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AN ECONOMIC HISTORY
OF THE CORK REGION
IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

PART 1
An Economic History of

THE CORK REGION

IN

THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

David Dickson

Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctorate of Philosophy,
in the University of Dublin, 1977
DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis has not been submitted as an exercise for a degree at the University of Dublin, or any other university. It is entirely my own work.

David Dickson
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In quotations throughout this study, and in the citation of contemporary works, spelling and punctuation have generally been modernized except where the meaning is unclear.

References to the last quarter of the year, old style, before the calendar reform, are given thus: 1744/5.

In footnote references to the Egmont MSS in the British Library, the symbol * after the MS number is sometimes used; this indicates the MS number in question belongs to the old classification in operation when the collection was microfilmed by the National Library of Ireland. These references can therefore only be used in conjunction with the N.L.I. microfilms (which are also cited).

Unless otherwise stated, all comments concerning trends in foreign trade to and from ports in the Cork region are based on data in the ledgers of imports and exports, Ireland, in the Public Record Office, London (Customs/15).
ABBREVIATIONS

B.L. British Library
Cal. S.P. Ire. Calendar of state papers, Ireland
C.E.P. Cork Evening Post
C.J. Cork Journal
D.N.B. Dictionary of National Biography
H.C. House of Commons (U.K.)
H.M.C. Historical Manuscripts Commission
H.U.L. Harvard University Library
I.H.S. Irish Historical Studies
I.M.C. Irish Manuscripts Commission
J.C.H.A.S. Journal of the Cork Historical and Archaeological Society
J.H.C.I. Journal of the House of Commons of Ireland
J.K.A.H.S. Journal of the Kerry Archaeological and Historical Society
J.R.S.A.I. Journal of Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland
J.S.S.I.S.I. Journal of the Statistical and Social Inquiry Society of Ireland
Mic. Microfilm
N.L.I. National Library of Ireland
n.s. new series
P.R.I.A. Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy
P.R.O. Public Record Office (London)
P.R.O.I. Public Record Office, Ireland (Dublin)
P.R.O.N.I. Public Record Office of Northern Ireland (Belfast)
R.C.B. Representative Body of the Church of Ireland
R.I.A. Royal Irish Academy
T.C.D. Trinity College Dublin
U.C.D. University College Dublin
U.C.C. University College Cork
The province of Munster in the eighteenth century was dominated by the port cities of Cork, Limerick and Waterford. The prosperity of these maritime urban centres was a direct consequence of the high seas-oriented character of the economy. The commercial functions of the three cities were initially auxiliary parts to the main developed Atlantic Sphere of influence near part of the continent and stretching around it. For a part historians rely on specific geographical indications, but they varied with time and between zones. Any decay predicated on it is observed not for the Literary city rather, yet its literature was bound to Irish historians. However if the chief importance of the analysis is an economic, then it is possible to detect the practice down into market settlements alone. The purpose of this study is to examine economic and social developments in the sphere of influence of the four ports, that of Cork, Youghal, Dungarvan and Waterford. The study is not limited to Cork, but it extends to the whole of the province of Munster. The study also examines the roles of the towns of Cork, Limerick, Waterford and other towns it included such as Youghal, Dungarvan and other towns. It is true that Munster was a self-sustaining region in some sense, but there was a series of districts which had greater economic ties to other parts of Ireland and other cities. Most of the towns were connected in the political and administrative unit of the county in which they lay, and in certain cases, these included several of the towns of the province, so that the role of Youghal, Dungarvan, and other towns was related to the economy of the province as well as the national level. The study of economic change in the Irish region is thus an important step in understanding the development of the whole region. It also helps to understand the relative self-sustaining nature of the Iveragh Peninsula, which forms part of the county of Kerry. The study shows how the towns and rural areas evolved in response to economic changes, and how they developed a sense of economic interdependence.
The province of Munster in the eighteenth century was dominated by the port cities of Cork, Limerick and Waterford. The pre-eminence of these maritime urban centres was a direct consequence of the highly export-orientated character of the economy. The commercial functions of the three cities were broadly similar; each in the main developed its own sphere of influence over part of the province and stretching beyond it. Such port hinterlands defy specific geographical delineation, for they varied over time and between commodities: dairy production in co. Limerick was for the Limerick city market, yet its fatstock was bought by Cork butchers. However if too much importance is not attached to boundaries it is possible to break the province down into market catchment areas.

The purpose of this study is to examine economic and social development in the sphere of influence of the largest of these ports, that of Cork, and to explore the relationship between city and hinterland. The zone to be investigated embraced the whole of the county of Cork, co. Waterford from Dungarvan westwards, and south and west Kerry: it included most of what is in effect south Munster. This may not have been a self-conscious region in cultural terms, but it formed a series of districts which had closer economic links with Cork than with any other city. Most of the zone was subsumed in the political and administrative unit of the county of Cork, and in certain contexts in this study, because of the nature of some of the data, it is the county rather than the market region which is used as the framework for analysis. Yet the course of economic change in 'the Cork region' can only be fully appreciated by observing developments in both the districts most heavily influenced by market forces (the richer lands of co. Cork) and the peripheral areas (the poorer and more inaccessible districts of south Kerry and west Waterford).
South Munster was a heterogeneous region in terms of its cultural and political traditions: after the first period of the Anglo-Norman invasion when a disputed succession to the Desmond kingship had facilitated a vigorous penetration by the colonists into the area, it had been divided between districts of Norman and of Irish dominance, the first forming a crescent of territory stretching from north Kerry through co. Limerick to east Cork and controlled by several Anglo-Norman lordships, the second an enclave of fluctuating size in the south-west. The Desmond lordship became the major political entity in the former, centred in co. Limerick but having dependent connections in north and east Cork; other Norman lords flanked it, such as the Roches and the Barrys, whose influence extended westwards along the Cork coast. In the Irish area the several branches of the MacCarthyys remained the strongest families until the reconquest. The frontier between Anglo-Norman and Irish zones is indicated by the pattern of market creation in the thirteenth century: there were thirty-four sites, all east of a line from Kilmoleague to Butt vant; in Orpen's judgement those market centres 'grew up in connexion (seemingly) with Anglo-Norman manors'.

The collapse of royal authority outside the orbit of Dublin caused this dichotomy to become less apparent in the reality of shared dynastic politics, of hybrid institutions and social practices that emerged more particularly in the colonised - or rather semi-colonised - areas. Perhaps the greater contrast in the late medieval period lay between the port towns and the interior. Kinsale, Cork and Youghal had evolved from Viking foundations and in spite of some recruitment into their civic communities of

families from both the Anglo-Norman and Irish interior, they remained culturally and politically distinct. Most communication was seaborne and economic links with the interior were based on the exchange of a few staple products. Yet such judgement of the economic relationship is mainly based on sixteenth century evidence depicting a period of constant warfare and lawlessness, and certainly one of predominant economic decline in the towns; at an earlier period their isolation must have been less marked: the mayors of Cork for instance had participated in succession disputes to the Desmond earldom. By this time the few urban centres not having port functions, such as Rosscarbery and Buttevant, were in decline.

The very coexistence on near equal terms of Kinsale, Cork and Youghal, each with its own small merchant body, indicates the limited size of their hinterlands. The south-west was of course better endowed with good havens for shipping than with easy lines of communication into the interior, none of its ports having the advantage of Waterford, placed near the mouth of the complex Suir-Barrow-Nore system (although the partly navigable Blackwater enhanced the importance of Youghal). The traditional staple exports along the south coast were unprocessed hides, fish, wool and some heavy woollen cloths, traded for wine (mainly from France) and a variety of wholesale commodities (iron, salt, and hardwares) largely from England. The offshore fisheries were the main stimulus to continental participation in the region's trade and from this activity emerged the small general trade of Dingle and Dungarvan. How far fishing activity was in the control of Irish lords and merchants, and how much it stimulated economic activity


beyond primary exchange along the coasts of Kerry and west Cork remains obscure; extensive commerce with Spain was a late fifteenth- and sixteenth-century phenomenon, the core of which was the fisheries. The multiplicity of traditions of the great incomes derived by O'Sullivan Bere and his clients from the regular visitations of the Spanish and French fleets, and the settlement of foreign merchants in these western havens suggest that the pattern of foreign trade in the Irish enclave was quite isolated from commercial activity further east. However, the sixteenth-century accusations of political collusion between the Irish, foreign and piratical merchants to the exclusion of the loyal townspeople of Kinsale, Cork and Youghal may in fact disguise the true role that such port towns played in the organisations of the trade.

Just as inheritance customs in the several territories of south Munster appear to have reflected the fusion of legal traditions, so in landholding and agriculture both feudal and Irish practices undoubtedly shaped the evolution of farming in the pre-plantation period. Neither the three-field rotation of manorial agriculture found in east and south Leinster nor the more pronounced pastoralism of the west and north of the country predominated. While some districts such as Roche's Country were regarded as granaries - by implication more than self-sufficient in their tillage - and in most other areas wealth was measured exclusively in cattle,

4. W. O'Sullivan, The economic history of Cork city from the earliest times to the Act of Union (Cork, 1937), pp. 84, 105-6.

5. A. R. J. Went, 'The Irish pilchard fishery' in P.R.I.A. li, 6, 83, 85-6. Over two centuries later Friar O'Sullivan claimed that O'Sullivan Bere received £1,900 p.a. in port charges at Dunbaoi, and named twelve harbours from Tralee to Bantry where Spanish merchant factories had existed, cf. 'O'Sullivan's Ancient History of the Kingdom of Kerry' in J.C.H.A.S., vi (1900), 16-17.


7. Nicholls, op. cit. pp. 61, 64.
the general impression is that in at least the Desmond lordship mixed farming was the norm and that some of the more productive Anglo-Norman methods of cultivation were utilized. Tillage was always associated specifically with the lower social orders, and this was to be one of the continuities in the region's agrarian history. Another was that the commodities of commercial significance were of pastoral origin, and exportable grain surpluses unusual. While Spenser's picture of a previously 'most rich and plentiful country, full of corn and cattle' brought to the desolation of 1580 by the collapse of the Desmond lordship and the campaigns of reconquest may exaggerate, later developments suggest deeper roots for certain patterns of rural life and intercourse than the chaotic political history might suggest.

* * *

The dissolution of the old order in south Munster in the hundred odd years following the confiscation of the earl of Desmond's territories (1586) was in many ways a microcosm of the general seventeenth-century transformation of Irish politics, but the particular course of changes was to be distinct. The initial so-called 'Munster Plantation' was the first major colonial experiment by the English crown, and its character was moulded by over-ambitious planning and ineffective execution; at an early stage it experienced military collapse with the 1598 rebellion, and each of the subsequent crises, the Confederate and the Williamite wars, altered the direction of change. The history of the plantation - which in theory comprehended 240,000 profitable English acres in Kerry, Limerick, Cork and Waterford - was not of course the history of the region as a whole, for not only were the MacCarthy territories unaffected at first but the

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8. There was perhaps some fall-off in agricultural production during the later Middle Ages in the region, cf. O'Sullivan, op.cit., pp. 37,78.
Possessions of the Barrys and other old English magnates remained generally untouched; even some of the client families of the Desmonds managed after several years of protest to recover their lands from forfeiture. However the initial formal contours of the plantation were quite different from the subsequent political and economic dimensions of the areas under new English control. Both spatially and historically the consolidation of the new order was a gradual process and the plantation proper was only one element, albeit the catalyst, in this.

The evolution operated at three levels which can be considered separately: the transfer of property and political power into Protestant and 'new English' hands, the extensive immigration from England to replace existing settlement or to create new settlement - in particular the new towns - and lastly the accompanying revolution in economic activity.

For at least twenty years before the Desmond forfeitures, Elizabethan adventurers, particularly from the West Country - such as Humphrey Gilbert, Richard Grenville and Walter Raleigh - had begun to see Ireland and America in the same vista, with Munster the centrepiece of various colonising schemes which they laid before the English administration, ostensibly for the more perfect establishment of civility, security and royal authority. Sir William St.Leger, aspiring to be President of the new Council of Munster, had joined Grenville and others to obtain various leases around Cork harbour from the Earl of Desmond in 1568-9 with the hope of introducing English tenants, and the subsequent rebellion prompted the proposal that all lands of MacCarthy Mór, recently made

Earl of Clanmarty, should be confiscated and colonised. Again as an indication of the new perspective into which the pacification of Ireland was being set, five of the eight persons identified as active in planning the actual plantation between 1584 and 1586 had already been concerned in American and other overseas schemes. Indeed the difference between devising settlements in virgin territory and establishing new communities inside an existing political framework tended to be obscured, for it was assumed — to judge by some of the plans — that the attained Earl of Desmond's rights and titles related to compact territorial units and that these had been completely depopulated by the wars. Thus the primary divisions of the final plantation—the portions to be farmed to individual 'undertakers' which they were to colonise under specific directions — were ambitiously large, and inside them model manorial societies were to be created. These ordered 'seignories' turned out to be legal fantasies, but one feature in them bore relation to subsequent reality: the emphasis on new urban settlements, part defensive and part economic in function, at the centre of each undertaking. Only those colonizers who were able to build up viable townships went any distance towards creating the new 'civilitie' envisaged by the English administration in the 1580s. The construction of urban centres required considerable investment, but military insecurity and the shortage of immigrants were to make them a sine qua non.

The 'plot for the re-peopling of ... Munster' as it was put into execution after 1586 became increasingly compromised both by the demands of already interested parties and the realities of the situation. The original concept of limiting grants to 12,000 English acres was travestied by Raleigh's patent for 42,000 acres (3½ seignories) in Cork and Waterford and by other inflated grants. On top of this all received large amounts of 'unprofitable' land which were not taken account of in the grants. Of the dozen-odd Cork adventurers, three took 12,000-acre seignories, three more took in excess of 12,000 acres and the remainder an average of about 6,000 acres. It was finally decided that the undertakers of 12,000 acres were to settle twelve farmers and freeholders, each on large holdings (300 to 400 acres), together with 42 copyholders on 100-acre units, and thirty-six small householders, all to be of English birth.

Practice was somewhat different. Quinn has estimated that the plantation blue-print implied a net immigration into the thirty-six seignories embracing four counties of 8,400 persons, including English servants and sub-tenants, and a capital investment of £60,000. The early inspections of the plantation gave an ambiguous picture of progress so that the extent to which even individual seignories were developed is unclear. The chaotic situation in Co. Cork in 1589, where old proprietors were intimidating immigrants, and the total inadequacy of the surveys was dismaying potential undertakers, probably mirrors conditions elsewhere. From the beginning the assumption that no more would there be a

15. Dunlop, 'Plantation of Munster', 257.
native problem was belied, for the earliest commentators lamented the undertakers' illegal tolerance of Irish tenants who had returned to their old territories. The nine years between the end of the rebellion and the passing of some of the patents to undertakers allowed much of the early enthusiasm to be dissipated, and the failure of government to carry out its obligations of military protection were demonstrated by the colony's disintegration at the outbreak of war in 1598. From this sixteenth-century period of plantation, only one of the twelve major co. Cork seignories was to survive de jure in the hands of the original undertakers' descendants, the Mallow seignory of the Norrys/Jephsons (although the Hydes and the Fleetwoods long maintained a presence in Condon's Country in spite of the reversal of their grants). Legal continuity was to be stronger in Kerry where the patentees' families (Browne, Herbert and Denny) later became dominant landowners in the county, although their material impact was slight at this period. In Cork by contrast, those undertakers who sought to fulfil their engagements had already begun to change the local landscape before 1598, although it was a mere prelude to seventeenth-century expansion. Indeed continuity in Cork lay in a different direction: a feature of the plantation design had been to grant sets of seignories to adventurers from a particular English region and it was probably a reflection of earlier activities that the Cork and west Waterford seignories were allotted to, or rather chosen by the West Country group.

After 1603 the relationship between government and plantation was altered by the lessons of four years of renewed warfare. The role of the


18. Dunlop, 'Plantation of Munster', 258.
individual 'entrepreneur' in advancing the English interest in Munster came to assume a new importance, and although the Presidency Court was a more effective regulating authority over the plantation, this growth was primarily achieved at the expense of the crown. In co. Cork the dominant personality in the first half of the seventeenth century was Richard Boyle, created Earl of Cork in 1620, whose rise to great landed wealth was the classic instance of an adventurer exploiting judicial office at a time when property titles were in a state of chaos. In the first phase of his career, as deputy-escheator, Boyle had accumulated by fairly unscrupulous means a collection of estates dispersed over three provinces; he developed a direct interest in Munster with his marriage to the daughter of a co. Limerick undertaker in 1596. His connection with Cork and Waterford began - after a period of imprisonment for earlier over-enthusiasm - in 1607 when he got a cheap purchase of the huge Inchiquin seignory from the disillusioned Raleigh (bought with the help of his second wife's marriage portion). In the first decades of the seventeenth century English government policy favoured by default the new English, both Dublin office-holders and Elizabethan immigrants, in their pursuit of vulnerable estates: thus Boyle's energies were devoted to securing the titles to his easy-gotten properties, and to buying and taking mortgages on other south Munster lands. Between 1602 and 1614 he had more than twenty patents passed improving his titles and removing where possible residual obligations to the crown included in previous patents; between 1613 and 1625 he acquired the Nuce (ex Grenville) and Beecher seignories forming the barony of Kinalmeaky as well as other


scattered Grenville grants. He attempted to buy Jephson's Mallow seignory but even without it he quite eclipsed all other adventurers in the region; the rise of his rental from £4,000 p.a. in 1614 to an estimated £20,000 p.a. in 1641, while reflecting the importance of his new acquisitions, came also from the upsurge in land values induced by a generation of stability and in particular from the economic activity stimulated by his private plantation policy, with its distinctive theme the establishment of several urban industrial colonies. Owning land in at least seventeen counties in 1636, he was supposed the richest subject in the king's dominions, and as political leader of the new English planter class had been within reach of the lord-deputyship in 1631.

An inspection of the Munster Plantation in 1622 found that in co. cork there were only two seignories outside Boyle's control which were progressing as plantations. Others had passed back into old English hands or were held on new patents that did not include the covenants stipulating the

21. G. Bennett, The history of Bandon and the principal towns in the west riding of county Cork (Cork, 1869), p.61. In 1621 Boyle firmly discouraged Lionel Cranfield from making a rival bid for the residue of the Grenville estates, on the grounds that Boyle's intended purchases were 'for strengthening my English plantation and convenience and not for my great benefit': Earl of Cork, Lismore to Lord Carew, 15 Sept. 1621, Sackville MSS (Kent Archives Office U269/08/7116).

22. H. F. Berry, 'The English settlement in Mallow under the Jephson family' in J.C.H.A.S. xii (1906), 12-3.


introduction of an English tenantry. An instance of decay was the fourteen ploughlands of 'Dronsuirchin', a seignory physically divided, part in co. Waterford, part an outlying grant around Bantry: in 1622 five ploughlands had been sold back to an old English family, three to an Irish family, three and a half to a neighbouring undertaker, and two and a half were being detained by former Irish proprietors; the commissioners were very vague about the details of these alienations. 27

There were however others of Boyle's mould active in extending new English power. Sir William St. Leger bought the flagging Spenser seignory and established the Presidency Court at his Doneraile plantation, 28 while Richard Perceval and more especially his son Philip used both the authority and the profits of the registrarship of the Court of Wards to gather titles to land in Cork and Tipperary in the two decades before 1641. In this period the traffic in escheated lands and defective titles was less open to private gain, but office in the Court of Wards remained a strategic position for an adventurer, and was little altered during Wentworth's deputyship. It was no coincidence that properties in the two counties where Philip Perceval established his interest, Cork and Tipperary, between them accounted for almost a quarter of the total handled by the court between 1626 and 1641. 29 By 1640, Perceval had by mortgage and purchase acquired a title to some eighty-five ploughlands in co. Cork and lesser amounts in seven other counties. How far pressure, legal and otherwise, was used to gain this property may be indicated by the striking

27. Dunlop, 'Unpublished survey', 144.
28. D.N.B., entry under 'Sir William St. Leger'.
compactness of the lands - set in Dunlelow, Orrery and Fermoy baronies - although carved out of the properties of over a dozen old English and Irish families.

Indeed in the region as a whole the experience of the old English and the Irish was fairly similar. Some conformed to the established church and identified with the new order for advantage, others taken up as wards in childhood did so less voluntarily. For the rest their position was slowly being eroded, given the fact that undertakers and their chief tenants were generally more diligent in making legal inroads into native property than in 'anglicizing' lands they already held. Nicholas Browne, the Kerry undertaker, had warned in 1597 that with the nemesis of the Geraldines the native Irish interest could only be controlled by a policy of divide and sequester: this advice was ignored when pardons were given to most of those implicated in the Nine Year's War, but Browne himself practised it by marrying the daughter of O'Sullivan Bere in order to get support in his battle for the absolute possession of a large territory mortgaged from the McCarthy Mor. The new English permeation of Irish areas via mortgages and leases was typified by a number of Boyle's dealings; Thomas Crooke's plantation in the very west of Carbery was also an example of this, developed on a lease from Sir Fineen O'Driscoll. However a few old English burgher families were no less energetic: Sir Walter Coppinger who had built up an extensive Carbery property after 1603 took possession of Crooke's plantation after his death, while a kinsman, Alderman John 'Coppinger, acquired 'vast' estates over the country in this period.

30. Transcript of surveys of Pereeval estates in 1640, 1677 and 1718 (R.I.A. MS 23.L.49); J. Lodge, The peerage of Ireland, 2nd ed., ii (Dublin, 1789) pp. 251n.-52n.


It was an Indian summer for the old English of the ports. They remained in political control in Kinsale, Cork and to some degree — in spite of Boyle's municipal property — even in Youghal until after 1641, but their recusancy almost certainly limited their participation in the rural land market. The young Viscount Buttevant, doyen of the old English lords of the hinterland was, as a ward, brought up a Protestant and married at an early age to Boyle's daughter. The Barry Mór patrimony was heavily encumbered and therefore much of it entered the inventory of Boyle's mortgages. The cadet branches of the clan were no more fortunate: some of them provided Perceval with his richest lands. The fate of the MacCarthyys, lords of Muskerry, nearly paralleled the senior Barrys, for Cormac MacDermot MacCarthy, the Irish leader who had declined to join the Irish forces in the Battle of Kinsale, became a Protestant, educated his son in England and introduced English Protestant tenants onto the territory. His son, however, remained Catholic and enjoyed some measure of political power, for the heir became one of the two county members in the parliaments of 1634 and 1639.

An estimate of the aggregate land owned by Catholics in 1641 is possible from the returns in the Books of Survey and Distribution, tabulated twenty-five years later of those forfeiting under the Cromwellian confiscation: these indicate that approximately two-thirds of co. Cork

33. Kearney, op.cit., pp.239-41. The Earl of Cork claimed that even in 1642, the Irish greatly outnumbered the English in Youghal, see A. R. Orme, 'Youghal ... growth, decay, resurgence' in Irish Geography v (3), 134.
34. Earl of Cork's will 1642, printed in Townshend, op.cit., pp.470-505.
35. Perceval survey, 1640.
36. O'Mahony, op.cit., pp 193-4, 203; Kearney, op.cit., p.239; V. Gibbs et.al., The Complete Peerage (London, 1910-59), entry under 'Muskerry'.
was still Irish or old English at the outbreak of the Confederate wars. The pattern of plantation up to that point was reflected in the relatively low returns of Catholic landowners in the old English baronies; conversely the least infiltrated baronies were Muskerry, Carbery, Bear and Bantry, and only Fermoy and the liberties of Cork and Kinsale returned high old English ownership. This profile probably exaggerates the strength of the old order, for no allowance was made for the alienation of land on favourable leases, and mortgage transactions were only selectively noted. It does however serve as a starting-point from which to judge the local implications of subsequent land settlements.  

In spite of several years of fissiparous military confrontation and convoluted politics during the 1640s, the pre-1641 distribution of power in south Munster was not radically altered until Cromwell's arrival—except in one respect: the port towns had not joined the Confederate Catholics at the outbreak of war, but the Earl of Inchiquin, anxious to underline his enmity towards the Catholic alliance, took it upon himself in 1644 to purge Cork city of its Catholic and therefore suspect citizenry. This expulsion (from the walled city at least) of the existing population, and the dispersal of the old municipal establishment—Kinsale and Youghal were similarly treated later—had far-reaching consequences on the political complexion of the region, for it was primarily through the reconstituted towns that the Cromwellian generation of immigrants was introduced. In the rural transfer of property following the Cromwellian pacification, the 'old Protestants' were to be the prime beneficiaries, both in the short run because of their close identification with the

37. Taylor set of Books of Survey and Distribution, in the R.I.A.
Commonwealth regime, and in the long run because of the part played by their leaders, such as Broghill, in the Restoration. Co. Cork was not included in the general settlement of either adventurers or soldiers, and although some of the confiscated land passed to Cromwellian immigrants few new estates of importance were created. The foundations of future major family interests were however laid — hence the origin of the Brodricks, the Prekes, the Whites and the Longfields — but grants of land on the scale of the plantation seignories were not made; the huge estates that the Earl of Anglesey acquired in Bear and Bantry, and William Petty in south Kerry postdated the Restoration.

In its original form the Cromwellian settlement seemed a spectacular general application of the principles of the 1580s, the creation of a completely new social structure east and south of the Shannon of Protestant English. Indeed a thorough transplantation of all the existing Catholic occupiers to Connacht was initiated in some areas, but how far this developed is obscure. One of the prominent old Protestants of Co. Cork, Vincent Gookin, published a tract in 1655 opposing the scheme, and the ambiguity of government policy was apparent in a directive of May 1654 that the Irish not already transplanted from the precinct of Cork were to be settled in artificial villages, but that all the Irish in west Carbery, unable to be of use to the garrisons, were to be expelled. Such draconian

39. The exact status of the county in the plantation is ambiguous, for although it was stated in Jan. 1654 that Cromwellian officers and soldiers were to be settled on some 75,735 acres of the county (J. P. Prendergast, The Cromwellian Settlement of Ireland, 2nd ed. (Dublin, 1870), p.211), yet later that year four counties including Cork were reserved for the special uses of the Commonwealth and were to be let only from year to year (Cal.S.P.Ire. 1647-60, p.796). Clearly much forfeited land was settled on officers (Prendergast, op.cit., pp.266-7) but the government was still reserving land in 1657 (R. Dunlop, Ireland under the Commonwealth (Manchester, 1913), p.665).

40. 131 tenants with their stock were registered on one of the few recorded transplantation certificates, that of John and Mathew Hore of Shandon near Dungarvan, (Prendergast, op.cit., pp.363-68).

41. V. Gookin, The Great case of transplantation in Ireland discussed (London, 165

42. Dunlop, Ireland under the Commonwealth, pp.424-6. In 1656, as well as the Irish landowners, all tenants in Co. Cork holding leases of seven or more years were to be transplanted, (ibid., pp.573-5).
measures bore little relation to reality judging by subsequent evidence.

The land settlement was still being processed at the time of the Restoration but Catholic landowners had certainly been dispossessed, if not transplanted by this time. Those previously expelled from the port towns successfully resisted their further transplantation to Connaught and obtained substitute estates in inland parts of Muskerry and Barrymore. Very few other old English families were restored under the 1662 Act of Settlement and the only prominent native Irish family in Cork or Kerry to be reinstated was the son of Lord Muskerry, the recently created Earl of Clancarty, who was closely allied with the Duke of Ormonde. Thus in the 1660s Catholic ownership was at about half its 1641 level in co. Cork, but Clancarty's huge estate formed the greater part of this, so that the number of Catholic landowners had fallen even more dramatically. The third earl of Clancarty, who conformed to the established church during his enjoyment of the estate (1666-1676), and the very Protestant trustees who administered the estate for the fourth earl, were probably responsible for the appearance on it of an English chief tenantry: by 1688 tenants bearing English names outnumbered the Irish gentry (who at the Restoration had sheltered as tenants under the Clancarty title in an effort to preserve the substance of their estates).

The sudden resurgence of local Catholic power in the early years of James II's reign confirmed for Protestants the warnings that some had constantly been giving that the Restoration settlement would never be secure as long as Catholicism remained a political force, either in the form of a Catholic landed interest or an organised Catholic church. There had been alarms

43. Prendergast, op.cit., pp 175-.
44. Books of Survey and Distribution.
45. Gibbs, Complete Peerage, entry under 'Clancarty'; Book of postings and sales of forfeited estates, 1760-03, in R.I.A.
about the uncontrolled Irish class in the furthest west, such as the nominal tenants of the Anglesey estate in Bear who in 1672 were paying no rent to king or landlord, but the more immediate menace had seemed to be the old proprietors who continued to reside on their former lands, coshing on their tenants. However the situation had appeared quite different to the clients of these Catholic gentry, such as the poet Daibhthidh O Bruadair; in much of his poetry in the 1670s and 1680s he lamented the declining status of his patrons who had been betrayed by King Charles in the Act of Settlement. Yet it was an indication of the continuing authority of this class that during the Williamite wars Lord Barrymore could write of Col. Mac Donagh and the O'Callaghan, thirty years dispossessed, that 'It is of very great consequence to draw over people of their quality and interest who will bring them one thousand men and at least seven or eight thousand cows'. In the Williamite settlement that followed, it was the memory of this political resilience that produced a violently anti-papist climate of opinion, a determination to secure for all the new colonial society.

In much of Ireland the seventeenth-century revolution in land ownership had horizontal rather than vertical impact, being a transfer of political power rather than a transformation of the social structure.

46. Earl of Anglesey to the Earl of Orrery, 21 May 1672, Orrery MS (N.L.I. Ms 13,217).

47. For example cf. Sir Robert Southwell to Sir John Percival, 16 May 1682, Egmont MSS ii, (H.M.C., 1909), 111-5.


However, in Munster as in Ulster where colonization occurred, society itself was fundamentally altered. Both the scale of the immigration to Munster and the methods employed in organising it are unclear, but the significance of the phenomenon, particularly in the development of Co. Cork, is not. As suggested above, the colonizing of the Desmond territories in the first phase of the Munster plantation was specifically directed by the government, whereas after 1603 individual undertakers determined the process. Quinn has suggested that recovery was slow after the first wave of settlement, that the number of English settlers in the Munster seignories in 1622 was about 12,000 or perhaps 75% of the total of twenty-five years earlier. Given that there was a continuous inflow after 1603 this comparison highlights the devastating effects of the last Desmond rebellion on the first plantation.

Two types of immigrant can be identified from this time, firstly the men of some substance, often settling on their own initiative as chief tenants of the undertakers, secondly the artisan/servant class, recruited perhaps by indenture. This distinction was of course implicit in the original plantation plan, where a new social hierarchy was to be created: below the undertaker, a few freeholders and major leaseholders who were to take and improve several hundred acres and build at their own cost, inferior to them a numerous body of copyholders who were to be settled in a town built by the undertaker, which was to be market centre, refuge area and servicing point for the seignory.

Military service and government employment seem to have introduced many of new English 'gentlemen tenants' to the region, others came over with the undertakers or were family connections. As they shared a common outlook with the undertakers themselves, there seems to have been

a distinct scarcity of men who would be content to reclaim a farm a few hundred acres to be an effective yeomen. They came because they were adventurers and, given the manpower shortage, it was a strong temptation for them to take up cheap leases and to reset to Irish tenants at an easy profit. A number of these chief tenants, particularly those on the Boyle 'palatinate', were the richest gentry, even the aristocracy of eighteenth-century co. Cork, families such as the Bernards and the Colthursts. On the Mallow seignory some of the early freecolders were bought out by the undertaker, but of the two remaining in 1611, one (Randle Clayton) was the founder of an important county family.

The Cromwellian settlement created a scatter of small estates over the county, of new landowners on an economic par with the chief tenantry; the Welsh Cromwellian Col. Henry Bowen, granted land in north Cork was exceptional in his prior ownership of property before he came to Ireland. The so-called 'census' of c.1659 provides some indication of the degree to which English tenants were distributed over co. Cork by this time: returns exist for some fifteen hundred denominations of land outside the towns of Mallow, Youghal, Cork and suburbs, and Kinsale - those for several baronies in the north-west and north-east of the county not surviving - and 'English' householders were shown to reside in about two-fifths of these. It is not clear whether 'English' here indicated new English-Protestant, or new and old English, but the probability is that it included only those whose settlement was of recent origin. This new settlement was densest in the baronies south-west of Cork city, thinnest in the furthest west, but throughout the county it was fairly evenly spread with one or two

'English' households to a denomination and Irish inhabitants generally outnumbering them: only one-third of the denominations with an English element had more than four English households in them, and only at points of urban plantation were English households often in a majority. The census is however a rather blunt tool to measure urbanization: the very interpretation of the returns - whether they are a count of householders or of all adult males - is ambiguous, but town and embryonic townships were already a distinct feature of the demography of immigration.

By this period they had become the chief filter through which new settlers were introduced. This indeed was an incentive to the foundation of further urban entities. In the century after 1586 at least twenty new towns were created in the Cork region, some around existing castles, others at fords or havens (see Map 5). The earliest and most spectacular example was Bandon-bridge: within three years of the grant of a moiety of the outlying Kinmealy barony to Phane Beecher he had laid the basis for 'a civil citie'; military rather than economic considerations probably dictated the concentrated settlement of colonists, for it was in a heavily wooded district and the old proprietors remained on as hostile neighbours. Beecher's town was on the south bank of the Bandon river, a short distance above its navigable limit and on the edge of his seignory. The neighbouring undertaker, Nuce, abandoned an early attempt to develop a town in the centre of his property for, recognising the advantages of Beecher's location, he opted for a duplicate creation on the northern bank.

The proto-history of the two towns is disguised by the later claims of Richard Boyle to have been their exclusive founder. Beecher's Bandon

52. Payre, 'A brief description', i.11.
was apparently substantial enough to survive the 1590 rebellion but this'settlement hardly predates the grant of markets in 1609. Boyle took possession on a mortgage of the latter in 1613, bought the southern town in 1619 and obtained fee simple ownership of the whole site in 1625. In 1622 there were 250 houses in the town and twenty years later Boyle made the doubtful claim that the district supported 7,000 colonists.

While many of the early townsmen may have taken leases of out-farms — a pattern elsewhere — Bandon was primarily an industrial colony from the beginning, lacking both an obvious market hinterland or easy communications. The processing of timber from the surrounding woodlands may have featured initially, but by the early seventeenth century Bandon was a clothing town, an outpost of the West Country woollen industry for either dissatisfied or ambitious combers, weavers and finishers of broad cloth: the town's historian, Bennett, claims that many of the settlers came from two districts in Somerset. Several parties apparently participated in the organisation of this immigration: a proposed scheme in 1617 to build up the woollen industry involved the formation of a cloth company with a subscribed capital of £7,000. Boyle's role in advancing the town lay mainly in his provision of walls, market-houses and churches, in which he had invested, according to himself, £14,000 by 1627. Inside this infrastructure merchants and master clothiers, the majority perhaps from Bristol and the West Country, built tenements for the weavers, mills, and other facilities

54. Substantial building may in fact postdate 1613, cf. Plan for the town, on the north bank at Bandonbridge 'as it is intended to be built', T.C.D., MS 1209/39.
55. Bennett, op.cit., p. 61.
57. Bennett, op.cit., p.63.
58. Ibid., p.61.
59. Ibid., p.68.
to process the yarn and cloth. In 1641 the leading clothier, Henry Turner, had an export trade giving him an income of £500 p.a. and owned a dozen of the tenement properties destroyed in the subsequent siege of the town.

Mallow, also in part a clothing town, was the only other large urban creation in the county, while outside it, Killarney and Tallow were significant new population centres with timber-processing apparently the staple of both, supplemented in Tallow at least with iron manufacture. Grants of fairs and markets for other sites were included in the plethora of patents granted in the generation before 1641, but how far these were subsequently used is not clear. Of the inland plantation towns Newmarket, Kilworth, Michelstown and Doneraile were becoming economic foci, but their growth was more pronounced in the Restoration period. Older sites such as Macroom, Castletelyons, Buttevant, Carrigtwohill and Inishkeane had large Irish populations but as ownership passed to the new English, their development generally conformed to that of the plantation towns. The early seventeenth-century maritime settlements of Clonakilty, Baltimore, Lemanon, Crookhaven and Bantry were largely to service the pilchard fishing and with the exception of Bantry and Clonakilty probably lacked market functions. The latter, one of Boyle's towns, had at the time of its incorporation, in 1613 'a plantation of some hundred English families' and was being put forward

60. The evidence for this comes mainly from the depositions concerning 'the losses chiefly of the British subjects... committed by the Irish and English rebels... in 1641, to... 1660' - e.g. Cork, iii, 118 (T.C.D. MS 824).
61. Ibid., iii, 118 (T.C.D. MS 824).
as a suitable shire town for the new county of West Cork that Boyle was hoping to have created. However like the other urban centres along the west Cork coast it was undermined by warfare and the dispersal of immigrants after 1641; it was still 'recovering' its position in 1685, while Lemeen and Crookhaven had all but disappeared as plantations. Some townships were even more transitory: the three towns built by the East India company c.1610 on the Brinny-Bandon confluence, one associated with timber processing, one with ship-building and one with their ironworks, were said to be inhabited by 300 English settlers. But several varieties of local opposition to the company's activities appear to have caused the demise of the colony within a few years.

The towns of the interior recovered more quickly after the 1650s, and the new towns of the Restoration period were notably successful: Charleville, which was the earl of Orrery's attempt to emulate his father's achievement at Bandon, rapidly grew as an exclusively Protestant town based on woollen and linen manufacturing, but benefitting from the conspicuous consumption of its partly resident owner. Mitchelstown, already of some size by 1660, was famous at this time for its fairs; the Aldworths invested

Substantially in the remote town of Newmarket on the cattle road from Kerry, while nearby the Percevals built shops and tenements for the growing town of Kanturk, as well they might for in 1677, 'the profit of it is incredible, the market and fairs, the mill, the copyholds, the meadows and gardens...' a sign of the times was the advice given to Sir John Perceval in 1681 that 'the place is capable of a woollen manufacture. But be pleased to mind the fairs first'. Midleton was a further instance of rapid expansion at a good location; it was incorporated in 1670 and two decades later had sixty slate houses. Orrery's second foundation, Castlemartyr, was by the time of the Williamite wars 'a good market-town... [it] consists of many well-built houses, and hath a good market-house'. By this time the older centres of Doneraile and Rathcormack were claimed to have eighty and a hundred houses respectively.

Towns to their creators were thus centres of innovation and social anchors of the rural plantation. The company of Staplers at Youghal argued that the attraction of English dealers to their town was a natural first stage of immigration: 'the English who entertain themselves thereby... having gotten some knowledge of the country, from thence as from a seminary, they disperse themselves to several plantations...'. A good

70. Orrery MSS (N. L. I. MS 13,189/1; MS 13,223/10).
71. Perceval estate surveys, 1640, 1677 and 1713, p.35.
74. Ibid., p.609.
75. Ibid., pp. 609-10.
76. Caulfield, Youghal, p.243.
school was regarded as an excellent magnet for a plantation town. Beecher's free school was already established in 1589, apparently at Bandon, and it was seen as an aid to the success of his whole plantation, while the decay of a school (through bad teachers or lack of subsidy), as at Charleville in 1680, could threaten the very survival of a town.

Estate improvement, in the conventional wisdom of the new landowners, was only to be achieved by the introduction of an English tenantry and the towns were regarded as seed-beds for this process. But more directly, a new town with regular markets, several resident merchants and buyers, some alehouses and a few shops dealing particularly in tobacco and salt, a tannery and a grist-mill, became an economic catalyst in its district, as immediate demand for certain agricultural commodities transformed prices and enhanced the value of rural land.

* * *

77. Cited in the tenants' demand at Castleisland in 1678, Samuell Wilson to Lord Herbert, 21 May 1678, in W. J. Smith, ed. Herbert correspondence (Cardiff and Dublin, 1963), p.244.

78. Payne, 'A brie description', p.11.

79. Leo Beecher to the Countess Dowager of Orrery, 19 Nov. 1680, Orrery MSS (N.L.I. Ms 13,224/18).
The century of colonization was by implication also one of profound economic transformation. A direct indicator of this was the growth in volume of the agricultural surplus marketed, expressed primarily in the secular expansion of foreign trade in the co. Cork ports. Commercial growth reflected social and political change on the land and in the port towns but, independent of this, external market demand moved from being a background influence to become a fundamental determinant of change during the century.

Primary pastoral products continued, as before the plantation, to be the staples of commerce but as the importance of individual commodities in the profile of exports changed considerably during the century, the growth of surplus is difficult to measure. Before 1683 only the crudest estimates of the total value of exports can be given, one made by an employee of the customs farmers in 1611, the other extrapolated from local customs revenue returns and national export data for 1640/41:

80. For the 1611 return, Cal. Carew MSS 1605-24, p.175. Although £20,000 is given by Cogan as the value of Cork exports it seems almost certain that this is a mistake and that this figure covered both exports and imports, judging by the returns for other ports. It was accepted by Cogan that exports and imports in ports outside Dublin were of equal value, so that it is assumed here that Cork exports were in fact valued at £10,000. The 1640/1 figure is calculated by taking the national customs revenue for that year, the value of Irish exports for that year (at 1665 prices), and the estimated revenue of Cork ports based on a half-year return, and is on the assumption that the export customs component in 1640/1 accounted for approximately 70% of the total customs revenue from this region as it had in 1620-22 and 1632/3 (Kearney, Strafford, p.160; R. Dunlop, 'A note on the Irish export trade in 1641, 1665 and 1669' in E.H.R. xxii (1907), 754-6; P.R.O. S.P. 63/259/225; Rich MSS (N.L.I. MS 8,013/10); B.L. Harley MS 2,048 ff.231-7). For the 1683 figure, B.L. Add.MS 4,759.
TABLE 1: i

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1611</th>
<th>1640/41*</th>
<th>1683</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Youghal</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td></td>
<td>58,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cork</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td></td>
<td>75,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kinsale</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td></td>
<td>17,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'Western parts'</td>
<td>n.g.</td>
<td></td>
<td>5,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baltimore</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Total</td>
<td>14,000</td>
<td>138,000</td>
<td>156,500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* 1640/41 value in terms of 1605 prices. Sources: see n.82.

These figures must be treated with great caution, for they almost certainly exaggerate the scale of growth in the pre-1641 period and the degree of sluggishness subsequently, even after allowance has been made for changing prices; the volume of exports in 1640/41 was perhaps not reached again until the late 1670s. These estimates do however point to the remarkable underlying rise in economic activity between the 1610s and 1641, and the economic resurgence in the second half of the century after more than a decade of civil war and social change, and in a less favourable international trading environment.

Returns for the actual exports of individual ports predating 1683 exist only for 1616/17 and 1626, and the contemporary prices needed to evaluate them are not available. To some extent the data on customs revenue fill this gap and indicate indirectly the relative changes in ports and products.

81. 'Brief abstract of the chief commodities exported out of... Ireland!', 1616/7, Sackville MSS (K.A.O. U269/ON4,806); 'Ireland: the total of all... goods... exported', 1626 (P.R.O. C.O. 388/85/A15).

82. Figures for 1615/8 are from the Rich MSS, loc.cit.; for 1619-22 and 1623-26 from the Sackville MSS (K.A.O. U269/ON 6,800; U269/ON 7,518; U269/O 284); for 1626-29 and 1629-32, Strafford MSS (Sheffield City Library, Strafford MS 24-5 (174)); for 1632-34, Temple Newsam MSS (Leeds City Library, TN/P07/1(18)c); for 1640/41 P.R.O. S.P. 63/259/225; for 1664 Cal.S.P.Ire. 1663-5, pp. 460-1; for 1668 Cal.S.P.Ire.1666-9, pp. 672-3; for 1683 B.L. Add.MS 15,896, f.129.
Sources: see n. 82.

This table shows the half-yearly returns for the half-year beginning Nov. 1640, and the half-year ending Dec. 1641. These figures are extrapolated from the returns for the half-year beginning Nov. 1640, and the half-year ending Dec. 1641.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Returns</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1640</td>
<td>2,135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1641</td>
<td>2,830</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1642</td>
<td>3,390</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1643</td>
<td>4,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1644</td>
<td>4,530</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1645</td>
<td>5,050</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1646</td>
<td>5,570</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1647</td>
<td>6,090</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1648</td>
<td>6,610</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1649</td>
<td>7,130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1650</td>
<td>7,650</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1651</td>
<td>8,170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1652</td>
<td>8,690</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1653</td>
<td>9,210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1654</td>
<td>9,730</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1655</td>
<td>10,250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1656</td>
<td>10,770</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1657</td>
<td>11,290</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1658</td>
<td>11,810</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* (annual average to the nearest £)

Gross customs returns

TABLE I: II
The movement of customs revenue is no direct index of economic change — indeed changes in the book of rates in 1632 and new duties prior to 1664 invalidate comparisons over the century — but customs revenue does provide dramatic evidence of the changing importance of individual ports in the country, and even changes in the book of rates were not purely fiscal. Before the 1632 change it was claimed that the price of many commodities had doubled since the previous book had been fixed in 1612.

It might appear from Table 1: ii that in the early decades of the century Youghal, Cork and Kinsale were of equivalent commercial importance, with Cork somewhat ahead, and that this situation was transformed in the two decades before 1641 when a much more explicit and different hierarchy emerged: Youghal, trailed by Cork, with Kinsale expanding only modestly. However the revenue returns for those years in which they are divided into import and export customs suggest that this is an oversimplification:

83. The reliability of these returns must be qualified on several grounds. In the first place they are mostly drawn from the records of a number of separate customs farms during the century, with presumably different accounting procedures, and not from central government sources. Secondly the changing official valuation of goods — notably in 1632 — and the introduction of additional duties before 1664, make straightforward comparisons meaningless. Neither of these factors have been allowed for, but it would seem that the 1632 revaluation raised revenue at a stroke by at least half, while the impact of new excise duties in the 1660s was at least as great. Thirdly, inefficient administration and fraud were clearly a constant influence towards under-registration. In a survey c.1623 'of what might be made more of customs... if such good orders and rules were observed with the officers, merchants and owners of barks as hereafter shall be set down', it was estimated that nearly a third more could be raised from the Cork ports, and this did not allow for fraud, (B.L. Sloane MS 3,827 ff. 198-9). However it was changes in the degree of under-registration that have more serious implications for the internal consistency of the data. For instance the spectacular national rise of the customs revenue in the 1630s was in part a result of the improved quality of customs collection and the associated decline in smuggling. Lastly, municipal exemptions or claims to privilege in the levying of customs interfered with the farmers' incomes in the earlier years. This may have particularly affected the figures for Cork city in the 1620s.

TABLE 1: iii

Import duties, expressed as a percentage of total customs revenue

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1615/22</th>
<th>1632-33</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Youghal</td>
<td>32.2%</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cork</td>
<td>31.3%</td>
<td>45.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kinsale</td>
<td>27.2%</td>
<td>25.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'Western parts'</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baltimore</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: N.L.I. MS 8013/10; B.L. Harl. MS 2,048, ff 231-7.

Cork city thus remained a centre of distribution, and although it was apparently overtaken in certain years by Youghal in terms of the total volume of trade, notably in the late 1630s, it remained in undisputed control of the most valuable single import, wine: in 1614/15 Cork imported fourteen times as much wine as Youghal, in 1639/40 twice as much. Youghal's imports, significant though they were in some years, were quite eclipsed by the passage of exports through the port, which was very much the 'conduit pipe' for south Munster goods destined for the English market.

86. 'Account of ... wines brought into Ireland', Ladyday 1634 to Ladyday 1640, Northumberland MSS (Syon House, Alnwick, Y. ii.26 [N.L.I. Mic. p. 3,6827]).
Its pattern of foreign trade stood in contrast to the more diversified continental associations of Cork. The continual threat of Algerine attacks along the south coast underlined the advantages of a shorter sea passage to the Bristol Channel ports, but it was the traffic in live cattle that above all determined Youghal's importance in this period: placed at the mouth of the Blackwater there were no estuarine tides to delay the speedy movement of perishable stock.

Cattle and wool were the staple exports in the first half of the century between south Munster and the West Country, and both were channelled through Youghal and were apparently controlled by the same local merchants, using the same type of small vessels for both commodities.

TABLE 1

Livestock and wool exports, 1616-1640

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1616-17</th>
<th>1626</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cattle/sheep</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youghal</td>
<td>1,998/a.g.</td>
<td>8,240/3,841</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cork</td>
<td>75/a.g.</td>
<td>90/70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kinsale</td>
<td>372/a.g.</td>
<td>280/-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'Western parts'/Baltimore</td>
<td>/a.g.</td>
<td>/-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Regional Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,445/</strong></td>
<td><strong>8,640/3,911</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1616-17</th>
<th>1626*</th>
<th>1632/35+</th>
<th>1635/38+</th>
<th>1638/40+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wool (great stone)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youghal</td>
<td>2,189</td>
<td>15,716</td>
<td>31,193</td>
<td>41,080</td>
<td>49,826½</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cork</td>
<td>1,191</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>8,944</td>
<td>15,566</td>
<td>12,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kinsale</td>
<td>2,040</td>
<td>1,969</td>
<td>3,203</td>
<td>4,458</td>
<td>3,294</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'Western parts'/Baltimore</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Regional Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>5,420</strong></td>
<td><strong>17,925</strong></td>
<td><strong>43,389</strong></td>
<td><strong>61,117</strong></td>
<td><strong>65,993½</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Great stone? + Average per annum, Ladyday to Ladyday.


Wool exports in this period were of course highly regulated. The re-
introduction of a staple port system c.1617 in which initially Youghal alone in Munster got a charter explains its dominance in this commodity; Kinsale secured similar privileges after 1620 but was hardly a real challenge. 89

It was claimed retrospectively that the choice of staple towns was 'not only ... to relieve these remote poor places, but to divert the trade from rich cities, and from the handling of such people as having great means, might not only engross the commodity ... but take advantage also secretly to convey ... [it] into foreign parts ...', 90 but the influence of the Earl of Cork was presumably a telling factor in favouring Youghal; he was certainly involved in interesting London merchants in the scheme. 91 The staple system seems to have been obsolescent by the early 1630s when licences were being sold by government to merchants to export from non-staple towns. 92 Nevertheless Youghal maintained its dominance in Munster wool exports, built up during the years of near-monopoly. However contemporaries claimed that the staple port policy had encouraged smuggling from the less favoured areas to the continent. 93 Certainly the remarkable growth of wool exports in the 1630s can hardly be accepted at face value. Buoyant conditions in the English cloth industry before 1615 had stimulated the widespread introduction of English sheep to the region, giving wool 'excellent good and fit for combing'. 94 With depressed conditions in the English industry in the following


90. Caulfield, Youghal, p.243.

91. Ibid., pp.44,243.

92. O'Brien, op.cit., 52.

93. Cf. 'Certain reasons against the new staple and staplers' c.1619, Rich MSS.

decade and a half, other illegal markets would have offered more attractive opportunities. In the 1630s improved customs administration, combined with higher English wool prices, may have reversed the trend.

The less impressive export performance of Cork city was not solely a consequence of its ill-location for English-orientated commerce. Its corporate image was explicitly old English, and there is some evidence that tension existed between the merchant community and representatives of the new order, such as the customs farmers, English merchants trading into the interior and the new English immigrants. Concern for the preservation of its municipal privileges was predictable enough, but having Youghal as a nearby competitor with a corporation more accessible to English influence, the city was vulnerable and seems to have suffered.

In 1626 the only significant exports in which Cork exceeded Youghal were hides and skins, butter, wheat and frieze, and with the exception of hides these were all of modest proportions. French trade there was probably as important as English, with hides and tallow being traded for wine; in 1614/15 Cork imported the largest quantity of wine in Ireland. This trade however was not conducted in local ships; in 1614/15 they were mainly English, in 1639/40 they were English, Continental and Irish, with none registered in Cork. Yet in spite of this passivity in foreign trade, the city as the largest urban centre in the region with a population of probably more than six thousand at the time of the fire in 1622, seems to have been the hub of internal trade, particularly in grain.

95. Cf. 'A note of the exactions taken by the mayor of Cork...', c.1620, Rich MSS; R. Cox, 'Rengum Corcagiense' (loc.cit.).
96. Kearney, Strafford, p.131. In 1640/1, the great majority of hides leaving Cork city was going to foreign parts, mainly from Youghal to England (P.R.O. S.P. 63/259/221).
97. Kearney, 'The Irish wine trade', 422-5; 'Account of ... wines', 1639/40 (loc. cit.).
The exceptionally high customs returns for Kinsale and the 'western ports' up to 1641 were overwhelmingly the result of one trade, the pilchard fishery. The fishing grounds off the south-west had some claim to have been the old 'fishery of Europe' before the discovery of Newfoundland, but probably at no time before or after the early seventeenth century was their impact on the local economy as great.

_Sardina pilchardus_ is a small herring-like fish which moves in dense shoals; its appearance in the south-west over the centuries has fluctuated greatly, but the first half of the seventeenth century was clearly a natural peak.

**TABLE 1 : v**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pilchard exports (tuns)</th>
<th>1616-17</th>
<th>1623</th>
<th>1626</th>
<th>1640-41</th>
<th>1665</th>
<th>1669</th>
<th>1672</th>
<th>1683/86x</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yougghal</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>77</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cork</td>
<td>7½</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7½/16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kinsale</td>
<td>161½</td>
<td>792</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'Western parts'†</td>
<td>88½</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>89½</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Regional</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,018½</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>3,016½</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>979/16</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>National above</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>sometimes</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,023½</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>2,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>3,459½</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,263</strong></td>
<td><strong>332</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

x average p.a.; + This includes Crookhaven, Baltimore, Bantry and Berehaven.


N.B. Prices before 1641 seem to have been around £5 per tun and somewhat higher in the 1670s and 1680s, perhaps £8-12.


101. Went, 'Irish pilchard fishery', passim.
Intensive inshore netting by the 'seine' method had been developed in Cornwall before 1600 and the introduction of this practice, probably in the 1610s, by new English settlers along the coast from Kinsale to Kenmare, together with the establishment of shore-based processing facilities ('pilchert palaces') for salting, pressing and barrelling, explains the rising volume of exports, worth up to £20,000 p.a. by 1632. Exports from this coast probably exceeded those of Cornwall by 1620; they had the advantage in the dominant markets, Spain and Italy, of an earlier season and cheaper processing costs. Exposure to Algerine attack was the only relative drawback of the fishery, but the sack of Baltimore in 1631 had little observable effect on shipments.

The chief developers of the fishery, Edward Davenant, the Earl of Cork, Sir William Hull, 'the Merchant Adventurers for pilchard fishing' and Sir Thomas Roper, invested heavily in the trade and in setting up English plantations at the fishing bases; Hull's Leman fish-house complex


105. 'Reasons humbly offered to the consideration of Parliament for taking off the prohibition and giving leave to the importation of Irish cattle' in 'Reports on manuscripts in the Bodleian Library, Oxford' in Analecta Hibernica, i (1930), 60.

106. In terms of customs revenue, the relative importance of Baltimore, Crookhaven and Bantry was constantly changing both before and after 1631. But taken together they experienced further commercial growth in the 1630s. For a discussion of the raid on Baltimore, cf. H. Barnby, 'The sack of Baltimore' in J.C.H.A.S., lxxiv (1969), 101-29.
cost over £1,400. However the returns were highly inviting. Hull's fishing profits had sometimes approached £2,000 p.a.,\(^{107}\) while Davenant returned to England after twenty years at Bantry having reputedly made £10,000.\(^{108}\) But neither the 'fisher-owners' nor the local merchants attempted to export much of the product on their own account. In 1632 most was taken off by the French and Dutch ships, often paying in coin, but west of England shipping was also active.\(^{109}\) Salt would seem to have been brought directly from the continent.

After 1660, higher prices offset to some extent lower catches and the fishery remained important. Many fishing palaces and English settlements had been destroyed in the 1640s, and new fisher-owners reconstructed the industry at various points. By 1672 Robert Southwell had invested about £3,000 in buildings, boats and nets at Kinsale,\(^{110}\) while in Kerry there was considerable development from the late 1660s.\(^{111}\) In 1672 Petty knew of 'about 20 gentlemen, who ... have among them all about 160 seines' in the country as a whole, most no doubt in the south-west.\(^{112}\) Continental participation was less: by the 1680s, pilchards were being shipped from western havens almost exclusively on the account of London merchants, dealing through Cork factors.\(^{113}\)

\(^{107}\) Went, 'Irish pilchard fishery', 82-9; Went 'Hull's losses', 59.


\(^{110}\) Copy, Robert Southwell to 'Mr. Reve'. Rotterdam, 14 June 1672, Kinsale manorial papers iv (U.C.C. Strong Room).


\(^{113}\) Letter-book of William Novell, Cork 1683-9, passim, Farmer MSS (Draper's Hall, London (N.L.I. Mic p 4,652)).
The pilchard fishery was of minor importance after 1690 but its effects were long-lasting. It had encouraged the local growth of a pastoral export trade in butter and hides and led to the increased circulation of money in districts far from the main ports. It created extensive employment and together with domestic fishing activity, explained the density of coastal settlement in the county. As important economically was its effect of extending the frontier of English colonization. Indeed the capital accumulated by the gentlemen-undertakers in the fishery was ploughed back into the extension of the plantation in other forms, such as land purchase and urban development; it probably helped to launch several county fortunes.

However, the industry, as Petty ruefully noted, was 'a mere lottery' and he for one appears to have been a net loser by his investment.

The 'vertical' management of the pilchard trade by new English gentry was paralleled in two other industries which in the development of the Cork region were particularly associated with the seventeenth century: timber processing and iron manufacture. Both dated from the first Munster plantation and were closely related. The hardwoods of the Blackwater, Lee and Bandon river valleys were alluring at a time of declining English timber stocks for barrel staves, for ship building and for charcoal. In spite of government intervention, licensing and at times the total prohibition of


115. In varying degrees, pilchard profits seem to have advanced the Hutchins, Southwell, Bernard and Wade families.

116. Lansdowne, Clanerought, p. 34.
stave exports, Youghal in the first decade of the century and Cork in
the 1630s exported significant quantities. Major undertakers such as Sir John Jephson and the Earl of Cork were involved on their own account, and between 1616 and 1628 the latter recorded transactions involving some four million staves.

Timber exports appear to have fallen in the 1620s but in this decade the new iron industry reached its apogee, with high international prices. The Earl of Cork and two London merchant partnerships were the main parties involved in the development of the industry in the first decades of the century, at first constructing forges using English sow iron and Munster charcoal. The mining by one of the London partnerships, as lessees of the Earl of Cork, of iron ore at two sites in Araglin from about 1615 facilitated the development of complete ironworks near Tallow and Cappoquin, and in Muskerry. Investment appears to have been large and by the mid-1620s annual production at the Blackwater furnaces - all probably by then in the control of the Earl of Cork - approached 600 tons.

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117. 'Brife abstract of exports, 1615/7', Sackville MSS; Return of stave exports, 1634-40 (P.R.O. S.P. 63/259/222).


119. Ireland, total of exports, 1626 (P.R.O. C.O. 388/85/A15).


121. Charles Smith's claim that the Earl of Cork in seven years manufactured 21,000 tons of bar iron is clearly an exaggeration (Smith, Cork, i, p.160n.). Strafford in the 1630s observed that Cork had never made above 600 tons p.a. and the export of iron from Youghal in 1626 amounted to 410 tons (Kearney, 'Richard Boyle, ironmaster', 159; Ireland, total of exports, 1626).
Falling iron prices and rising timber costs in the 1630s led to a drop in profits for the Earl; his ironworks which had been let for £4,000 p.a. in 1622, produced sixteen years later only £650. 122

Although iron production continued throughout the century in the Tallow district, 123 mining was largely abandoned in the region, and English saw was imported. 124 The centre of timber processing and iron production moved west: the most spectacular concerns in the later part of the century were those of Petty and Francis Brewster in Kerry. 125 While the establishment of a forge in the 1650s could have been accomplished for £600, 126 Petty's colonies at Glanerough and Kenmare - which included mines, furnaces and forges - represented an investment of some £10,000. 127 West Cork supplied domestic timber to other parts of the county 128 and most of the timber exports in the region were from Baltimore and Dingle ports. 129 The expanding demands of the

124. Copy, William Hovell, Cork to George Loop, Bristol, 6 June 1684, Hovell letter-book. In Kerry however Petty's ironworks were using local ores in the 1670s (Lansdowne, Glanerought, pp.17-8).
125. Lansdowne, op.cit., pp.16-24, William Brewster, Dublin to Sir William Trumbull, 24 Nov. 1696 in Downshire MSS i (H.M.C., 1924), 710.
127. McCracken, op.cit., p.93.
coopers and the tanners together with depleted timber stocks ended exports from elsewhere and 'a great and continual consumption of deals and woods' imported from Scandinavia had developed by the 1680s. Thus a natural resource had been easily squandered in the course of a century. However both iron and timber processing had been large employers of labour, and native labourers, working either for cash or in lieu of rent, had to some extent been involved.

The pattern of direct exploitation by new landowners was of course found in agricultural activity itself. Before 1641 little changed on lands where there were few English immigrants; here it would seem that arable was let by the third or fourth sheaf - a corn rent in kind - and grazing by the gneeve or its subdivision, the collop, with payment sometimes in kind, more normally at a money rent. The modest trade in grain under this system would have been handled by landowners and leasors: thus Sir John Fitzgerald was engaged in arranging corn shipments to Bristol in 1626. Judging by the large losses of corn on the ground and in the haggard claimed by English tenants after 1641, they perhaps also let out land on a sharecropping basis to Irish sub-tenants.


133. Cork depositions, 1641, passim.
But agricultural profits lay in cattle and wool: everywhere the English settled, the Munster clergy claimed in 1615, there was little tillage and falling tithe, for all were engaged in grazing cattle. Conversely, threats to the wool trade as in 1619 were presented as discouraging English undertakers in Munster from sheep-farming and causing them to revert to letting out lands to Irish tillage tenants. Although open sheep-walks existed in the Cork region, sheep-farming on English lines implied enclosure which, with building in the English style, was treated as an index of the success of a plantation. Enclosure of land for sheep pasture involved ditching and quick-setting. Before 1641 Sir William Hull had spent £180 at Lemenon in breaking of rocks... and stoning the land five times all over to make it arable land, and so divided it into many fields, of 8, 10, 15 and 20 acres in a field... also in draining bogs and making gutters underground whereby the bogs became good meadow land and for ditching and hedging the same land...'. Such enterprise in an unfavourable situation was probably exceptional, but the costs of building, enclosing and stocking a farm with cattle and English sheep demanded men of capital; it led to considerable direct participation by landowners. Thus Philip Perceval had over 5,200 sheep and lambs dispersed among his tenants' flocks and nearly 200 cows and calves set out c.1634, and was apparently shipping cattle on his own account to England about this time.


135. 'Certain reasons against the new staple', Rich MSS.


137. Went, 'Hull's lessess', 62.

The role of the landowners and major adventurers in economic development before 1642 was complementary to the proliferation of gentleman tenants and other large tenant-farmers - both new English and native - most of whom generally combined grazing, sheep-farming and subletting. It is doubtful whether this had altered much by 1660 despite the intervening events, which certainly changed the topography of rural Protestant settlement and extended it. The impact of early seventeenth-century growth remained, as a Kerry steward recognised in 1658 when welcoming the prospect of some tenants from co. Cork, for he 'would rather deal with them than with many here, for most are either English or accustomed to the ways of the English plantation. They will be free to build and quick-set'.

Over the next quarter-century there was a continuous process of dispersal from the earlier centres of colonial employment, strengthened at times with fresh immigration from England. Sir Philip Perceval described its rural impact in 1679: 'I have divided Sir Nicholas Purdon's farm... into seven or eight parcels, and am letting it to several men that will build a good house on each parcel ... people are mad for land, and will give any rent for it than be without it. Some think the reason of this may be the great number of English which have come into Ireland within these ten or fourteen years.'

The division of ploughland denomenations to form more appropriate leasable units for a farming chief tenantry took place on several estates in the 1670s and 1680s, but this reflected more than migration and immigration. The changes in the pattern of external trade, following the Cattle Acts (1663-66) were profound. In the early 1660s the live cattle trade had been larger than ever, and the

139. Thomas Herbert, Castleisland to (Lord Herbert, 29 June 1658 in Smith, Herbert correspondence, p.152.

140. Sir Philip Perceval, (Churchtown) to Sir Robert Southwell, 1 Aug. 1679 in Egmont MSS ii (H.M.C., 1909), p.84.
national importance of Youghal in the trade no way diminished. Short-term depression was therefore intense, but can have been scarcely greater than the dislocation following the subsequent cattle mortalities of 1670-71, 1672-73 and 1674; Lord Broghill was hardly exaggerating when he wrote from Charleville in April 1673 of the severity of the previous winter that 'hath swept away '1000ds' of black cattle in our parts; if the prohibition of transporting them was taken off, it would be some years before here would be any to be transported'.

The adoption of alternate markets for substitute pastoral products was not automatic - at first there was some expansion of corn production but by the 1680s butter exports for Continental markets had become the country's most important single export.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 1 : vi</th>
<th>Butter exports 1640-41 - 1683/86 (cwt.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1640-41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youghal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cork</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kinsale</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baltimore/Dingle</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Total</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Total</td>
<td>34,807</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

x average per annum.

Sources: R. Dunlop, 'A note of the Irish export trade ...'. Imports and exports of Ireland, 1683-6 (B.M. Add. MS 4,759).
Thus butter exports in the twenty years after 1665 increased nationally five-fold, with the Cork ports sharing more than a third of the trade by the 1680s. This remarkable growth in output was achieved in the context of a speculative international market, with sharp fluctuations rather than any secular rise the chief feature of price movements. Cork prices in the 1680s were however higher than those of Belfast, the other centre of butter exports at this time.

In national terms butter and wool became the leading export commodities after the loss of the English market for cattle, but in the Cork ports wool fell away in importance so that by 1683/6 the average volume of exports leaving the county was little more than half that of 1638/40. Munster exports as a whole had risen greatly, but by 1683 Waterford quite eclipsed the ports further west. Cloth manufacture and woollen yarn exports from Cork were hardly sufficient in the 1680s to explain this switch. It was more likely caused by changes in the hinterland: a sharp increase in wool production in Tipperary and Kilkenny, and a relative concentration on dairying at the expense of sheep in co. Cork. However in the two summers during which the Cattle Acts lapsed in 1679 and 1680, the livestock exports from co. Cork were mainly sheep - over 41,000 against 5,800 cattle - and these sheep exports represented about a third of the national total. The decline of sheep-farming in the area should therefore not be exaggerated.

Youghal, having lost its earlier role as a centre for cattle and wool exports, became the largest exporter of butter in the province by the 1680s, but this trade represented a break from its earlier intimate relationship

147. John Jervis, Castleisland to Humphrey Owen, 4 June 1688 in Smith, Herbert correspondence, p.337. For a comment on the thinness of Tipperary's population and its value as a sheepwalk, see Richard Cox's remarks on Petty's Political Anatomy (B.L. Add. MS 21,127, f.54).
with the west of England, for the main markets for butter lay at this time in northern France and Flanders. At a time when Cork city was engrossing other trade in the region it is difficult to explain Youghal's albeit brief dominance in the continental butter trade. It was only marginally nearer the markets, and dairying does not seem to have been particularly widespread in the immediate hinterland. It does seem to have had a fairly dynamic merchant community; in 1678-9 there were thirty-three small ships locally owned, and twenty-one of these - 73% of the tonnage - were held by five merchants. One family of London origin, the Lawndys (who owned eight ships) were particularly large traders, and were also heavily involved in urban and quay development.

It is not clear how this rise in butter production in the county was accomplished: the new export was often designated 'English' butter (apparently in contrast to butter produced traditionally which was unsuitable for salting and barrelling and therefore not for export), but its manufacture was not restricted to English tenants on Cork estates. However large dairies


150. Caulfield, Youghal, pp. lvi-lvii.

151. Ibid. pp. lvi-lvii; lease, Youghal corporation to Edward 'Laundy', 28 May 1674, Hodnett MSS (Cork Archives Council); abstracts of Roch letters, 2 June 1675; E. P. Shirley, ed., 'Extracts from the journal of Thomas Dineley...' in Journal of the Kilkenny and South-East of Ireland Archaeological Society, 3rd ser., iii (1870), 320-1.

152. For example, see comment on Manus O'Kiffe, tenant of Knocknageehy, in survey of the Perceval estates in 1677 (loc.cit.) For an early reference to Munster butter of 'English making', cf. 'Prices of some victuals in some Munster markets last October' c. 1628 in Cal.S.P.Ire. 1647-60 etc., p.127.
owned by head tenants, often of new English origin, seem to have been common. Merchants in the ports often made seasonal contracts with large dairy-owners in spring to deliver their summer output at a given price, yet how far the dairy system of the eighteenth century— the letting out of milk cows for a butter rent—had developed is uncertain. It seems likely that the tendency towards the concentration of production in the hands of larger, capitalized tenants was in part a result of the exceptional recurrence of cattle mortality in the 1670s and 1680s at the time of the expansion. But the rise of dairying however does seem to have been associated with the reduced acreage of denominations that land owners were prepared to lease, and the growing density of a rural new English head-tenantry.

Dairying was only one aspect of restoration change: cattle fattening including the innovation for Ireland of stall-feeding, expanded on some of the richer lowlands of the county in spite of poor prices. In 1682 Robert Southwell, whose family had managed victualling contracts at Kinsale, wrote that 'all county Cork is so filled with English, that cattle since the prohibition are stall-fed in great plenty, and little inferior to the best beef in England'. Before 1641 beef exports from south Munster had been a small fraction of a modest export, but by 1683/86 Cork ports held more than 40% of total Irish exports:

153. Cf. copies, Hovell, to Sir John Houblon, 20 Jan. 1684/5; to Sir John Newton & co., 29 May 1685; to Thomas Putland, 4 May 1686, Hovell letterbook. For an example of a butter contract, see agreement between Dominick Sarsfield and James Gallwey, 11 June 1689, Caulfield MSS (T.C.D. MS 2,011/31).

TABLE 1: vii
Beef exports 1640-41 - 1683/86 (barrels)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1640-41</th>
<th>1665</th>
<th>1669</th>
<th>1683/86^x</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Youghal</td>
<td>5,671</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cork</td>
<td>21,830</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kinsale</td>
<td>3,339</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baltimore/Dingle</td>
<td>322</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Total</td>
<td>31,162</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Total</td>
<td>15,215</td>
<td>29,264</td>
<td>51,793</td>
<td>74,187\frac{1}{2}</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

^x average per annum.

Sources: as in Table vi.

Cattle slaughtered in the Dublin region were still superior to Cork stock in 1686 but the increasingly Atlantic complexion of international demand for provisions was favouring production for the Cork market.

Cork city's growth in the late seventeenth century, both physically and commercially, was not specifically a result of the significant growth in the provision trade and of the employment it produced, but more generally from the enhanced role the city played after the Cromwellian period as the economic and social focus of the region which - for the new English at least - it had failed to be before 1641, due to both political and economic factors. The inner town had become a new English enclave and most of the merchants from the 1650s were recent arrivals. In supporting an attempt to secure a new charter for city, the Earl of Orrery wrote in 1675 that he knew of

155. Copy, (Hovell) to (Sir John Houblon), 7 Dec. 1686, Hovell letterbook.


157. There are almost no surnames common to the freemen enrolled after 1656 and those appearing in the council books prior to 1644: Register of freemen of Cork city, 1656-1741 (Cork Archives Council); Caulfield, Cork, passim.
no corporation in Ireland, more loyal, more Protestant, more thriving, and more improving that the Corporation of Cork are. There is but one Papist merchant within their walls. I believe they have laid out in public and private buildings above sixty thousand...'.\textsuperscript{158} In place of earlier passivity, foreign trade was more actively initiated: Orrery had observed in 1667 that 'in Cork there are 17 good new ships built by the merchants ... since the Restoration, which is more than all Ireland has done'.\textsuperscript{159} To some extent this resulted from the new opportunities that existed from the 1650s in Atlantic trading, but undoubtedly the immigration of traders of modest capital who made up the new corporation helped, and these were the men who owned the shipping.\textsuperscript{160}

By 1664, even before the Cattle Acts passed, Cork had developed a larger export trade than Youghal, but its superiority lay primarily in the import trade.\textsuperscript{161} However the undoubted potential of a re-export trade in colonial produce was obstructed by the 1663 and 1671 Navigation Acts, and permanently blocked by their confirmation in 1685. The 1663 Act, which only indirectly discouraged the importation of colonial produce, affected Cork trade unfavourably and the 1671 act seems to have totally prevented the direct importation of 'enumerated' goods, in particular tobacco and sugar. The Earl of Orrery had lobbied in 1666 for the repeal of the Navigation Acts as they affected Munster on the grounds that 'our free trade to the plantations... was the chief support of this province', claiming...

\textsuperscript{158} Earl of Orrery, Castlemartyr to the Earl of Essex, 11 Jan. 1674/5, Essex MSS (B.L. Stowe MS 207 [N.L.I. Mic p 1480], f.34).


\textsuperscript{160} Orrery, 'Ballemartir' to Essex, 4 June 1672 in O. Airy, ed. Essex papers 1672-9 (Camden Society, 1890), p.7.

\textsuperscript{161} Returns of customs and excise, 1664 (Cal.S.P.Ire. 1663-5, pp. 460-1); returns of customs and excise, 1668 (Cal.S.P. Ire. 1666-9, pp. 672-3).
their enforcement would cause greater dislocation than the Cattle Acts;
subsequently he secured royal incorporation of a Munster merchant adventurers
company, having argued that the province was particularly hit by the
Navigation and Cattle Acts. 162 When the Navigation Acts affecting direct
importation lapsed in 1680 Cork merchants took swift advantage of their
situation: in 1683 almost a third of national tobacco imports from the
plantations and over 40% of sugar imports came to Cork. In 1685 sugar at
Cork was 'excessive low (in price), we refine great quantities, and hence
supply all this province, and even Dublin with great part'. 163 A sugar
house had been opened c. 1681 with an initial capital of £4,000 by four
merchants. 164 The renewal of the 1671 act caused understandable frustration. 165

In spite of these difficulties, foreign trade on local account was
surprisingly prominent in the 1670s and 1680s, and even during the years
when colonial imports had to be routed via an English port prior to 1680,
ventures to the west Indies continued. 166 In a comment on import excise

162. Orrery to [Clarendon], 22 March 1666/7 (loc.cit.); Orrery, Charleville
to the Duke of Ormonde, 19 March 1666/7 and 2 Apr. 1667 in Orrery state
letters, pp. 145, 154-5; King Charles to the Earl of Orrery, 24
June 1670, Southwell MSS (P.R.O. I., M2,459, pp. 131-3); King to the


164. Copy, [Hovell] to [Thomas Putland], 14 Sept. 1686, Hovell letterbook;
for the identity of the partners, see copy, Hovell, John Newenham,
Francis and George Rogers to [Sir John Houblon], 8 Apr. 1684,
Hovell letterbook.

165. 'Twill ruin the Irish trade if our ships must actually go thither
[to England] and discharge ere they come hither ... ': copy, [Hovell]
to [Thomas Putland], 7 Aug. 1785, Hovell letterbook.

166. Cf. memorandum on the petition of Mathew Dean, 17 Dec. 1672 in
practices in 1683 it was noted that 'the merchants generally throughout the kingdom drive a peddling trade upon credit, having not stocks of their own ... except in Cork ... where they are substantial rich men'.

Although the trade of Kinsale trailed that of Cork and Youghal in the Restoration period, imports there were consistently more valuable than exports. In part this was the result of merchants from other towns making purchases from 'ships of great burthen from foreign parts', which were using the deep-water facilities of the harbour, but in the 1660s and 1670s there was substantial local enterprise, probably generated by victualling profits in the mid-sixties. Twenty ships of under 100 tons were based at the port, as well as several larger ships for extended Atlantic trading.

Before 1641 Kinsale had been the foremost importer of tobacco in the country but after the passing of the Navigation Acts the possibilities of competing with an entrepôt such as Falmouth were denied. There were attempts to make the town a free port throughout the 1670s but these failed due to opposition from the customs farmers. A complaint familiar at a later


169. 'A brief account of the several ports of Ireland ... by T. Whiting', 1674 (Kodleian MS Rawl. B. 510); Thomas Burrowes, Kinsale to [?], 14 June 1670 (P.R.O. S.P. 63/328/20); Burrowes, Kinsale to James Hickes, 11 Oct. 1678 in Cal.S.P.Dom. 1678, pp. 457-8.

170. P.R.O. S.P.46/91, ff.280-1; Caulfield, Kinsale, p.xxxix.

171. The proposal for creating Kinsale a free port had been accepted in principle at the time of the farming of the customs (Lord Mountmorres, The history of the principal transactions of the Irish parliament from 1634 to 1666 ..., ii (London, 1792), p.282) but the customs farmers were actively opposed to implementing the project in 1675 and apparently remained so after further endorsement of it by the Irish Council of Trade in 1678, cf. Robert Southwell sen. to Sir Hart Capell, Aug. 1675, Kinsale manorial papers iv (U.C.C. Strong Room); Robert Southwell sen., Kinsale to Sir Robert Southwell, 1 Oct. 1675, and copy, Irish Council of Trade to the Lord Lieutenant and the Privy Council, 19 Oct. 1678, Kinsale manorial papers, v.
stage, that Cork was taking away the town's trade, was made as early as 1670, but in spite of fitful prosperity which wartime victualling gave, the physical restrictions of the town's site together with the problems of a silting harbour mouth undermined efforts to encourage trade; in 1685 William Movell, a Cork merchant who had originally lived in Kinsale remarked that in the latter 'a 1,000 makes more noise and is presently better known than £10,000 here'.

Cork's commercial growth and its internal wealth were interdependent; it had the most appropriate facilities for the larger, more diverse transatlantic ventures and it took advantage of them. The actual growth in the volume of trade hastened centralisation, and Cork was as close as Youghal to the rich lands in Imokilly, and better placed to receive goods from the widening hinterland to the north. Movell explained to a London correspondent in 1683 how Cork's advantages led to higher prices: 'the reason that hides are cheaper in other places than here is the ill-site of those places, where navigation is more tedious, difficult or dangerous, than hence which occasions that the wool, hides and butter of the county of Limerick is mostly exported hence ... And the goods imported for consumption there are often landed here, as tobacco, wine, sugar ...' 174.

By the Restoration, the social links between the larger merchants of Youghal, Cork and Kinsale - both the Protestant majority, the relatively few Catholic merchants now active in foreign trade and the growing number of Quakers - and the landowning gentry of the interior were close. They were

173. Copy, [Movell] to Thomas Putland, 17 Nov. 1685, Movell letterbook. For the physical deterioration of the harbour, see report by Lord Dartmouth and Thomas Philips on the fortifications of Ireland, 24 March 1685/6 in Ormonde MSS, 1st ser. ii (H.M.C., 1899), p.315.
strengthened subsequently in several ways: the purchase of land and mortgages by men in trade was a common feature throughout the century, sometimes as an investment, sometimes as in the case of Sir Mathew Deane in 1685, a means of assuming the social prestige of a landlord: Hovell scornfully observed how Deane had 'quite rejected the bay making and not only that but all mercature, and now lords it over the unhappy rustics, among whom for his clampering, law suits and cruelty he is greatly infamous'. 175 However even the taking up of determinable leases as an investment became a practice in the Restoration period, for Cork merchants took farms to graze and sublet as far away as Castleisland, and were encouraged to do so: they were expected to become prominent dealers at the local fair. 176

Secondly, the growth of rent remittances to several major absentees in England kept estate stewards in constant contact with those merchants who had funds to their credit in London. On occasions merchants were actually receiving advances for up to several months from stewards in order to get favourable terms of exchange at the cheap season for bills. 177 This remittance flow aided the development of an independent bill trade between Cork and London and facilitated the settling of accounts between London principals and Cork commission merchants. As an extension of this, Cork merchants themselves were ready to act as agents - or rather 'receivers' - for absentee landowners.

At a more general level, the practice of private bargaining between export merchants and farmers or inland dealers in corn, butter, fatstock and pilchards was extended. There is no local evidence that merchants were

175. Copy, Hovell to Houblon, 26 May 1685.
actually giving advances to farmers at the beginning of the summer, as Belfast merchants in the butter trade were already doing, but goods bought from the country were paid for in ready money. Trucking imported goods for country products was considered unprofitable, for 'the way to make advantage is to parcel out foreign goods on trust', and take full payment over time. The importance of private bargaining between merchant and farmer indicated the relatively large unit-size of rural production and the still modest scale of foreign trade; it did not imply any erosion of the structure of fairs in the region. There were twenty-two principle fairs per annum over the county in the 1680s at sixteen locations. Many of these were for transmitting lean stock and heifers from outside the county to the graziers and the dairy-owners, and most of the sales for export were either made by direct agreement or contract between merchant and producer, or at markets in the port towns. Future growth in the provisions trade and the changing type of producer were in fact to cause a massive expansion of fairs in the eighteenth century.


180. Copies, [Hovell] to [Sir John Houblon], 9 Nov. 1683; to P. Caulier, 24 June 1684, Hovell letterbook.

181. Bourk's Almanack for 1684 (Dublin).

LAND OWNERSHIP AND THE LANDED INTEREST

In my reckoning the landlord was at the centre of the social system in 1780. In the previous or land-related social hierarchy, political power and financial security, as was the case in the rest of Ireland and in contemporary Britain, indeed the conventional attitudes towards land ownership in the two island states were strikingly different. Yet in composition and evolution, the structure of ownership in the region was greatly influenced by the events of the seventeenth century, just as the ethos and behaviour of colonialism were considerably modified by the quasicolonial environment. Partition of small-scale estates was en masse by a small elite of landlords that in turn even divided the total amount of households. But the benefits of land ownership, be it the social recognition it conferred, the prospects of participation in county politics it offered, or the security of a return on investment it promised, was self-evident to a far greater proportion of the population. Indeed the practice that had grown up in the seventeenth century of granting three-time rentable tenures created a group who became, socially and economically, an exception of the landed in state.
By any reckoning the landlord was at the centre of the local economy in 1700. On the ownership of land rested social hegemony, political power and financial security, as was the case in the rest of Ireland and in contemporary Britain; indeed the conventional attitudes towards land ownership in the two kingdoms were strikingly uniform. Yet in composition and evolution, the structure of ownership in the region was greatly influenced by the events of the seventeenth century, just as the ethos and behaviour of landowners were considerably modified by the quasi-colonial environment. Possession of fee-simple estate was enjoyed by a small elite of families that in co. Cork can have at no time during the century approached one per cent of the total number of households. But the benefits of land ownership, be it the social recognition it conferred, the prospects of participation in county politics it offered, or the security of a return on investment it guaranteed, were self-evident to a far greater proportion of the population; indeed the practice that had grown up in the seventeenth century of granting three-lives renewable tenures created a group who became, socially and economically, an extension of the landed interest.
The high estimation of landed property was shared by those of the old religion who regarded themselves as gentlemen, or who accumulated capital in trade—in spite of the legal bar for the greater part of the century on their purchasing, inheriting or marrying into landed possessions. Their attitude was conditioned as much by the common attractions of land as by any specific ambitions to offset the effects of seventeenth-century forfeiture.

The identification of those families who collectively constituted the landlords of the Cork region and a study of the distribution of wealth among them pose a number of interpretative problems. In the first place it is not possible to calculate the acreage of the various estate units in aggregate. The location of the more important and enduring estates which formed to a greater or lesser extent contiguous clusters of townlands can be easily established, but a complete picture cannot be reconstructed from existing sources. The late nineteenth-century returns of landed proprietors, showing for Co. Cork over 1,700 owners (in fee or perpetuity) of more than 100 acres,¹ bear little relationship to the eighteenth-century scene. The absence of a land or other property tax made unnecessary any serial record that would facilitate the study of property distribution; quit-rent was of course levied on most land in the country by 1700 but property not included in the major seventeenth-century confiscations was exempt from the rent, which in any case was not based on any common valuation of the land involved.²

There are several further difficulties preventing any precise definition of property distribution in the county. Most of the Civil

² The so-called Crown Rental (P.R.O.I. Q.R.O. MSS) first drawn up in 1706, with its haphazard method of entry and its omissions, would seem to be an unusable document.
Survey for the county has not survived, and the Down Survey is incomplete. Together with the inquisitions and surveys associated with the original Munster Plantation, they were the general authority used in patents, deeds of conveyance, settlements and leases to determine the location and boundaries of townlands - the basic unit of landed property throughout the period - and provided an estimate of their acreage which was on some estates still being used well into the eighteenth century when private surveys began to give a more precise guide to size and valuation.

Acreage returns in the seventeenth-century surveys are themselves problematic. Distinctions between 'profitable' and 'unprofitable' land appear arbitrary and inconsistent: the classification of rough pasture and mountain grazing is unclear. In fact acreage as an index of size or valuation in 1700 was of secondary importance in many districts, where townlands were being let in complete units and their value ascertained by estimates of the cattle they could feed. Outside the original plantation precincts, townland size was usually expressed in ploughlands and gneeves, measures fixed by tradition and based loosely on grazing capacity. In places ploughland and townland units coincided, but in general the two types of denomination bore little relation to one another, with townland size tending to vary to a much greater degree. Even in 1800 acreage was still competing with the old measures in western and upland districts.

In view of this contemporaries rarely sought to categorize proprietors in terms of the acres they owned. Wealth might be measured by ploughlands, by stock or even by tenants but from an early stage the more normal guide was rental income.


4. For a boundary dispute citing the Down Survey, Nicholas Greene to Lawrence Clayton, 2 Aug. 1709, Midleton MSS (P.R.O.N.I. T2862/2/7); for difficulties in identifying townlands because of confusing nomenclature cf. Account of Midleton estate 1 Dec. 1765, Midleton MSS (P.R.O.N.I. T2862/4/2).
If analysis of property distribution on the basis of acres is unrealistic, the problems of measuring landed income and its distribution systematically are even more insuperable. As with ownership there was no current taxation that could have provided indications of income. And evidence of other kinds, fragmentary or serial, is compromised by the vagueness of contemporary notions of income. As Professor Stone has pointed out in another context, the study of landed income based on family papers, common report and legal record has to content itself with gross income (sometimes including assured reversionary interests, e.g. jointures), for it would require exceptional family accounts to determine disposable income, i.e. after deduction of debts and other charges and of maintenance costs of estate and household. And information on gross rental income from a variety of discrete sources has to be treated cautiously, as much of it is incomplete or second-hand. Furthermore income from non-landed sources, the Funds, political office, the professions, industrial investment, banking or commercial involvement—essential information for an understanding of the evolution of the land market—can only be most tentatively estimated, in part because contemporaries were less able to guess the size of income drawn from sources less visible than land.

There are thus profound difficulties in assessing the breakdown of ownership and the direction of changes in ownership. But if one departs from the strictly quantitative, it becomes easier to distinguish certain general characteristics. The tripartite categorization of landowners in

Gregory King's England into peers, gentry and freeholders, could only be applied with considerable distortion to south Munster, for in the first place very few fee simple estates existed corresponding to the English freeholder category: the soldiers' grants in the Cromwellian settlement, from which originated many of the smallest estates of eighteenth-century Ireland, had been a very minor feature of the changes in the region under the Protectorate. And the distinction between peers and gentry of seventeenth-century England was far less important socially in Cork of c. 1700 for several reasons. Of the ten peers then holding land in Co. Cork six were definitely absentee, the Earl of Cork and Burlington, the Earls of Orrery, Lanesborough and Anglesey and Viscount Shannon, and there is some doubt about the residence of the remainder at this time, the Earls of Barrymore and Incliquin, Viscount Doneraile and Barons Courcy and Kingston. Absenteeism was not of course a monopoly of the peerage at this or any later stage, but it did tend to set off the wealthiest from the less wealthy for at least half the century. Residence therefore was a more important consideration than title in determining a landowner's local importance and social functions.

This was demonstrated nowhere more clearly than in local politics. The profusion of parliamentary boroughs in cc. Cork, which had risen to a dozen with the incorporation of Rathcormack in 1682, gave an impetus to county political activity which continued throughout the eighteenth century, but with the exception of the Burlington/Devonshire

6. The Doneraile title was not in fact created until 1703.
7. The Kingston estate was in trust with Sir Robert King until 1708, whose residence was probably in Co. Roscommon: R. D. King-Harman, The Kings, Earls of Kingston (Cambridge, n.d.), p. 19. A definite resident was the Countess Dowager of Castlehaven Brady, Clerical and parochial records, ii, p. 481.
family, absentees remained outside this; even in the case of the Burlington/Devonshire family the style of political management practised by Henry Boyle, first earl of Shannon, of his cousins' political interests over nearly half a century effectively removed any degree of independent influence from them. 'Your Lordship's not living here is all that can prejudice your interest', as Earl Grandison was told after the loss of a case before the co. Waterford Grand Jury in 1727, was a warning given to absentees if they wished to maintain influence beyond the borders of their estates, and particularly if they had county political ambitions. The politically active were the larger resident landowners, men without title apart from the occasional baronetcy; it was only with the proliferation of new titles in the last third of the century that this began to change. These were the families in line for political office at national and particularly at local level, purveyors themselves of limited patronage. However they were rarely independent political forces, for one of the results of the over-representation of the county in parliament was the existence of a cohesive south Munster faction in most eighteenth-century parliaments. This seems to date from the local pre-eminence of the Whig faction leaders, the Brodrick family, when after the Hanoverian succession the moderate Tory group led by the Bernards had dissolved. From the 1720s until the 1780s a regional group was led if not controlled by Henry Boyle and his son, a faction which Boyle built up from the five close boroughs in Cork and west

8. Henry Boyle was also the Earl of Burlington's brother-in-law from 1726. Except where otherwise stated, genealogical information in this chapter is based on J. Lodge, The peerage of Ireland, 2nd ed. (Dublin, 1789) and J. B. Burke, A genealogical and heraldic dictionary of the peerage and baronetage of the British Empire, 11th ed. (London, 1849).

9. Maurice Ronayne, Fetters to Earl Grandison, 7 Apr. 1727, Villiers Stuart MSS C/6 (at Ballynaparka, Co. Waterford).


Waterford that were nominally Burlington's. Representation of co. Cork itself was determined more by coalitions between Boyle and the wealthiest resident families, but the general trend towards the proliferation of political interests and the growing value of local patronage again produced two factions by the 1780s, one supporting the administration of the day and being granted the disposal of patronage, the other posing as the country and patriot party. As a reformist pamphleteer of 1790 noted, this political conflict in the county was not ideological nor 'the emancipation of a spirited yeomanry... but the disputes of petty despots, wrangling for the selection of a Dictator'. The second earl of Shannon's group enjoyed the favours of the administration for most of the 1780s, but fell into eclipse after the Regency crisis, at which time Shannon had sought in return for his support of Government 'the nomination of one bishop, one judge and one commissioner of the Revenue, besides office for himself, inferior office for his dependents and the whole patronage of the county and city of Cork'.

His group was rejected in favour of the Longfield/Kingsborough party who then took over the control of county appointments for most of the 1790s. However political independents survived throughout the period and at no stage was any faction all-pervasive. The M.P.s for Cork city remained partially insulated from the county groupings.

12. For the Burlington interest, cf. List of seats in Parliament under the influence of the Burlington family, c. 1755, Devonshire MSS 387-4 (Chatsworth House). The Burlington/Boyle relationship was described thus in 1727 by the third earl: 'I am very sensible of the disadvantage I should lie under by living on this side of the water, if I had not such a friend as you to take care of my interest, which you know you may look upon as your own', Earl of Burlington to Henry Boyle, 13 July (1727). Shannon MSS (P.R.O.N.I. D2707/A/1/2/18). The family alliance between the Devonsires and the Ponsonbys threatened Speaker Boyle's interest in co. Cork after the Devonsires gained control of the Burlington property in 1753, cf. Earl of Kildare to the Countess of Kildare, 15 May 1755 in B. FitzGerald, Correspondence of Emily, Duchess of Leinster, i (Dublin 1949), p. 19.

13. 'Falkland', Parliamentary representation... (Dublin, 1790), pp. 14-5.

If the distinction between foreign-residing landowners and politically involved families was fairly clearcut, the division between the latter group and other resident landlords was less precise. Most landlords would occasionally brush against local politics at county or borough level; parliamentary blended into corporation politics, notably at Kinsale and Youghal, in which neighbouring small landowners actively participated. Personal inclination, a minority or indebtedness meant that for many families engagement in politics over the century was intermittent. But in one respect the divide between potentially political families and others was very real: politics remained an exclusively Anglican preserve until the 1780s. There were occasional claims of a Catholic interest in certain boroughs but on the whole the surviving Catholic gentry were an insignificant political force; when writing to his Catholic relative, Garrett Nagle, at the time of the 1768 general election, Edmund Burke hoped that 'all my friends will have the good sense to keep themselves from taking part in struggles, in the event of which they have no share and no concern'.

15. For a Catholic dimension to the Southwell interest at Kinsale, see Lampoon against the Blues of Kinsale, Kinsale Manorial papers vi (U.C.C. Strong Room); S. Breathnach, 'The Buffs and the Blues at Kinsale' in J.C.H.A.S., xlvii (1943), 133-42. For Catholic involvement in Rathcormack in 1756 and the use of apparently casual recantation, see letters of Richard Barry, Rathcormack to James Meade, Sarsfield MSS (N.L.I. Acc. 2930).

There were perhaps two or three dozen families directly involved in political management of Co. Cork and the smaller boroughs at any one time; from these would usually be drawn the panel of twenty-three grand jurors at the county assizes, however political the individual choices by the sheriff might be. But there were a great many more who assumed the title of esquire and the right to a family coat of arms which appeared on their silver and their coaches. The record of arms registration is a poor guide to this group for, as one contemporary Cork antiquary suggested 'the reason of families of English origin not registering arms may arise from the idea of their being already recorded in the Herald's office in London', and many gave their ancestry the benefit of the doubt. In effect this meant that use of the title of esquire reflected no more than a certain level of wealth, education and the friendship of powerful men. Smith in his 1750 history of the county listed 200 seats in the area outside the liberties and city of Cork, 7½% of which were occupied by peers and Anglican bishops, 43½% by esquires, and the gentlemen and those of undefined status the remaining 49%. Smith's return of those holding the commission of peace, all of whom can be presumed normally resident, named 128 individuals and all but the five peers and nine clergy were given the rank of esquire. This would tend to suggest that in Cork there were about 100 'county' families at this time. The numbers appointed as J.P.'s since the 1650's had risen gradually and was

18. Smith, Cork, passim.
as much an index of the supply of local men of 'standing', as of the changing demands of law enforcement or of the ambitions of the lesser gentry. An income of £100 was the minimum qualification for the commission, but it seems probable that this was well below the socially acceptable threshold. Earl Grandison, when he complained of the quality of west Waterford J.P.s to the Lord Chancellor in 1734 was very conscious of the subtler implications of the appointment: 'there is so many in this neighbourhood in the Commission that really I dont care to go to the Sessions.... many of whom are persons of very low circumstances as well as 'famillys' [sic] therefore hope your lordship will take it into consideration to remove this growing evil...'.

Beneath the acceptable families lay the less identifiable elements of the landed interest, the 'parochial' gentry, the Anglican clergy and the city rentiers who could claim the title of gentlemen for the simple reason that they drew their income from non-menial activity and had usually received a recognisably formal education. These must have considerably exceeded the

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hundred gentlemen-residents of 'seats' in Smith's no doubt selective list.  

Social status and social functions rested therefore largely on income. A more precise specification of the relationship between the different landed groupings and of the distribution of landed income can only be attempted for the top three or four dozen families, comprising the main absentees and the potentially political families, firstly through a survey of the major movements in the land market.

Edward Wakefield, generalising in 1812 about the recent history of the market in fee simple land throughout the country commented that 'estates are so much entailed that they are not often exposed to sale'. Whatever about entail, the local eighteenth-century land market might seem at a distance to confirm the supposed consequence. The largest landowners of 1800 in south Munster were the descendants of the first earl of Cork, namely the Duke of Devonshire and the Earl of Cork and Orrery, and other first-rank estates such as those of the Earl of Kingston and Earl Grandison were even older in origin, being the inheritance of cadet branches of the Desmond Geraldines. Superficially the seventeenth-century distribution of property remained recognisable in the early nineteenth. Yet an examination of the three most important land transfers in the course of the eighteenth century will highlight certain general trends modifying that distribution.


22. E. Wakefield, An account of Ireland, statistical and political (London 1812), i,p.307.
After the Williamite victories, the quarter of Co. Cork property that had
still been held in 1688 by Catholic and ipso facto Jacobite owners was
presumed forfeit. Most of this rump was the Muskerry estate of the Earl
of Clancarty and there was a particular determination among the local
Protestant interest that it should pass to Protestant control. 'If
Clancarty be restored' warned Richard Cox at the end of 1690, 'the country
is undone for ever and the people swear they'll go to the Indies.'
In the event it took a dozen years from the Treaty of Limerick before the
political wrangling over forfeiture and regrant was resolved and decisions
implemented, but Protestant landed ascendancy was finally assured in the
region; on the basis of J. G. Simms' calculations, it appears that
after 1703 only about fifteen Catholic landowners were left in Cork holding about
8% of the county.

Prior to 1703 various schemes for the future of the Clancarty property
in particular had been mooted, and local initiatives were significant:
when it was rumoured in 1692 that the English Commons Speaker, Sir John
Trevor, would be granted the estate, several Cork merchants led by
Edward Hoare sought to lease it from him or at least to manage it,
while three years later what appears to have been a county consortium
were lobbying to buy it outright for £60,000. Such a figure was a gross

24. Based on information supplied by Dr. J. G. Simms and taken from
sources used in Appendix D of J. G. Simms, The Williamite
Confiscation in Ireland, 1690-1703 (London 1956).
1692, Kinsale Manorial papers vi (U.C.C. Strong Room).
26. Earl of Shrewsbury to /Thomas?/ Brodrick, 3 Dec.1695, in MSS of the
Duke of Buccleuch and Queensberry ii, pt.1, 271 (H.M.C.,1903).
under-valuation, for before the wars the estate had been let at over £8,000; a local estimate of 1699 suggested that in spite of extensive timber destruction it would then set at £10,000 p.a. As for the other Cork forfeitures, which were much smaller - the 1699 estimate for the largest, that of Col. John Barrett, was £1,500 p.a. - they appear to have been initially part of the abortive grant by William III to the Earl of Romney, which was cancelled with other royal alienations by the Act of Resumption in 1700; indeed some of the Clancarty estate may have in this category too. Lands so bestowed had been let out by the grantees on long beneficial leases, an activity which had attracted local interest in the late 1690s, (even if open competition did not operate, as the claim of John Hely of Mallow, who was present at several cants of lands, would suggest: 'lands were often let at not above a quarter of the value, and very seldom at half value', Hely 'with about fourteen or fifteen of this part of the country went up to Dublin to take lands at the cant, but did not dare overbid some gentlemen of this country who have taken very good bargains...'). In some cases land, auctioned off prior to 1700, was subsequently confirmed by private act of parliament, in other cases the vendors were given the opportunity to have their acquisitions confirmed on the payment of further monies to the Forfeited Estates Trustees, set up in 1700, for Hely was not alone in believing that the earlier deals had been cheap bargains.

28. Ibid.; Reports of the Commissioners...respecting the Public Records of Ireland (1821-3;1824-5), pp.348-96; Simms, op.cit.,passim.
It is apparent that whatever portion of the Cork forfeitures were part of the premature grants of the crown, most of them were handled or rehandled in the Trustees' auctions, c. 1702-3. Some £94,000 of co. Cork property was sold in those two years to private buyers but the market (and not just for Cork land) was distinctly sticky; only about a third of the Clancarty estate was bid for. The residue was assigned in June 1703 together with other great blocks of confiscated land over Ireland to a group of London adventurers, dealing through the 'shell' Hollow Sword Blade Company, for a sum total of £208,867(Ir.) which worked out at 83p. per acre(Ir.). The Cork property purchased before the Hollow Sword Blade Company's appearance had been taken in the main by local Cork buyers, 25.5% by Cork city merchants and gentlemen, 34% by gentlemen of the county. Of the residue, 29% was taken up by other Irish buyers, some of whom may have had close Cork associations, and 11.5% by men with English addresses. None of the Cork purchasers bought more than £5,000 each, and the scale of buying by city and county was similar. The promoters of the 1692 scheme were among the twenty city purchasers, while the largest of the twenty-three county buyers were the well-established Sir Richard Mead of Ballymartle (£4,877) and Col. Percy Freke of Rathbarry (£4,802). The depression after 1701 in part explains the lack of further local investment. Although in extent the Cork component of the Hollow Sword Blade Company's purchase was more than half their total national commitment, in purchase money paid

31. Book of Postings and Sales of Forfeited Estates, 1700-3 in R.I.A. At first it seems only a quarter was bought: Simms, op.cit. p.150.
33. Book of Postings and Sales.
34. Simms, op.cit. p.186.
it represented scarcely more than one third, being about £75,000.\textsuperscript{35}

The contract of June 1703 was not the end of the transfer of ownership. How the company intended to develop its enormous properties is unknown, for in 1708 it was driven by the cumulative effect of a succession of challenges to its land titles to sell off, or set on leases of lives renewable for ever, all its Irish land.\textsuperscript{36} It is possible that a policy of perpetuity creation may have been pursued before 1708, but the scale of fining down and beneficial lease setting in 1708-9 seems to have been unprecedented. Precisely who was taking their Cork land is not clear: a London merchant, Francis Edwards, purchased a great deal of Irish property,\textsuperscript{37} but it would seem that in Cork local participation was dominant; Francis Bernard and William Warren for instance greatly extended their foothold in Muskerry.\textsuperscript{38} And in September 1709 it was noted that Cork exchange on London was holding up because 'the Hollow Blades has £30,000 at Cork to be remitted',\textsuperscript{39} no doubt fines and purchase monies drawn from south Munster.

In the turbulent atmosphere of reconstruction in the 1690s and commercial depression in the first decade of the new century, the sale of the forfeited estates was an episode \textit{sui generis}. But several aspects

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{35} Reports of \ldots Public Records (1821-3; 1824-5), pp.360-2.
\item \textsuperscript{36} Simms, op.cit. p.153. For examples of Hollow Sword Blade Company renewable leases, see N.L.I. Report on papers in private keeping no.388: Warren papers.
\item \textsuperscript{37} Simms, op.cit. p.153.
\item \textsuperscript{38} Cf. N.L.I. Report no.388 for Warren purchases; 'Case of Richard Eyre' (P.R.O.I. MI023), and Bennett, Bandon, p.238, for Bernard's Macroom acquisition.
\item \textsuperscript{39} William Taylor, 'Corriglas' to Sir John Perceval, 9 Sept. 1709, Egmont MSS (B.L. Add.MS 46,968; p.227).
\end{itemize}
have much in common with subsequent land transfers. In the first place, the cause of the upheaval lay outside the regional economy; it was the national and political aftermath of civil war. Other major sales were similarly induced by factors exogenous to the economy, the consequence not of external political decisions but rather of absentee landowners' behaviour and attitudes.

Secondly the transfer, however much it was the denouement of seventeenth-century developments, had the characteristics of an eighteenth-century sale. The attraction of English adventurers or immigrants as part of a new plantation was hardly considered, and the disturbance of terre-tenants not envisaged. Richard Hedges, the agent of the Hollow Sword Blade Company and himself a purchaser of Muskerry land was admittedly attempting to settle Protestant families at Macroom, but this was to be a common feature of eighteenth-century urban development. Also Catholics had been barred in 1702 from entering the forfeiture market, and all leases given by both the company and private purchasers of forfeited estates had to specify that no alienation or beneficial releasing to Catholics should occur, in hopes that the old Catholic freeholders would not continue in their former situation; however in practice letting back to the old major leaseholders seems to have been widespread and enduring in many districts. A number of buyers shed their new purchases on long or

40. Richard Hedges, Ross Castle to Joseph Dawson, 20 March 1706/7 (P.R.O.I. M757)
renewable leases fairly quickly so that many were apparently only intending to invest in a secure fixed income rather than to manage a new estate. The security of their investment was occasionally thrown in question, for as the history of the earls of Kenmare was showing, if an estate was in strict settlement only the life interest could reasonably be forfeit. The greatest 'scare' to the Muskerry purchasers came in 1735 when the new pretender to the earldom of Clancarty was lobbying the English parliament for restoration of his inheritance, with the personal backing of the Duchess of Marlborough: an earlier panic had reputedly led one perpetuity tenant of the Hollow Sword Blade. Company, Lord Chief Justice Pyne, to sell his Blarney estate to the Jefferys family.

A third and most significant precedent established by the forfeiture sales was the prominence of local investment. However much the supply of fee-simple land coming on the market was to be externally determined, local demand evolved to more than meet it as the century progressed. The small size of individual investments at this time, with the possible exception of those of Francis Bernard, was a reflection of depleted post-war rentals, the cost of general reconstruction and the limited degree of concentrated capital accumulation. If Bernard's purchases were significantly greater than the formal record implies, they must have been financed by the exceptional profits of government office and the Dublin bar.

43. Lease, Edward Hoare to William Smyth, 8 Dec. 1703, Exham MSS; 'Case of Richard Eyre' (P.R.O.L. M1023); J. C(oleman), 'Dr. Caulfield's records of the Sarsfield family in the co. Cork' in J.C.H.A.S xxi (1915), 91.
44. Edward Southwell, London to Marmaduke Coghill, 9 Dec. 1735, Southwell MSS (N.L.I. MS 875); Egmont diary ii, 7 Dec. 1735 (H.M.C., 1923); A letter from Robert Macarty alias Earl of Clancarty to the gentlemen of the county of Cork... (Cork, n.d.); Letters written by His Excellency Hugh Boulter, D.D.... (Dublin, 1770), ii, pp. 118-20.
46. Bennett, Bandon, pp.229-38.
The partial breakup between 1728 and 1738 of the most valuable estate in south Munster, that of the fourth earl of Cork, third earl of Burlington, was the next milestone in property sales. It served to highlight by its very magnitude the trend of estate-shedding by absentees that was becoming the dominant characteristic of the region's land market. The senior branch of the Boyle family had inherited most of the original estates of the Great Earl but since the Confederate Wars, his descendants had been resident in London and on their Yorkshire estates acquired through marriage. At what point the dispersed patrimony of the first earl began to be sold off is unclear, but debts of over £35,000 forced Earl Charles into land sales after 1698. After his death in 1704 sales of land around Fermoy and outlying estates in Tipperary and Connaught were apparently enough to clear all debts. The Irish estates passed to his ten-year-old son who assumed control of them on completion of his Grand Tour in 1715: a portent of things to come was the 878 trunks and crates of luggage that returned with him. In the following twenty years the man hailed as the new Maecenas was to lead the English neo-classical movement with a display of artistic patronage strongly reminiscent of Renaissance Italy. In his artistic integrity, his sense of cultural mission, his professionalism as an architect and his remoteness from political faction, he stood out from the contemporary nobility and was regarded by many of the Augustans as the ideal responsible aristocrat, neither hoarding, nor indulging in self-aggrandizement. Yet a consequence of his achievement was the mutilation of his Munster landed inheritance.

47. The second earl of Cork married the daughter and heiress of Henry Clifford, Earl of Cumberland in 1635 (Burke, Peerage) but probably only became an absentee after the Restoration. In 1665 Burlington House in London was built (J. Lees-Milne, Earls of Creation (London, 1963), p.117).


49. Lees-Milne, op.cit. p.112.

'Who builds like Boyle?': building activity in London and Chiswick was the single most spectacular form of expenditure, yet only fragmentary accounts survive. In 1720 £18,749 was spent on reconstruction and furnishings at Chiswick and Burlington House and that was a quiet year, for the rebuilding of Burlington House had taken place c. 1717-9 and the construction of the Palladian villa at Chiswick followed in the mid-1720s. By the time his spending was firmly in the control of trustees in 1737 his fellow absentee earl of Egmont adjudged him 'almost as extravagant as was the Duke of Buckingham... for in one year he spent £90,000', probably referring to 1726 during the building of Chiswick. His open-handed sponsorship ranging from Handel to architectural publishing, and notably of Italian opera, sculpture and painting continued well into the 1730s and according to Horace Walpole he also 'spent large sums in contributing to public works, and was known to choose that the expense should fall on himself rather than that his country should be deprived of some beautiful edifices'.

To some extent fraudulent management of the Munster estates contributed to his financial difficulties: arrears in 1737 stood at £80,000 'of which he will see little or nothing, the tenants being gone off and not to be found, which proceeded from his several agents being underhand

51. Lees-Milne, op.cit. pp.119,149.
52. Ibid., pp.117-8,149,154.
54. Cf. Apollo of the Arts, passim.
the profiteers of the farmers /sic/. The dismissal of the main agent, Andrew Crotty, two years previously was a consequence of embezzlement, but that such a situation developed was largely a reflection of the landowner's character, for as Judge Coghill suggested in 1735 'when great men will not settle their accounts yearly, as the case is here, their agents very probably will make all advantages of such negligence, and no accounts have been stated and settled by Crotty and his Lord since 1725,... and then in such a manner that neither charge nor discharge have been duly vouched'.

Under the marriage settlement of Earl Richard's grandfather leases for more than twenty-one years had been excluded, although an attempt was made to break this by a private act of parliament in 1705 and permit the granting of leases for lives renewable. With the majority of Earl Richard in 1715 the position radically altered; excluding the lands settled on the Dowager, he had the rare freedom to choose whether 'to let his estate...for a term of years, or for three lives renewable'. If the later course was adopted future growth in rental income would be sacrificed for the possibility of raising immediately large sums through fines; as Burlington himself remarked 'letting for lives renewable for ever is the same as selling so much as I agree to fine off (except the casualty of the renewals)'. In the event, much of the Cork and

57. Egmont diary, ii, 12 Dec. 1737.


59. Ibid.; the estate accounts surviving in the National Library of Ireland deteriorate markedly in quality after 1725.

60. A. Spurrett, Kensington to Digby Foulke, 28 June 1705, Shannon MSS (N.I. MS 13,249/2).


Waterford estates that had been falling out of lease in the previous decade, and maintained on annual tenures, were reset in the years after 1718 for three lives or thirty-one years, but no lease of lives renewable was granted. The option of fining was however offered, and most of the successful new tenants paid a varying multiple of their annual rent in fines; £47,768 had been raised in this way by 1725 and apart from this the annual rental of the estate was raised from £11,180 to £15,367.

Burlington's spending was at its most prodigal in the 1720s: £3,575 spent on bridal jewels in 1721 was a small item. Including the Carleton and English estates and his Irish pension, the earl had a disposable income in 1725 of £20,999 (Eng.). On top of this had come a huge marriage portion; furthermore the West End urban property was being developed. Yet more drastic fund-raising was being planned. In early 1728 rumours of major sales, even of the ancient core of the Boyle lands, the ex-Raleigh seignory of Inchiquin.

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63. Schedule of lands to be let, 1718, Lismore MSS (N.L.I. MS 6,150); schedules of leases, Lismore MSS (N.L.I. MSS 6,144;6,156;6,177;6,179).

64. Irish estate accounts, Burlington MSS (Greater London R.O. Q/CML/5-7).

65. Lees-Milne, op. cit. p.131.

66. Irish estate accounts, Burlington MSS (G.L.R.O. Q/CML/7).

67. This is assumed from the provision of £40,000 later made for the two surviving children of the marriage: Report of judges on petition of Richard, Earl of Burlington c.1738, Estate Bill Records (House of Lords R.O.).

around Youghal, inflamed an old tenant of the estate, Jeremiah Coughlan, to remonstrate 'what is the meaning of all this, is there no regard to posterity nor to the memory of those noble ancestors who with truth, pains and labour honestly acquired these great honours and possessions now hawking about for purchasers? Had they been his Lordship's own acquisitions the less were to be said against it; had necessity been the case, the curse of God on the advisers...'.

Certainly the events of the next ten years were to alter the estate beyond all recognition. Selling began on the west Cork estate which Burlington had inherited from his uncle, Viscount Carleton, in 1725. However the greater part of funds raised in 1728-9 came from the systematic conversion of terminable leases into ones for lives renewable for ever on the fining down of one moiety of the previously agreed rent; this course was pursued on the remainder of the Carleton estate and on portions of Burlington's other unentailed estates. Over £40,000 was obtained through this method out of a grand total of some £80,000 by 1730.

The mid-1730s seem to mark the end of Burlington's career as a builder and financial sponsor: they were also the period when the largest sums were raised from the Munster estates after these had been taken into

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69. Jeremiah Coughlan, Lismore to Henry Boyle, 4 March 1727/8, Shannon MSS (P.R.O.N.I. D2707/A).
70. Daniel Conner, Bandon to Henry Boyle, 11 June 1728, Shannon MSS (N.L.I. MS 13,296/13).
71. Instructions of Earl of Burlington to Henry Boyle and others, 14 Aug. 1729, Shannon MSS (N.L.I. MS 13,296/18); sale notice of lands to be fined down, 1729, Shannon MSS (P.R.O.N.I. D2707).
73. Lees-Milne, op.cit. p.164. Burlington involved himself in the laying out of Chiswick gardens from 1716 to 1736 (ibid. p.140); here would seem to have been a barometer of his more general activity.
trustees' hands. In 1737 the earl's debts were about £169,000 (Eng.) and beyond this lay the task of finding £40,000 for the marriage portions of his two surviving daughters. Accounts vary as to the amount raised, but the figure was around £200,000 (Ir.). The methods of 1729, fining off a moiety of the rents of lands relet as de facto perpetuities, were now extended to other parts of the estate - including lands released from the earl's marriage settlement by a private act of parliament in 1738 - but on this occasion the head rents of lands thus fined down were also sold, in several blocks; only the mining royalties were retained, and even this reservation was ambiguous. In the years prior to this Burlington had been borrowing in England on the security of his Irish estates; only the pressure of creditors can have forced him to pay off mortgages bearing an interest charge of 4% by the sale of land at twenty years' purchase, which seems to have been the rate for most of the fines


76. Cf. reference to a mortgage to James Macrae, 1732 in Lismore MSS (N.L.I. MS 16,525); also to a Heathcote mortgage in Heathcote MSS (P.R.O.N.I. T3091/A2/5).
and sales in 1737-8. Even after this Burlington's financial problems remained; gross income had fallen to about £12,000 (Eng.), one third from the English estates. In 1741 trouble was encountered in raising loans for the £21,000 marriage portion of the eldest daughter. In 1744 there were plans to sell some of the profits of the Irish manors.

However Burlington by having no male heir and finally only one surviving daughter, was able to endow her with the attenuated Boyle inheritance in her marriage to the Devonshire heir in 1748.

In the years 1728-38 Burlington's 'loppings' had therefore raised about £280,000, and nearly a third of a million pounds if the fines of the early 1720s are included: where did this come from? The use of the fining system ensured that considerably more than half came from men prepared to buy long or perpetuity tenures, by implication local men.

So it largely was: the absentee Edward Southwell was in 1737 surprised on hearing of Burlington's decisions that 'all [is] sold to our countrymen, I am glad there is such money stirring'; as far as head-rents were concerned...


78. Egmont diary, ii, 12 Dec. 1737.

79. Abdy, Chetham to Usher, Shannon MSS (N.I. MS 13,251/4).

80. Copy, [Usher], Lismore to Abdy, 11 Apr. 1744, Lismore MSS (N.I. MS 7,180).

81. Burlington, 'very capable of business, if he thought it worth his while to preserve his estate' never visited his Irish properties and seems to have been far more interested in his Yorkshire estate: Earl of Orrery, Cork to Alexander Pope, 9 May 1736 in Countess of Cork and Orrery ed., The Orrery papers (London, 1903), i, p.160; W. R. Chetwood, A tour through Ireland by two English gentlemen, 2nd ed. (Dublin, 1748), p.125; Lees-Milne, op.cit. pp.161-2,164.

82. Southwell to Coghill, 4 Aug. 1737 (loc.cit.).
this was an exaggeration but as regards fines payment, correct, for 'the best gentlemen in a whole county are embarked in this affair', 83 'many of them has [sic] laid out a great part of their substance in these purchases, and... they are to remain in their families for ever'. 84

The short-term impact on Cork/west Waterford was noticeable: in 1731, a year after the completion of the first major sales and fines, the consequent remittances were being blamed for the lack of money in circulation, 85 while greater fears were entertained about the second phase of sales, that it would 'swallow up all the ready money' in the region and overstock the land market. 86

Details of the purchasers are incomplete but it is clear that local gentlemen, many already living on the estate, were the most prominent participants both in 1728-9 and 1737-8, men such as Richard Tonson, Robert Longfield and Francis son of Counsellor Bernard, the latter seemingly spending £36,000 in purchases. 87 Direct merchant participation was modest, but a few such as Daniel Conner of Bandon and John Harper of Cork made sizeable purchases. 88 One of the largest fee simple purchases was that made by Henry Boyle of the Clonakilty estate in 1737; Burlington's negotiator, Francis Burward, when he came over to Munster that year had found little immediate response, 'no man caring to bid for

83. Copy, [Usher], Lismore to Abdy, 23 Apr. 1740 (loc.cit.).
84. Copy, [Usher], Lismore to Abdy, (? May 1740.
85. Lord John Perceval, Ballymacow to Lady Catherine Perceval, 8 June 1731 (loc.cit.).
87. Southwell to Coghill, 1 May 1736 (loc.cit.); survey of Burlington deeds, Lismore MSS (N.L.I. MS 16,525); Heathcote rent schedule 1737, Heathcote MSS (P.R.O.N.I. T3091/A2/9).
any part of the estate', so he 'recommended it strongly to him [Boyle] to treat for Clonakilty, which he said would give him, Mr. Burward, credit in the country, and might be a leading card to others to follow his example'. Boyle by borrowing himself, raised most of the £17,000 purchase money very quickly, which 'had the desired effect in the country', although it was a favour that Boyle much regretted doing shortly after.

The sale of head-rents followed a different pattern: the rent-charges that were being created were in the nature of fixed interest investments. They were sold off in several large units and bought mainly by non-locals. The Kilkenny-based Lord Duncannon purchased the head rent of the seignory of Inchiquin for about £45,000 but the most important buyers were Sir William Heathcote and his brother, both major figures in the London business community. Sir William had already lent Burlington £25,000 (Eng.) on mortgage; he extended his commitment in 1737 to buying over £3,000 p.a. head rents at just under £60,000 (Ir.), achieved by cancelling certain English mortgages of 4½% and 5% held by him. 'My only inducement' he told...

89. Copy, Healy, Lismore to Abdy, 24 Feb. 1740/1 and 13 July 1743, Lismore MSS (N.L.I. MS 7,180); also Abdy, London to Henry Boyle, 3 Apr. 1739, Shannon MSS (N.L.I. 13,297/49).

90. The exact purchase figure is unclear. Burward stated in Sept. 1737 that £44,000 head rents apart from Heathcote's purchases remained to be sold: Burward to Sir William Heathcote, 15 Sept. 1737, Heathcote MSS (P.R.O.N.I. T3091/A3/28); it is possible that this referred to more than the seignory of Inchiquin, all of which Duncannon bought: Burward to Eeles, 25 April 1738 in Grattan Flood, op.cit. 25-6. The value of the purchase was put at £2,000 p.a. in 1738, £2,300 in 1743: Eeles to Burlington, 1 May 1738 in Grattan Flood, op.cit. 26; Bishop George Stone to the Duke of Dorset, 17 July 1743 (P.R.O.I. T2760/5).

91. Cf. Heathcote MSS passim. The brother, George Heathcote, held estate of £700 p.a. in 1739, so his purchase presumably approached £14,000: rental etc. of G. Heathcote's lands 1739, Heathcote MSS (P.R.O.I. M562).

92. Detail of purchase, 1737, Heathcote MSS (P.R.O.N.I. T3091/A2/5).

Burward 'for buying this estate is purely to have a good interest for my money...'; the return on his investment worked out at just over 5% gross and had the advantage over mortgaging that it would never be called in.

The Burlington sales have much in common therefore with those of the Forfeiture Trustees. External factors caused them, the structural changes were purely at the level of ownership and local capital provided about two-thirds of the sums raised; the instrument of the renewable three lives lease was again extensively employed, in spite of some resistance from would-be purchasers of the 'tail rents'. However the sales were also the most striking example of the diminution of absentee estates through piecemeal selling to resident gentlemen tenants or locally-based landowners. There were many parallels: in the breakup of the west Cork estates of the earls of Anglesey and the Annesley family which was spread over thirty years (1738-69), local buyers dominated, in particular Richard White who bought over £14,000 in twelve years. A portion of £20,000 and legal costs incurred in the dispute over the family title were the immediate causes of early sales, but the remoteness of the estate, the long leases previously set on it and the fact that it was only a part of diverse properties in several counties encouraged such an outcome.

95. It was calculated at nineteen and a half years' purchase.
96. Burward to Heathcote, 15 Sept. 1737 (loc. cit.).
97. Copy, [Usher], Lismore to Abdy. 23 Apr. 1740 (loc. cit.).
98. On the death of the sixth Earl of Anglesey the Irish estate as a whole was believed to be worth £10,000 p.a. with a much higher reversionary value: Egmont diary, ii, 14 Apr. 1737. The inheritance was long disputed and this clearly hastened the estate's dismemberment, but in ways that remain unclear: cf. Richard White, Bantry to Richard Tension, 21 Feb. 1737/8, and deeds of sale, Francis Annesley and Richard White, 27 March 1739, William Annesley and Richard White, 28 May 1751, Bantry-White MSS 41, 209, 212, 273 (Bantry House, co. Cork). For the sale of Barrett's land by the Anglesey heir in the 1760s, cf. agreement of sale, 30 July 1767 and deed of conveyance, 2 Aug. 1769, George Ogle etc. and John Walsh, Ormthwaite MSS (T.C.D. uncat.coll.).
The peripatetic fifth earl of Orrery who inherited debts of £20,000 from his father in 1731 and a reduced rental of about £3,000 p.a. had to struggle during the following decade with eighteen lawsuits and would have had to sell more than his Askeaton (co. Limerick) estate but for his marriage to an heiress in 1738. That estate was sold to Sir John St. Leger, the lawyer brother of the first Viscount Doneraile. Doneraile himself had bought the manor of Liscarrol in 1721 from the absentee Sir John Perceval, after the latter's losses in South Sea Stock, for £11,000. Perceval's son sold two townlands in 1751 to a recently-conforming ex-Catholic and his brother, and another two were sold in 1758 to help in the purchase of Somerset property; the trustees of the grandson sold twelve townlands in 1771, and nine further in 1776, the latter alone probably realizing £11,000. All these were

99. Narrative of Lady Cork [c. 1756] (City of Dublin Library, Gilbert MSS 120, pp.5,7); in 1737 Orrery's Irish estates were producing £3,449 gross with outgoings of £648: Copy, Earl of Orrery, Westminster to Richard Purcell, 15 Nov. 1737, Orrery MSS (Harvard University Library, MS Eng. 218/4F/7, p.144 [N.L.I. Mic. p.789]). For the Orrery/Hamilton marriage, cf. The Medley, 8 July 1738.


105. Hibernian Chronicle, 11 March 1776: the rental of the nine was £572 p.a. and would have sold for over twenty years' purchase.
offered in parcels with the expectation that the sitting tenants would purchase. The trustees of the absentee third viscount Midleton, faced with debts of £30,000, got a private act of parliament c. 1766 allowing the sale of part of the unsettled estate, again in parcels. 106 Residents like the Bernards of Bandon and the Lysaghts of Mount North were the gainers. Nicholas Lysaght for instance, a man with a reputed income of £320 in 1688 purchased extensive lands in north Cork from the absentee third earl of Orrery about the beginning of the century, several denominations from the possibly absentee Randall Clayton, and in 1717 £14,000 of co. Limerick land from the absentee earl of Bellamont; by the mid-1720s his income had risen to £2,500 p.a. 107 His son, later first Baron Lisle, bought the estate of the admittedly resident Taylors (mainly in co. Limerick) in 1747 for £10,000 and the family became thereby the largest resident landowners in north-west Cork. 108 In co. Kerry the absentee Lord Powis levied fines in 1734 on the five gentlemen tenants of the old Herbert seignory of Castleisland, setting leases to them of lives renewable; 109 by 1750 the sale of even the head rents was being negotiated. 110 However such beneficiaries themselves occasionally off-loaded onto the market: one of the Castleisland purchasers, Sir Maurice Crosbie, was being forced in 1757 to sell his Castleisland holdings together with Leinster estates


because of debts of £20,000. And there are examples of mainly resident peers being forced to sell, such as the first earl Grandison who inherited huge debts on his west Waterford estate, apparently encumbrances charged to the estate by his absentee mother and step-father; in the 1730s he was servicing loans of over £50,000 and was finally driven to sell the manor of Templemichael to the Dublin banker, Richard Dawson, in 1750 for £48,456; his grandson, thirty years later, was attempting to pay off some £44,000 further debts; he sold nearly £35,000 and planned retrenchment on a severely contracted estate. The first earl of Clanwilliam, who had married a wealthy co. Down heiress in 1765, was forced to sell his life interest in Cork city and county property in 1784. Heavy charges on the estate, including over £31,000 allegedly needed to dower his large family, accounted for half his mounting debts; he had to resort to outright sale in the years after 1787 of estates in Cork and other counties (apparently disposing of them in fairly small lots).

111. John Hewson, Ardfert to William Crosbie, 27 Aug. 1757, Talbot-Crosbie MSS.


113. Richard Musgrave, Tourin to /Viscount Villiers/, 5 Nov. 1778; Viscount Villiers, Avignon to /Cavin Delane?/, 14 Feb. 1779, Villiers Stuart MSS E/3; E/2.

114. Thomas Forrest, Cork to John Holy Hutchinson, 1 Feb. 1784, Donoughmore MSS C/6/14 (Knocklofty House, co. Tipperary); Act affecting estate of Earl of Clanwilliam, n.d. /? 1793/, Private estate acts (T.C.D. 186.s.40); Cork Evening Post, 5 July 1787.
The third case highlighting the development of the Cork land market is that of the Barrymore sales. The fourth earl of Barrymore, partly resident and politically ambitious, had been actually buying land in the 1720s and was later known to be restrained only by a shortage of funds. Suspicion of Jacobitism and the extravagance of his heir weakened the family, so that at Barrymore's death in 1747 the estate bore heavy debts.

The son did not reside, while the grandson after inheriting as a minor, followed an army career, cut short in 1773; before his death he was selling and mortgaging parts of the Cork estates. His child, the seventh earl, succeeded at the age of five and was orphaned at fourteen. Without family restraints he was able through mortgaging his future income at the age of seventeen (in loans taken from London moneylenders) to indulge in England in conspicuous consumption on a scale large enough to scandalize contemporaries. By extravagant patronage of the turf — he had forty horses in training at Newmarket in 1790 — the theatre, the gaming table and the convivial club he appears to have gone through over £150,000 (Eng.).


117. Pearde to Price, c. March 1743/4, 6 Nov. 1744, 20 Sept. 1748, Puleston MSS.


119. About £25,000 worth of land was being sold in 1769 — at the same time that mortgages were being arranged: Cork Evening Post, 2 Jan. 1769; 'The Windele MSS' in J.C.H.A.S. 2nd ser. iii (1897), 174.

120. 'Personal Observer', Truth opposed to fiction, or an impartial review of the life of the late... Earl of Barrymore (London, 1793), p. 13.
before his premature accidental death at the age of twenty-five in 1793.¹²¹

The Barrymore estates had been worth at least £10,000 (Ir.) at his majority, but by 1791 they were in the control of the West End banker, Thomas Hammersley, who took a mortgage of the whole Irish estate for £130,000 (Eng.) and settled an annuity on Barrymore of £2,500. The remaining creditors were offered interest of 5% on their debts, an undertaking to repy in ten years and the equity of redemption on the mortgage as security.¹²² In the event, after Barrymore's death the equity of redemption itself was sold by his brother, the eighth and last earl in 1798, with the annuity confirmed for the lives of himself and his wife.¹²³

¹²¹ Ibid. passim; 'Anthony Pasquin', The life of the late Earl of Barrymore (London, 1793), passim; Robinson, esp. pp.228-9.

¹²² Robinson, p.228; 'Pasquin', pp.8,47. Robinson claimed that Barrymore 'consumed' £300,000, but the size of the Hammersley mortgage would suggest that this was a considerable exaggeration. An independent source in 1791 suggested that the debts of Barrymore and his brothers stood at £150,000 - Duchess of Leinster to Lady Charlotte Strutt, 24 Aug. 1791, Strutt MSS (P.R.O.N.I. T3092/12). There must also be some doubt as to the size of Barrymore's initial income: although 'Pasquin' stated it to be £10,000 p.a. (op.cit. p.8), it is curious that this is also the figure given over a decade earlier by Arthur Young, A tour of Ireland... in the years 1776, 1777 and 1778..., II (Dublin, 1780) part ii, p.82, and by the current edition of T. Prior, A list of the absentees of Ireland, 6th ed. (Dublin, 1783); compare this with the statement of the Duchess of Leinster in the letter above cited that Barrymore 'has they say £17,000 a year'.

Beyond the intrinsic importance of the Barrymore collapse the nature of the estate's purchasers mark the event off from the sales earlier in the century. The main purchaser of the creditors' interest in the estate and the equity of redemption was a Cork merchant of Scottish background, John Anderson. The subsequent development of the Fermoy and Buttevant estates is considered elsewhere but here the notable feature is the contrast between the fines and 'parcel' sales in earlier absentee estate-shedding, and the block sale by Barrymore's trustees. It was not without parallels: the near bankruptcy of Lord Riversdale in 1784 after the failure of Warren's Bank in which he was a partner, led to the sale of his Rathcormack estate to one who like John Anderson had made his fortune in the American war, as commissary at New York, who it was reported 'has brought home one hundred thousand pounds'. When in 1767-9 the residue of the Anglesey property in Cork - farms in Barretts set on renewable leases - was being sold by George Ogle, the Anglesey heir, (in his twenties and already in 'distressed circumstances') the purchaser, John Walsh of Middlesex, had East India wealth behind him. Walsh extended his purchasing into Kerry, buying into the estate of the third earl of Kerry, a young absentee whose career resembled that of the

124. In the transactions that are recorded in the Irish Registry of Deeds only the name of Anderson appears, but another Cork merchant, John Travers, is usually cited as partner in the mortgage purchase, cf. 'Windele MSS', 173.


126. Deed of conveyance, George Ogle et al. to John Walsh, 2 Aug. 1769, Ormitwhaite MSS; Burke, Peerage, 'Walsh'. Walsh's purchase from Ogle amounted to £27,000.

127. Deed of conveyance, Earl of Kerry to John Walsh, 28 May 1771, Ormitwhaite MSS; here the purchases were for £16,500.
seventh earl of Barrymore. He had been orphaned at seven and after an eccentric marriage left Ireland in 1772 to reside in France for twenty years, during which time the Kerry estates were sold off, in the main to Richard Hare, one of the wealthiest Cork provisions merchants. Hare had already built up landed property of at least £2,000 p.a. before beginning a series of purchases from the earl in 1775. He had paid out over £30,000 for various parts of the estate before purchasing in 1782-3 the reversion of the residual desmesne estate around Lixnaw, probably for about £19,000. Whether the earl had been forced to sell by pressure of debts is uncertain; as in the Barrymore final sale, a life annuity was settled on him and his wife who were childless, charged on the desmesne estate.

How far had this flow of mercantile fortunes into landed property become a feature in less spectacular workings of the land market? Merchants were being criticized throughout eighteenth-century Ireland for their alleged tendency to invest too readily in landed property, for as a Dublin pamphleteer put it in 1691 'the cheapness of lands... and

129. Copy, [Richard Hare], Cork to James Baillie, 21 Sept. 1771, Hare letter-book 1771-2 (Cork Archives Council).
130. Rental and notes on sale of part of the Earl of Kerry's estate, 20 May 1779, Hare MSS (P.R.O.N.I. D585/16); memorial of deed of sale, Earl of Kerry and Richard Hare, 28 Oct. 1782 (K.D. 347/401/233545).
131. Kerry's Parisian house and furnishings which he was forced to abandon in 1792 were given a very high valuation when compensation was being arranged three decades later, but the considerable English land and funded property which he left on his death in 1818 suggests that he may have used Irish sales to finance English purchases: c.f. Alger, op.cit. 673-4.
132. Deed of sale, Kerry and Hare, 28 Oct. 1782.
easiness to subsist...makes...merchants turn purchasers as soon as they have gotten as much as will maintain their families; whereby the stock in trade is small. For it's observed, that tho' many... gain a livelihood by trade, yet very few of the merchants have acquired considerable or competent estates'.

But the reality was more complex. Certainly a few passed quickly up the ladder of commerce into landed respectability such as the Cromwellian soldier Col. Evans who was active in tanning at Kinsale after the restoration 'but being a cunning, industrious and saving man, by buying army debentures and other opportunities that offered, laid the foundations of a large estate which his son and grandson... by parsimony have improved to near £6,000 a year' by the 1730s; the son had picked up a barony (Carbery) on the way, after entry into Irish and English politics. However the history of another Cromwellian soldier's family is perhaps more relevant, that of Major Hoare of Dunmanway whose two sons, Edward and Joseph, were foremost in the late seventeenth-century Cork business community and themselves active in Williamite forfeiture purchases. But they and most of their sons after them continued to pursue careers as merchants, bankers or lawyers in Cork, Dublin and London. Other major merchant families in the early eighteenth century such as the Rogers, Dunscombès and Newenhams, entered the land market but together with the Hoares built their residences close to the city or around Cork harbour, signifying their real commitment.

133. Walter Harris, Remarks on the affairs and trade of England and Ireland (London, 1691), p. 32.

134. Egmont Diary, ii, 16 Apr. 1737; Burke, Peerage, 'Carbery'.

135. E. Hoare, Some account of the early history and genealogy... of the families of Hore and Hoare (London, 1883), passim.

136. Their main seats were at Factory Hill, Lotabeg, Mount Desart and Maryborough respectively.
And while later in the century many others imitated Hare and Anderson in more modest purchases of rural fee simple, both the scale and implications of this process can be exaggerated. No major political dynasty of urban origins emerged during the course of the century via extensive land purchases: even members of the Hoare and Hare families who sat in parliament did so for Cork city. It seems likely that the pattern set by Richard Hare and John Anderson of remaining actively in trade after major purchases was the norm, even if for many residence in the country was popular. However this was seasonal, as the diary of George Newsom, a Quaker merchant who acquired a small (possibly leasehold) estate at Glanville in the 1780s, suggests; when he moved at the beginning of summer 1785 to his new house Newsom recorded his gratitude for the chance 'to experience... rural retirement in order that the leisure so afforded from hurry and business may be more devoted to serious reflection and applied to an earnest consideration of the uncertainty of life', but he was fully resident in Cork again the following autumn. A few certainly did retire to the land completely, like the Quaker Abraham Devonsheir who transformed a 'coarse hungry' farm at Kilshannig into a fine house and gardens in a few years, and entered parliament for Rathcormack in 1756 'by constantly residing and entertaining and drinking with the people'; he had become a recluse before the end of his formal parliamentary career twenty years later.

137. Edward Hoare, grandson of the Cromwellian major, was M.P. for the city from 1710 to 1727; William, son of Richard Hare, sat for the city after 1800. Hoare's youngest son, Joseph, sat for Askeaton, Co. Limerick, while Hare after losing Cork city sat for Athy, Co. Kildare.

138. Anderson's trading in Cork admittedly seems to have ended by the late 1790s, but his entrepreneurial vigour in Fermoy and his financial activities generally more than compensated.

139. Diary of George Newsom 1785-90, 1 June 1785 (Society of Friends' Library, Eustace St. Dublin MS Rm.4/Sl.P/5).

140. Diary of Joshua Wight, 1752-6, 8 Apr. 1754 (Soc. of Friends' Lib. MS Rm.4/Sl.P/3); M. Bodkin, 'Notes on the Irish Parliament in 1712' in P.R.I.A. xlviii, c(1942), 134-5.
However, the close relations between the Protestant merchant community and the rural landed class (which existed already as has been seen in the seventeenth century) makes the question of the merchant impact on land ownership rather artificial. Younger sons of gentry provided a ready supply of apprentices to the larger merchant houses, while intermarriage was fairly regular. Thus the third son of Henry Wrixon (dec'd. 1714), a small landowner and prominent tenant on the Perceval estate, appears to have been a butter merchant in Cork before retiring back to a farm in Duhallow. The heir of Henry Wrixon’s fourth son benefited from Egmont’s land sales and was able to arrange the marriage of his only daughter to Richard Hare’s eldest son in 1772. The only question for Thomas Sarsfield, a small landowner in the liberties of Cork, when debating c.1785 his sons’ futures, was what sort of urban careers they should follow: ‘My intentions are to put every one of them to some kind of business, each to such as they may have talents and inclinations for. I wish Dominick may be fit for the bar... The others if they live, shall be either attorneys or merchants’.

The links between town and country were closest in banking and the legal profession. The interest in land of the earliest recognizable remitting bankers, the houses of Hoare and Harper, has been noted above: Harper was even described in 1736 as ‘an enthusiast in Burlington purchases’, full of ‘schemes and proposals’. But it was Dublin bankers who were usually thought of as possible purchasers of land; the earl of Egmont when pondering sales in 1732 was told of ‘bankers in Dublin worth £100,000 who desire nothing more than to have opportunities of buying land’.

141. Wrixon genealogy (Gen. Off., Dublin MS 171, pp.148-9); memorial of lease John Wrixon to Henry Mannix, 6 Apr. 1738 (R.D. 92/48/63078); Hibernian Chronicle, 28 May 1772. Other members of the family were also Cork merchants, cf. memorial of deed confirming lease, Edward Hoare to Henry Wrixon, 22 Apr. 1734 (R.D. 79/150/55067).

142. Copy, [Thomas Sarsfield], Dowthcleyne to [?], c. 1785, Sarsfield MSS (N.L.I. Acc. 2930).


How far such Dublin money entered the Cork land market is not known; Richard Dawson's purchase of part of Grandison's Waterford estate in 1750 was an example of penetration into the region, and Dublin bankers were probably mortgagees for more than just the Earl of Orrery in 1745 and Baron Muskerry, on his financial collapse, in 1784. In the second half of the century the prominence of landowners themselves in the development of Cork banking would suggest that the flow of resources was increasingly in the opposite direction. For instance, the bank known as Tonson's, later Warren's, was a partnership of James Bernard and four other major Cork landowners, 'independent gentlemen of the county whose united fortunes amounted to £500,000' at the bank's foundation in 1768. Those bankers of mercantile origin in this period - Pike, Kellett and Newenham, for instance - were not notable for their landed investments.

The legal profession provided both the brokers in the land market and often enough the real gainers. The history of Counsellor Bernard's massive accumulation of landed wealth at the beginning of the century, of John Hely-Hutchinson's gains, admittedly political rather than territorial in mid-century, and of James Chatterton's rise as banker and land investor towards the end are examples. Bernard's father was at least a major landowner unlike Hely Hutchinson's (who was a Cork attorney) or Chatterton's (who was a Cork distiller and brewer). These

145. State of matters respecting the lands conveyed by John, late Earl Grandison, Villiers Stuart MSS F/3; Richard Purcell, Dublin to Earl of Orrery, 23 July 1745, Orrery MSS (H.U.L. MS Eng. 218 4F/7 (N.L.I. Mic. p7897); memorial of deed of lease and release, Baron Muskerry to David La Touche, 27 July 1784 (R.N. 357/564-6/242337).

146. Cork Chronicle, 12 and 16 May 1768.


were all barristers, but several piecemeal estates seem to have been built on attorneys' fortunes. 149 Whether seeking mortgages, offering loans on personal security or actually publicizing monies available for land purchase, the Cork attorneys played not surprisingly a central role, as is demonstrated by the many such advertisements placed by them in Cork newspapers from the beginning of regular publication in 1753. Dublin attorneys occasionally advertised in Cork papers as in August 1790 when £70,000 to be laid out in purchases, £40,000 in mortgages and £12,000 on personal security were offered. 150 With all its metropolitan facilities - not least the Registry of Deeds - Dublin of course dominated the national land and money markets, but nonetheless with fifty-two attorneys or notaries public in Cork in 1787, 151 it seems reasonable to suppose that the greater part of transactions concerning land, whether conveyancing or mortgaging, was negotiated in Cork.

Dealings in free-simple property and perpetuity leases were only a part of the urban connection with land investment, as trading in unexpired leases for terms of years or a finite number of lives was a universal practice during the century as will be seen below. The existence of leases of sufficient duration, the upward secular movement of rents and the de facto freedom of tenants to alienate leases made this an inviting area of speculation. The bar on Catholics buying land, holding beneficial or long

149. E.g. the cases of Richard Martin - cf. Martin, Dublin to Charles Brodrick, 24 Nov. 1792, Midleton MSS (N.L.I. MS 8862/7) - and that of John Kennedy who bought part of Grandison's estate - State of matters respecting the lands conveyed by the late John, Earl Grandison (loc.cit.).


leases, or laying out money on mortgages imposed under a series of penal statute after 1704 and not repealed until 1778, would appear to have channelled Catholic money into this activity. While there were few really wealthy Catholic merchants in Cork city before the last quarter of the century, it was believed at an early stage that Catholic investment in farm leases had become a substitute for buying land and for taking mortgages, and that this was raising rent levels. In the years after 1778, only the wealthiest Catholic merchants such as George Gould of Cork city were showing an interest in the limited rural property on the market. Lands worth £350 p.a. in Carbery were sold by a local landowner, William Wade, in 1783 because of debts, at twenty-one years purchase to Timothy Deasy, the leading Catholic merchant in neighbouring Clonakilty. But on the whole it would seem that Catholic land investment in the period of penal relaxation remained predominantly in the area of leasehold interests.

To determine the motivation behind urban interest in land would require fuller details both of the movement of mortgage interest and of purchase rates. It seems highly likely that with the limited supply of fee-simple land coming onto the market - at least in the later part of the


154. Memorial of conveyance, William Wade and Timothy Deasy, 17 July 1783 (R.D. 351/478/237417); Cork Evening Post, 8 May 1783.

155. Cf. Thomas Newenham’s comment on co. Cork: 'there is a vast number of wealthy Roman Catholic landholders and lessees, but near nine-tenths of the fee simple property belong to Protestants' - Newenham to Edward Wakefield, c. 1811, quoted in Wakefield, Account of Ireland, ii, p.601n. It seems probable that Daniel Callaghan, a Cork city Catholic and one of the foremost merchant contractors during the French wars was exceptional: in the years 1813 and 1816 alone he laid out over £130,000 in purchases of fee simple in co. Cork and Limerick - Dublin Evening Post, 2 Feb. 1813; Ennis Chronicle and Clare Advertiser, 22 May 1816.
century - land bore a premium. To some extent this resulted from the almost continuous expectation of a future rise in income from land on which leases were set, so that the purchase rate, expressed as a multiplier of the income from a property at the time of sale, seems always to have been greater than contemporary interest rates would otherwise justify. After about 1710 there is hardly any record of fee-simple land selling at under twenty years' purchase, yet the statutory rate of interest, fixed at 6% in 1732, was never revised. Contemporaries were aware of a close correlation between the movement of interest rates and land prices, and it is significant that only in the early 1750s (when interest rates probably reached their lowest level in the century) and in the 1760s (when interest rates were generally low) did lands sell at rates approaching thirty years' purchase. A Cork newspaper correspondent compared the position in 1785 when land he claimed was fallen to as low as sixteen and a half years' purchase, to that of two decades earlier when interest on mortgages stood at 4½% and land sold at twenty-one to twenty-three years' purchase.


To most merchants therefore purchase of an estate or of rural land for a residence might be a normal ambition, but contact with the land market more usually took the form of taking mortgages and seeking beneficial leases. The effect on Cork city of the sharp rise in lands after 1749 reveals both aspects: the largest local bankers, Harper and Armstead, were by late 1751 having liquidity problems because 'the people of this city have last year or this laid out considerable sums in purchases, and at interest, which was before lodged mostly in their hands...', in particular because of the withdrawal of 'fifteen or sixteen thousand of the £20,000 borrowed by my Lord Orrery from different people here...' which had been lodged with them.158 Thus the improved prospects of land, whether as investment or security - after nearly a decade of depression - could decisively affect business conditions.

If it is accepted that existing landowners themselves were ultimately the more active participants in the land market, certain features of landed finances deserve further attention. Behaviour in relation to marriage and inheritance reveals the fundamental attitudes of the propertied class towards wealth, its maintenance and its hoped-for enlargement in an age when fear of sudden reverses was shared even by the richest, and when family name, family tradition and family connections defined the limits of social and economic opportunity in large measure. Decisions about marriage alliances and marriage settlement were of course determined most visibly by economic circumstance, social standing and family aspirations, but demographic factors - family size, sex distribution

and the survival rate of spouses — were arguably as important. Indeed, the differing experiences of landed families over time were less the consequence of freedom of choice exercised between various marriage strategies than the result of factors less intentionally controlled. The commitment to a qualified primogeniture was all but universal throughout the century among at least Protestant landowners, combined with a preference for the male line in any indirect inheritance. The pattern of marriage settlement was similarly stereotyped; all was sublimated to the successful negotiation of the eldest son's match. Variation is however detectable in the treatment of younger sons, in attitudes towards the foundation of cadet branches and in decisions concerning the ratio of daughters' portions to income.

The most memorable local deviation from primogeniture had been the multipartite division of the Boyle estates by the first earl of Cork, although the very scale of his property and the fact that it was a personal acquisition gave him the practical, and legal freedom which most lacked. Strict settlement appears to have been general among major landowners by 1700, a fact which curtailed if it did not rule out partition. But a striking example of the positive estimation of primogeniture among landowners was the extent to which the surviving Catholic proprietors, faced with the statutory obligation after 1704 to 'gavel' their property, managed to maintain primogeniture through the genetic good-luck of single male heirs, the legal camouflage of protection by assignment or, as in

160. Cf. the will of the first Earl of Cork, 4 Nov. 1642 in Townshend, Great Earl of Cork, pp.470-505.
most cases, through religious conformity; a majority of the 'innocent' Catholic proprietors of 1704 either conformed themselves or else a descendant in the senior male line did, mainly it would seem to protect the integrity of their inheritance.\textsuperscript{161}

Primogeniture was normally qualified to the extent that other sons, usually the second at least, were guaranteed a varying fraction of property, perhaps to maintain a line of defence in case of premature death of the eldest. This was possible as long as a significant portion of an estate was not tied in strict settlement. Arrangements could vary from those of the first Sir Richard Cox who made a near equal partition between two sons of his property at the beginning of the century\textsuperscript{162} to the elaborate ones in Nicholas Lysaght's will in 1724, when he bequeathed most of his property to the eldest son, a small estate to be divided between his second and third sons, portions of £1,000 to each of the latter on reaching majority, and favourable leases to be set them by the eldest of lands on the estate; this complicated plan was revoked in a subsequent codicil, the second son died young and the third, apparently through marriage, built up an interest in a different part of the county.\textsuperscript{163}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{161} The Brownes, earls of Kenmare had single male heirs over three generations; for cases (or retrospective claims) of protection by assignment of land to Protestants, see R. & D. Townshend, \textit{An officer in the Long Parliament and his descendants} (London, 1892), p.145; W. A. Copinger ed., \textit{History of the Coppinger or Coppingers} (Manchester, 1884), p.192; E. Barry, 'Barrymore: records of the Barrys' in \textit{J.C.H.A.S. viii} (1902), 16, 148; The extraordinary case of James Ph. Trant (Cork, 1777), passim. Among the significant conformities were those by major branches of the following families: O'Donovan of Bawnlahan, MacCarthy of Carrignavar, Kearney, Ronayne, Cotter and Lombard; in at least the latter two cases the change occurred when the family estate passed into the hands of a Protestant-educated minor.
\item \textsuperscript{162} Sir Richard Cox, 'Autobiography', transcript of unpublished section, Caulfield MSS 6 (U.C.C. Strong Room).
\item \textsuperscript{163} Memorial of will of Nicholas Lysaght, 24 Sept. 1724 and Codicil, 25 Aug. 1725 (R.D. 48/309/31690); Lysaght genealogy, Betham MSS (P.R.O.I. M746, p. 19).
\end{itemize}
decision of Thomas Beecher of Sherkin in 1705 to leave twenty-four ploughlands to his eldest son, four ploughlands to his second and portions of £1,500 and £500 to other sons was probably not untypical, nor that of James Stawell in 1766 to leave his rural Kilbrittain estate to his elder son and leases of property in the liberties of Cork to the younger. 164 In the case of Dillon Newman of Dromaneen (Barrymore) in his will of 1739, two of the three younger sons were left what were apparently outlying estates, the third a cash portion. The latter son had become a merchant in Cork but at a later stage was to return to reside on the estate. 165 Thomas Sarsfield certainly believed he was atypical in the 1780s in his opposition to strict primogeniture: regarding succession 'that is a matter I mean to settle in a manner not usually done in this country, for instead of giving almost the whole to the eldest my intentions are to leave him more than to any of the others, but by no means to have them dependent on him. I have no notion d'établir une maison, and I think it most unjust in a man who has many children to make one a squire while the others are unprovided for. Mine shall be almost upon an almost equal footing, and they must each of them work for their bread.' 166

164. Memorial of will of Thomas Beecher, 21 Aug. 1705 (R.D. 1/456/356); Copy, will of James Stawell, 5 Dec. 1766, Exham MSS (P.R.O.I. acc. no. 1035).

165. Memorial of will of Dillon Newman, 25 Sept. 1739 (R.D. 96/302/67782; also 65/363/45907 for evidence of the merchant status of the fourth son, Adam Smith, Cork, i, p. 308.

166. (Thomas Sarsfield), Doughcloyne to [ ], c. 1785, Sarsfield MSS (N.L.I. Acc. 2930).
The freedom to endow younger sons with unsettled 'loppings' would seem to have declined in the later part of the century - although the lower survival of testamentary documents of this period makes it difficult to confirm - for the area under strict settlement probably expanded, while the possibilities of piecemeal land acquisition contracted from the position in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries when the aftermath of forfeitures and high incidence of absentee estate-shedding had given many the option of founding a cadet line. Of the first earl of Cork's descendants in the male line all younger sons for two and possibly three generations had inherited large landed incomes. Another notable seventeenth-century partition, the details of which are not clear, was that by Counsellor Bernard's father before 1690; the junior branch of 'Palace Anne' Bernards remained a distinct branch for more than a century. The establishment by John Longfield (1653-1730) of a second line of the Castlemary family at Longueville also lasted for several generations before the estates were reunited. The history of the King properties in Cork, Roscommon and Sligo illustrate at a more elevated level both cadet creation and planned reunification: at the beginning of the century the admittedly huge estates of the first Baron Kingston, acquired through marriage and inheritance were divided between his son, who inherited the Mitchelstown estate, and nephew to whom was bequeathed the Connacht lands; this unusual settlement arose from the unacceptable marriage of the son to a Catholic servant. Male heirs failed in the junior line in 1761 but an emphatically arranged match in 1769 brought the estates in two provinces together. However there was a partition between the first and second sons of this match with the Cork and Sligo.

167. Longfield genealogy, Betham MSS (Gen. Off. MS 179).
estates, valued c. 1799 at £20,000 p.a. passing to the former, and
the latter getting the Roscommon estate (£10,000 p.a.) and a viscountcy
(Lorton) created for him later.¹⁶⁸

Marriage to an heiress did not necessarily therefore imply the
union of estates in the senior male line, for one of the ways a second
son became independently established was through inheritance of the
mother's estate in part or in toto: thus John Bayly of Castlemore
(Muskerry), when leaving his estate to an
only daughter in 1718 specifically settled the reversion on the second
son of her marriage.¹⁶⁹ The evolution of the family of Thomas Uniack
of Youghal (decd. 1708) highlights the custom further: in 1670 he had
married a Corkbeg Fitzgerald to whom apparently the Corkbeg estate
reverted, his son married the co-heiress of the Borri (co. Wexford) estates,
and the latter were settled on their eldest son together with the
paternal inheritance, while the Fitzgerald estate passed to the younger
son, Robert (1711-78), who took the surname Fitzgerald. Fitzgerald
married twice, his second wife being a Juidkin, co. Tipperary, co-heiress.
On the second son of this match, Thomas, was settled at least some of
the Juidkin lands; the latter married a Capel co-heiress himself and he
passed the wife's inheritance to a second son.¹⁷⁰ The first Viscount
Doneraile's decision to found a cadet branch may also have arisen from
Hayes, his second son's inheriting part of the wealth of his wife, an

pp.19-21, 38-9, 77; A. P. W. Malcomson, 'Absenteeism in eighteenth-


¹⁷⁰ Uniack genealogy, Betham MSS (Gen. Off. MS 173, pp.32 ff.).
English heiress; in purchasing the manor of Liscarrol in 1720 Doneraile sold off £10,000 held in the Funds, presumably part of his wife's fortune and at the time it was said he 'designs to make a second family'; the son married two years later the coheiress of Lord Chief Baron Deane and in the marriage settlement Doneraile undertook to settle £10,000 further on him, which was in fact laid out in purchases, mainly in Waterford and Queen's county. The family fortunes had been further enhanced by the marriage of Hayes' elder brother, Arthur, to the sole heiress of Charles, Lord Mohun in 1717, and her death the next year no doubt greatly facilitated Doneraile's family ambitions, for Arthur picked up a further portion in a second marriage. Between the two marriages Arthur left one son who inherited in 1734; the latter also married twice - the first wife a Longford heiress but he died leaving no children, so ironically all the accumulation of portions passed with the paternal inheritance back to his uncle Hayes, who himself died childless in 1767. Then partition occurred again, for the second estate created by the first viscount passed to Hayes' first cousin John St. Leger, while the paternal estate was bequeathed to Hayes' sister's second son, St. Leger Aldworth, bypassing the eldest who was in line for the less valuable Aldworth patrimony.

Second marriages sometimes caused the creation of a cadet line where they were more prolific than in the St. Leger family. Alan, first Viscount Midleton and second son of Sir St. John Brodrick, through the success of his legal and political career had acquired considerable landed estate; he settled £8,000 worth of property on his eldest son, St. John, and apparently

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172. Memorial of Will of Viscount Doneraile, 7 Apr. 1726 (R.D. 53/470/36463); petition of John St. Leger, Dec. 1767 (P.R.O. SP/63/425/65c); see also sources cited in footnote 8 above.
sought to leave the residue to the first son of his second marriage. The tone of his 1726 will would suggest tension between father and eldest son for Midleton, noting the reversion of the senior Brodrick estates onto himself through the failure of direct male heirs, directed his trustees to pass the patrimony to whichever son they thought 'best likely to fulfil my wishes'.

In the event the young St. John died the same year as his father, but left five daughters: his estate appears to have passed to the first son of the second marriage heavily encumbered with charges to portion the daughters.

A more long-lasting division resulting from a second marriage was that by the absentee second earl of Egmont who had seven children by his first wife and nine by the second. The settled part of the estate seems to have passed to the future third earl, and the unsettled segment to have been bequeathed to the eldest son of the second marriage; younger sons of the first marriage were commissioned into army and navy. Egmont was demonstrably creating a new line, for he got a separate title for his second wife who was made Baroness Arden in 1770. The proportions in the partition are indicated from rental estimates c.1809 when Egmont's Irish income was given as £14,000 p.a. and Baron Arden's as £6,000.

As can be seen from these examples the course of inheritance when heirs failed could vary: when only male heirs were lacking the paternal estate could pass in equal portions to daughters, in one lot to a specifically designated grandson or thirdly, daughters could merely receive portions charged on the estate as it passed out of the direct line. When no direct


174. This is implicit in the schedule of estates held by the third viscount: State of the Dean of Cork's account, 1765, Midleton MSS (G.M. & M.R. MS 145/102).

175. Wakefield, Account of Ireland, i, p.250. The estimate of Egmont's income would seem rather inflated.
heirs existed there was an even larger element of discretion although reversion was normally settled on the nearest male relative. The case of the Doneraile succession of St. Leger Aldworth is a demonstration of such discretion, as in the case of Thomas Bernard who inherited the Palace Anne estates from his unmarried first cousin Roger in 1774, died childless and willed them, not on his younger brother Arthur but on the son of his younger sister. 176 Cornelius O'Callaghan, first Baron Lismore, inherited the senior O'Callaghan Banteer estate from his cousin over the claims of nearer relations, presumably in the interests of integrating the dignity of the old estate with the honour of a title. 177 The enlargement of the fortune of Thomas Roberts (1736-1817), a small Cork landowner and banker was distinctly fortuitous: 'Jane Roberts... sole heiress of Sir Walter Roberts of Glassenbury in Kent, having no issue or near relative, accidently heard that the arms of Roberts had been painted on a carriage ordered by a gentleman of that name of Cork... Her Grace... commenced a correspondence, the result of which was that she bequeathed the estate... to his family... '. 178

Even illegitimacy however did not detract from the natural preference for the direct line. Two very large landed properties passed to illegitimate off-spring during the century. Richard Tonson (1689-1773), the only son of an only son, had greatly extended the family estates in west Cork and Barrymore; his legitimate son predeceased him unmarried, so that his natural son, William Hull, originally employed it was reputed as a menial

176. Bernard of Palace Anne genealogy, Betham MSS (P.R.O.I. M746, pp. 43-5). A parallel case to the Aldworth inheritance of the Doneraile estate was that by William Wrixon of the Beecher estate; as second son of Henry Beecher's sister he was also obliged to change his name to gain the property, cf copy, will of Henry Beecher, 28 Nov. 1780, Lombard MSS (N.L.I. uncat. MSS).


178. Tonson, Rathcormack to Betham, 15 Apr. 1807, Betham MSS (P.R.O.I. M749, p.156). For a more implausible version of Roberts' inheritance, see Burke, Vicissitudes of families, ii, pp.405-6.
in his father's kitchen, inherited an estate worth upwards of £10,000 p.a. James Smith-Barry, the grandson of the fourth earl of Barrymore by his fourth son, inherited a small Cork estate from his father and a very valuable Essex estate from his mother for which he changed his name. An absentee in Cheshire until he was an old man, he never married but produced late in life an illegitimate family of two sons and three daughters; the second son died young, the daughters were left in his will of 1799 £30,000 for portions and the elder son inherited the estate worth over £20,000 p.a.

The financial logic of a landowner's decisions in his choice of partner for his children - or for himself or his sisters if orphaned - was seldom less than obvious; match-making was a form of investment in which the mix of risk and security could be varied. This was recognized by the indebted William Taylor, landowner and agent to the similarly embarrassed fifth earl of Orrery, in an unusually frank comment to his employer in 1736: 'You have no possibility of retrieving yourself but by marrying nor I but by doing the same or selling my estate. Your Lordship must not hold out for too much fortune if you can get enough to make you easy. It will not be prudent to run the most manifest hazard of being under at present and indeed for ever because it is possible you may get ten or twenty thousand more...you as well as myself are upon the brink of the precipice. Our credit is pretty good now but it is in the power of our


180. Smith-Barry genealogy, Betham MSS (Gen. Off. M171, p.455); will of James Hugh Smith-Barry, 1799 summarized in N.L.I. report on papers in private keeping no.2: Smith-Barry papers; Charles Tonson, Lisnegar to Sir William Betham, 6 Jan. 1819, Betham MSS (P.R.O.I. M746, p.323); Wakefield, Account of Ireland, i, p.250.
In the event Orrery, whose first wife had died in 1732, married the Tyrone heiress, Margaret Hamilton, reputedly worth £80,000, in 1738. Taylor was less lucky for he died more than £10,000 in debt in 1746. The match of the first earl of Glandore's eldest son to the daughter of Lord George Germaine in 1777 involved the element of risk, for a portion of £10,000 and the exalted status of the bride was at the cost of a high jointure, equivalent to a third of the estate's then rental and one-fifth of the portion. Glandore was informed by his son that he 'was induced to offer this liberal jointure for several reasons. First I considered it was not probable that it would affect you, for though no doubt it may very well happen that I die before you, yet considering the difference of our ages, it is not probable. It can never affect myself as it must take place after my death and then, if I should have a son, by the time he can be of age the estate will be very well able to afford such a jointure'. Yet many estates were encumbered precisely because of such specious calculations. Jointures in the late seventeenth century had indeed been normally as high as one-fifth of the portion - much higher it was thought than in England - but the average rate, reflecting among other factors the current level of interest, fell in the course of the eighteenth century.

182. Richard Purcell, Kanturk to the Earl of Egmont, 11 Dec. 1746, Egmont MSS (B.L. Add. MS 47011*, p.161); The Medley (Cork), 8 July 1738.
185. Compare for instance Viscount Kenmare's marriage settlement of 1720 (where the jointure was set at one-fifth of the portion) with that of the future Viscount Clanwilliam in 1765 (where the jointure was approximately 8% of the portion) and with the intended settlement for the Doneraile heir (where the jointure was set specifically at 8%) - Kenmare estate bill, n.d. [c.1727]; act affecting estate of Earl of Clanwilliam, n.d. [c.1793] and Doneraile estate act, 1785, Private estate acts (T.C.D. 186.s.40).
The practice of determining the future portions for younger sons and daughters by making them equivalent to the wife's portion, a fairly general arrangement, could spell trouble for a family that received a high portion at the marriage of the eldest son; the latter was a naturally tempting solution to current debts in which the future encumbrance that family charges would place on the estate was ignored. Large portions, especially those in cash rather than in settled landed property or on bond, were attractive to fathers-in-law like Glandore who would have immediate access to them. Some landowners such as John Beecher in his will of 1769 were able to pass on the portion they had received intact to finance all settlements on younger children, although in his case this was partly because his wife's family were still owing part of the portion after twenty-nine years. There is however ample evidence of families mortgaging or even selling land to raise funds for portions for daughters and younger sons. The dilemma of whether to sell or borrow had an added dimension for the absentee with differential interest rates to consider, as Sir John Perceval realized in 1732: 'Sell or borrow I must to satisfy daughter's portions, my son is for the latter with a view that his wife's fortune if ever he marries may discharge the debt,... but I incline to sell because interest in Ireland is 6 per ct. The security of £12,000 which I design to raise for my daughters' portions will put much of my land out of my power, as I think borrowing every whit as scandalous as selling. Besides I hate to

186. Cash would seem to have been the normal mode of settlement for the landed class by the early eighteenth century and the marriage settlement of Baron Courcey's daughter in 1751, where the portion was in land, seems to have been a late exception, cf. Maria de Courcy to Thomas O'Grady, 12 March 1750/1, 'O Grady papers' in Anal. Hib. 15(1944), 52.

live with a debt upon my shoulders, and may be pressed to pay the principal
at a time when most inconvenient to me...'. A man who could not offer
cash with his daughter would clearly be at a disadvantage; thus Francis
Bernard in 1735 was expected to desist from land purchases 'having but one
daughter, will he not rather have ready money for that daughter?', The
size of a portion itself would generally be the subject of delicate
negotiation, proportional to the reversionary rental income of the groom.
When Sir Emmanuel Moore was negotiating with Sir John Perceval about a
match between his eldest son and the latter's sister in 1683 he invited him
'to carve up' the estate, presumably to make a settlement equivalent to
the portion available.

If marriage settlements exhibited varying degrees of social ambition,
the history of landed family alliances in the region reveals a fairly
regular pattern of intermarriage: those whose social horizon did not
extend beyond the county assizes arranged alliances overwhelmingly within
the region. Even for a landowner with a very large family such as Arthur,
the founder of the Palace Anne Bernards, it was possible to make nearly all
alliances locally; of his four sons and ten daughters surviving to
adulthood, eleven married and all but one of the matches were to Cork or
west Waterford spouses. The political gentry who spent part of the year

188. Copy, Viscount Perceval, London to William Taylor, 4 May 1732,
Egmont MSS (B.L. Add. MS 46,997a, p.66). Cf. Prof. Habbakuk's
comment on the contemporary English situation: 'The prudent course would
have been to save, but the normal practice was to borrow'; Habbakuk
argued that mortgages were normally used to raise money for portions
and that portions were generally invested in land purchase -
H. J. Habbakuk, 'Marriage settlements in the eighteenth century' in
T.R.H.S. 4th ser. xxxii (1950), 15,28. Local practice was less
clearcut.

189. Marmaduke Coghill, Dublin to Edward Southwell, 24 Apr. 1732,
Southwell MSS (N.L.I. MS 875).

190. Sir John Perceval to Sir Robert Southwell, 26 June 1683, in Egmont
MSS, ii, 131.

191. Bernard of Palace Anne genealogy, Betham MSS (P.R.O.I. M746, pp.43-5).
in Dublin had the opportunity to seek out more distant brides, but it would seem that it was only when an heiress was on offer that an inter-regional - or cross-channel - alliance was likely. The agent of the partially absentee Earl Grandison, looking out for a local match for one of the earl's daughters in 1728 felt that 'England in my poor opinion is not so proper a place to match daughters of moderate fortunes, as it is to get a great deal of money for sons'. However even among the resident peers local alliances remained the most popular: of the twelve ennobled families living in the county at the end of the century, eight were married to other Cork titled or 'county' families, three more had married into other Munster families and the exception, the second earl of Shannon, had married the daughter of Speaker Ponsonby; (this may in fact exaggerate the intensity of local alliances, for the wives of the eight baronets show greater geographical distribution). The marriage pattern of the surviving Catholic landowners was slightly different, for potential spouses of landed status at any one time were very limited. The alternatives were to marry down the social scale, to seek out a spouse from further afield or to marry across the denominational divide, which meant conversion of one, usually the Catholic, partner. Families such as the Kenmares and Coppingers were forced to cast over the country for spouses of equal social standing: the Kenmares drew most of their brides from Leinster Catholic families, and young John Coppinger was even brought to England in 1729 to find a bride among North Country Catholic families; ironically his marriage to a Blundell was apparently a love-match with a portion well below that offered by two Munster Catholic families.


193. Copinger, History of the Copinger or Coppingers, pp. 192-5.
This survey of marriage and inheritance practice reveals therefore little evidence of major changes in the social composition of the landed classes in the region. It is true that for much of the century a system of qualified primogeniture accentuated the trend towards smaller estate units but this did not lead to any radical shifts in the character of landownership. It seems probable that the fundamental explanation of this continuity was the sustained upward movement of rental income that was only briefly punctuated by periods of depression. Even in the bad year of 1773, the Earl of Shannon was resisting the pressure of a creditor to sell land rather than seek out another mortgage, as 'I find my estate so rising a one, what if I do not get very highly for it, I shall prefer borrowing for the present'.\textsuperscript{194} It is not clear at what point in time the appreciation of landed property was assumed to be the normal state of things; it would certainly appear that for much of the century family settlements were made on this presupposition.

As has been suggested earlier, attempts to quantify this movement of gross head-rents are bedevilled by inadequate data. Even the sample of figures for half a dozen estates provided in Table 2:ii must be treated with great caution, being based on sources of varying reliability. Contemporary assumptions about the rise in rental income are graphically illustrated by the various estimates of the value of the ex-Clancarty estate: as has been seen it was let for about £8,000 in 1687; it was believed to be worth £10,000 in 1699, £50,000 in 1737 'by improvements', and fully £200,000 by the end of the century.\textsuperscript{195} Such calculations were however probably 'rack' valuations, not statements of the income of a putative

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{194} Earl of Shannon, Castlemartyr to James Dennis, 19 Feb. 1773, Shannon MSS (P.R.O.N.I. D2707/A2/3/25).
\item \textsuperscript{195} Petition of John Hely, Mallow, 5 Sept. 1699 (loc. cit.): Egmont diary, ii, 7 Dec. 1735; 'J.C.', 'Justin MacCarthy, Lord Mountcashel', in J.C.H.A.S. xiii (1907), 162.
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<th>Date</th>
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<td>1772</td>
<td>750</td>
<td>1795</td>
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* This includes the estate settled on the heir c. 1725 the income of which is taken to have been £2,000.

Sources: for Kenmare - E. MacLysaght ed.; The Kenmare MSS (Dublin, 1942), pp. 262. (407, 421); A. Young, A tour of Ireland... in the years 1776, 1777 and 1778... (Dublin, 1780), ii, part 2, p. 82; for Bernard - Bernard rental 1720-7, Doherty MSS (Cork Archives Council); T. Prior, List of absentees of Ireland, 3rd ed. (Dublin, 1769); E. Wakefield, An account of Ireland, statistical and political (London, 1812), i, p. 250; for Cloyne diocese - W. M. Brady, Clerical and parochial records of Cork, Cloyne and Ross (London, 1864), iii, pp. 29-30; for Egmont - rent-rolls of Irish estates 1712, 1749, Egmont MSS (B.L. Add. MS 46,979* p. 123; 47,014); William Taylor, Egmont to Viscount Perceval, 6 March 1732/3, Egmont MSS (B.L. Add. MS 46,999* p. 51); rentals of Egmont estates 1785, 1799, Ryan Purcell MSS (Cork Archives Council); for Grandison - rent-roll, 1701 and Lett., Natch Fitzgerald, London to Earl Grandison, 17 July 1737, Villiers-Stuart MSS F/4 and C/4; for Midleton - rentals 1713, 1753, and 'State of the Dean of Cork's account, 1765', Midleton MSS (Guilford Museum & Monument Room MS 148, 144, and 112); Prior, List of absentees, 1st ed. (Dublin 1789); for Lombard - rent-roll 1772 and rental (s); Lombard MSS (N.I.E. Inc., MSS and MS 2939).
head-landlord; herein lies a problem in the interpretation of the movement of rentals. If as seems likely income rose five- or six-fold for solvent proprietors between the 1690s and 1810s, how far was this a reflection of changing land values as against a redistribution of income between tenant and landlord? This problem is examined in the next chapter, but it may be assumed at this stage that the former was of greater importance.

In other words the relative stability of landed society was achieved primarily by external economic circumstance although in the later part of the century the policies pursued in relation to estate management were also relevant.

The incidence of landed indebtedness in such a context becomes more difficult to identify. With the upward drift of income, indebtedness caused by the placement of high family charges on an estate could be accepted as no more than a short-term curtailment of family spending power. There was indeed an element of deficit budgeting in the thinking behind family settlements, for borrowing on mortgage was frequently a part of the arrangements for portioning younger children. However where indebtedness forced retrenchment or actual land selling, a family's social position could be threatened: it is the incidence of such 'embarrassment' rather than indebtedness per se that is important. A Cork city observer of the anti-tithe agitation of the mid-1780s believed that 'the gentlemen of this country by living beyond their incomes are mostly distressed', but this is clearly an exaggerated generalization, given as an explanation of landed attitudes towards tithe. A survey of the land market has provided a more conservative view of the degree of 'distress', but it is appropriate at this point to review some aspects of landed expenditure to elucidate the causes of embarrassment.

196. J. B. Bennett's notes on Whiteboys, p.50 (N.I.I. MS 4,161).
It has already been seen that absenteeism of the vendor was the common denominator linking much of the larger land sales of the century; conspicuous consumption in English society has been highlighted. There are however several facets of the phenomenon of absenteeism that deserve further examination. In the first place, absenteeism was a factor of decreasing importance in the region over the century; this was partly because of the land sales which curtailed the relative dominance of the absentee aristocracy of 1700; the Burlington/Devonshires, the Orrerys, the Egmonts, the Midletons, all absentee from at least the early eighteenth century remained unambiguously so, but the richest Cork proprietors c.1800, the Kingstons, the Smith-Barrys and the Bernards were all resident. Members of at least the latter two families had indeed been absentee for long periods in England, and few leading families were without some generation in which non-residence had been important. The decision to be non-resident arose from a variety of motives; Sir John Perceval, living mainly in England since his majority c.1703 - in spite of being M.P. for the county 1703-14 - decided finally in 1716 to let the desmesne at Burton Park with the remains of the house that had been burnt down in 1690, and to

197. It is possible that the trend towards residence on the part of the greatest landest families was reversed in the early nineteenth century. Speaking of the country as a whole the Corkman Newenham believed that the 1798 rebellion had brought back absenteeism to a mid-eighteenth-century level (Thomas Newenham, A statistical and historical inquiry into the progress and magnitude of the population of Ireland (London, 1805), p.170) but the existence of increasing non-residence after the Union has been recently questioned (Malcomson, 'Absenteeism', 26). However a local pamphleteer, attacking Munster absentees in 1819, claimed that 'full half of the entire rental of the county of Cork is spent out of that county...' also (and perhaps more significantly) asserting that three-quarters of the rents of Kerry, Clare and Limerick went to absentees (W. Parker, A plea for the poor and industrious... (Cork, 1819), p.10).
sell the lease interest of his co. Dublin house, in the belief that the
delicate health of his wife would be best served by residence in England. However his active entry into English politics and the social life of the Court increased his social distance from Irish connections; his son made efforts to have a residence on the Cork estate by restoring Lohort Castle in the 1740s, but it became apparently no more than an occasional summer retreat for him and his own son, Baron Arden. For the Brodricks, residence on their Irish estates never seems to have been a permanent condition: the father (dec'd.1711) and uncle (dec'd.1680) of Alan, first Viscount Midleton, both heavily involved in Irish affairs, were buried in England; likewise both Alan and his elder brother Thomas, as well as being pre-eminent in national politics, were M.P.s for Cork city and county respectively, but spent the end of their political careers as members of the English parliament. Both Alan's younger brothers were in the legal profession, one in London, the other a judge in Jamaica (and Ireland).

None of the senior descendants resided again in Ireland but the fourth viscount's younger brother Charles (1761-1822) pursued a highly successful career in the Church of Ireland. For most of the century the family maintained a residence at Midleton; how often this was visited is uncertain. The Burlingtons, whose absenteeism from the mid-seventeenth century has already been noticed appear never to have visited their Munster lands in the first half of the eighteenth century, and the record in the subsequent

199. For details of Lohort's reconstruction etc., cf. letters of William Cooley throughout the 1740s in Egmont MSS (B.L. Add. MSS 47,004A & B, 47,005A & B and 47,006).
200. Brodrick genealogy, Betham MSS (Gen. Off. MS 139, p.89); Smith, Cork, i, p.155.
201. Tour through Ireland by two English gentlemen, p.125.
half century of their successors, the Dukes of Devonshire, was little better. They were however an extreme case, for absenteeism was seldom as absolute; the fourth earl of Barrymore was active in English politics, yet spent much of his life at Castlelyons. Francis, elder son of Counsellor Bernard, only became an absentee in middle age, apparently as a result of a bitter dispute with Bandon corporation; unpopularity (after the execution of the local Catholic landowner James Cotter) may also have been one cause of Alan, Viscount Midleton's final absenteeism.

The higher cost of living in London or at an English seat, and the increased openings for conspicuous consumption explain in part the tendency of absentees to be in financial difficulty. However the mortgaging or sale of Irish property was often to fund the purchase of English land, considered a necessary base for social advancement. Sir Philip Perceval and subsequently his brother Sir John were considering c.1680 the purchase of English land - before the family became absentee - as a security 'if trouble should come'. The latter's son was considering an English purchase in 1708 for similar reasons: 'My design being not to live on such a purchase, but to be able on an emergency to raise a sum...'. In April 1720, his prospect of getting an English parliamentary seat through land purchase raised the question of selling part of the Cork estate. And in 1758 the

203. Memoir on Sir James Cotter, p.8, Cotter MSS (N.I.1. MS 711). If this incident in 1720 kept Midleton away from his estates, it was the loss of political office in 1725 that seems to have precipitated his actual departure from Ireland (cf. preamble to will of Viscount Midleton, 19 Apr. 1726 (loc.cit.).
second earl of Egmont obtained a parliamentary act allowing the mortgaging of part of the entailed Cork property to pay for purchases in Somerset.  

The fifth earl of Orrery compounded his financial difficulties by consolidating his Somerset estate through the expenditure of £22,000 in 1749, raised by Irish mortgages; this was in spite of the fact that he was part resident, not on the Munster estate (where the great-grandfather's Charleville house had been burnt in 1690 or in the other residence, Castlemartyr, which had passed to the first earl's second son, Henry Boyle) but at Caledon on his wife's estate in co. Tyrone. The origins of the Midleton estate in Surrey are not clear, but the fourth viscount considered its extension: turning down in 1782 the possibility of bidding for a property contiguous to his Cork estate he expressed a preference to buy around the 'very circumscribed' English property. In 1797 Midleton stated his determination to dispose of those Irish estates 'which are least likely to rise [in rent] and which are the most detached from other property... by proper attention a large sum might be raised either to discharge encumbrances or to lay out in land in England and by so doing I should simplify my affairs...'

The frequency of fraudulent or incompetent management of non-residents' estates was a major cause of their embarrassments. The general character of estate agents is discussed below; here the disasters on a few estates can be noted. The absentee fourth earl of Orrery, after a dispute throughout the 1710s with a former agent's widow over fraudulently set leases,
employed one Brettridge Badham as agent; according to information reaching Orrery by 1724 he was indulging in similar activities. Yet the constraints on an absentee's freedom of action are highlighted by Orrery's admission six years later, when Badham was still agent: 'I must not appear too much exasperated, I must try by gentle means to prevail upon him to own his misbehaviour and to make any reasonable satisfaction in his power lest he should embroil my affairs by secreting and detaining papers, or other yet more wicked methods...'.

The fifth earl, succeeding the following year, appointed a new agent but was driven to enter eighteen law suits as a result of his father's agent: in 1739 Badham and his predecessor were still indebted to Orrery to the sum of £3,000. 'Always imagine you are conversing with Satan when you talk to him', Orrery warned in 1741; Badham escaped his obligations by purchasing a parliamentary seat in 1743 and died shortly after. The responsibility of agents' behaviour for Burlington's nemesis was, as suggested above, only relative. However Andrew Crotty, the head agent in 1725 pronounced 'that no estate... in the King's dominions has been worse treated' by incompetent employees, yet Crotty with his assistants were dismissed ten years later for grossly undersetting the estate in the course of

215. Orrery, Marston to 'Mr. Goolde', 20 May 1741, Orrery MSS (H.U.L. MS Eng. 218/4F/5 [N.L.I. Mic. p789]).
re-letting, and tolerating arrears to build up; in the process they had
'advanced themselves to that degree that their fortunes are admirable'. 218

Other absentees often regretted their choice of agents, and abrupt dismissals
were not uncommon. The problem may have eased in the course of the century,
but grand corruption could still occur: when Sir John Purcell, agent at the
end of the century for a number of north Cork non-residents, died in 1822
it was revealed that debts of £20,000 were owing to the earl of Egmont alone,
for which family he had been agent for thirty-eight years. 219

Absenteeism, as has been recently suggested, was a complex phenomenon;
landowners above a certain income were naturally peripatetic and further,
'internal absenteeism' was at least as common as English residence, a
consequence of regionally fragmented estates and the attractions of Dublin. 220

The Eton-educated Lord Kingsborough's behaviour illustrates the phenomenon.
Married in 1769, he lived at first in Dublin but moved to London for a
year after family quarrels. He then went with his wife on a Grand Tour before
coming to Mitchelstown to embark on a programme of building and estate
reform. Yet a family house in Dublin was maintained for the Spring season,
and English visits seem to have been annual. 221 In fact a Dublin residence

218. Richard Baggs, Lismore to Henry Boyle, 24 Nov. 1736, Shannon MSS
(N.L.I. MS 13,235); A just and true relation of Josias Bateman's
concern, under the Right Hon. Richard, Earl of Burlington,... since...

Purcell, 16 March 1825, Ryan Purcell MSS (Cork Archives Council).

220. Malcomson, 'Absenteeism', passim.

221. Young, Tour, ii, part 1, pp. 276-8; E. C. McAleer, The sensitive plant:
a life of Lady Mount Cashell (Chapel Hill, 1958), pp.18-9, 23, 57-8;
S. Watson's Almanack for 1783 (Dublin, /c. 1783/).
TABLE 2:iii

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>c. 1783</th>
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<td>CORK PEERS (temporal and spiritual)</td>
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<td>locally resident:</td>
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<tr>
<td>CORK MPs locally resident:</td>
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<td>without Dublin or English addresses</td>
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Sources: S. Watson's Almanack for 1783 (Dublin, [c.1783]); J. Watson Stewart's Almanack for 1800 (Dublin, [c.1800]).

for locally residing peers - as well as local MPs - appears to have been popular, if perhaps in decline at the end of the century. The Kingstons, Shannons and Mountcashels at that time maintained great Dublin houses but some of the others in Table 2:iii may have held little more than rented accommodation for the parliamentary and legal sessions. Internal absenteeism was never, it seems, total: there is no record of a large Cork landowner residing in Dublin who did not also maintain a base in Cork, unlike the practice of those who normally resided in England. And Baron Lisle, who as well as holding Cork and Dawson St. addresses in 1783, had a second Dublin residence at Blackrock, was exceptional.222 But clearly much of the conspicuous consumption of leading families was taking place in Dublin; as a correspondent near Charleville remarked in the winter of 1743: 'This country is now very dull, all our members of parliament and their families being in Dublin, and so are numbers of our gentlemen who have money to spend

222. Watson's Almanack for 1783.
or who have any hopes of preferment'. Cork city provided only brief competition at Assizes time.

The gentlemen with money to spend did not of course restrict their conspicuous consumption to the metropolis. Two major forms of local non-productive spending were house-building and political activity, both of which provided landmarks in the financial history of certain families. The magnitude of house-building activity in the two or three generations before 1750 can be gauged by the comments in Charles Smith's survey of the county of that year: of the two hundred seats mentioned by him outside the liberties of the city, less than an eighth were explicitly described as being in part or in toto old castellated structures, and a great many were of decidedly recent origin. It can be conservatively assumed that one half of the country houses of 1750 were less than fifty years old. Yet of the larger houses that were being built, none competed with the Palladian mansions in the neighbourhood of Dublin: in terms of size only Kingston's palatial Gothic castle at Mitchelstown of the 1820s was to be comparable. In a sense, the demands of provincial entertainment made the really great house unnecessary. Speaker Boyle's Castlemartyr, although the largest house in east Cork in the 1730s, was probably built by his father, and bore no comparison with Speaker Conolly's Castletown. When in 1755 the Lord Lieutenant made the first visit of a royal deputy to the county in fifty years, it was at the house of Francis Carleton, a leading city merchant, that he was entertained. In the first


224. Smith, Cork, passim.

225. Josias Bateman's concern, p.35.

226. Cork Journal, 2 and 5 June 1755.
half of the century few new buildings probably rivalled the great late seventeenth-century houses of Orrery or of the Percévals, although the Barrymores appear to have greatly extended the old structure of Castlelyons — valued at £40,000 when it was destroyed by fire in 1771 — and the Earl of Inchiquin was reported to be ruining himself by his building operations at Rostellan in 1708, which activity he was combining with the construction of 'a great house' in Dublin; an observer's comment on his Rostellan enterprise two years later was probably a sentiment to be frequently echoed: 'there never will be an end. God help him...'. One larger house of early eighteenth-century date in the region was the new Killarney house of the titular earl of Kenmare, a surprising venture both because of the religion and delicate financial position of the builder.

The financing of house-building remains obscure but the timing of some of the major building starts — Doneraile Court and Mount North in the 1730s, Mitchelstown Castle and Deane's Dromore in the 1770s, Castle Bernard and Ballynatrarry in the 1790s, Castle Hyde in the 1800s — was related to the

227. Tuckey, Cork remembrancer, p.159.


passing of an estate to a new generation or to the arrival of a bride, rather than to short-term changes in interest rates. Indeed the dowry may have directly financed some house-building, although it must be assumed that many had to borrow. Sir Robert Deane probably used both sources: marrying the sole heir of John Fitzmaurice of Springfield Castle, co. Limerick in 1775 he had begun by the next year to build Dromore 'a very large house', but within eight years and after reportedly spending £30,000 was effectively bankrupt: he was forced to demolish his building and sell the materials. 231 (His embarrassments were only partly because of the house, for in 1788 his mother believed that 'her lost son...owes his destruction to a long residence in [Italy]...', 232 presumably before he commenced building; the costs of acquiring his peerage were a further factor.) This abortive project was to replace a house, according to Smith in 1750, 'lately rebuilt with an elegant front of hewn stone', 233 and there are other cases of rebuilding as fashions changed. Counsellor Bernard built the first brick and corinthian-pilastered Castle Bernard onto an older castle in 1715, but his great-grandson, inheriting in 1790, demolished it and began rebuilding in 1794 in the Gothic manner. 234 And changing preference for the location of houses - from low sheltered ground surrounded by plantations to hill sites amid lawns 235 - must have nudged

231. Daniel Beaufort, Journal for 1788:1, p.85 (T.C.D. MS K.6.59); Young, Tour, ii, part 1, p.29. For differing (and later) estimates of the house's cost, cf. J. C. Grove White, Historical and topographical notes on Buttevant... (Cork, 1913), iii, pp.82-3.

232. Mrs. Tighe to William Tighe, 3 June 1788, Tighe MSS (P.R.O.N.I. D2685/1/12).

233. Smith, Cork, i, p.309.

234. Robert Reeves, Dublin to Sir William Heathcote, 8 Dec. 1794, Heathcote MSS (P.R.O.N.I. T3091/261); Bence-Jones, 'Celtic twilight', 1264.

landowners into unnecessary rebuilding.

A building programme did not necessarily produce indebtedness. Lord Bandon felt able in 1794 to discharge an old debt of £8,000 and the expenses of building Castle Bernard 'out of his income', although within a few months he was seeking a delay in paying off the debt because of 'some unexpected calls for money...'.

Lord Henry Stuart, who had married the heir of Dromana in 1802 made his first visit to the property in the following year; he weighed up the desirability of building against the need to disencumber the estate which would take five or six years, commenting that 'our stay at Dromana was so much to our satisfaction... that we intend frequent visits but judged it more prudent to wait till everything is clear before we undertake a new house, and be in a larger place than the Rock House; I intend to have the new part of the mansion house pulled down, the old part thoroughly repaired [in the mean time]...'.

Death however intervened to save Lady Grandison's edifice of the 1770s.

House building could in fact be adjusted to the availability of funds, because it was often a process drawn out over many years, except where an architect was working under contract. Unfinished building and sparse furnishings were sometimes in evidence. But it was more in the sphere

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236. Reeves, Cork to Heathcote, 6 Apr. 1795, Heathcote MSS (P.R.O.N.I. T3091/267).


238. It is assumed that she was responsible for the enlargements of that decade, cf. P. Sandby, The Virtuosi's Museum, 2nd ed. (London, 1781), ii, notes appended to plate 15.


240. Garretstown House (Courceys) - lacking any central block to connect the wings - is almost certainly an example of the former. For a reference to the latter cf. Elizabeth Conner, 'Visits to Longueville c. 1805-15' in Bulletin of the Irish Georgian Society iii (1960), 27.
of external improvements - orchards, gardens, plantations and general landscaping - that spending could continue as occasion permitted for decades. The social benefits of such spending could be real and permanent enough: on the laying of the foundation stone at Castle Bernard, Bandon was praised by the radical Cork Gazette for the employment he would provide 'for some hundreds of poor for a year or two at least'. The labour content in house construction was probably eclipsed by the costs of materials and fittings, but in external improvements labour was the preponderant charge; of course materials themselves were largely local, aside from the increasingly important foreign timber. Labour costs in money terms were reduced by the settlement of building labourers and craftsmen onto their own plots on an estate: thus the origins of several estate villages such as Cecilstown and Curryglass. Such a practice of part-payment in kind further discouraged a hasty building programme. The impact of the spending of up to several thousand pounds over several years on an underdeveloped local economy was considerable, for beyond the 'public works' aspect, the demand for craftsmen, from glaziers and plumbers to architects and draughtsmen, created a pool of skills that could be more 'productively' applied in an urban and proto-industrial setting.


244. For late eighteenth-century estimates of building costs for a range of house sizes by an architect of Cork origin, see those of Richard Morrison in his Useful and ornamental designs in architecture (Dublin, 1793), quoted in de Breffny and ffollmott, Houses of Ireland, pp. 169-70.
Political involvement could be as expensive an activity as major building. While county Cork continued politically stable superficially, under the influence of the Brodricks, the Boyles and at the end of the century the leaders of faction, there was ample opportunity inside that framework for the working out of family ambitions. There is little evidence - at least after the Hanoverian succession - that the major impulse driving families into politics was other than the honour of a seat, and the hope of emolument and family advancement. Offices and places however were generally gained - nationally and locally - through membership of the local parliamentary group, not through direct relations with the administration. It was possible through alliance with the dominant families to remain solidly of the country interest and yet enjoy some of the fruits of a parliamentary seat.

Political spending could take the form of costs associated with the preservation of a family interest in a close borough (only in the totally 'rotten' boroughs could this be discounted), of purchase costs of a close borough or of a seat in such, or of campaign costs where an attempt was being made to build up an interest at open borough, county or city level.

Of the eleven boroughs in co. Cork, four were manor or potwalloping ones - Doneraile, Mallow, Baltimore and Rathcormack - and the remainder corporation ones: Youghal, Kinsale, Charleville, Bandon, Clonakilty, Midleton and Castlemartyr; of the latter, at least two were pocket boroughs - Midleton and Castlemartyr - while the others were in varying degrees close. Spending in a close borough generally revolved around the maintenance of minimum attention to the freemen of a borough: 'without much application, good words and kind promises, few people have success in elections' the fifth earl of Orrery, controller in theory of the borough of Charleville, was reminded by his agent in 1740. 245 His cousin, Speaker Boyle, was

245. Richard Purcell, Kanturk to the Earl of Orrery, 27 June 1740, Orrery MSS (N.U.L. MS Eng. 218/4F/7 [N.I.L. Mic. p789]).
'befriending' the burgesses to weaken Orrery's control: his absentee son, the seventh earl, lost control of at least half the borough because he 'does not spend one penny of his income among his tenants, nor ever did one act for the good of his town, nor even for the numerous poor of it, the paltry sum of five guineas excepted, which he generously distributed among them when he was here about ten years ago'; the Speaker's son insinuated himself into the borough by promises to contribute to such things as the repair of the market-house and the shambles. In Rathcormack, of which it was said c. 1770 that James Barry 'had the natural interest here but his father being idle and negligent and he not much better the interest is almost gone', the parliamentary seats only became merchandizable again when a new owner, Richard Tonson, re-imposed full control on the manor borough. More expensive management was required in larger boroughs such as Youghal, or the Waterford borough of Dungarvan, where corporation politics had to be monitored for the landowner if the interests of the estate on which the towns stood were not to suffer. Burlington agents were attempting in 1703 to hold the loyalty of the townsmen in Dungarvan during a municipal election where an opposition was stating 'that they would ease them of the Castle [i.e. duty] fish, recover for them the commons and promising to lend them money, besides their sinister ways of procuring subscriptions as well by the aforesaid vain suggestions as by naggins of brandy and pots of ale...'. In practice, management came to be devolved, by the Burlingtons onto Speaker Boyle - to their cost - and by Boyle and his son onto local families of influence, in Youghal for instance onto the Ulickes who appear to have largely dominated

corporation politics. For a resident family such as the Donerailes or the Jephsons, the ownership of near-closed boroughs was the basis for an alliance with Boyle and his successors. When under threat, as the Jephsons were in Mallow from the 1770s because of the incursions of the neighbouring Cotter and Longfield families - both, to begin with, Shannon's friends also - they responded vigorously if unsuccessfully, by creating numerous freeholds. As Denham Jephson told his son in 1775 'next sessions I must make fifty freeholders, a reduction of income of £100 p.a.', and again at election time in 1783, more were being created.250

Although most borough controllers were intimately associated with the parliamentary faction leaders, the marketing of borough seats was becoming increasingly noticeable. Before the Octennial Act of 1768 only one borough was sold in co. Cork, and the record survives of only two sales of seats: when Burlington sold his Clonakilty estate to Speaker Boyle, it was understood that the borough patronage was being conveyed with it, yet there was no specific allowance made for it in the purchase price.251 However when both seats at Rathcormack were vacant in 1743 they were sold for a considerable sum: 'Col. Barry has made a pretty penny of his borough, he has got 600 guineas of Berthridge [sic] Badham, and £700 of Mr. Leeson... besides what there might have been settled with Lloyd the new rector...'. One of the Doneraile seats was sold in the same year.252 The indeterminate length of


252. Edmund Spencer, nr. Charleville to Francis Price, 8 Nov. 1743, Puleston MSS (N.L.W. MS 3580C [N.I. Mic. p 3263]).
parliaments posed a problem in valuation of such deals before 1768. The ambitious James Cotter got round the problem by offering in 1755 £1,000 for a seat 'with the condition of being re-elected in case his Majesty should die in five years'. Nomination in itself did not end the possible costs for a candidate: John Usher, a Burlington agent receiving free the recommendation to Dungarvan in 1746, still expected to pay out over £400 during the fifteen months before parliament met in drinking with the townsmen, because of opposition from the local Osbornes, even though the latter had no chance of success.

Once the length of parliaments became more predictable it seems that seats became more marketable; the incumbent of Mallow believed in 1774 that 'seats in parliament are of late years become so honourable, and such distinctive marks of intrinsic worth and virtue, that every gentleman of fortune aspires thereto...'. It has been estimated that seats rose in value nationally to £2,000 - £2,500 as a consequence. Three were sold in the region for the latter sum in 1796. Many of the purchasers came from outside, and included of course the government itself; some were local like the barrister James Chatterton, who in 1783 'bought his seat for

257. Note of letter, Viscount Longueville to C. B. Kippax, 12 May 1796 in P.R.O.I. Calendar of Official Papers (not extant), i.
Doneraile... upon a speculation, hoping for professional advancement but,' according to the administration's memorandum he was 'not an object of necessary attention, as perfectly unconnected, and of low education and very moderate talents'. Other local purchasing occurred for less pecuniary but equally purposive motives: Sir Robert Deane had bought three seats for the government - it is not clear where - by 1780 'on his voyage to the peerage', while William Hare laid out £12,000 in 1796 securing seats for government in return for his elevation to the Ennismore title. Richard Tonson, as the controller of Rathcormack, offered his seats to government in return for the Riversdale title which he received in 1783.

For an absentee with a borough interest the problems of management were greater and the rewards less, as the Burlington family found. Edward Southwell, having an unsteady influence in Kinsale, tired of the problem when he wrote in 1736 'the contest with Sir Richard Meade makes the whole corporation so importunate on me, that unless I get quite free from them, I never must expect to receive much rent or any peace from that quarter', adding that he only preserved his interest to save his honour, not to let down his friends there and to prevent the satisfaction of his enemies.

He planned to sell the town estate to Meade but never carried this out; in fact the family interest was maintained in the long term through the

258. Johnson, 'Members of the Irish parliament, 1784-7', 175.
261. Sayles, 'Contemporary sketches... in 1782', 241; 'Falkland'. Parliamentary representation, p. 20.
appointment of non-resident freemen from the Southwell estate in co. Down, and the
toleration by the family of one local independent.263 The close borough of
Midleton involved no management problems and was the centre of the
Brodrick estate, therefore the family, although without Irish political
connections latterly, did not deign to become borough-mongers. Lady
Midleton's agent did suggest in 1768 that each person returned for the
borough should give a fixed sum towards the improvement of the town of
Midleton,264 but a more direct control was favoured by Lord Midleton
in 1784: 'I am clear that the consequence of the family is much interested
in retaining the borough while they do not reside as it gives an
opportunity of obliging in a high degree the first persons in that country,
and of keeping up connections which otherwise would be constantly
weakening'.265

Campaign spending - on a scale to affect family solvency - was
generally restricted to contests at county level and in the county borough
of Cork city. The papers of Henry Boyle and his son reveal little of
their finances; how far the ongoing cost of entertainment at county and
parliamentary levels - such as the two-day dinner and ball provided for
all by Lord Boyle at the Cork Assizes in 1752266 - explain the moderateness
of the Shannon fortune in the course of the century can only be assumed.
It is quite clear that entertainment in its various forms was the prime and
very considerable expense in electioneering. As given by one candidate in

264. Memorandum by the Dean of Cork on Midleton borough, 1768,
Midleton MSS (G.M. & M.R. MS 145/102).
265. Copy, Viscount Midleton to Charles Brodrick, 1 June 1784,
266. Richard Purcell, Kanturk to the Earl of Egmont, 27 March 1752,
Egmont MSS (B.L. Add. MS 47,003, f. 76).
the Kerry by-election of 1743 it included four tons of wine and twenty bullocks. The sums spent by individual candidates in county elections was very much affected by the nature of the contest: in the heated four-cornered party-dominated contest of 1714, Alan Brodrick had spent £500 many months before the death of Anne foreclosed the campaign, competing for the whig vote with Henry Boyle, who was personally riding about the county to see 'everybody'. On the rumour of a county vacancy in 1742 Barrymore, willing to take on the Speaker, prepared to back his son, forwarding £2,000 for the purpose. The rumour was false but Barrymore later claimed he would have spent £10,000 in support of his son. It took the resources of one of the richest men in the county, Lord Kingsborough, to break in 1783 the run of Shannon's 'friends' monopolizing the representation of the county - at unknown cost. The other more hidden expense in county electioneering was the interference of political considerations in a profit-maximizing estate policy. The creation of freeholds for instance must often have been for political considerations; even as early as the 1670s Sir Philip Percival had created leases for lives 'that his tenants might be... enabled to vote for him'. Alternatively gentlemen-tenants could expect promises of favoured treatment in return for support: in 1714 eighty of Burlington's tenants holding leases for years on the estate but freeholds on other estates, were inclined towards

267. Edmund Spencer, nr. Charleville to Francis Price, 22 Nov. 1743, (loc.cit.).


270. Copy, 'Mr. Mead', Kinsale to Sir John Perceval, 16 Jan. 1680/1, Egmont MSS (B.L. Add. MS 47,024, f. 56).
supporting Henry Boyle, partly in the hope that he could secure longer leases for them when his cousin came of age two years later and the estate was re-let. 271

County participation in the Cork city elections also provided instances of major spending where support was being sought in the corporation. For most parliaments of the century an alderman or one closely in touch with the merchant interest - notably the Hely-Hutchinsons - shared representation of the city with county families more or less connected with the major factions. At a by-election in 1731 between Jonas Morris and William Newenham, the latter, a place-holder, was defeated after a petition, when it was said that the election had cost him 'already £4,000 and must greatly hurt his family. He depends upon his interest...'. 272 At another by-election in 1739 which was expected to be the stiffest ever, Barrymore backed the winner, the landowner Matthew Deane, who before electioneering was over had spent £900. 273 When Richard Longfield sought to build up a new borough-based grouping, he did so with his wife's fortune and a city seat for a power-base. By buying a number of seats outside the county and seeking friends within it, 274 he constructed with Kingsborough a 'popular' faction. In Cork city itself he tried with Augustus Warren, whose family had broken with Shannon, to capture both seats in 1783 for the group, but only Warren was elected, with Longfield forced to purchase a seat at Baltimore. 275 The financing of the 1783 election had severe repercussions for Warren and many others, as Hely-Hutchinson's agent observed a year later,

271. Dering to Perceval, c. Apr. 1714 (loc.cit.).
274. Johnston, 'Irish House of Commons in 1791', 47.
in the aftermath of the collapse of Warren's bank: 'the expenses of that election, together with the large sums lent to people that had votes, was the cause of giving a shake to the bank at first; that is all now removed, and their interest in future will be of little consequence...'.

In bankruptcy the Warrens' political ambitions seem to have ended, but Longfield was re-elected for the city in 1790; after his elevation to the peerage in 1795 his own estimate was that £20,000 was spent in the ensuing denominationally-charged by-election, in which the future Lord Ennismore was successful.

How far was political spending either productive or profit-orientated? Beyond creating heightened demand for the innkeeper and the wine merchant, it was not more productive than traditional feasting hospitality. Embezzlement at such times of uncontrolled open-handedness may have spread the gains, as the agent of Earl Grandison implied when commenting on an innkeeper's bill of £100 for one night's entertainment of Dungarvan freeholders in 1730: 'it was impossible for them to consume all that they are charged with there, unless they cast the liquor into the street...I find there was but 70 horses which makes the number, including servants, to be but as many men. Sure, had they been fully extravagant, six shillings a man would have been sufficient for one night'.

Some could enter politics as James Chatterton for professional career advancement, others in a less discriminating hunt for places as the career of John Hely-Hutchinson would imply: the still 'popular' member for Cork city, with an income in 1775 from offices of £4,900 to himself and over £2,000 to his family 'is still dissatisfied and ever will be until


277. Note of letter, Viscount Longueville to C. B. Kippax, 12 May 1796 (loc.cit.).

278. Maurice Ronayne to Earl Grandison, 9 Apr. 1730, Villiers Stuart MSS C.
he engrosses the station of primate, chancellor, Lord Chief Justice...

Provost etc. in his person'. In the same year Shannon held a £3,000 pension and an office worth £1,800, but he had much greater entertainment and management costs; his 'friends' were in receipt of over £2,000 from offices held. It was the kudos for family at national level and the influence in the local sphere that justified political spending for the individuals involved. Those who could control the appointment of the sheriff and thereby the composition of the Grand Jury, largely determined county presentments, the routing of new roads and the granting of market patents. The county patronage that Boyle, Shannon and their successors operated for their friends and their dependents reached from influence in the creation of peers to recommendations to low appointments in the Revenue service. Longfield as Governor of the county even sought to control nominations to the Catholic hierarchy in 1791.

Political power was however impermanent and title was not. Some sought the peerage for mundane reasons, like Francis Bernard, who when applying to Shannon in 1788 emphasized that it was not for ambition but to avoid having to attend the Commons to serve Shannon's interest; others, by the prices they paid, seem to have been more grasping. The advantage of seeking a title over a parliamentary seat was identified by

280. Ibid. p. 65.
281. Earl of Shannon, Castlemartyr to Lord Boyle, 6 July 1791, Shannon MSS (N.L.I. MS 13,303).
Earl Grandison's agent in 1727: 'I find your Lordship has been prevailed on to be concerned in elections: your Lordship is the better judge of the advantage to be gained by the like proceedings, but... I should think it would be of more consequence to be at more expense in getting an English title which would still continue in the family...'.

As an ironic footnote to eighteenth-century local politics, the compensation of £15,000 given to borough patrons under the Act of Union - twenty years purchase at the rate for seats of a few years earlier - helped recoup some depleted fortunes. The earl of Clandore, patron of Ardfert, co. Kerry, was given the news thus: 'the liberal consideration spoken of for boroughs will, I trust, effect an entire revolution in your affairs, will enable you, if well applied, to extinguish annuities, discharge principal debts, in short, to redress your income and estate, and then to live with suitable credit'. In the event, it was his creditors, not he who benefited. But the owners of such boroughs in co. Cork - Baltimore, Castlemartyr, Charleville, Clonakilty, Doneraile, Midleton and Rathcormack - which were disenfranchised and thus deemed to come under this provision, were more successful. In spite of the claims of those who had bought seats at Rathcormack and Doneraile for the sitting parliament, it was the vendors who received the compensation. The family that gained most from compensation was predictably the Shannons, who received £37,500 for their patronage of Castlemartyr, Clonakilty and half of Charleville.

285. Proceedings of the commissioners under the Union Compensation Act..., H.C. 1803/4 (159) viii, pp. 8-9, 21, 24, 36; Return... of all claims for compensation on account of all representative franchises... 1805, H.C. 1833 xxxv. For the effect of the compensation on Shannon's finances, cf. Shannon, Castlemartyr to Boyle, 30 March 1802, Shannon MSS (N.I.1. MS 13,304/1).
III

LANDLORD AND TENANT: THE EARLY EIGHTEENTH CENTURY
The owners of land held the central social and political position in eighteenth-century south Munster; the relationship between them and the active managers of the soil, the main tenantry, was perhaps the most important economic nexus. Changes in the nature of this relationship were very considerable in the course of the century, as landed attitudes were revised and the composition of the tenantry was altered. But from the landlords' viewpoint there was at least one continuity; this lay in the loosely-defined concept of 'improvement' - that landed property was in an underdeveloped state and that proper management lay in its progressive development. In part this was a carry-over from the seventeenth-century notion of implanting 'civilitie', and Protestant landlords were not alone in a belief that the community was moving away from a recent uncivilized past; thus when discussing the prospect of a decline in trade in 1750 the Cork Catholic merchant John Falvey expressed the fear that the country might return 'to its primitive state of beggary and poverty'.

Improvement had an emphatically cultural dimension, whether with reference to manners or to the landscape. But what Professor Mingay has observed of eighteenth-century England could be applied locally: 'when landlords spoke of 'improvement', it was usually an 'improved rental' they had in mind'. Thus although the 'improvements' around gentlemen's seats alluded to by Smith in his mid-century survey of co. Cork were overwhelmingly ornamental (horticultural and architectural) rather than productive, the 'improvement' of an estate implied raising the level of agricultural activity, either through limited intensification of land use or, more


importantly, through reclamation, in order to increase its value over time. But improvement always meant slightly more than mere profit maximization: estate development as will be seen was shaped by more than economic factors.

In whatever form, the improvement of an estate was by the early eighteenth century seen almost entirely in the context of the letting out of land rather than of the direct participation of landowners in farming operations. As has been suggested, this had not been the case in the early phases of the Munster plantation, but the importance of desmesne farming would seem to have been small by the late seventeenth century. The evidence suggests that the desmesne farms did not disappear - except on the estates of perpetual absentee - but that production for the market became insignificant. There remained the considerable demands of resident landlords' own households which were to an extent serviced by the home-farm - although the peripatetic life-style of most larger owners must have limited the scale of domestic production. In the 1720s the occupants of up to six townlands around Castle Bernard were paying rent by labour services (in contrast to the rest of the estate), and yet desmesne output was not able to make the household self-sufficient, for frequent purchases were made of wheat, malt and butter in the years for which accounts survive; beyond the sale of flax to the Macroom linen company in which Francis Bernard was himself a partner, little was marketed. In 1730 the mainly resident Viscount Kenmare was holding desmesne valued at £200 p.a. - some 4% of his total property - and this it seems was enough to provide self-sufficiency in basic foodstuffs. But the desmesne of the building enthusiast,

3. Rental and account-book 1720-7 of Bernard estate, Doherty MSS. For evidence of continuous farming activities on the Doneraile desmesne from at least 1729, see references to (now missing) estate account-books in 'Report on the Doneraile papers' in Ana. Hib.xv (1944), 353.

4. Daniel Cromine, Rathmore to Viscount Kenmare, 14 Aug. 1730 in Maclysaght, Kenmare MSS, p.46.
the third earl of Inchiquin, was assumed to be only worth £80 p.a. in 1720 after his death (although parts of the 'park' were being let out). On the Grandison desmesne at Dromana in the 1730s, hops were being cultivated on newly reclaimed land, stables and cow-houses were being extended, and some stock was being marketed (at least at a time when Earl Grandison was not in residence). Three decades later, on Grandison's death, the corn, stock 'etc.' at Dromana were valued at £1,000. Grandison however was ahead of his time in having an interest in agricultural experiment: not only was his steward encouraged to use rye grass and clover, but in 1729 he himself joined with the English discoverer of a compound manure in securing an Irish patent, agreeing also to finance Irish manufacture of the new product. The scheme proved a failure, but Grandison seems to have active at Dromana for some years, 'very busy minding all affairs like a farmer'. Other landowners shared an interest in things agricultural: George Rye of Ryecourt was a striking example; posthumously described by Smith as 'a great planter and improver', he was the owner of a small Muskerry estate and author of the very practical Considerations on agriculture.

5. Rental of the fourth earl of Inchiquin, 1720, Inchiquin MSS (N.L.I. MS 14,371).


published in 1730 and apparently the first comprehensive account of Irish agricultural practice.

Some landowners were drawn temporarily into farming when tenants surrendered their holdings abruptly or went bankrupt. In the difficult years at the beginning of the century and again in the early 1740s, this was fairly widespread. Thus a neighbour observed of Hayes St. Leger 'a great tyrant' and his Liscarrrol estate that 'his tenants have fled, and he has stocked the lands with bullocks and dry stock...'. But at most times there was a ready demand for grass for 'graziers' (dry-stock held by itinerant herdsmen) so that landlords could usually avoid having to buy stock themselves; even where they had to possess a farm it was seldom for more than two or three years. And there were several other ways in which landlord agricultural activity could extend beyond the desmesne: as an extension to the interest in planting around and landscaping a seat, a few landowners established nurseries, to supply their own needs and to encourage their tenants to plant. Lord Perceval, an enthusiast for planting, had two nurseries: in the years 1743-4 thirteen tenants were supplied with 35,000 apple, ash and crab saplings from them. At Dromana there were also two nurseries with a range of forest soft-wood saplings, totalling almost 108,000 in 1729. Most landowners however were less active in this area, and although they may have enjoined their tenants to quickset ditches and otherwise plant, they continued in somewhat less dramatic fashion the seventeenth-century extractive approach towards


11. List of trees given to tenants by Lord Perceval, 1743-4, Egmont MSS (B.L. Add. MS 47,008A, f.110).

dwindling timber resources. More important, if no more widespread in the early decades of the century, was reclamation activity financed and carried out by landowners. Where this took place it seems to have been confined to the draining of low-lying marshy land, a process which required the centralized direction and resources of a landlord; in contrast the clearance of scrub and the bringing in of upland could be carried on piecemeal by tenants themselves. Kilcrea bog on the (western) Bride river, formerly part of the Clancarty estate, was drained and reclaimed by three of the new owners c. 1705, creating several hundred profitable acres. 13 No less extensive was the draining of Annagh bog on the Awbeg, on which Viscount Perceval spent nearly £1,000 in the years after 1723 when the lease of which the bog was part had fallen in. 14

George Rye suggested that the cheapness of land discouraged landlords from any form of capital investment; referring to the country as a whole, he claimed '£3 will purchase an acre of good land, and it is very doubtful with most, whether that sum will reduce a bog'. 15 But at an earlier period just as landowners appear to have engaged more actively in farming, so had they also carried out reclamation more widely, as Viscount Perceval reminded his agent in 1724 when he contemplated more extensive intervention beyond the draining of Annagh bog: 'when my great-grandfather bought his estate he was at the expense himself of draining, enclosing,


15. [G. Rye], Considerations upon agriculture (Dublin, 1730), p.75.
planting, liming and building which having done in a convenient manner
he then set the lands at a great improved value'. His agent Berkeley
Taylor answered that the conditions of ninety years later were differ-
tent and that it was unwise for Perceval to have coarse land limed and cul-
tivated before it was reset: 'I presume when your great-grandfather improved
his estate, land was low and the country very woody, which made arable
much dearer in proportion than unimproved land, and it is probable that he
had ploughs and conveniences of his own, and maybe, obliged some of his
poorer tenants to give work', but now the hire of implements and labour
would not justify the expense where 'your Lordship... must pay the ready
penny for everything'. Even the prospect of periodic absence was a
sufficient deterrent for another landowner, Viscount Kenmare, who noted c.1755
his reasons for not engaging in a riverine reclamation on part of his
Killarney estate: 'I once had thought of performing this improvement at my
expense before I set these lands, but... I shall be under the necessity of
going to England for some time for my children's education and... in my
absence such attempts would never be effectually performed, and only a
pretence for imposition'. But the management problem seems to have re-
mained even for the normally resident: thus William Taylor remarked of his
perpetuity interest, 'I do not make by three [shillings] per acre as much
of these lands of Egmont I could set them for, nor is it possible for [any]
gentleman who is obliged to leave the management to servants to do it were
they ever so honest'.

16. Copy, Viscount Perceval, London to Berkeley Taylor, 10 Nov. 1724,
Egmont MSS (B.L. Add. MS 46,989*, p.122 /N.L.I. Mic. p4,676/).

17. Berkeley Taylor, Ballymacow, to Perceval, 8 Dec. 1724, Egmont MSS
(B.L. Add. MS 46,989*, p.133 /N.L.I. Mic. p 4,676/).

18. Observations on his estate by Thomas, Viscount Kenmare, c.1755 in
MacLysaght, Kenmare MSS, pp.225-6.

MSS (B.L. Add. MS 47,001*, p.198/N.L.I. Mic. p 4,678/).
In a sense, both the level of desmesne farming and of involvement in improvements on land to be let was a function of relative backwardness. Just as in the seventeenth century for the region as a whole, so in the less accessible districts for much of the eighteenth century, circumstances probably necessitated more direct involvement; Sir Richard Cox, recalling the bad condition of his estate around Dunmanway in the 1730s, described how he had found himself 'daily sinking into debts... For the little money I received, was usually employed in repairing houses and farms, which always fell upon me, in a ruinous condition'.

There is little evidence that the limited agricultural activity of the landed class was the result of group contempt for those who depended on farm, as opposed to rentier income, for although an interest in the new agricultural practices being popularized in eighteenth-century England only began to develop slowly after mid-century, it was to replace a mild indifference rather than hostility to men such as Rye and Grandison. When Arthur Jephson, the landlord of Mallow, remarked to Viscount Perceval that he had 'several sons and would be much pleased to have any of 'em settled near Mallow, and though farming is not (I hope) what any of 'em are to depend on, yet [they] would be glad of a place of retirement', it was implicit that gentlemen would only actively farm from undesirable necessity.

This was stated more explicitly by fifteen leading Catholic gentlemen of co. Cork when denying the obscurity of the future Catholic bishop of Cloyne's ancestors: 'they have never degenerated by following any vile or mechanical profession, but have always lived in a decent and credible manner,

20. A letter from Sir Richard Cox, Bart. to Thomas Prior Esq., shewing... a sure method to establish the linen manufacture... (Dublin, 1749), p.6.

in the farming way, as all other Roman Catholic gentlemen in this kingdom are generally obliged to do, ever since the Cromwellian and Revolution forfeitures of Irish estates'. Farming was therefore no vile profession, no bar as such to those who aspired to genteel status, but to be profitable it evidently required a degree of personal supervision that placed unwelcome restrictions on the style of living which most landowners felt appropriate to their status, and to which most 'gentlemen' aspired.

If land was generally let out, and if the active intervention of landowners was restricted, how was the 'improvement' of their estates to be achieved? There were basically two ways of influencing development, firstly in the choice of tenant, secondly in the mode of letting land.

The existence of a considerable degree of choice in the selection of those to whom land would be let is a reminder of the colonial-type conditions of the early eighteenth-century south Munster economy. There was a recent history of changes in land-use and ownership, and in spite of rapid commercial expansion, land was still cheap and capital scarce. In many districts there had been considerable settlement disturbance, particularly where the plantation aim of attracting English immigrants had been realized. Precedents therefore existed for the substantial transformation of estates through the introduction of outsiders which forceful landowners could hope to emulate in the early eighteenth century. The qualities generally sought in a tenant were almost precisely those of the plantation period; they were neatly summarized by the Bandon agent of Viscount Carleton in 1717: 'Your Lordship have [sic] begun the most reasonable... method that can be for the Protestant interest and for the improvement and honour of the estate, to prefer

22. Petition of gentlemen of the county of Cork, 3 June 1747, Stuart MS 285/43 (Windsor Castle).
resident improving Protestants [to] others who will not reside nor improve... Tis what the gentlemen of the country are glad to hear.'

The belief that Protestantism and industriousness went naturally together was at the heart of the systematic preference for Protestant tenants that most landlords shared in this period; the assumption was not so much that all English were industrious, but that the inclination was as strong among them as it was weak among the old Irish. Thus the agent of the Petty property in Kerry in the 1690s, observing the low rental of the estate, wondered 'what the same would yield had their natures allowed the Irish gentlemen to build good houses, plant orchards, set out fields with double ditch and quick and other improvements as by their leases they [were] bound to do'.

A similar assumption was attributed to the Great Earl of Cork by an eighteenth-century commentator on the Youghal, Tallow and Lismore estates: 'All this so fine an English colony, which the late Earl Richard took such pains and cost to plant here, by bringing with him families out of England, and encouraging those of English extract... whose industry he liked, for their improvements, and would not set a lease to a native, because they are quite the reverse to improvements'.

When wishing to emphasize the bad state of a farm on the Perceval estate previously held by a Protestant, a prospective tenant in 1710 described how he had 'found it like a Papist's farm without either bounds made or a bush on the same, [no] cabin but three such as our cowherds generally live in...'.

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Certainly by 1700 the overriding motive behind the attraction of outsiders to an estate was economic rather than political, for even when Sir Robert Southwell advised the young Sir John Perceval in 1702 that 'English tenants are best and safest for you, even at ten in the hundred cheaper than the Irish', the safety they would provide was implicitly financial, not tactical. Admittedly some landowners sought to maintain a militia troop, but even on the largest estates these do not seem to have been a conspicuous feature after 1715 (apart from a brief revival in the 1740s), so that lease covenants obliging a tenant to maintain a horseman in arms (a standard feature in leases of the Boyle family in the seventeenth century and not confined to them) were becoming a formality.

Seventeenth-century estate development had evolved in the context of significant if fluctuating English immigration into the region. After the turn of the century this effectively ended, at least as a rural phenomenon. Sir Richard Cox established an English plantation near what became Dunmanway in the mid-1690s, others might talk of the desirability of an English plantation on an estate even after 1700, but in general large-scale programmes for the introduction of outsiders were not pursued. There

29. Edward Hoare, Cork to Sir Robert Southwell, 2 Aug. 1696, Kinsale manorial papers vi; A letter from... Cox... to... Prior, pp. 4-5.
30. E.g. William Taylor to Sir John Perceval, 15 Dec. 1707, Egmont MSS (B.L. Add. MS 46,978* [N.I. Mic. p 4,674]).
were of course exceptions: the introduction of artisans from Ulster (invariably Protestant) accompanied many attempts by landowners from the 1720s to establish a linen manufacture on their estates, but this was usually as part of a plan to establish an urban settlement, and they were not expected to become farmers. The placement of German Palatine immigrants on several estates in the 1710s was more specifically agrarian. Sponsored by Government, their introduction attracted considerable attention, but in co. Cork their numbers were not great: by 1720 there were only about thirty families scattered over seven estates. The arguments used by William Taylor to dissuade Sir John Perceval from accepting them were probably not unique: 'I see you have a great desire to entertain some of the Palatines... I cannot think there can be any great advantage to take any of them, they are a sort of people... hard to be pleased... most people that has entertained any of them were gald to be rid of them... as for working I am told they are no better than our common [sic] but great eaters and constantly at it... I cannot understand what advantage they can be to you, more than another sort of people, only they are Protestants'. Over one hundred families were settled however on Sir Thomas Southwell's co. Limerick estate, permanently affecting its character as well as proving a source for several Palatine settlements later in the century on Kerry estates.

33. Palatine notes, p.73; Young, Tour, (1780), ii, pp. 123, 151-2.
Landowners in general were obliged to shape their estates from what was locally available. In the late seventeenth century there can have been few estates where the majority of tenants were of recent English origin; even on the Burlington estates in 1685 there was a substantial number of main tenants with Irish names, and after the Jacobite wars the elderly Earl Richard declared his policy would be 'to fix all English tenants that before this troublesome time did pay their rents well...'; but also 'to draw in such of the Irish tenants as were good ones formerly into those farms they formerly held...'. Prior to the reletting of most of the estates in the 1710s at the coming of age of the great-grandson, the agents were directed to look out for 'good substantial tenants... always preferring an old tenant and good payers... to a stranger', although they were later told 'you may turn out as many Papists as you think fit, provided you can get good Protestant tenants and that you are sure will pay their rents well'. Here as elsewhere there is the implication that, all other things being equal, Protestants were preferable, but in practice such religious discrimination was inseparable from the conviction of the greater economic worth of the Protestant tenant.

34. Copy of rental of Earl of Cork's estate, 1685, Caulfield MSS 9 (U.C.C. Strong Room).

35. Earl of Burlington, London to William Congreve, 22 Nov. 1690, and Burlington, London to 'Mr. Foster', 31 Jan. 1690/1, Shannon MSS (N.L.I. MS 13,226/1 and /2).


37. J. Spurrett, London to Foulke and J. Walker, 11 Feb. 1715/6, Shannon MSS (N.L.I. MS 13,249/2). This potentially drastic directive should be set against an instruction from Burlington in later life which had a closer bearing on actual practice on the estates: when a proposal came for a farm which a Catholic had held, the agent was informed that Burlington 'will not think of turning the present tenant out though a papist, he says that his religion is nothing to him if he pays his rent well, he will not consent to his being turned out...': Sir William Abdy to William Conner, 16 Feb. 1750, Shannon MSS (N.L.I. MS 13,252/4).
It is only possible to see clearly the type of improving tenant that landlords were seeking in the early eighteenth century by following their own comments in estate correspondence. This survives in unique abundance for the Perceval/Egmont family in this period, and as there is nothing to suggest that their preferences were unusual it is worthwhile examining their attitudes in detail. During the forty-three years regime of Sir John Perceval, his early inclination 'to cherish old tenants and Englishmen' was never widely departed from; the balance between new English and Irish tenants which he had inherited did not alter dramatically. His principle, he told his agent in 1738, was 'that an old tenant ought to be preferred before another if worthy of it, and if his rent be sure...'. But this begged several questions: Perceval shared a common conviction that a tenant should pay a 'reasonable' rent—reflecting the movement of land values—and should develop his holding according to the stipulations of his lease, so that there was frequent occasion for measuring a sitting tenant's claim for renewal against the offers of outsiders; at such times of adjudication, the general preferences of Perceval and his agents were frequently made explicit. Thus arising from various individual instances certain types of prospective tenant were objected to in principle: Anglican clergy, 'who if they are rich grow troublesome, and if poor pay no rent'; relations, 'generally the worst tenants a gentleman can have'; drunkards; members of parliament

38. William Taylor, Burton to Sir John Perceval, 10 May 1706, Egmont MSS (B.L. Add. MS 46,978* [N.L.1. Mic. p4,674]).


or other landowning neighbours; in the latter case it was feared they might rearrange boundaries or, more importantly, make it 'no easy matter at the expiration of the lease to get it out of... such a family, and people... will not create themselves powerful enemies by bidding' against them. At a more general level, the twin evils to be avoided were the 'engrossing' tenant on the one hand, the insolvent on the other. Perceval's guardian had warned against the former in 1702: 'the letting and renting out great scopes of land to one man has hindered the improvement of the country, and established beggary;... the true rule should be to let no more to any one tenant than his own stock were able to manage'. Thus when he was approached in 1719 by the largest tenant on the estate - the Protestant William Freeman, who sought to secure new leases for some of the 1,871 acres (Irish) which he then held - Perceval's reaction was unenthusiastic: 'it is my business to have my lands improved, which hitherto has been too much neglected... small farms is the proper method to obtain that'. Of course tenants like Freeman were attractive to less provident landowners; they were of sufficient affluence to weather the most depressed years and maintain rent payments. Perceval's objection to such over-substantial tenants was based on the assumption that they would not reside and would thereby be less efficient improvers; moreover

44. Berkeley Taylor, Ballynort to Viscount Perceval, 4 July 1726, Egmont MSS (B.L. Add. MS 46,991*, p.52 [N.L.I. Mic. p4,676]).


they would be less inclined to farm on their own account, and as Perceval reminded his agent in 1725 'I don't like to see my land set to undertenants'.

During the negotiation of many new leases a promise of residence was sought, as well as evidence that a prospective tenant had the capacity to carry out improvements. For example when a half-pay officer that had settled in the neighbourhood applied for a farm, Perceval responded coolly: 'My answer was that I would write to know of his circumstances and character, and whether he knew farming affairs, for I had much rather the industrious men for tenants who will, as they say, put their hands to the plough, than your fine gentlemen who have a town life, and leave the care of all to a bailiff or undertenants.' The objections to Catholic gentlemen was similar, for instance, Perceval's son was critical of the part-tenant of an outlying farm in Ibane barony: 'O'Hea... was always in my judgement an improper tenant, being too fine a gentleman for a farmer. I never saw him but once and then I met him upon the road with a better attendance, and in more parade, than I travel with myself'.

But the danger at the other extreme - of accepting the less than solvent tenant - was so apparent that in the first forty years of the century the leasing of land to 'low' tenants seemed inconceivable on the Perceval/Egmont estate; they were a greater financial risk in the short term, and unlikely instruments of improvement in the longer run.

47. Copy, Viscount Perceval to Taylor, 13 Apr. 1725, Egmont MSS (B.L. Add MS 46,990*, p.65 [N.L.I. Mic. p4,67±]).


49. Lord Perceval, 'Mountpleasant' to Egmont, 27 July 1744, Egmont MSS (B.L. Add. MS 47,009*, p.109 [N.L.I. Mic. p4,67±]); compare this with the comments on another old Irish gentleman (MacDonagh) on the estate forty years earlier - who it was advised should be given charity rather than a farm: William Taylor, Ballymacow to Sir John Perceval, 29 Nov. 1704, Egmont MS (B.L. Add. MS 46,964*, p.87 [N.L.I. Mic. p4,67±]).
Prior to the reletting of a sizable portion of the estate, Perceval summarised his aims: 'The great matter will be to choose responsible men or have good security from others and where we can to prefer Protestants to Papists who are new and strangers, but such of the latter who have done the part of honest tenants and offer fairly deserve to be continued, as on the contrary such Protestants who have not built according to their covenants cannot reasonably expect the preference...'. What he was seeking when strangers were to be taken onto the estate was that intermediate grade in local society - below a gentleman and above a cottier - which he delineated more precisely on one occasion in 1726: 'Old Col. Taylor told me frequently that 500 acres [Irish] was as much as any tenant ought to have for the land's advantage and then land was not so valuable as it is now wherefore I should be [?] very well pleased that a less quantity were given to each particular one, and a tenant of a hundred pound [Rent p.a.] is I think the best on several accounts'.

Given the level of rent settings in that decade, Perceval's ideal tenant would be master of about 570 acres statute.

* * *

The counterpart to the choosing of suitable tenants was the devising of letting conditions likely to further the development of an estate. At first sight letting practice might seem almost stereotyped: the lease was the near-universal instrument of agreement used between landowners and main tenants. Variety however existed in the terms of the lease - its length and its contractual covenants - and the level of rent agreed.


51. Copy, Perceval, Charlton to Taylor, 23 July 1726, Egmont MSS (B.L. Add. MS 46,991*, p.56 [N.L.I. Mic. p4,676*]).
In the first place the very ubiquity of the lease raises certain questions. Early practice has yet to be clarified but it seems to have been implicit in the original plantation scheme that the fully-fledged lease was to be used in letting agreements between undertakers and their new English tenants. Whether Irish tenants enjoyed more than rudimentary letting agreements, not strictly binding at law, is more problematical. Certainly in the post-Cromwellian period leasing to both English and Irish tenants appears to have been general, although sometimes on less favourable terms to the latter: on Orrery's Duhallow estate in the 1660s, most English rural tenants were holding on twenty-one years leases, while the maximum term of those with Irish names was eleven years, yet on the Earl of Cork and Burlington's estates in the 1680s English and Irish tenants shared twenty-one years terms alike. There is no evidence of any major estate not employing leasing as normal practice by this period.

There were clear advantages in the lease instrument for a landowner: given the fluctuations in agricultural prices and harvest conditions it was tedious for a landlord to have to negotiate letting agreements annually, while to have a predictable income facilitated landed finances, whether marriage settlements, productive investment or foreign travel. Evidence of this comes indirectly from the existence and partial enforcement of lease clauses forbidding or restricting a tenant's power to surrender his holding before the expiry of the full term. In periods of exceptional difficulty - for instance during and after the Williamite wars, and again in the early 1740s - heavily-arreared tenants often fled without consent, but more usually there were sufficient sanctions, legal and otherwise,

52. Rental of the Duhallow estate 1664-5, Orrery MSS (N.L.I. MS 13,177).
53. Copy, rental of Earl of Cork's estate, 1685 (loc. cit.).
54. See comments in Richard Purcell, Kanturk to Egmont, 1 Apr. 1743, Egmont MSS (B.L. Add MS 47,008*, p. 'P' [N.L.I. Mic. p4,679]).
available to dissuade a tenant from defaulting. On the Perceval/Egmont estate it was generally thought inadvisable to allow surrenders (except in the case of the odd 'hopeless' tenant, where in fact the tenant might have to be persuaded to surrender in return for the cancellation of arrears owed). The argument was that the sight of tenants surrendering their farms would damage the reputation of an estate, while finding substitute tenants prepared to take land at rates approaching the existing levels might be impossible. In part however landowners' opposition to accepting surrenders was the fear that tenants, having been set land at low rates in return for agreeing to lay out money on improvements within a given number of years, might throw up the lands before reaching the point at which they could be fined (under the original agreement) for non-preformance; thus in a 1705 Lombard lease it was specifically stated that the demised land could only be surrendered after the improvements agreed had been carried out. And a concomitant fear by tenants to commit themselves to leases was occasionally noticed: Sir Richard Cox, writing in 1749 of his Dunmanway estate claimed as much when contrasting conditions before and after the introduction of domestic industry: 'Those, who heretofore were obstinate, [have] become petitioners for leases of the longest duration, that the landlord may be bound'.

55. E.g. copy, Perceval, Charlton to Berkeley Taylor, 22 July 1724 Egmont MSS (B.L. Add. MS 46,989*, p.99 [N.L.I. Mic. p4,676]).

56. William Taylor, Ballymacow to Perceval, 28 Dec. 1730; Taylor, Egmont to Perceval, 18 May 1733; see also copy, Perceval to Berkeley Taylor, 23 Feb. 1720/1, Egmont MSS (B.L. Add. MSS 46,995*, p.102; 46,998*, p.118, 46,986*, p.45 [N.L.I. Mic. p4,676-7]).


58. A letter from... Cox... to... Prior, p.40.
Landowners' willing acceptance of the lease in the early eighteenth century must of course be balanced against the natural tenant preference for favourable terms of tenancy. Thus in 1745 in the case of a vacant farm on the former Maynard Curryglass estate placed in Chancery, Judge Ward was asked whether he wished to have it released, 'for should your Lordship think proper to do so, a tenant will much readier be found for it'. On occasions leasing seemed to be regarded simply as a concession to tenants; the comment of the agent of a Co. Derry estate, when addressing his employers in 1714, stated more explicitly an assumption evident in south Munster: 'You are to observe that tenants will not hold land in Ireland from year to year as in England but expect leases of twenty-one years, sometime forty years and three lives. For in Ireland the tenants make all repairs and improvements at their own charge, consequently lands there must be leased out or lie waste; the leases, by guaranteeing 'quiet possession' at a fixed rent for an agreed length of time was seen here as quid pro quo for whatever improvements the tenants made on the property demised. Tenants were willing to be tied down by lease contracts if they could secure longer terms (i.e. thirty-one years or more), while landowners seem to have felt that the most convenient arrangement, all other considerations excluded, was to let on twenty-one years leases, or in some cases on shorter terms.


60. Summary of Mr. Meredyth's letter, 16 July 1714, Downshire MSS (P.R.O.N.I. D671/Al3/1).
Investigation of the actual length of leases in the century before 1750 reveals that 'other considerations' did in fact modify leasing practice very significantly. Firstly there was a great variety in lease length throughout the period, and secondly there was almost certainly a trend towards longer lease terms. Variety arose chiefly from the distinction between what might be described as 'improvement leases' and 'convenience leases', while the trend towards longer leases was partly a result of the changing importance of these two categories. Landowners were in fact responding to the demand for long tenancies by seeking estate improvement in return. This was not of course based on the pious hope that 'security of tenure', would lead consequentially to improvements, but on a trade-off: longer tenures, or alternatively, 'easy' rents were granted in return for tenant acceptance of lease clauses that bound them to such improvements as building, planting, ditching, enclosing and manuring coarse land. 'Improvement leases' were no late seventeenth-century innovation, but their use was continually being extended. At their simplest they contained clauses in which the tenant promised to build a farm-house of a certain value; this would be elaborated by covenants to plant an orchard, to double-ditch and quickset the out-bounds, to fence the ploughed inland or to lime a certain number of acres of virgin or out-land. In contrast the 'convenience leases' were those agreements where investment by the tenant was not anticipated and were in consequence shorter and simpler, but sometimes contained regulatory convenants governing land use.

61. Prior to the resetting of a farm on his estate, Sir Philip Perceval had noted in 1677: 'In the setting of these lands care must be taken that the tenant be bound to make ditches and improvements, and in case they neglect it to reserve a power to myself to set the work on at the tenant's charge': transcript of survey of Perceval estate, 1677 (R.I.A. MS 23.L.49).
### TABLE 3: i

**Lease terms on the Perceval/Egmont estate 1680-1749**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>17 years</th>
<th>21 years</th>
<th>31 years</th>
<th>3 lives</th>
<th>41 years</th>
<th>6 lives</th>
<th>Renewable</th>
<th>Unknown</th>
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<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1700-9</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1710-9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1720-9</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1730-9</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1740-9</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: see Appendix Table ii

### TABLE 3: ii

**Lease terms on the Burlington estates 1690-1749**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>10 years</th>
<th>21 years</th>
<th>(30)31 years</th>
<th>1 life</th>
<th>3 lives</th>
<th>(40)41 years</th>
<th>3 lives and 21 years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1690-9</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1700-9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1710-9</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1720-9</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>(5)38</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1730-9</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1740-9</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: see Appendix Table i

### TABLE 3: iii

**Lease terms on the Kenmare estate 1720-59**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>10 years</th>
<th>(24)31 years</th>
<th>3 lives</th>
<th>61 years</th>
<th>unclear</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1720-9</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1730-9</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1740-9</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1750-9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>(1)29</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: see Appendix Table iii
Tables 3: i, 3: ii and 3: iii provide evidence of both the variety of lease length - the contrast between Burlington and Perceval policies at the end of the seventeenth century is the best illustration of this - and the direction of the trend, a gradual move away from twenty-one years as the minimum term, although the three estates in question were hardly representative. But less complete evidence from other estates confirms that after the 1690s leases to main tenants of less than twenty-one years were uncommon - except for the year-to-year tenancies between the expiry of one lease and the perfection of another - and that by the third or fourth decade of the century the standard alternatives were thirty-one years or three lives (the latter of course only available to Protestant tenants). Before the turn of the century the three lives lease had become the most common formula where comprehensive improvement was being sought - but it had other advantages. It was the normal way of creating freeholds for electoral purposes, and also the best way of raising fines from tenants. Sir Philip Perceval before his death in 1680 had been using it both to encourage improvement and to further his political ambitions, and this was probably the factor explaining the situation on the Doneraile estate where most of the tenants were freeholders in 1710: before his elevation to the peerage, the first viscount Doneraile had had electoral ambitions. On the Kenmare estate however, where over three quarters of the land was held on three-lives

62. For an assumption of the ubiquity of the thirty-one lease, see Sir Richard Coxe, Some observations on the present state of Ireland... (London, 1731), p.5.

63. Abstract of letter, 'Mr. Mead', Kinsale to Sir John Perceval (sen.) 16 Jan 1680/1, Egmont MSS (B.L. Add. MS 47,024, f.56).

leases in 1709, it was more likely because of extensive fining, as over half of these were set by John Asgill who only held a life interest in the estate. A further argument for lives leases in general was that as 'tenants... are so disposed to destroy and prejudice lands towards the end of certain terms that... setting for lives' was preferable.

There was however no automatic correlation between length of lease and improvements required: in 1695 Viscount Midleton set a farm of forty acres statute to six partners in Barrymore for eight years, during which time the out-bounds had to be fenced and planted (within three years), all tilled land to be enclosed and forty oaks to be planted p.a.; this was one extreme, and the many thirty-one years leases with no improvement or regulatory clauses whatever were at the other. Yet the probability was that the longer the lease term the more specific the improvement requirements. Thus three-lives leases and those of forty-one years or more almost never failed to stipulate some improvement, even if sometimes, as in the majority of forty-one years leases set on the Burlington estates in the years after 1719, the only requirement was that each tenant should build an orchard. Much of Burlington's property of

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67. Lease, Viscount Midleton to John Lea, John Catin, Denis Keene, John Dooley, Edmond Doyle and John Carew, Ballysimon, 14 Nov. 1695, Brodrick MSS (P.R.O.I. D9,377).
68. For an exception see the three lives lease of Farahy on the Bowen estate, 18 June 1722, Bowen MSS (N.L.I. P.C. 30/1).
69. Schedule of leases 1718-51, Lismore MSS (N.L.I. MS 6,156).
course inherited some of the basic improvements from the seventeenth
century, yet even here improvement requirements expanded in later settings:
in the 1740s tenants were being bound to specific house-building, liming
and ditching conditions. There was also no simple correlation between
the size of an estate and advanced practice in the use of improvement
leases. Old estates such as those of the Kingston and Grandison families,
and smaller estates of resident families such as the Bowens and the Coxes
were still granting leases with no improvement clauses for many years
after 1720, while the Catholic Charles MacCarthy as early as 1694 set a
lease obliging the tenant to make sixty perches of ditch p.a.

Regulatory covenants also became more prominent, although the degree
of complexity was not specifically tied to the length of lease. But there
could be a connection: on the small Newman estate, the townland of
Knockansweeney was let for twenty-one years to an Irish family partnership
in 1718 with no improvement or regulatory clauses; it was reset (pres-
sumably after a surrender) to two tenants with English names in 1737
for three lives; they were bound to build a house, to lime all tilled land
(with only four crops permitted per liming), to dung all potato land or
wheat stubble (while no other stubble was to be broken up without
reliming). These highly specific regulatory clauses did however appear
in thirty-one years leases subsequently.

70. Ibid.; see also copy, [John Usher] to Sir William Abdy, 21 Nov. 1743,
Lismore MSS (N.L.I. MS 7,180).
71. Lease, Baron Kingston to Cornelius Clifford and Michael Fitzgerald,
'Garranrushela', 12 Dec. 1741, Exham MSS (P.R.O.I. acc.no. 1035);
lease, Earl Grandison to Elizabeth Fitzgerald, 14 July 1741, Villiers
Stuart MSS (uncatalogued section); for Bowen examples, see above,
footnote 68, also lease, John Bowen to John Madagane and John Ffling,
'Monenshanna', 17 Sept. 1718, Bowen MSS (N.L.I. P.C. 30/3); lease,
Sir Richard Cox to Thomas Howard, 'Coolavokig', 30 Aug. 1720, Bantry-
White MSS (Bantry house); lease, Charles MacCarthy to Teige McDaniel
Morphy, 'Kyle', 14 Aug. 1694, Doherty MSS.
72. Lease, Dillon Newman to William Callaghan et al., Knockansweeney,
5 Apr. 1718; lease, Richard Newman to Robert Witty and James Berry
Knockansweeney, 9 March 1737; lease, Newman to Timothy Callaghan,
'Killnockagow' etc., 10 Aug. 1747, Dillon MSS (P.R.O.I. uncatalogued
collection).
regulatory clauses mingled as their appearance in lease agreements became more general. On the Bernard estate however lease length appeared to have little bearing on the type of covenants included: a lease for twenty-one years in 1712 contained covenants binding the tenant to ditch the out-bounds and the surrounds of ploughed land, while the burning of land and the ploughing of meadow in the last seven years of the lease were prohibited. These clauses - without the ones relating to ditching and meadow ploughing - were reproduced in a ninety-nine years lease of 1725, although burning was permitted on 'heathy or furzy land'. By 1753 a standard printed lease was being used on the estate in which the stereotyped clauses included the double-ditching of out-bounds, the fencing and enclosing of the arable parts of farms and the manuring of every tilled acre at the beginning of the lease with a fixed quantity of lime, sea sand or dung. The common regulatory covenants - the prohibition on the burning of land, the itemizing of manure to be used on tilled land and of the number of crops that could be taken after a manuring, the curbing of tillage on meadow and arable generally towards the end of a lease - can be found in leases from the beginning of the century and most date back further. Many minor variations can be found in early eighteenth-century leases, some of which may have been novel: the toleration of

73. Lease, Francis Bernard to Teige Deashy, Ardcahan, 30 Aug. 1712; lease, Bernard to Jonathan Busteed, Cloghane etc., Sept. 1725; lease, Francis Bernard (jun.) to Samule Crooke, 20 Jan. 1753, Doherty MSS.

74. For early examples of various covenants, cf. (for prohibition on burning) articles of agreement, James Waller to nine Irish tenants, Ringcurran and Preghane, 18 July 1696, Kinsale manorial papers vi; (for detailed specification of manures) comment on Bridgefield setting in 1700, Midleton rental, 1715 p.8, Midleton MSS (G.M. & M.R. MS 145/102); (for restrictions on use of arable in the latter years of the term) lease, Henry Boyle to Francis Bernard, lands near Clonakilty, 12 May 1713, Doherty MSS.
burning on coarse land or in conjunction with liming for instance.\textsuperscript{75} The methods used to facilitate enforcement (which are discussed presently) were in fact the main area of change, apart from the overriding fact that the use of such covenants was becoming more widespread.

Closer examination of policy on two estates concerning lease length and improvement illustrates the arguments that sustained variety, and the reasons for changes of practice. The Southwell estate in and around Kinsale was partly out of lease in the early 1690s; Sir Robert Southwell, an office-holder in London, believed that the estate had very good prospects because of the potential of Kinsale as a victualling port. He therefore favoured short leases, but his agents were unhappy with this, and they argued for more generous terms to attract good tenants:

'by letting long leases you encourage them to lay out their substance in improvements by which you insure your rent at a time when trade is dead'.\textsuperscript{76} Southwell sought to grant only twenty-one years leases, which was far from the renewable leases some prospective tenants were demanding; on one such occasion he insisted 'if they will not otherwise deal than upon their own terms, the lands must lie waste, till others can be found who will be content with the lease of twenty-one years...\textsuperscript{unless} you should be tempted by a good tenant and by good rent, then to extend the lease to three lives, but not with renewal'.\textsuperscript{77} It is not clear how

\textsuperscript{75.} For limited allowance of burning cf. comment on Carrigshane\[?] set in 1712, Midleton rental, 1715, p.22 (loc. cit.); lease, Baron Kingston to Cornelius Clifford and Michael Fitzgerald. 'Carranrushela', 12 Dec. 1741, Exham MSS (loc. cit.).

\textsuperscript{76.} James Waller to Sir Robert Southwell, 19 Sept. 1694, Southwell MSS (B.L. Add. MS 38,147).

\textsuperscript{77.} Southwell to Waller, 16 March 1694/5, Southwell MSS (B.L. Add. MS 38,148).
far Southwell's preference for twenty-one years leases was translated into reality; the great majority of tenants on the estate in 1700 held by three-lives lease, but many were urban and may have been old lessees.  

On the Perceval/Egmont estate the pattern of leasing set out in Table 3: i highlights the preference for three-lives leases in the 1680s of Sir Philip and Sir John (senior), and the contrasting choice of twenty-one years terms set in the mid-1700s after Sir John (junior) reached his majority, probably influenced by his ex-guardian, Sir Robert Southwell. The latter leases had a variety of building and other improvement clauses, but argument and the promise of more extensive improvements secured for Cornelius Callaghan, a Protestant, a three-lives lease after he had pointed out 'as to the term 'tis too short, for twenty-one years is a very inconsiderable time for a tenant to improve upon the land, the former improvements being all destroyed and the houses all burnt, which must be repaired'. As the time approached for a major reletting of the estate in the mid-1720s, Perceval despite an initial determination to grant only twenty-one years terms agreed to offer thirty-one years leases where building was being sought of a prospective tenant 'and the other farms where already houses are, or where none are expected twenty-one'. In fact, through tenant pressure all the leases set subsequently were for thirty-one years.

78. A general and particular account of the estate of Sir Robert Southwell, 3 May 1700, Kinsale manorial papers vii.

79. Cornelius Callaghan to William Taylor, 29 Apr. 1706, Egmont MSS (B.L. Add. MS 46,978* [N.L.I. Mic. p4,674]).

80. Copy, Viscount Perceval to Taylor, 10 July 1725, Egmont MSS (B.L. Add. MS 46,990*, p.107 [N.L.I. Mic. p4,676]).
The legal assumption that twenty-one years was equivalent to three lives was used by some existing Perceval tenants to press for conversion of their twenty-one years leases to a lives form, a move stoutly resisted by Perceval: 'I look on three lives to be really equivalent to thirty-one years however the law reckons it but twenty-one...'. Yet most tenants clearly did not accept even thirty-one years as an equivalent, as one tenant remarked in 1719, 'we cannot avoid thinking a lease of lives (though very uncertain) to be much more encouraging and satisfactory', revising his opinion somewhat by 1724 when negotiating for another farm: 'if I were to take that land as an out farm, I should make [my?] choice of a lease of thirty-one years, before the uncertainty of lives but as it is a designed place of residence and settlement for my son during his life, and as he is to build and lend his industry thereon, it would be infinitely more encouraging and satisfactory to him to run the chance of a lease of lives, than the certainty of thirty-one years.'

Even after the 1720s Perceval felt that where a farm had already been improved or where improvement was not being sought twenty-one years was an adequate term, a view queried in 1733 by the then agent, William Taylor: 'Twenty-one years is such a term as many tenants will not even bound their farms on, much less make any improvements so as to make... a stake for the landlord's rent, [and] thirty-one is rather too short.

81. Copy, Baron Perceval to Taylor, 3 Nov. 1716; see also Perceval to Taylor, 16 Apr. 1715, Egmont MSS (B.L. Add. MSS 46,981*, p.160; 46,980*, p.76 [N.L.I. Mic. p4,675]).

82. Robert Conron, Tralee to Taylor, 13 March 1718/9; Conron, Welshtown to Viscount Perceval, 14 May 1724, Egmont MSS (B.L. Add. MSS 46,984*, pp.40-1, 46,989*, pp. 70-1 [N.L.I. Mic. p4,675-6]).

83. Cf. copy, Viscount Perceval to Taylor, 3 Apr. 1733; copy, Perceval to William Taylor, 31 May 1733, Egmont MSS (B.L. Add. MS 46,998*, pp. 80,124 [N.L.I. Mic. p4,677]).
I never knew any estate set for leases of twenty-one years that was not soon in miserable order even though it had been well improved'. 84 The appearance of an increased number of three-lives settings in the 1740s was because of the more amenable attitude of the son who gradually took control of the estate during the decade.

On the Perceval/Egmont estate there was little general discussion on improvement or regulatory clauses in leases; the offers of various prospective tenants to build, to ditch or to lime were measured against the needs of the farm out of lease and the rent being offered in conjunction. As a permanent stock of improvements was accumulated on the estate, requirements changed; grassland liming became more common, ditching and planting less necessary. Throughout it was understood that the lease agreement cast all the onus on the tenant to make the initial investment and keep the improvements in repair. Thus when a tenant in 1739 sought aid because he had had to rebuild his house, Egmont (as he was by then) remarked that 'his late building is for his own advantage, and it belongs not to me to create houses for my tenants: I might accuse him of injury for suffering his former house to decay, which every tenant is obliged to keep up,' 85 but an arrear was in fact forgiven. When the question arose of scouring and dredging a part of the river Awbeg, Egmont's attitude was simple: 'Are they not all bound to do it? And if the lands are all set how can they insist that I should bear my part in the expense? But my tenants think, it is but ask and have...'. 86 In spite of

84. Taylor, Egmont to Perceval, 18 May 1733, Egmont MSS (B.L. Add. MS 46,998*, p.118 [N.I. Mic. p4,677]).
85. Copy, Egmont, London to Purcell, 20 Feb. 1738/9, Egmont MSS (B.L. Add. MS 47,004*, p.29 [N.I. Mic. p4,679]).
86. Copy, Egmont, London to Purcell, 29 May 1747, Egmont MSS (B.L. Add. MS 47,012* [N.I. Mic. p4,680]).
such comments, tenants seem to have preferred to have had their rents trimmed according to the improvements they undertook to carry out, rather than enter on a farm where some improvement - such as building or liming - had already taken place. For, given the relatively large units in which land was being let, tenants had a ready source of labour in contrast to their non-farming landlords, and most improvements were labour-intensive. Thus Berkeley Taylor advised against river improvement on the landlord's account in 1713, 'I believe the tenants will be better pleased to fall about widening the river themselves, and making what other improvements of that kind you judge necessary, than deposit their money, for they have tenants who are obliged to work for them, and have no other way to pay the rent of their houses and gardens, than by their day labour...'.

* * *

Leasing policy was one aspect of estate development. The type and amount of rent sought was another. From at least the mid-seventeenth century, in agreements between landlords and main tenants rent had normally been expressed in money terms: certainly this was uniform practice on larger estates, and the 400 sheaves (for corn land) and £18 (for grazing land) which was the rent of one Carbery tenant of the Earl of Burlington in 1685 was an archaic survival, presumably on an old lease. Such a demi-métayage agreement, given its social and managerial implications, was inappropriate for most estates by the late seventeenth century, although it survived in agreements between main and undertenants; at that level,

88. Copy, rent of the Earl of Cork's estate, 1685 (loc. cit.).
89. Cf. transcript of survey of Perceval estate, 1677, pp.47,51,55 (loc. cit.).
a special form of métayage developed - the dairy contract between 'cow-master' and dairyman - which was to be of paramount importance for much of the eighteenth century. Rent of course, though specified in money terms, could be paid in kind; this in fact occurred at periods of economic difficulty in the late seventeenth century - and necessarily involved the landowner, or rather his agent, in the marketing of produce - but it rarely seems to have happened after 1700. Some landowners played a limited role in handling the sale of butter for their tenants in Cork city but in general the possibilities for dispute over valuation must have deterred landowners from such activities, while the advantages for tenants were doubtful. The situation in west Cork and much of Kerry may have differed somewhat: as will be seen, landowners in the more remote parts of the region in the later eighteenth century were actively engaged in marketing, and it seems unlikely that they were any less involved earlier on.

All leases obliged tenants to render certain duties - for instance fowl, turf, ploughs with beasts and men to drive them) on an agreed number of days or at particular times of year - but the importance of such requirements diminished in proportion to the size of an estate. It was


92. See the comments on the Somerville and White families in the following chapter.
general practice to fix a monetary equivalent for these duties, and probably the factors determining how duties were paid were the residence or absence of the landlord, and the social and financial status of the tenant. Turf was probably the most practical service, for plough teams were of little use even on an agriculturally active desmesne like Dromana, for in the opinion of the agent 'duty ploughs, upon my credit... are not worth giving them [sic] grass and feeding the men that attend them'.

A more fundamental consideration than the mode of rent was the relationship it held to the gross value of agricultural produce. Rent levels were not as a rule determined by any such objective measurement but rather by demand. Before the implications of this are explored, the distinction between various types of rent should be drawn. Quit or crown rent paid by most landowners was an insignificant outgoing for most estate owners, but the term 'quit rent' was sometimes loosely used to describe a nominal rent. Also below normal levels was the rent paid on 'beneficial leases', tenures usually held by landowners' relatives or by Catholic ex-proprietors whose land was being held in trust. The penal legislation of 1704 disenabling Catholics from holding land at less than two thirds its 'improved yearly value' arguably diminished the prevalence of such leasing forms. A more common phenomenon was the low rent level of leases (mainly for three lives or of three lives renewable for ever) where fines had initially been taken.

93. Maurice Ronayne to Earl Grandison, 6 Feb. 1730/1, Villiers Stuart MSS C/6.

A variety of terms were used to describe 'normal' rent levels: 'full', 'improved' and, with a slightly different meaning, 'rack'. Occasional attempts to explain these tended to be tautological, such as that of the first earl of Burlington defining full value to an agent: 'I mean as much as any one would give'.95 There was a further refinement: 'reasonable' or equitable rent, a concept occasionally invoked which of course presupposed an agreed view of the distribution of wealth between landlord and tenant, in other words the degree to which a tenant should make a profit. Burlington in the same letter remarked: 'I shan't blame a tenant to make the best of his bargain...' while Viscount Perceval after arranging new lettings in the mid-1720s thought it 'reasonable a tenant should get something by his bargain', adding that he had 'the satisfaction to believe I shall not ruin any one by raising to too high a rent',96 being unwilling 'that any person should go off undone from my estate'.97 At a later stage he supposed that 'the advantage which a tenant makes above his rent... is generally double',98 meaning presumably that the ratio of rent to the value of output was in the order of one to three. In fact on a group of twelve farms on his estate - held on leases of widely varying age - where a census of stock and crops was taken in 1744, the value of total output (excluding the not insignificant subsistence items of sourmilk and turf) was just under two and a half times the annual rent.99 But William Taylor, when commenting

99. See Appendix table xx for details of this calculation.
on his employer's assumption countered that 'especially on new set farms... very few have anything left, after paying their rent'. 100 Landowner and agent in this instance clearly had quite different definitions of tenants' 'advantage', the former seeing it in gross terms, the latter net. However the discussion of rent levels in such a manner was unusual; what a landowner such as Perceval regarded as unreasonable was evidence that a tenant was making a profit sufficient to improve markedly his social standing, usually achieved by subletting which as will be seen, was in itself offensive to some landowners. A tenant should be able to make a living, not a fortune.

The general aim of landlords was to set rents at the maximum rate as determined by competition among prospective tenants, with two significant modifications - the preference given to solvent and improving tenants, and the willingness to adjust rent in proportion to a tenant's commitment to improvements. Indeed the terms 'full rent' and 'rack rent' seem to have distinguished the rent a substantial tenant would pay and that further level to which a cottier was prepared to go. Egmont assumed in 1735 that the reason for the differential was cottiers 'being contented to live harder than our gentleman farmers, who care for no land they can't make estates of'. 101 How significant was this differential? It seems to have varied from about 10% to 25%: Berkeley Taylor for instance assumed when letting Burton park in 1716 that he could get ten shillings per acre (Irish) 'for most part of it, from poor people to divide it... not worth at the most a year's rent, or... I may get nine shillings from better sort of people'. 102

100. Taylor, Egmont to the Earl of Egmont [sic7, 14 Feb. 1736/7, Egmont MSS (B.L. Add. MS 47,002*, p.37 [R.L.I. Mic p4,678?]).


In 1746 a former MacCarthy of Cloghroe tenant referred to a farm for which a solvent tenant could only give £60 to £70 but which 'poor Irish cotters, who would work and destroy said lands and live upon potatoes and salt, may promise £70 or £80 a year for them...'.  

Solvent tenants and those capable of improving were thus chosen at the cost of rent maximization. Whether the differential shifted over time is unclear; logically this would have been a function of the supply of solvent tenants. It is of course somewhat unreal to draw a rigid distinction between the categories of 'solvent' and 'poor' tenant. The line was roughly drawn between those possessing personal estate in excess of one year's rent and those with less; an alternative index was a tenant's capacity to stock a farm on his own account. The existence of an identifiable differential also presumes that prospective tenants used objective means to assess the value of land. In dairying, rearing and fattening districts, tenants and agents often calculated a farm's worth on the number of mature cattle, of collops it would take, the value of a collop being based on current market prices, but even grazing capacity was neither constant nor immediately verifiable. Thus the Earl of Orrery was warned against assuming the existence of any precise method: 'It is hard for a person who is about taking a farm to satisfy himself what he can offer to give. But it is not possible to be exact in knowing what other people will give. Because caprice and convenience govern more people that take land than judgement in the value of it'.

103. Exchequer bill, Mary MacCarthy et al. v. John Galway et al., brief for plaintiffs, 1746 in MacLysaght, Kenmare MSS, p.344. See also comments in Richard Purcell, Kanturk to Egmont, 26 Aug. 1751, Egmont MSS (B.L. Add. MS 47,003, f.26).

104. William Taylor, Ballynort to the Earl of Orrery, 20 Dec. 1736, Orrery MSS (H.U.L. MS Eng./218.4F/6 [N.L.I. Mic. p7897]).
to current prices, but how far did he allow for fluctuations, or was he prepared to offer a high rent in the expectation of an abatement if markets fell? Lord Perceval believed in 1731 that the latter was generally the case, tenants trusting 'to the landlord's clemency... and to the prospect of better times', 105 or as a Perceval tenant had put it in 1712 when seeking a renewal, he wished to remain tenant because of his confidence that 'if by a change of times or fall in markets the lands should not bear 5s 6d per acre, a due consideration will be had in such an extremity'. 106 Wholesale abatement was in fact unusual except in the worst years, as in the early 1740s. In practice it must be assumed that tenants appreciated the risks of estimating land value exclusively on the returns of the good years.

105. Copy, Lord Perceval, Ballymacow to Lady Perceval, 8 June 1731, Egmont MSS (B.L. Add. MS 46,996*, p.164 [N.L.I. Mic p4,677]). For the assertion that Egmont tenants trusted in abatements, cf. William Cooley, Lohort to Lord Perceval, 17 June 1746, Egmont MSS (B.L. Add. MS 47,005B, f.49). On the fall-off in land values in the early thirties, it was claimed that 'many gentlemen that live in the country seeing it have given abatements': William Taylor, Dublin to Egmont, 13 Nov. 1733, Egmont MSS (B.L. Add. MS 46,998*, p.205 [N.L.I. Mic. p4,677]).

106. Robert Conron, Welshtown to William Taylor (sen.), 18 Nov. 1712, Egmont MSS (B.L. Add. MS 46,978* [N.L.I. Mic. p4,674]). The comment of Berkeley Taylor in 1733 which implicitly advised the tolerance of arrears rather than formal abatement is probably a more accurate illustration of estate practice: 'The markets this and last year, have been a great deal worse than usual which gives room to tenants (that have taken land lately) to pray a landlord's lenity and forbearance' - Taylor, Ballynort to Viscount Perceval, 25 Jan. 1732/3, Egmont MSS (B.L. Add. MS 46,998*, p.25 [N.L.I. Mic. p4,677]).
The policy of obliging tenants to make particular improvements was almost as important a factor in moderating rent levels. It was not a case of easy rents being fixed in the hope of creating a propitious environment for tenant industry, but rather of rents being adjusted to compensate for specific improvements that a tenant undertook to make. Egmont for instance expressed his annoyance at tenants who appeared to overlook this: 'I cannot but observe that if a tenant performs his covenants he makes it a matter of merit and an argument for not paying as much as another [at renewal], whereas his fulfilling them is no more than a duty to which honesty and interest obliges him'.

In practice however he was prepared to allow old tenants who had made improvements some credit when measuring their offers for new leases against the bids of others.

Rent levels on individual estates varied a great deal in this period. This much is indicated by the evidence for several estates set out in Appendix tables i – iii, and is no surprise given the soil diversity of the region, the variation in access to resources such as lime and turf, and in proximity to markets. But allowing for these, contrasts remained. Thus the Earl of Orrery compared land let at its 'full' value with the situation on his own estate: 'All my tenants have very valuable leases; many of these leases are only kind of quit rents, and most of them renewable for ever...'.

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that partly marched Orrery's, the Courtenay estate in co. Limerick, also had the reputation of being let at easy rents, whereas the estate-builder Counsellor Bernard was believed to have been 'as unwilling to set his lands too low as another'. The major determinant affecting particular rent levels of an estate was the extent to which fines had been sought at the setting of leases. On institutional estates - such as those of Trinity College and of the Anglican bishops - fining was the foremost means for adjusting tenants' payments to the changing value of their holdings; leases of twenty-one years were constantly renewed - every seven years on the T.C.D. Kerry estate - with the rent and tenancy remaining unchanged. The fourth earl of Orrery, holding very dispersed properties in a number of counties also favoured fining over rent increases: 'I am inclined to take fines where I can get them on all considerable leases, on small leases perhaps I should as willingly take an advanced rent'.


111. Copy, Viscount Perceval, London to Taylor, 6 May 1731, Egmont MSS (B.L. Add. MS 46,996*, p.74 [N.L.I. Mic. p4,677]).


fining instead of rent rises had only legal and administrative implications, Orrery and most other private landowners attracted to fining did so for financial reasons, and in conjunction with the setting of long leases. Such fining was often said to be helpful to improvement on the grounds that it "ties the tenant fast and encourages him to all improvements of advancing and beautifying the estate" in the words of Sir Robert Southwell in 1679. Burlington's agent in arguing for the 'fining down' of a particular estate in 1725 used an alternative argument: 'the greater part thereof being at rack can never otherwise be well paid'; tenants in other words would meet their commitments better by this mode of payment. Both points of view were based on doubtful logic. The drawing-off of large sums at the beginning of a lease drew capital from a tenant (or his creditor) which can hardly have assisted improvement.

The major Burlington land sales of the 1720s and 1730s discussed in the previous chapter were partly accomplished through raising fines. There the context was quite clear: the landowner was heavily in debt, and in fact that was the normal reason, whatever other justifications were made, for resort to fining.

Sir Robert Southwell's attitude to fining, quoted above, had changed to opposition by the mid-1690s; his explanation of this is illuminating: writing from England to his agent he directed that 'seeing I want no money on that side, I would not draw any fine from tenants, but would rather wish they would lay it all out on the premises, whereby

114. Sir Robert Southwell, King's Weston to Sir Philip Perceval, 21 Aug. 1679, Egmont MSS ii, p.84. Similar advice was given forty years later to Sir Philip's nephew: Berkeley Taylor to Baron Perceval, 7 Apr. 1720, Egmont MSS (B.L. Add. MS 46,985*, p.51 [N.L.I. Mic p4,676]).

115. Memorandum on payment of Burlington's debts by Andrew Crotty, c.1725, Burlington MSS (G.L.R.O. Q/CML/11).
to make it so valuable as that my rent might be more safe and secured'.

And when earlier discussing the letting of two farms in perpetuities, he had stated how 'I would not let them [the tenants] fine off any part of the rent, as I am not willing to pay ten per cent when I can get if for my occasion at five per cent and though I did fine off rent in the town [Kinsale], it was because all the houses were falling down, and I could have no better than I did'. Fines were generally calculated at the legal rate of interest at the time of agreement; with the fall in the rate from 10% to 6% between 1703 and 1731 those tenants paying fines at the beginning of the century clearly benefitted. The tenant who was prepared to fine off a certain proportion of an agreed rent may occasionally have gained preference even to the extent of being accepted at a lower initial rent. The conventional belief was that tenants could drive good bargains when their landlords needed to raise fines. Perceval, when encouraged by Berkeley Taylor to fine down part of his estate, replied that he would not choose such a course 'because in that case I apprehend the tenants would find their account more than I, who must content myself with what they offer me, whereas if I sell outright I am sure of the full value of what I part with... I don't know that any of my estate is set at a rack rent, which is the only inducement I could have [?] to follow the method you provide'.


117. Copy, Southwell, London to Waller, 16 March 1694/5, Southwell MSS (B.L. Add. MS 38,148); however fining took place in the Kinsale town estate, cf. Account of Southwell estate, 3 May 1700 (loc. cit.).

However the movement of rents on the Burlington estates would suggest that the tenants' gain could be marginal: nearly all leases set on the Lismore and Tallow estates in the 1710s and 1720s incorporated fines, most equivalent to several years' rent. Yet the gross rent levels (i.e. including the portions fined off) were high, although these are calculated on the high interest rates of 8% and 7% (see App. table i): the average acreage letting rate of 1720s was not again reached on these estates until the 1750s.

Fining was therefore a mortgaging of part of the future income of a landlord. It was very often accompanied by the setting of three lives leases renewable for ever, the perpetuity formula peculiar to Irish land law and one that evolved in the late seventeenth century. It has already been mentioned in connection with land ownership: a policy of leasing in this manner was the very negation of estate improvement in the sense that it froze for all time the rental income of an estate. It was the easiest way to prod tenants to fine down their rents, and was presumed the surest way to maintain steady payments.

The earliest use of this mode of leasing appears to have been on the Kingston estate: from at least 1660 leases were being granted in Duhallow by Baron Kingston for ninety-nine years, contingent on the existence of three named lives, any of which could be replaced on death by another on the payment of a fixed fine. 119 By the time of the Williamite land settlement, the more straightforward leases of lives renewable for ever without the parallel ninety-nine years were commonplace; they maintained the crucial feature of a fixed fine for the naming of a new life, usually set at the equivalent of one year's rent, although variants - such as twelve bottles of claret 120 - were not unknown.

119. J. Finlay, A treatise on the law of renewals in respect to leases for lives renewable for ever in Ireland... (Dublin, 1829), pp.103, 141-2; for a general discussion of the term's origins, cf. ibid, pp.14-15.

120. Lease, James Bernard to John Austen, west Cruary, 1 Sept. 1770, Doherty MSS.
Sir William Heathcote, when purchasing the rents coming from the newly created three lives renewable leases on the Burlington estate in 1738 needed re-assurance about a type of tenure unknown in England: 'Your rents, reserved upon lives, are as secure as upon leases for terms of years having the same privileges of distress and ejectment for non-payment of rent... The method of renewing lives in this kingdom is very easy and short, not by a new lease, only a short docket to be 'tuckt' to the old lease...' (Yet in 1746 it was observed that the Irish Courts of Equity 'of late years have given a great latitude' to tenants holding by such leases, and were unwilling to support the rights of landlords to re-enter because of non-renewal or waste; it was the Mansfield ruling of 1779 reversing this 'old Irish equity' concerning the naming of fresh lives that precipitated the Tenantry Act of 1780, which consolidated the position of tenants to such agreements.)

The employment of this type of lease by the Hollow Sword Blade Company after 1709 and by the Earl of Burlington in the following decades were the most important demonstrations of its use, but it was by no means confined to them. The whole Petty estate in south Kerry was let in 1697 in two divisions, each on a lease of ninety-nine years and three lives renewable


124. For an attempt to evict a three-lives renewable tenant because of waste, see 'Some hints towards the state of the case of Richard Eyre esq.', 31 Jan. 1768 (P.R.O.I. M1,023).
(the Kingston formula); they included substantive improvement clauses, in particular a covenant to establish a Protestant township at Glanerought. The inclusion of improvement clauses in this type of lease - not unknown elsewhere - was clearly to secure more firmly the future payment of the agreed rent. The effective alienation of such an undeveloped estate as the Petty one by an agent apparently acting ultra vires took several generations to undo, and even then only partially. But at much the same period the fourth earl of Orrery was pursuing a similar policy: welcoming the decision to give specific clearance in a private parliamentary act for the setting of leases renewable for ever, his agent declared that 'a better project could not be thought upon to advance your Lordship's interest'.

And on a small estate such as the Aldworth at Newmarket, renewable leasing seems to have been pursued at the beginning of the century; as early as 1726 it was being seen as having been short-sighted. But on most estates one or two farms were alienated in this way - as a favour to a relative or an agent - although one of the consequences of the growth of strict settlement was to remove from many landowners this form of tenure as a leasing option.

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125. Lansdowne, Glanerought, pp.48-56.

126. E.g. draft of lease, Edward Southwell to John Nash, Tuocusheen, 26 Feb. 1720/1, Southwell MSS (B.L. Add. MS 9,714, f.164).


128. Berkeley Taylor, Ballynort to Viscount Perceval, 4 July 1726, Egmont MSS (B.L. Add. MS 46,991#, p.53 [N.L.I. Mic. p4,676]). There is an apparently inaccurate reference to this in Wakefield (Account of Ireland, i, p.253) where he refers to the creation of perpetuities by the then Lord Doneraile's father (confusing him presumably with his Aldworth grandfather).
Positive qualities have been emphasized in this survey of landed estate policy in the first half of the eighteenth century. Yet precisely at this period an extensive criticism of landlord behaviour was developing at a national level, mainly as part of the agitated politico-economic pamphleteering of the 1720s and 1730s. In writings ranging from those of Dean Swift to Bishop Berkeley many aspects of estate practice were savagely attacked or sarcastically explained. From the gentle query of Berkeley (locally resident at the time as Bishop of Cloyne) - 'whether, for one [gentleman] who hurts his fortune by improvements, twenty do not ruin themselves by foreign luxuries?';129 to Swift's declaration that landlords 'either by their ignorance or greediness of making large rent rolls, have performed... so ill... that there is not one tenant in five hundred who hath made improvement worth mentioning...'.130 Such exaggerated caricatures of reality need not necessarily have been prompted by local conditions, but the reason for such hostile comment - the under-employment and physical squalor of much of the population, the conspicuous consumption of a minority and the hesitant pattern of commercial expansion in the first half of the century - were common to the country as a whole in varying degree. Landowners were not of course the only target, but the circumstances in which many found themselves by the 1730s made them vulnerable to criticism, for between policy and reality there was a distinct gap.


Several influences modifying a commitment to long-term improvement have already been noticed — the financial exigencies of some landowners, for instance — but more significant were certain factors which offset the policy of those landlords who did attempt to improve their inheritance by the conventional methods — the attraction of tenants thought likely to invest, and the setting of improvement leases. The first difficulty was simply the shortage of the type of tenants which landlords were seeking. This was in part a consequence of the end of casual immigration from England and elsewhere, into the countryside at least. The various modest attempts to settle immigrants on estates at a later stage has already been referred to; landowners were coming to think of introducing model farmers rather than of remoulding the character of their estates through a general immigration. The real problem of course lay not in the absence of English tenants as such, but in the assumed reluctance of Irish tenants to participate in non-subsistence forms of agriculture. Experience later in the century was to show that the prejudice in favour of Protestant and English tenants may have been based on an exaggerated view of the failings of Catholic and Irish tenants, and certainly the non-availability to Catholics of the full improvement lease (that for three lives) in the two generations after 1704 must have distorted relative attitudes towards improvement: there is nothing to suggest that a desire for life tenancies was peculiar to Protestants. Yet even when this is allowed for, the differing cultural legacies would seem on balance in the early eighteenth century to have been reflected in divergent economic motivation and expectations.

In this situation the aim of creating a tenantry composed exclusively of resident industrious improvers was somewhat unreal; thus by the 1720s and 1730s, landlords were being advised to prefer prospective tenants who could be relied on to pay their rent but who might not reside or improve.131

131. E.g. Berkeley Taylor, Ballynort to Viscount Perceval, 29 June 1725; William Taylor, Ballynort to Perceval, 4 Apr. 1731, Egmont MSS (B.L. Add. MSS 46,990*, pp. 103-4, 46,996*, p.54 [N.L.I. Mic. p4,676-7]).
At the same time tenants who were solvent were in a stronger bargaining position, not only to get leases or secure renewals on their own terms, but also to be tolerated when their activities were contrary to the wishes of a landlord. This was demonstrated most clearly in the case of improvement: it is quite clear that much of the specified improvements were never carried out. On a national level it was claimed by Swift that what was needed were 'good firm penal laws for improvement, with a tolerable easy rent, and a reasonable period',\textsuperscript{132} yet strict covenants for performance, modified rents and extended terms were being given, on south Munster estates at least. The problem of enforcement was considerable; this is well illustrated on the Perceval/Egmont estate: at the beginning of the century the standard method used had been the demand of the tenant a bond of performance undertaking the improvements set out in the lease or forfeiting a sum, perhaps double their value.\textsuperscript{133} This was a cumbersome method, and the legal problems involved in suing a tenant were a deterrent, of which tenants themselves were well aware.\textsuperscript{134} Variations were tried: the addition of a percentage to the rent with an endorsement on the lease specifying that this was only to be paid in the event of non-performance;\textsuperscript{135} the down payment of a sum returned after three years if the improvements were carried out.\textsuperscript{136} These methods were abandoned in 1725 after

\textsuperscript{132} Quoted in Daly, \textit{Swift}, p.202.

\textsuperscript{133} Taylor, Burton to Sir John Perceval, 30 June 1713, Egmont MSS (B.L. Add. MS 46,979*, p.286 [N.L.I. Mic. p4,674f]).

\textsuperscript{134} Cf. copy, Baron Perceval, Bath to Taylor, 28 May 1716, Egmont MSS (B.L. Add. MS 46,981*, p.106 [N.L.I. Mic. p4,675f]).

\textsuperscript{135} Taylor, Cork to Sir John Perceval, 22 May 1713, Egmont MSS (B.L. 46,979*, p.262 [N.L.I. Mic. p4,674f]).

\textsuperscript{136} Memorandum on the new method for securing covenant performance, 1715, Egmont MSS (B.L. Add. MS 46,980*, p.295 [N.L.I. Mic. p4,675f]).
Counsellor Annesley advised, 'As to your endorsements I... think that a good deal will be left to the discretion of a jury to ascertain what... shall be damned by the non-performance of covenants and such juries being generally made up of tenants, they are favourable another in such cases'; instead Annesley recommended Perceval 'to reserve a power yearly... to distrain for so much money as you think fit to value them and then your tenants will make such improvements...'. This system was adopted although there is no evidence that such distraining took place. However under both types of procedure there is abundant evidence that tenant investment was occurring, in spite of Perceval's disillusionment in the 1720s about the efficacy of improvement clauses; in the next decade both his son and his agent remarked on the extent to which improvements had occurred. In so far as tenant-inspired improvement was taking place, this was no proof of the superior enforcement of improvement clauses, for in Perceval's words 'the spirit of improvement is more in the man than the length of his lease... The best therefore I can propose is to keep tenants up to their agreements, but for their doing more than what they covenant for I know no encouragement will prevail on men who love not improvement'.

137. Francis Annesley, Dublin to Viscount Perceval, 8 March, 1724/5, Egmont MSS (B.L. Add. MS 46,990*, p.43 (N.L.I. Mic. p.4,676)).

138. Copy, Perceval, Charlton to Taylor, 7 Apr. 1724 Egmont MSS (B.L. Add. MS 46,989*, p.44 (N.L.I. Mic. p.4,676)).


140. Copy, Viscount Perceval, Charlton to Berkeley Taylor, 7 Apr. 1724, Egmont MSS (B.L. Add. MS 46,989*, pp.44-5 (N.L.I. Mic. p.4,676)).
importance of a tenant's attitude and the relative weakness of the lease to compensate for the lack of industriousness was shared by others; Viscount Kenmare, on setting one of his farms to a Catholic gentleman on his Kerry estate in 1748 at a cheap rent, 'inserted many clauses of improvement as in... all my leases not so much from the expectation of their being performed by such indolent persons as my tenants (though they would greatly rebound to their interest) as that my family may upon expiration of the leases have a just excuse for dividing their farms and setting the land to the utmost penny or turning them out as they'll judge most advisable'.

Such cynicism about the function of improvement clauses highlights the problem that a shortage of the ideal industrious tenant caused. The overlarge tenant engrossing leases had to be tolerated, whether he be Protestant or Catholic. Examples of the former were the Palace Anne Bernards, who built up a portfolio of leases on the Carleton/Burlington estates. Arthur Bernard held at least a thousand acres (statute) around the village of Enniskeen where it was claimed he has 'made no improvements, nor planted any Protestants ... and the land wearing out for want of good improvers'.

When a farm in Bernard's sphere of influence was being relet, Carleton's agent told how 'there have been several gentlemen with me about this farm who had a mind to settle their eldest sons in it, but they fell off from their proposals for fear of disobliging of Mr. Bernard which he finding, is the reason he makes so indifferent a proposal...'.

141. Observations, c.1755 in MacLysaght, Kenmare MSS, p.186.


complaints on the Perceval/Egmont estate. 144 The fourth viscount Kenmare, contemplating one of the many Herbert tenancies on his estate, supposed the logic behind the renewal of it by the third viscount had perhaps been his 'fear of revolting this country into clans against him, then a stranger...'. 145 But many ex-landed or ex-freeholder Catholic families also maintained or even extended a local dominance as overlarge tenants in areas away from the most valuable or most 'planted' lands. Such families as the Power family on the Waterford estate of Earl Grandison, the Nagles on the Doneraile estate in north Cork, the O'Driscolls on the Carleton estate in Carbery, the O'Sullivans on the Eyre estate on Bear, the O'Mahonys on the Kerry Petty/Shelburne estate or the Cronins on the Kenmare estate continued in some cases because they were their landowners' positive choice, in other cases because no one was willing to replace them; given the informal nature of local influence many seem to have actually consolidated their power, some like the Cronins by acting as estate agents for their landlords. Kenmare assumed the justification for an extensive letting to the Cronins by his father had been that 'the roads were then so bad, and the reputation of the country so indifferent, that few strangers would have been induced to settle there'. 146 But when the large lease held by one described as 'an idle proud branch of the O'Donoghues of Glenflesk' expired in 1752, Kenmare was himself pressurized into renewing to him although the tenant, as to improvements 'is not the man to make any though many are mentioned in his leases'. 147 The Earl of Orrery whose fragmented estate

144. William Taylor, Ballynort to Perceval, 10 Dec. 1728, Egmont MSS (B.L. Add. MS 46,993*, pp.197-8 [N.L.I. Mic. p4,677]).

145. Observations, c.1755 in MacLysaght, Kenmare MSS, p.183.

146. Ibid. p.185.

147. Ibid. p.209.
included lands in Cork, Limerick and Kerry, was warned of the problem of having a large number of such gentlemen tenants: 'no fewer than twelve or thirteen of your Lordship's lessees... keep, or in their lifetime did keep, coaches, and therefore not as manageable as tenants of inferior degree...'. 148 Indeed the gentleman tenant became a consciously noticed feature of the social landscape before mid-century. The Protestant variety was picked out in exaggerated form by a Dublin pamphleteer in 1745: 'the first tenant is always a gentleman who wears a long sword at an Assizes, and in as well proved a brace of pistols as his landlord; and having the additional advantage of some attorney for a son, a brother, or a nephew, he no longer considers himself as under any ties, but talks of a lawsuit, if his landlord dares to talk of his rent'. 149 His Catholic counterpart, in Kenmare's acidic judgement, was 'the midling sort among the Irish' with the dominant traits of pride, drunkenness and sloth: 'Everyone of them thinks himself too great for any industry except taking farms. When they happen to get them they screw enormous rents from some beggarly dairyman and spend their whole time in the ale houses of the next village. If they have sons they are all bred to be priests, physicians or French officers; if daughters they are bred up to no kind of industry...'. 150

The existence of such tenants implied a major diminution of control by landlords over the development of their estates. A parallel development

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149. A view of the grievances of Ireland by a true patriot (Dublin, 1745), pp.5-6.

150. Observations, c.1755 in MacLysaght, Kenmare MSS, p.230.
can be seen in the growth of a market in leases. It had been standard estate practice from the seventeenth century to prohibit the alienation of a lease interest (to other than an heir on death of the named lessee) without the permission of the landlord, yet it is quite clear that on most estates where such permission was sought it was to give post hoc validity to deals already settled. That this was the case is confirmed by the commonness of lease mortgaging, i.e. the use of a lease interest as collateral for borrowing, which could not have operated if there had been obstacles preventing the transfer of an interest in the case of default. In such mortgage transactions, possession of the premises was sometimes transferred to the mortgagee, more normally the mortgagor retained possession and paid interest as in most fee-simple agreements of lease and release.\footnote{151} A possible indicator of the prevalence of lease alienation and mortgaging is the situation on the Kenmare estates at mid-century: over one-tenth of all the major holdings were known to Viscount Kenmare to have been subject in the recent past either to mortgage agreements or alienations.\footnote{152} On the Perceval/Egmont estate alienation was specifically forbidden in early eighteenth-century leases (although perhaps not earlier)\footnote{153}


152. Observations, c.1755 in MacLysaght, Kenmare MSS, pp. 179-238.

153. Cf. draft lease, Sir John Perceval to Robert Conron, c.1713 and covenants in Perceval lease draft c.1680, Egmont MSS (B.L. Add. MSS 46,979*, pp.242-9; 46,980*, p.281 [N.L.I. Mic. p4,674-5]).
but this had no major effect, not least because, as Egmont was informed
in 1743 'the clause of alienation in your Lordship's leases, hitherto
perfected, is not binding, as no penalty has been annexed thereto, and
therefore it met with no objection from the tenants...'. 154 Sales
had taken place without agent or landlord having an opportunity to screen
the purchasers, while the knowledge that payment was being made equivalent
to several years' rent irritated Perceval by highlighting the unjust
profit, as he saw it, that some tenants were enjoying. 155 A move was made
to introduce new clauses in the 1740s which laid specific penalties if
alienation took place, but the tenants refused to sign such leases, and
the attempt seems to have been abandoned. 156 It would however be mistaken
to assume a complete loss of control in this area; agents could on
occasions adjudicate between competitors for a lease interest being sold,
and swing the balance. 157

154. Richard Purcell, Kanturk to Egmont, 10 June 1743, Egmont MSS
(B.L. Add. MS 47,008*, p.12 [N.L.I. Mic. p4,672]).

155. See, for instance, Berkeley Taylor, Ballynort to Baron Perceval,
12 Sept. 1717; copy, Egmont, Charlton to Richard Purcell, 5 Oct.
1742; copy, Egmont, London to Purcell, 12 June 1744, Egmont MSS
(B.L. Add. MSS 46,982*, p.130; 47,007*, p.81; 47,009*, p.84
[N.L.I. Mic. p4,675; 4,672]).

156. Purcell, Kanturk to Egmont, 10 June 1743; copy, Egmont,
Tunbridge Wells to Purcell, 27 June 1743; Purcell, Kanturk,
to Egmont, 17 Jan. 1743/4, Egmont MSS (B.L. Add. MSS 47,008*,
pp.12, 19; 47,009*, p.7 [N.L.I. Mic. p4,672]).

157. E.g. Purcell, Kanturk to Orrery, 19 Sept. 1740, Orrery MSS
(H.U.L. MS Eng./4F/7).
Whatever the weaknesses of management in this area, the actual size of tenancies and general character of tenants reflected the aims of landowners across the region. The most specific example available of this is, again, on the Perceval/Egmont estate. In Appendix table ii it can be seen that the average holding size—overwhelmingly of single tenants—between the 1680s and 1750 was large and reflected the choice of substantial tenants; the size was however falling from almost 650 acres (stat.) in the 1680s to under 300 acres in the 1740s and at all times the average was below the landowner’s ceiling of 500 acres Irish (approximately 810 acres statute) for individual holdings. Of course some tenants by taking up leases in different parts of the estate and at different times exceeded this considerably, but nonetheless the trend was towards smaller holdings. The same trend can be seen as the Kenmare estate between the 1720s and the 1750s; the data in Appendix table iii if anything understate the strength of this movement.158 On the Burlington estates (Appendix table i) the trend is complicated by the fact that holding size increased on at least the Lismore and Tallow estates in lettings between the 1690s and 1720, yet smaller letting was evident during the second quarter of the century. On all these estates land was more usually than not being let in townland units; the smaller lets were being obtained by breaking down multi-townland letting and, less often at this stage, by dividing townlands. Trends are not so clear on other estates where serial data over several decades is unavailable, but rental information at particular points in time would suggest that the tenurial framework was not dissimilar. The core of the Midleton estate in

158. There is additional data for the 1760s from the same source as used in Appendix table iii, which although patchy, confirms this trend.
Imokilly in 1715 had twelve tenants, with the annual rents ranging from £219 to £10; the average holding size was probably somewhat below 400 acres (stat.). On Francis Bernard's estates, scattered over three western baronies in Cork with outliers in Kerry, the rental of over £4,000 p.a. in the 1720s came mainly from the sixty rural tenants, most of whom leased single townlands, about one-fifth of the tenants had Catholic Irish names, and this group generally held the smaller holdings. Most of the Earl of Inchiquin's £2,000 p.a. Imokilly estate was let in 1720 to about thirty large tenants - although about fourteen were partnership or multiple tenancies. On the Grandison estate, mainly situated in Decies (co. Waterford), the rental in the mid-1740s of £9,500 was being paid by about ninety tenants, substantial by implication and largely Catholic by name. Several tenants, however, were disproportionately large, such as the master-dairyman John Keily, who held about a dozen townlands. Tenant composition on smaller estates is less certain but letting to large tenants was certainly not unusual if the pattern of leasing on the small Earberry and Hely properties in Muskerry was typical.

159. Rental, 1715, Midleton MSS (G.M.&M.R. MS 145/102).
160. Rental and account book 1720-7 of the Bernard estate, Doherty MSS.
161. Inchiquin rental, 1720, Inchiquin MSS (N.L.I. MS 14,371).
164. For a partial indication of tenant composition on the Earberry estate, cf. Crofton MSS E/7/43,49,58,104,111; for a similar indication of the situation on the Hely estate c.1719, Crofton MS E/7/33 (T.C.D.).
A less clearcut cause of retarded estate improvement than the shortage of suitable tenants was the market environment in the first half of the century. Improvement as envisaged by most landlords assumed a context of mixed farming and fairly labour-intensive agriculture. And improvement - in the sense of farm-building and planting - was more likely, in an underdeveloped agrarian economy, to occur with buoyant agricultural prices. But the configuration of agricultural prices favoured a lopsided development in the second quarter of the century, with the emphasis of commercial farming over most of the region on dairying, fattening and rearing. Draining, ditching, and liming were less attractive to tenants in such a pastoral economy. Yet even prices for the staples, butter and beef, were in no sense dynamic (see Appendix tables v-vi). Thus, contemplating the relative absence of planting compared to England, William Cooley, the steward at Lohort castle, observed in 1747 that 'most people here think every shilling which is laid out in trade viz. in buying cattle in cheap seasons and selling in dear answers infinitely better than burying it as they call it in improvements...'. Indeed the pastoral nature of the local economy was such that the Earl of Egmont was being advised in 1744 against insisting on house-building and residence in lease covenants if he wanted solvent tenants: 'in a country where the rent is almost wholly made by the profit of cattle, and not by the profit of corn, or any manufacture, a man who must live on and by the produce of a farm, cannot pay as heavy a rent for it, as a man who has his residence elsewhere'.


166. Richard Purcell, Kanturk to Perceval, 30 Nov. 1744, Egmont MSS (B.L. Add. MS 47,001B, f.92).
Such a perspective must however be qualified. The absolute decline of tillage operations before mid-century should not be exaggerated; intra-regional contrasts continued to be important. Also the sluggishness of prices must be set against the secular rise in output: this can only be extrapolated from regional export data, which show butter and fatstock-based products experiencing a slow long-run growth, punctuated by several years of particularly rapid expansion (see Appendix tables x-xii). Increased cattle numbers were not just a function of expanded investment in livestock; by implication they involved a degree of land improvement, probably though reclamation and enclosure.

The probability of this type of tenant activity is all the greater if the timing of lease setting is taken into account. On many estates, leasing began from a situation of tabula rasa in the 1690s: old leases that had fallen since c.1687 were only reset in the middle years of the decade; in addition, the wars had seen very considerable tenurial disturbance and much land was vacant in the first years of peace. Also, pre-1687 tenants who continued in situ sought to renegotiate their leases with land values fallen and markets uncertain.\textsuperscript{167} The consequence was that the rent paid on a great part of the land in the region was to be artificially depressed until the leases set at this time had expired. Land values apparently began to re-cover in the interlude of peace at the turn of the century, but tenants who took land then sought abatements with the subsequent collapse of prices for pastoral products and poor harvests. Thus land was let out in the years after 1703 on equally disadvantageous terms to the landlord. The new purchasers of the Williamite

\textsuperscript{167} E.g. Copy, Sir Robert Southwell, London to James Waller, 16 March 1694/5, Southwell MSS (B.L. Add. MS 38,148).
forfeitures were therefore badly placed when they attempted to let out their land; Sir James Jefferys for instance experienced this on his new Blarney property. The formula used on many estates to mitigate this problem was to set leases on staggered rents, increasing either to a 'full' rent over several years, or with a fixed reduction lasting for the duration of war. The former method was used mainly in the 1690s, while the pegging down of rents during wartime only appears after 1702.

With the predominance of leases for thirty-one years and twenty-one years, a large proportion of the lettings dating from this period fell in the 1720s. This was for instance true of the estates tabulated in the appendix tables, even if the decennial figures mask this: on the Burlington estates nearly all the lettings between 1710 and 1729 took place within the years 1718 to 1724, when all lands set in the 1680s and 1690s on twenty-one leases were relet, while there was great activity on the Perceval/Egmont estate in 1727 and 1728 for similar reasons. The low rents that most tenants were paying in the intervening period, and the heady experience of high prices for much of the 1710s, gave way to higher rents; the Cork landlord Sir Richard Cox in 1731 suggested that 'estates... are raised near one third all over the kingdom within these seven years...'. The impressive expansion in butter exports that took place between c.1707 and 1714 represented significant supply responsiveness to the forward movement of prices, but that such flexibility existed was probably not unconnected with the relatively low overheads tenants of that generation were burdened with.


169. Cox, Observations on... Ireland, pp.5-6.
Much of the reletting of the 1720s and 1730s was done in a manner that received widespread criticism: by 'canting', which was a process of letting land out of lease by public advertisement. When the great cant of Burlington lands was advertised in 1718, the bidders were invited 'to set down the utmost rent they will give more than the rent at present...'. Similarly, when a farm was being set on the Perceval/Egmont estate in 1719, the agent reported how he had taken 'all the care in my power to raise it to the highest I could, by concealing what proposals were made to me, and giving all possible encouragement to the country to bid for it, I set up papers in all the market towns in the neighbourhood...'. The large cant seems to have been unusual before the early eighteenth century, but some of the reasons for the practice date from earlier. The frequency of attempts by landowners to draw new tenants, closer to the ideal, onto lands out of lease has already been seen; this provided the precedent for non-continuity of tenure. The competitive aspect was the logical consequence of this. Nonetheless the particular circumstances of the 1720s undoubtedly gave a fresh dimension to the process of reletting. Tenant profits from the 1710s and the unrealistically low old rents combined to produce a degree of speculative bidding that was to prove a serious setback to estate improvement, as most learned to their cost in the hard times of the thirties and the disasters of the early forties. The Perceval heir, visiting the family estates for the first time in 1731, believed that the high rate of lands was simply the consequence of 'a combination in the landlords of this country to raise them [lands] that the tenants must give them their price or not

170. Schedule of lands of the Earl of Burlington to be let... 1718, Lismore MSS (N.L.I. MS 6,150).

be able to "rent" any farm'. Across the region the problem of arrears achieved a new prominence, the consequence of which was widespread tenant bankruptcy and lease surrendering in the early 1740s. When the chief Burlington agent predicted in January 1743 that 'a fourth of our tenants will break this year', it might seem that he was confirming Swift's forecast of the consequence of the inexorable upward movement of rents: 'the frog, over-swelling himself, burst at last'.

The specific criticisms of canting were that it made tenants over-value land, and that by creating insecurity it discouraged tenants from improving. Where it sought simply to find the rack level and the person prepared to pay that, their criticisms were valid enough. But in the half-dozen or dozen bids that a farm might attract, it was often hard to determine precisely who was the highest bidder, for how did one measure the three-lives offer against one seeking thirty-one years, or how precisely could the value of the various improvements being promised be compared, even if a tenant put a cost on them? On the approach of the major reletting of his estate c. 1727, Viscount Perceval initially authorized a notice promising that lands would be let to 'the best bidder', but later decided that this should be changed insofar as it meant the highest bidder, for this

172. Copy, Lord Perceval, Ballymacow to Lady Perceval, 5 June 1731, Egmont MSS (B.L. Add. MS 46,996*, p.166 [N.L.I. Mic. p4,672]).
174. Quoted in Daly, Swift, p.155.
would 'bind me in three cases where I would be free. The first is to make a lease to one of them when perhaps none of them all has offered a just value for the land or second it will bind me to prefer a bad tenant to a good one only because he offers more, and thirdly it will oblige me perhaps to readmit again some tenants which it were better I were rid of."

For Perceval the virtue of public advertisement of lands to be let was that it was the most effective way to find the value of lands: this of course assumed there was some intrinsic value and overlooked in theory what was conceded in practice, the distinction between rack and 'full' rent levels. The danger of over-valuation was hardly recognized, at least by Perceval or his agent at this period. Their concern was rather that tenants might combine 'not to bid for each other's farms, and under-value their own; so that neither they nor strangers will offer what they ought to do, to remedy which, if in the general advertisement... it were said that each person should send his proffer sealed, and those which were not accepted should never be declared, it might encourage such as would be backward to bid for their neighbour's land, to make proposals.'

What however of the second criticism, that canting undermined tenants' incentive to improve? The evidence of the Perceval/Egmont estate is again most explicit on the treatment of old tenants. Perceval identified three categories: 'such as have performed their covenants of improvements, such as have not though dwelling on the land, and lastly such as do not dwell on the land, nor have their own stock on it but have set it to others.'


177. Copy, Perceval, Charlton to Taylor, 27 Apr. 1725, Egmont MSS (B.L. Add. MS 46,990*, p.79 [N.L.I. Mic. p4,676]).

178. Copy, Perceval, The Hague to Taylor, 10 June 1726, Egmont MSS (B.L. Add. MS 46,991*, pp.47-8 [N.L.I. Mic. p4,676]).
To the first I would have you say that they should not be surprised to see their farms mentioned in [the printed bills], that it was reasonable to enquire what [others] valued their concern at; but that you should have all due regard to them on account of the performance of their covenants provided they make a just and reasonable offer. To the [second] sort you may remonstrate how much my land has suffered by their neglect of improving as obliged by their lease, [and] that tenants who must be sued for non-performance of covenants ought not to wonder that new person[s] should [be] invited. To the third sort you need only say no more than [is] reasonable, the head landlord should have the fair preference of his land'.

This encapsulated his policy of renewal: improvers were by definition those who had kept their contract; it was 'a sort of justice' to prefer them or their heirs, all other things being equal – it was 'reasonable (though not strictly a duty)' and those who improved beyond what they undertook should not suffer. One concession, consistent with this, to old tenants who had improved was that they should be informed of what offers had been made by others, so that they could adjust their own.

179. Copy, Perceval, London to Taylor, 10 July 1725, Egmont MSS (B.L. Add. MS 46,990*, p.108 [N.L.I. Mic. p4,676f]).

180. Copy, Perceval, Charlton to Taylor, 7 Apr. 1724, Egmont MSS (B.L. Add. MS 46,989*, p.44 [N.L.I. Mic. p4,676f]).

181. Copy, Perceval, London to Taylor, 10 Jan. 1726/7, Egmont MSS (B.L. Add. MS 46,992*, p.8 [N.L.I. Mic. p4,676f]).


Two problems obstructed the execution of this logical policy; firstly
the familiar difficulty, the shortage of suitable replacement tenants:
Perceval specified eight tenants in 1725 to whom he was not prepared to
give renewals, yet because of arguments of solvency or expediency three
were able in the next few years to secure new leases. 184 The second
problem was the counter-assertion by tenants that any improvements on their
part created a claim for renewal in 'justice and equity'; 185 William
Freeman, when seeking a renewal of one of his farms in 1726, not for himself
but his son-in-law, spoke of yielding 'my tenant-right of preference' to the
latter. 186 There is very little other specific reference to such claims,
renewal usually being sought on vaguer appeals to justice than to any legal or
customary right; Perceval's tenants were wiser to emphasize (or exaggerate)
the magnitude of their improvements - implying that these were more than
they had covenanted to do - and to assert their indispensability, being
better improvers than their neighbours or than those who might replace them
would be. 187 'Tenant right' can only have existed as a broadly accepted
claim if there was less than free competition when land was canted. The
evidence from the Perceval/Egmont estate is ambiguous; William Taylor declared

184. Cf. copy, Perceval, Charlton to Taylor, 7 June 1725, Egmont
MSS (B.L. Add. MS 46,990*, p.97 [N.L.I. Mic. p.4,676]) and also
Egmont rentals cited in Appendix table ii.

185. E.g. cf. 'The case of William Freeman...', c. Aug. 1712,
Egmont MSS (B.L. Add. MS 46,978* [N.L.I. Mic. p4,674]).

186. William Freeman to Perceval, - Oct. 1726; see also Freeman to
Perceval, 2 March 1724/5, Egmont MSS (B.L. Add. MS 46,991*,
p.83; 46,990*, p.41. [N.L.I. p4,676])

187. Cf. George Crofts, Churchtown to Perceval, 12 March 1723/4, Egmont
MSS (B.L. Add. MS 46,989*, pp.35-6 [N.L.I. Mic. p4,676]).
in 1725: 'I do not find in this part of the country that people are near so cautious of bidding one upon another as they are in the North or in some parts of England', yet twenty-two years later William Cooley noticed that 'there is a sort of spirit or principle discouraging people to cant another man's lands as they call it here'. In 1751 a sitting tenant only had to declare publicly the rent he was offering for others not to exceed it in their offers. If a recognition of a tenant's preference was developing, it was not based on any appeal to ancient right. It was also still quite weak: allowing a farm to lie vacant two or three years and stocking it on the landlord's account was enough to defeat a 'combination'.

If it is accepted that there was a widespread desire on the part of landlords to secure and hold the improving tenant, then one of the criticisms of the practice of canting in this period is less than convincing. Best practice was to respect the co-operative old tenant both for economic and for social reasons. The language of patriarchalism was sometimes borrowed to describe the relationship that should exist, as is explicit in Viscount Kenmare's survey of his tenantry c.1755; when noting a newly set farm to a young tenant he remarked how 'his ancestors

188. Taylor, Ballynort to Perceval, 29 June 1725, Egmont MSS (B.L. Add. MS 46,990*, p.103 [N.L.I. Mic. p4,676]).
190. Richard Purcell, Kanturk to Egmont, 26 Aug. 1751, Egmont MSS (B.L. Add. MS 47,003, f.26).
191. Purcell, Kanturk to Lord Perceval, 24 Nov. 1746, Egmont MSS (B.L. Add. MS 47,002A, f.60).
ancient tenants on the estate, which entitles them to patronage of my family in after times'. But the commitment to an indeterminate 'just and reasonable' rent, when matched with a speculative approach by would-be tenants to leasing land helped accentuate a development that was anathema to the improving landlord: subletting.

The phenomenon of sub- or reletting of land by main tenants dated back to the beginnings of the Munster plantation. It was a natural consequence of the supply shortages already noticed - the shortage of capital and of improving tenants, the large size of tenant holdings, and the unwillingness on the part of some landowners to accept Irish cottagers as main tenants. Thus while a hierarchy of landlord, improving tenant and tied labourer may have been the continuing aspiration of the landed interest, a rather different kind of social pyramid evolved.

There were at least two functionally distinct types of subletting arrangement, one between main tenant as rentier and small farmer, the other between main tenant, engaged in farming operations, and labourer. The key to the first relationship lies in the identity of the 'small farmer': there is a very real semantic problem arising from the loose early eighteenth-century use of the word 'cottier' (or 'cottar'), which at its broadest appears to have been more a description of a man's style of living than of his economic position: a cottier was one who lived in a cottage or a cabin, who wore brogues and whose diet was largely based on the potato. It was only at a later period that the word gained the more specific meaning of tied labourer - in the sense that Arthur Young discussed 'the cottier system'. To avoid confusion the word is not used in

192. Observations, c.1755 in MacLysaght, Kenmare MSS, p.182.
this study where possible; in order to distinguish between cattle-owning small farmer and the cabin-holder whose subsistence mainly came from an acre or two of land paid for by agricultural labour to another, the terms 'gneever' and labourer will be used.

The origin and currency of the word 'gneever' is largely unknown; it occasionally occurs in estate papers. Its meaning however is unambiguous: one who holds a gneeve, i.e. one-twelfth of a ploughland (sometimes a gneeve was said to be one-twelfth of a townland). A ploughland of course was of varying acreage, and even if it originally reflected grazing capacity rather than area, the former was not constant: reclamation, liming and other land-use practices could all change the stock-carrying capacity of pasture; it also took no account of the tillage potential. Thus ploughlands could vary from 100 to 500 Irish acres, even up to 1,500 acres on the Bere peninsula - but what grazing load was a ploughland supposed to take?

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194. Pádraig O Maidín, 'Pococke's tour of south and south-west Ireland in 1758' in J.C.H.A.S. lxiii (1958), 91; Young, Tour, ii, p.85; W. Shaw Mason, Statistical account, or parochial survey of Ireland (Dublin, 1814–9), i, p.560n. For the relationship of gneeve to townland, see entry for 'gniomh' in J. O'Brien, Focaloir Goidhilge – Sax –Bhearlach, an Irish-English dictionary... (Paris, 1768).

195. 'Pococke's tour', 91; Mason, Parochial survey, i, p.560n.; memorandum on lease of Old Court (Kerricurrihy), 1701 (in which measurement is given as 'eighty acres or two-thirds of a ploughland Irish measure), Sarsfield MSS (N.L.I. P.C. 196).

196. 'Pococke's tour', 91.
It would seem that four cow units (or their equivalents) i.e. collops, made a gneeve in west Cork; it must be presumed that reclamation and various economic pressures made for higher stocking ratios elsewhere in the region by the early part of the century: on twelve townlands on the Perceval/Egmont estate in 1744, an average of sixty-seven collops were grazed per townland, i.e. approximately five and a half per gneeve; (beside this there were twelve acres of tillage per townland). Another pointer to the size of the gneeve comes from south Kerry: there the gneeve was equal to sixteen 'ounces' or potato gardens of presumably about an acre each. Taken together the evidence would suggest that the gneeve normally incorporated about twelve to twenty Irish acres of arable and grassland (i.e. a median of twenty-six statute acres).

The gneeever was not necessarily a 'partnership' farmer, but it is likely that a majority did in fact hold land jointly. The implications of partnership tenure are discussed presently, but it should be noted at this stage that partnerships were frequently of only two or three farmers, often drawn from the same kin group; also that partnership was as much an administrative convenience to the lessor (enforcing co-responsibility for rent payment) as a reflection of the agricultural practice of the smallholder.


198. Lansdowne, Glanerought, p.68.

The survival of the gneever in the guise of 'joint tenant' is not immediately apparent from the records of early eighteenth-century estate management. And this was a consequence of the preference of head landlords for other types of tenant; opposition to partnership tenures probably showed clearest on the larger estates, on better land, and in those districts that had formed part of the old plantation seignories. That the gneever was a substantial class in numbers is borne out by a Forfeiture Commissioners' survey of 328 townlands in Muskerry c.1701, on 55% of which were cabin dwellings only, 8% farm-houses only, and the other 37% contained both types. 200% Thus a majority of townlands in the sample were by implication farmed by small, probably partnership tenants.

The gneever was the closest approximation to the peasant family farmer, whose cheap inputs (family labour) and low maintenance costs (the limited cereal and potato diet, combined with a tolerance of squalid housing and living conditions) permitted him to accept leases at rents significantly beyond what the profit-maximizing larger man was prepared to give. The small average size of such undertakings is understandable, given the brittleness of the gneever's economic circumstances. When Viscount Perceval was trying to settle cottagers beside Annagh bog in 1725 for a few years rent-free in return for clearing patches of it, those who came forward wanted a guarantee of a twenty-one years lease after the three years but, more significantly, did not want to take on more than thirty to thirty-five acres. 201

200. Book of postings and sales of Forfeited Estates, 1700-3 in R.I.A.

201. Taylor, Ballymacow to Viscount Perceval, 4 Feb. 1724/5, Egmont MSS (B.L. Add. MS 46,990*, p.17 [R.L.I. Mic. p4,676]).
Purcell, referring to such tenants in 1743, believed that 'the building of a house, making bounds, and enclosing and setting a garden, must cost half as much as one of that class is generally worth'.

Purcell's predecessor as Perceval's agent believed that 'cottier' lettings were usually ten to twenty acres, and local evidence supported this: on the large mountain farm of Beallbahallagh in the 1740s there were six sets of undertenants on the farm, 'tenants in common, or in partnership, whose stock graze in common' (with an average of just over three tenants to a partnership) plus four other single undertenants, totalling twenty-three, which was an average of one family per twenty acres (Irish).

The objection of landlords to gneevers on an estate operated on several levels. There was the simple dislike of main tenants disregarding their obligations to improve, and getting a visible profit by letting to others. Thus Perceval frequently referred to such behaviour by tenants as fraud: 'That practice of commencing tenant with a design of setting to undertenants is little better than a cheat upon the head landlord, for the profit which the first tenant makes thereby ought really to be the true landlords...'. A more substantive objection to the gneeever tenant, whether as direct lessee or undertenantry was his mode of land use. Perceval, in the letter quoted above, continued: 'that method [subletting] prevents for ever the improvement of the land and even racks the heart of it away...'. Such a belief was quite general: Maurice Ronayne, agent of

202. Purcell, Kanturk to Egmont, 1 Apr. 1743, Egmont MSS (B.L. Add MS 47,008*, p.'Pl' [N.L.I. Mic. p4,677]).

203. William Taylor, Egmont to Egmont, 10 Feb. 1736/7, Egmont MSS (B.L. Add. MS 47,002*, p.30 [N.L.I. Mic. p4,678]).

204. Copy, Baron Perceval to Berkeley Taylor, 28 Feb. 1718/9, Egmont MSS (B.L. Add. MS 46,984*, p.29 [N.L.I. Mic. p4,675]).
Earl Grandison, argued that a farm being leased out by a tenant in small potato gardens was being ruined: 'so many ditches will be made to fence off the separate plots that a great part of the best lands will be destroyed'. But some distinguished between their effect on improved farms, and on rough land, mountain and bogs which as the Bantry landlords, Richard White, noted, 'cannot be injured by those kind of cottagers for the gardens they must set on such lands will notwithstanding their ill-management rather do good than harm'. It was thus in their role as reclaimers that small-holders could be acceptable to an improving landlord, or an improving large tenant. By a process of soil burning, scrub clearance and mainly potato culture, coarse ground and upland could be brought in for tillage or pasture. To reclaim a coarse farm beside Dromana desmesne, Grandison's agent proposed in 1729 to let it 'to honest labouring men who will perhaps better improve the land by their several potato gardens than richer men could, and... they will give it up upon a year's warning without any consideration'.

Generally the gneever-type tenant was Catholic and of Irish background, with the consequence that subletting was seen to weaken the English or Protestant character of an estate. Thus Arthur Bernard's major subletting activity on Lord Carleton's estate could be seen as positively subversive: the agent wrote how he held 'two court leets every year in the manor of Enniskeen... yet am always under great straights to find a jury of Protestants to serve... often am forced to take Irish men who cannot speak one word of English, occasioned by setting many farms to one man, who place Irish on them'. Yet there were Protestant cottiers, and

205. Maurice Ronayne, ffetters to Earl Grandison, 7 March 1728/9, Villiers Stuart MSS C/6.
206. Rental and account-book of Richard White, 1765-76, pp.28-9, Bantry-White MSS.
undertenants of English descent; improvement (in the limited sense of planting and building) by undertenants was not unknown. This of course was related to the terms of tenure by which gneevers and other larger undertenants held.

It seems probable that most main tenants in the region who sublet land to farming undertenants did so by written contract, by lease or article of agreement. In the early eighteenth-century environment verbal contracts or tenancies-at-will had the same disadvantages for the subletting main tenant as they had for the landlord, with the added problem that they left no way for the tenant to ensure that the constraints under which he lay in regard to turbary and land use would be observed by undertenants. The extensive use of written agreements might at first sight seem implausible when most lessees would be illiterate, but the commonness of signatures by mark shows the permeation of contractual agreements beyond the confines of literacy, and as Richard Purcell observed in 1748, 'the cotters in this country know more law than the rich farmers do in England'. Yet few enough examples of sub-leases have survived to allow confident generalization about their nature. They were however by definition shorter on average than head leases; whether terms under twenty-one years were frequent is not clear, but terms longer than this were only likely to occur where the lessor was granting a term co-terminous with his own interest, or where a tenant with a lives lease was setting improvement sub-leases of thirty-one years. All sub-leases necessarily contained a clause making the demise contingent on the continued interest in the premises of the head tenant.

Variety in tenurial arrangement was probably greater than that between head landlords and main tenants. At one extreme was the situation in Drumcarbud on the Perceval/Egmont estate, held on a three lives lease of 1684 by the main tenant, and by 1711 sublet to several Catholic undertenants for the duration of his own and his wife's lives; one of the undertenants, threatened with distraint because of the main tenant's arrears, described how he had recently 'built two good houses... burnt four lime 'kills' which I turned out on the premises... planted a plantation... of oziers on the farm and several other improvements'. Another subletter on the estate, holding also on a 1680s lives lease, had by the 1710s set six farms to four tenants co-terminous with his own interest, and part of a seventh to 'poor cottagers'; the under-leases all reproduced the covenants regulating land use contained in the main lease. The lease in 1733 of part of Ballyhanemore on the Grandison estate, let to four partners by a tenant holding a lives lease was for twenty-one years, and - probably reflecting main estate practice - lacked improvement clauses; the only non-standard clause in it was that if the undertenants sought to alienate their interest the main tenant must have first option. Examples of shorter tenures can be found over the region but they were probably commonest in the more remote districts: John Mahony of Dunloe was apparently subletting land in Kerry on fourteen-years leases at the beginning of the century.

211. William Taylor to Sir John Perceval, 30 Aug. 1711, Egmont MSS (B.L. Add. MS 46,978* \(\text{R.I.A. MS} 23.L.49\)).


213. Berkeley Taylor to Baron Perceval, 18 June 1717; copy, Perceval to Taylor, 2 July 1717, Egmont MSS (B.L. Add. MS 46,982*, pp.74,88 \(\text{R.I.A. MS} 23.L.49\)).

214. Lease, Valentine Browning to William Power et al., part of Ballyhanemore, 30 Dec. 1733, Villiers Stuart MSS.

215. Lease, John Mahony et. al. to Dennis Downing, 'Glanbeghy and Rossbeghy', 2 Oct. 1704, Blennerhassett MSS (Shropshire Record Office).
while Richard White was letting out his leasehold interest by Whiddy island
to 'annual cottagers' in the 1730s (although the continuation of leaseless
tenure there - without any rent adjustment - for over sixty years was
regarded as an unusual circumstance by an observer in 1810). 216

In what way did undertenants pay their rent? Before this can be
answered, the other type of subletting arrangement, that to a labourer,
must be examined. By 'labourer' is meant the 'cottier' who spent most
days of the year working for another, whose subsistence dependence was more
exclusively on an acre of potatoes, a cabbage garden, and perhaps one
or two grazing collops, all of which might be physically divorced from his
cabin. 217 Invariably he held his acre and collops by annual contract, and
his 'rent' was exclusively given by labour services. Any surplus would
normally be settled in kind: oats, milk, agricultural implements for instance.

By the 1740s it was claimed in Duhallow that 'the farmers here always build
the houses, for the labourers are so miserably poor that they can in no
sort contribute to such an undertaking. It is the custom without exception
to give an acre to each house...', 219 although such activity by farmers

216. Copy, Richard White, Bantry to Jonathan Burward, 28 June 1737;
rental and account-book of Richard White, 1765-76, pp.1-2, Bantry-
White MSS; H. Townsend, Statistical survey of the county of Cork...
(Dublin, 1810), p.389 [hereafter cited as Townsend, Cork].

MSS (B.L. Add. MS 47,005A, f.82).

218. Cf. labourers' account-book 1724, Lismore MSS (N.L.I. MS 6,528);
Courte diary 1739-51, passim, Limerick MSS (N.L.I. Ms 16,091);
Macroom account-book 1742-97, passim (P.R.O.I. M972x).

219. William Cooley, Lohort to Lord Perceval, 14 Feb. 1745/6, Egmont
MSS (B.L. Add. MS 47,005B, f.17).
cannot have been universal practice over the region. Tied labour was required in the first place where extensive improvement - reclamation and building - was taking place, but it is difficult to gauge the size of this demand. Certainly the substantial tenants on the larger estates, if they were to carry out their lease covenants, needed a significant labour force. On Perceval's 450-acre (Irish) farm of Templemurray, the tenant's father-in-law reported how it had been leased when 'the greatest part of it [was] very coarse... no ditches or any other improvement made on it', so that the tenant had 'planted twelve labourers thereon, which he has continued on the premises ever since, and with his own care and their labour, he has very much improved the land,... building a pretty good dwelling house, planting a good orchard, a great many forest trees, burning four or five large lime 'kills' and laying them on the land and with them a great deal of dung and a great many good ditches...'; such was the achievement of a dozen labourers in six years. Where relatively small lots of land or unimproved farms came up for releasing on this estate there was often considerable competition between farming tenants seeking accommodation for their labourers. Such settlement of labourers were smaller versions of the concentrations of labourers by landowners adjacent to their desmesne, where not only might ditches and houses be built for labourers, but such settlements might become the nuclei of estate villages.

220. George Crofts, Churchtown to Egmont, 15 Jan. 1733/4, Egmont MSS (B.L. Add. MS 46,999*, pp.7-8 [N.L.I. Mic. p4,678]).

221. E.g. Berkeley Taylor, Ballymacow to Baron Perceval, 19 Apr. 1716, Egmont MSS (B.L. Add. MS 46,981*, p.75 [N.L.I. Mic. p4,675]).

There was not much to choose between the subsistence margin of the tied labourer and that of the gneever, but it is probable that the latter had somewhat greater opportunity for upward social mobility, particularly if leases were taken at an advantageous time (when rent levels were depressed). For the labourers, having very limited cash resources, the openings were less. One type of arrangement however offered possibilities both for the labourer and the younger sons of small farmers: this was the dairy agreement. The system of 'putting out' milch cattle with sufficient land, garden and accommodation to 'cowkeepers' or dairymen, in return for a fixed quantity of butter for each cow that calved, and limited labour services (usually referred to as 'horn money'), became a major feature of rural society in the early decades of the century. The origins of the dairy system are unclear: it may have inherited certain features from West Country practice, but the letting out of various types of dry cattle for a season (or longer) to herdsmen in return for a few collops of grazing with potato ground or the right to the third or fourth sheaf of other undertenants was probably not a recent innovation.\(^{223}\) The usual contract was for one year, running from Ladyday, but there were major variations, notably the extension of the dairy contract as a kind of lease; in 1722 for example William Freeman was changing the status of his dairymen on Kilbarry because of his own ill-health: he explained to his landlord that he had set some of the less improved parts of the farm to 'honest laborious dairymen who have lived under me on the lands for ten years past and rented my cows from year to year from me' and added, 'I have now agreed with them to hold part of my cattle with the land set to them for a term of years...'.\(^{224}\)

\(^{223}\) The only direct evidence of how the herd system operated at this time comes from north Munster: transcript of Lucas diary 1739/40-1, entry for 1 May 1741 (N.L.I. MS 14,101).

\(^{224}\) William Freeman, Kilbarry to Baron Perceval, 16 Feb. 1721/2, Egmont MSS (B.L. Add. MS 46,987*, p.29 (N.L.I. Mic. p4,676)).
Such an agreement could be for the payment of rent in butter or in cash. An early contract - set admittedly by a head landlord, Sir John Meade - of land in Kinsale liberties with twenty cows in 1692 for three years was fixed at a cash rent, while in 1742 Edward Warner was letting a farm in Orrery barony for twenty-one cwt. of butter p.a. for twenty-one years. The economic status of the dairyman, even when on an annual contract, seems to have been superior to that of the labourer. His diet may have been identical, but the 'dairyhouse' was distinct from and more substantial than the labourer's cabin, although this partly arose no doubt from the need


226. Memorandum of agreement, Sir John Meade and John Meade, Mellifontstown, 17 Jan. 1692/3\textsuperscript{27}, Caulfield MSS 81, pp.5-6 (U.C.C. Strong Room).


228. In Bateman's survey of part of the Earl of Burlington's estate in 1716-7 (N.L.I. MS 6,148) there are specific symbols for farmhouse, dairy-house and cabin; the dairy-house and the cabin lack windows, but the chimney in the dairy-house is centralized in contrast to the cabin - where it is at one end - suggesting two rooms against one, and the symbol of the dairy-house is larger. A quite different type of hint of the dairyman's status comes in a lease of tithes in 1726 for six years of Nicholas Earberry where the co-lessees are described as farmer and dairyman respectively: lease of tithes of Knockburden, Nicholas Earberry to David Burdon and Daniel Grany, 14 May 1726, Crofton MS E/7/67 (T.C.D.).
for a specific room for butter preparation. On some occasions at least, the farmers were building dairyhouses; insofar as this might affect butter quality they had an incentive so to do. Profit to a dairyman could arise from keeping a pig, sheep or even calves on his collops, for the disposal of the sour milk was at his own discretion. However practice relating to the calves produced by the cattle rented out is less clear; in some cases the owners of the cattle took possession of the calves in the autumn, in others the dairymen could keep the calves as long as they were cleared from the land before winter; a possible variation on this was where dairymen were allowed to rear their calves, giving the cow-owners a proportion of the yearlings. Dairymen could thrive: occasionally among the bidders for lands on the Perceval/Egmont estate were ex-dairymen, such as the three Sheehan brothers in 1747 who sought a 130-acres (Irish) farm and who offered to build a stone house and plant two acres of orchard; they were reckoned by the agent 'honest and industrious,... together deemed to be able to put sufficient stock on that farm; but I don't think it likely that they... will improve any land'. Dairymen were often, it seems, required to give some guarantor for the cattle which they rented, but in spite of

229. E.g. John Norcott, Ballygarrett to Viscount Perceval, 23 March 1730/1, Egmont MSS (B.L. Add. MS 46,996*, p.43 [N.L.I. Mic. p4,679]).


231. The evidence for these arrangements is drawn from the 1770s - (Young, Tour, ii, pp.11,122,133,137) - but it is assumed that they existed at an earlier date.

232. Copy, Purcell to Lord Perceval, 26 Jan. 1746/7, Egmont MSS (B.L. Add. MS 47,012* [N.L.I. Mic. p4,680]).

233. Cf. Daniel Cronine, Rathmore to Viscount Kenmare, 18 Jan. 1730/1 in MacLysaght, Kenmare MSS, p.47.
this, dairy owners were constantly talking of the 'villainies' of
defaulting dairymen, and in the words of one large Grandison tenant, 'the
rent of dairy cows... is uncertain, attended with great loss. I know
that I never one year with another could make twenty shillings ster. of
the milk and grass of each dairy cow round; the difference 'twixt the prices
I am to allow the dairyman for the butter and what I am promised by the
merchants who but sometimes pays it [sic], and the arrears of the dairyman
which they [sic] never pay runs away with upwards of a third part of the
sum they undertake to pay; and if they are changed every year it commonly
turns to the same account...'; there was special pleading here perhaps,
but nonetheless the high incidence of defaulting can only have made the rate
at which cows were set a near perfect rack rent. Thus the 'horn money'
could amount to over a dozen day's labour per cow, which with an average
let of fifteen or twenty cows left little opportunity for other agricultural
activity, and the task of herding, milking and butter preparation presumably
became a family responsibility.

The distinction between the gneever, owning his own cattle and
engaged in tillage operations, and the dairyman, hiring his cattle and
often occupying rather more land, was not always clear. A dairyman's
rent could be expressed in terms either of butter or money: a gneever's
rent was normally fixed in money terms, but was often partly
worked off by labour. On the Perceval/Egmont estate, undertenants

C/8.

235. Calculated from information given in copy, Purcell, Kanturk to
Lord Perceval, 22 July 1743, Egmont MSS (B.L. Add. MS 47,008*,
p.29 [N.L.I. Mic. p4,679]). It is assumed here that the average
daily wage was 4½d.
had had agreements in the 1670s which fixed a money rent per collop held and a sheaf rent for tillage, but by the eighteenth century sheaf payment seems to have disappeared. Day labour was the only means some undertenants were reported to have had to pay the rent in 1713, although the quality of labour was doubtful. But the same estate provides evidence that cash was also paid by undertenants; the mode was presumably a function of the size of the let and the disposition of the lessor. However the gneever tenant proper - the man perhaps averaging twenty-six statute acres - would have been unable to pay the rent simply by labour, given current rent and wage levels (unless there was a second male adult in the family) and yet his access to cash must also have been limited. He must in fact have made a major part of his payments in the form of butter from his own cattle. This was William Taylor's belief in 1729: 'Upon the rise of lands lately which put the farmers under a necessity of altering their management of them, it is pretty universally practised in this country to set great part of their ground to Irish tenants for so much butter and so much money per acre, the money is commonly taken out in work... it is much easier to pay that way than find money...'. The assumption that the new full rents of the 1720s caused


an alteration in management away from direct farming is highly plausible.
Subletting was on the increase in the period and although the expansion of dairying output almost certainly was responsible for the extension of the putting-out system, the pressure behind an expansion of subletting in general came from the heightened head rents of the second quarter of the century. 240

Such management costs which the setting to small tenants involved, was one reason why head landlords were loathe to lease directly to the gneever tenant. But the underlying objection was to countenancing the type of tenant who subverted improved agriculture whether as tenant or undertenant. Thus in main leases, landlords sometimes inserted covenants against subletting: in Brodrick leases at the turn of the century the prohibition had been by implication; clauses were inserted forbidding any but Protestants to inhabit the lands, although in one case there was a concession - 'excepting only that the tenant may settle six labourers by the bog side'. 241 Such attempts at control obviously ran into difficulties in trying to distinguish between labourers necessary for farming operations, and other undertenants. Perceval leases in the 1680s and in the early eighteenth century attempted to get around this by forbidding the subleasing of land for periods of more than three years without first letting part to a Protestant Englishman; enforcement of this depended on establishing the existence of letting agreements, an exercise which would hardly have had the cooperation of either tenant-lesser or sublessee. Such lease covenants were probably relics of the plantation: in eighteenth-century conditions the only effective sanction against the subletter was non-renewal of his lease.


Changes in landlord-tenant relations between the first and second halves of the century are illustrated first by an examination of the evolution of estate administration. These were an underlying trend throughout the century, more noticeably in the second half, toward greater intervention in the running of estates, a pattern that did not continue far into the nineteenth century. As all but the largest estates in 1700, "administration" consisted in the sale of leases and the collection of rent. But in many smaller estates, a framework of memorial institutions had been established, commercial sector regulation, courts lees and boron, and memorial wills, requiring at least in theory significant supervision. Yet the key individual in estate management emerged around the main activity of letting and receiving rent: the "agent;"

this office became distinct only in the later part of the century. The agent was first and most clearly visible on larger and on absentee estates for obvious reasons. Where a landlord was involved on the spot, rentals, accounts and estate correspondence were at a minimum; this was most likely to be the case on small estates, and consequently least is known about conditions on them. The presumption must be that the larger and the more absent the owner, the greater the supervision and the independence of action agents enjoyed. Not among the very large owners were exceptions, the first Earl of Northampton, the parsonly agent ten years studying his father's deeds, a contrast to his grandsons local uninterest in estate affairs. The fourth Earl of Barrymore,

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resident at Castlereyns in 1747, was actually receiving his rents himself (with
the help of a clerk) - although this was mainly because of troubles with
previous employees. But however absent a landowner was, some degree of familiarity
with his inheritance was necessary. Sir Robert Southwell's advice to the
young Perceval in 1702 was not too demanding: 'You are born to acres
sufficient... and you must be prepared to know them... The present tenants
must be known, and who before, and why any difference in the rent'; he
was also recommended to find out about the grazing and cropping value
of the land and the movement of markets. Yet Southwell made no mention
of agents or estate servants, although on this estate a steward or agent
had been actively running affairs since the 1680s, before the family became
permanent absentees. Direct contact with tenants came in fact to be re-
garded as positively inconvenient; in 1726 Perceval noted how he avoided
'as much as I can writing to tenants because they are apt to build promises
upon the slightest pretences'. But in this case indirect contact did not
mean less supervision: Perceval for most of his life wrote at least once
a month to his Cork agent, and many absentees retained the right of deciding
the choice of tenants, and by so doing, maintained a significant control
over agents, even if a power of attorney to perfect leases was frequently
given.

Yet the largely autonomous agent was naturally associated with
absenteeism. Developments on the Petty/Shelburne estate in Kerry (set by

2. William Pearde, Castlereyns to Francis Price, 13 Oct. 1747, Puleston
MSS (N.L.W. MS 3,579D).

3. Sir Robert Southwell to Sir John Perceval (jun.), - Sept. 1702,
Egmont MSS, ii, p.208.

1726, Egmont MSS (B.L. Add. MS 46,991*, p.107 [N.L.I. Mic. p4,6767]).
an agent in 1697 on two leases renewable for ever, which were subsequently challenged on the grounds that the lessor's agent had been acting ultra vires), on the Orrery estate (where letting policy in the 1720s was largely left in the hands of an unscrupulous agent) and the heavily encumbered Barrymore lands in the 1790s (where an agent with full powers had exploited the possibilities of underhand leasing) amply demonstrate the dangers of insufficient control. And the tradition of incompetence and fraud on the Burlington estates, already seen in the period before the great sales, continued after 1748 when the agency passed into the hands of the Conner family for forty-five years; they usually corresponded not with their employer, but with an English head agent or 'auditor', whose refusal to receive letters or petitions from anyone else on the Irish estates was seen in retrospect to have been at least partly responsible for the Conners' self-serving conduct. Agents on the Irish side sought maximum control, using the argument put by Sir William Heathcote's banker-agent in 1764: 'a full power... to act on your behalf, as if personally present [is]... no more than what all the agents for absentees are furnished with, and nothing else will do'.

5. Lansdowne, Glanerought, pp.48, 52.
The use of bankers (together with merchants) underlined the primacy in many cases of the rent-receiving function of agency. Thus Edward Hoare was agent-receiver for (at least) the Dublin-based Viscount Midleton, and his father is recorded as having sought other agencies. The Cork merchant William Hovell had been receiver for the Davies Bantry estate in the 1680s, while the bankers Harper and Armstead, and Falkiners after them, acted in this capacity for the Heathcote west Waterford estate after 1739; the latter property, consisting entirely of tenants on perpetuities, posed few management problems, yet it was found necessary after 1750 to have local assistance in receiving (even though tenants had covenanted to pay their rents in Cork).

In general however agency became too demanding for the merchant whose sole advantage lay in his access to the market in bills of exchange. The functions of an agent, as defined by Percival for the recently appointed Berkeley Taylor, included the writing of one letter a week to his employer, with an abstract of monies received and disbursed once a month, together with the current rates for leading country commodities, 'to be as well informed as possible what the undertenants pay the others', and of course 'to be diligent in getting in the tenants' rents and arrears, especially of the Papist tenants'. The duties of an absentee's agent in effect...


included the full range of receivership and management, as well as supervising and often participating in manorial institutions; the agent was also likely to be the steward of the desmesne and household if one was maintained, and the personal representative, politically and socially of his employer.

For rent-receiving and collection of arrears, extra staff were sometimes needed. This was the critical area where the reputation of an estate could be made or lost. General rent payment twice yearly (at Ladyday and All Saints' Day) was suitable for mixed farming, rearing and dairying districts, but less so where the rent was made by tillage or fatstock (and it does seem that annual payments sometimes became the custom). While rent was usually paid to the agent or his receiver, towards the end of the century payments were in some instances made directly into the banks at Cork. With the predominance of 'full' rents, payment was by no means automatic and much of an agent's energies were devoted to prodding dilatory tenants, threatening them with distraint, actually driving and pounding their stock, or in the last resort bringing ejectments against them. The general concession to all but annual tenants was the 'hanging' gale, the toleration of up to six months' arrear which even in 1711 was described as 'the old custom'.

14. One instance of quarterly payments has been traced, but it was on a farm in the liberties of Cork city by the undertenants of a middleman: rental and general account-book of George Randall, 1756-89, ff. 2-9 (Reginald's Tower Museum, Waterford).


Thus to tenants, paying one rent when the next fell due was 'good payment';\textsuperscript{18} Egmont regarded the practice as a 'reasonable indulgence'.\textsuperscript{19} Attempts to forshorten it were always resented, and were taken as a sign of foolish management.\textsuperscript{20} Beyond the six-months period, customs varied. In times of depression, harvest failure or cattle mortality, exceptional forbearance was necessary, such as in the mid-1700s, the early 1740s or in the aftermath of the cattle mortality of 1783-4.\textsuperscript{21} On the whole when arrears approached or exceeded one year, landlords became uneasy. The practice on the Perceval/Egmont estate was to prepare for distraint as one year's arrear approached, even though, as it was pointed out to Egmont, when 'gentlemen of large estates and full-set lands allow their tenants half a year's time for paying their rents, how is the loss of a year's rent to be avoided whenever a tenant proves knavish or insolent...?'.\textsuperscript{22} The danger was seen to lie in allowing a tenant to run into arrears greater than his stock on the land - in effect the tenant's collateral - was worth.\textsuperscript{23} And, believed Egmont 'when

\textsuperscript{18} William Taylor, Egmont to Viscount Perceval, 13 Jan. 1732/3, Egmont MSS (B.L. Add. MS 46,998*, p.13 [N.L.I. Mic. p4,677]).

\textsuperscript{19} Copy, Egmont, London to Taylor, 19 March 1737/8, Egmont MSS (B.L. Add. MS 47,003*, p.55 [N.L.I. Mic. p4,678]).

\textsuperscript{20} E.g. Berkeley Taylor to Baron Perceval, 19 Jan. 1720/1, Egmont MSS (B.L. Add. MS 46,986* [N.L.I. Mic. p4,676]; Edmund Spencer, near Charleville to Francis Price, Puleston MSS (N.L.W. MS 3,580C [N.L.I. Mic. p3,263]).


\textsuperscript{22} William Taylor, Egmont to Egmont, 8 June 1739, Egmont MSS (B.L. Add. MS 47,004*, p.103 [N.L.I. Mic. p4,679]).

\textsuperscript{23} Cf. copy, Egmont, Charlton to Taylor, 23 Oct. 1736, Egmont MSS (B.L. Add. MS 47,001*, p.178 [N.L.I. Mic. p4,678]).
an Irish tenant is gone in arrears two years' rent, he never will think of paying, but looks on all as his own', so to prevent a tenant becoming 'desperate' the timing of harsh threats and distraint had to be planned. Driving a tenant's cattle was in a sense an admission of failure, for it was the boast of an efficient agent such as Richard Purcell that he could 'give a shrewd guess to the ability of every tenant on the estate, and I will surely oblige such to pay who are able to do so without suffering their stock to be sold'. It was unwise for instance to restrain dairy farms in summertime, and even in autumn driving was an inefficient method of getting in arrears. Cattle impounded would first be redelivered in return for bonds, and if money was not forthcoming, attempts at sale would be made, but often 'tenants will not buy one another's cattle', and an agent was forced to try and find grazing for such cattle and gradually dispose of them. Driving a tenant's means of livelihood off a farm was counter-productive in another way: it could force the tenant to sublet. In the later part of the century, the driving of cattle could trigger off agrarian violence, or at least fairly violent 'rescues'; the fact that

25. Purcell, Kanturk to Egmont, 30 Apr. 1744, Egmont MSS (B.L. Add. MS 47,009*, p.70 [N.L.I. Mic. p4,679]).
'no four-footed beast had been sold for rent' in the previous ten years on the Shelburne estate in contrast to all neighbouring south Kerry estates was given as an explanation of the locality's tranquillity in 1797. And the driving of undertenants' cattle which sometimes occurred where a main tenant was in arrear was throughout the century a certain source of protest.

Distraining was obviously more suitable in a pastoral economy than one dependent on tillage, as was increasingly the case towards the end of the century. The alternative was greater resort to ejectment. This approach, in the eyes of William Taylor, living in a dairying environment, was 'tedious... and only to be used when the tenant is vexatious or his interest valuable to make the landlord amends for at least three years' rent that [is] lost', a view shared by his employer. Ejectment at this time was of course used as a threat, but the practice seems to have become more commonly used in the later part of the century, although perhaps this was as much a function of the smaller size of tenancy as the swing to tillage. On the Earberry estate, tenants in 1787 were being threatened with ejectment if they exceeded the hanging gale, while the agent of the Grandison estate, pressed for remittances

30. Lansdowne, Glanerought, p. 87.
33. Purcell, Kanturk to Orrery, 2 Dec. 1737, Orrery MSS (H.U.L. 218.19 [N.L.I. Mic. p792]).
by his needy landlord in 1778, justified using threats of ejectment in preference to distraining. Yet in the course of the century driving was probably as normal as ejectments actually executed were unusual: the elopement of tenants with their chattels before the law took its course was indeed more common. There was a consciousness on the part of agents and landowners of allowing peaceful enjoyment of a lease interest; thus Egmont's zeal for prompt payment could be countered by the argument that 'severe methods may produce great confusion and a disreputation upon the estate which may lessen the value of it, which at present is kept up, and the best sort of tenants got by the character of gentle usage it has...'.

The impossibility of quantifying the normal proportion of arrears to annual rental - beyond the loose assumption that it fluctuated 50% either side of parity - is a result of another dimension of agents' activities: accounting. The general practice of absentee and peripatetic landlords was to require annual or bi-annual accounts from their agents. Beyond a few isolated survivals, accounts do not survive in serial form for the estate of any fully resident landlord, suggesting the slow development of regular book-keeping except where monitoring was necessary to prevent fraud, and as has already been seen even on the largest absentee estate - the Burlington property - accounts for a long period were not regularly checked. Furthermore even on the most efficiently run estates, central accounts of landowners' expenditure and receipts - consolidating landed and non-landed income - were apparently not kept. Insofar as agents were specifically equipped for their job, it was not in accounting, as Berkeley Taylor, agent and son of an agent, frankly

35. Richard Musgrave, Tourin to Villiers, 5 Nov. 1778 (loc.cit.).

36. Taylor, Egmont to Egmont, 8 June 1739 (loc.cit.).

37. The only significant financial documentation for estates where the owner resided that has come to light relates to the Coppinger, Brown/Kennare, Lombard, Somerville, Villiers/Grandison and White estates.
admitted in 1716: 'There is nothing I dislike more than long accounts' (after several mistakes had been pointed out to him by his employer). 38

Even John Purcell, a man holding a number of north Cork agencies at the end of the century, kept disorganized accounts, mixing in one case disbursements on his own and on one of his employer's accounts. 39 More importance however was attached by a non-resident owner to an agent's capacity to remit funds efficiently and at the cheapest rates of exchange; irregular remittances could jeopardize his liquidity and his credit.

The alternative to remitting bills from Cork was for the absentee to draw bills from London on the agent in co. Cork: this was unpopular 40 and the disposal of such bills could be difficult. Attempts were made to secure fixed rates of exchange with individual Cork merchants or bankers: this could not be arranged for the Perceval/Egmont rents in the 1720s but was the case by the 1780s, 41 while Sir William Heathcote's rents were remitted at a constant rate from 1739. 42


41. Taylor, Ballynort to Perceval, 10 Aug., 6 Oct. 1726, Egmont MSS (B.L. Add. MS 46,991*, pp. 60, 78 [N.L.I. Mic. p4,676]); R. Purcell, Bath to John Purcell, 2 May 1785, Ryan Purcell MSS.

42. Agreement re remitting bills, Sir William Heathcote with John Harper and John Armstead, 2 April 1739, Heathcote MSS (P.R.O.N.I. T3,091/A/1/15).
The execution of leasing policy and often its formulation constituted the other major responsibility, and it was here that agents could have the greatest discretionary power, and where the most dramatic profit-taking could take place. Given the risks, on what criteria was an agent chosen? The qualifications generally sought were on the one hand trustworthiness, and on the other a knowledge of local conditions, or rather access to such knowledge. There was some conflict therefore between the need for substantial gentlemen, and for smaller men with better understanding of individual farm values and of tenants' and undertenants' circumstances. At one extreme were a landowner's relatives: on the Petty/Shelburne, Perceval/Egmont, Midleton, Ronayne and O’Hea estates, relations were agents at different periods in the century; in contrast Catholic agents of social status certainly not above the main tenants were to be found at some points on the Orrery, Burlington, Grandison, Barrymore, Doneraile and Earberry estates. The bias was probably towards substance: it was said of the recently inheriting fifth earl of Barrymore in 1748 that 'the ill effect of employing mean tools... are very palpable in his Lordship's family already; they brought his wise father into more contempt than any other act of his life, and in the end lost many thousand pounds by one harpy...'.

43. Family agencies included James Waller on the Shelburne estate (L Lansdowne, Glanerought, p.48); three generations of Taylor on the Perceval/Egmont estate: Dean Chinnery and Charles Brodrick on the Midleton estate in the later part of the century; Dominick Sarsfield on the Ronayne estate (Thomas Ronayne, rental and accounts 1755-77 (N.L.I. MS 1,721)); Mathew O’Hea’s brother on his estate,- of copy Egmont, London to Purcell, 13 Feb. 1744/5, Egmont MSS (B.L. Add. MS 47,009*, p.67 (N.L.I. Mic. p4,679)).

44. Such appointments included John Honohane on the Orrery estate at the beginning of the century, Andrew Crotty on the Burlington estates in the 1720s and 1730s, Maurice Ronayne and Pierse Barron at different periods on the Grandison estate, Michael Creagh on the Doneraile estate - Purcell, Kanturk to Egmont, 13 Feb. 1751/2, Egmont MSS (B.L. Add. MS 47,003, f.65) - and John Mahony on the Earberry estate in the 1780s.

the decision to send over a Londoner was hardly the answer: 'where he is an absolute stranger both to the estate and the people it must be an expensive embassy, and I doubt will hardly answer the ends...'. The fourth earl had apparently tried to salvage himself from a dishonest agent by appointing the Catholic Andrew Crotty, previously the chief agent for more than a decade of the Burlington estates before he had been dismissed; Crotty had also acted for 'other persons of quality' and in 1725 had been described by a Catholic exile as 'a great man and can do you or any he pleases great services, he is what he pleases with many...'; Crotty died shortly after the Barrymore appointment.

Most agents of social standing had at least an under-agent: Dean Chinnery of Cork, a relative of the Midleton family and their agent from 1761 to 1779, had as an assistant 'a person conversant in accounts' who was clerk, book-keeper, receiver and menial servant. After Chinnery's death the accounts were found to be disorganized, and a Cork attorney was agent for several years; he became an alcoholic. Presently Viscount Midleton's

46. Ibid.

47. William Taylor, Cork to Egmont, 8 April 1735, Egmont MSS (B.L. Add. MS 47,00* p.57 (N.L.I. Mic. p4,678); copy, Marmaduke Coghill, Dublin to Edward Southwell, 7 Oct. 1735, Southwell MSS (N.L.I. MS 875); William Pearde, Castlelyons to Francis Price, 25 March 1743, Puleston MSS (N.L.W. MS 3,579D (N.L.I. Mic. p3,263).]


49. Patrick Sarsfield, Ostend to Dominick Sarsfield, 20 Dec. 1725, Sarsfield MSS.

50. Pearde, Castlelyons to Price, 20 May 1746; c. Dec. 1746, Puleston MSS.

51. Answer of Viscount Midleton to bill of complaint, n.d., Brodrick MSS (P.R.O.I. Co. 1,994); copy, to Viscount Midleton, 14 May, 16 June 1784, Brodrick letter-book 1784 (loc.cit.). This appointment was in spite of the fact that Midleton's father thought it impossible that 'any person in their senses would take a lawyer for their agent and immediately lay before them such a temptation for drawing them perpetually into unnecessary lawsuits': Midleton to Dr. Chinnery, 22 May 1764, Midleton MSS (P.R.O.N.I. T2,862/3/2).
younger brother came over to Ireland and took direct charge for about ten years, before becoming Bishop of Clonfert in 1795: he also employed at least one under-agent.\textsuperscript{52} The main Burlington agent after the trauma of the 1730s, John Usher, was probably exceptional in not delegating: 'I receive all the cash myself and superintend the business from the time the books are opened till they are closed. My clerk though a man to be trusted has nothing more to do than make out the rentrolls and transcribe the accounts...'.\textsuperscript{53}

Egmont's William Taylor (also an alcoholic) saw his deputy gradually replacing him in his employer's confidence: Richard Purcell, a Kanturk worsted yarn manufacturer, became not only full agent of the estate on Taylor's death in 1746, but also of the neighbouring Orrery estate, while he turned down at this point an offer of the Kingston estate agency.\textsuperscript{54}

He gave over his yarn business to a relative and within a year was seeking the agency of the huge Courtenay estate across the hills in west Limerick. Multiple agencies were nothing unusual, but Purcell's qualities of efficency, honesty and abstinence, and his intermediate social status were apparently a rare and sought-after mixture.

When appointed, Purcell had had to give a bond for £5,000 as security, Crotty a £6,000 bond to Barrymore:\textsuperscript{55} the demand for such narrowed the social field from which agents could be drawn. The size of the bonds are an indicator of the potential for fraud; this raises the question

\textsuperscript{52} Cf. correspondence between William Welland and Bishop Brodrick, Midleton MSS (N.L.I. MS 8,871/2).

\textsuperscript{53} Copy, \{Usher\} to Sir William Abdy, 10 Feb. 1743/4, Lismore MSS (N.L.I. MS 7,180).

\textsuperscript{54} Précis of letter, Purcell to Lord Perceval, 10 June 1746, Egmont MSS (B.L. Add. MS 47,011*, p.63 [N.L.I. Mic. p4,679f]).

\textsuperscript{55} Purcell, Kanturk to Egmont, 15 July 1747, Egmont MSS (B.L. Add. MS 47,011*, p.91 [N.L.I. Mic. p4,679f]; Pearde, Castlelyons to Price, 25 March 1743 (loc.cit.).
whether agents were dishonest because of the opportunities for embezzlement, or because of their under-remuneration. The former was in the mind of the Society of Friends in 1695, when the Munster provincial meeting warned Quakers to be careful before becoming stewards to great men, because of the moral and financial temptations. The competition that vacant agencies attracted was not unlike the lobbying for local 'places', notably in the Revenue service for offices such as collectorships. Remuneration was generally proportioned to the rental of an estate: it would seem that on a resident's estate, the agent-receiver's salary came from a $2\frac{1}{2}\%$ fee on all rents payable. The danger of the commission system was that it gave the agent an interest in raising rents to their full level, but whether frauds committed under alternative arrangements were any less is doubtful, except that where there was a fixed salary it was generally higher: on the Burlington estate there was a salary of £300 on a gross rental of £8,000 in 1744, about the same time on the Kingston estate a £200 salary existed beside a rental probably exceeding £3,000, and in 1752 the Courtenay salary of £600 went with a rental of £9,000; in 1777, Arthur Young

56. Extract from minutes of Munster provincial meeting in minutes of Bandon men's meeting, 19 May 1695, Cork minutes 1v (Library of the Soc. of Friends, Dublin).

57. E.g. MacLysaght, Kenmare MSS, p.265. Most salaries were gross in the sense that they did not take account of the agent's employment of a clerk or under-receiver.


59. Précis of letter, Purcell to Lord Perceval, 10 June 1746 (loc.cit.); for a near contemporary estimate of the Kingston rental: (T. Prior), List of the absentees of Ireland... (Dublin, 1729).

60. Diary of Joshua Wight, 6 March 1752 (Soc. of Friends' Lib. MS Rm.4/Sh. P/3).
received a £500 salary from Lord Kingsborough when the rental had risen to about £7,000, while the agent's salary on the Devonshire estates in the 1790s was £560 (between three and four per cent of the rental). There were of course non-quantifiable advantages in holding an agency: the friendship and patronage of an influential landowner, and the prestige of holding office under him, were strong attractions.

Improper management and conflict with landowners, a continuous feature, arose in part from the imprecise responsibility of agents, and unclear codes of conduct. The most frequent abuse, one which was not strictly 'embezzlement', was for agents to arrange the leasing of farms to themselves, their families or their nominees. On the senior Herbert estate in Kerry in 1686, the steward and receiver, Edward Kenney, a man of £1,000 p.a., had seen to it that thirty of the sixty-two ploughlands in the seignory of Castleisland were held by himself or his relatives. On the Kingston estate there was a lawsuit over a beneficial lease the agent had secured when the third baron Kingston was on the Continent. The second earl of Burlington at the

61. Memorandum of conversation with Lord Kingsborough, 26 Feb. 1777, Young MSS (B.L. Add. MD 35,126, f.171); Young, Tour, ii, appendix p.82.


64. Survey and rental of the Herbert estate, 1686 (N.L.I. MS 7,861, f.163).

beginning of the century expressed a determination to prohibit agents
from taking farms and reletting them, and yet his patrimony was later
to exhibit the most striking cases of such practices: charges of favouring
personal friends, setting farms to nominees for themselves and
generally letting at under-rates in return for gratuities were to be
made against various sets of agents between the 1710s and 1730s, claims
which seem to have been well-funded. After a short spell of efficient
management under John Usher until 1748, the property - probably still the
largest in the region in spite of the great sales - was managed by one
family (the Conners) for over forty years. They let lands extensively
to their relations at low rents without seeking for other bidders, or else
received bribes before granting leases; they substantially weakened the
political influence of the Burlington/Devonshire family in the boroughs
which the family had traditionally controlled by alienating key voters.
(Fraud was compounded by incompetence: the Conners failed
to maintain the renewal of lives in some churchland which had formerly been part
of the estate, with the result that it passed out of Devonshire control.)

Gratuities paid to agents for recommendation was the issue that got
most attention in the later part of the century. It was to be found on
large estates - as on the Barrymore during the agency of Edward Collins


67. See chapter ii, pp. 75-6, 119-20; also Richard Baggs, Lismore
to Henry Boyle, 24 Nov. 1736, Shannon MSS (N.L.I. MS 13,235);
A just and true relation of J. Bateman's concern, passim.

68. Richard Musgrave, Dublin to Lord Frederick Cavendish, 14 Dec. 1790;
Thomas Garde, Bath to John Heaton, 7 Jan. 1792; Musgrave to Heaton,
13 Feb., 10 April, 16 April 1792, Devonshire MSS (P.R.O.N.I. T3,158).

69. Thomas Knowlton, Chatsworth to Heaton, 20 Dec. 1800, Devonshire
MSS (P.R.O.N.I. T3,158).
in the 1790s when it appears he undervalued new lettings to the extent of £2,000 p.a., receiving in one case a douceur of £500 as 'a corrupt consideration';70 and on small properties: in 1786 Timothy Mahony, the new agent for the Earberry estate, was receiving bribes from many sitting tenants 'to recommend them in good favour' and from new lessees;71 he was also taking 'forbearance money' from tenants threatened with distraint.72

Earberry's reaction to reports of his activities was unhelpful: 'if they are fools enough to part with their money for no reason whatsoever they must only blame themselves'.73 A year later some of the tenants, posing as Whiteboys, 'dealt' with Mahony, almost drowning him; a subsequent handbill cautioned 'all agents in the country not to be guilty of such 'treatstrous' action, between landlord and tenant, or if they do they may be sure of Mahony's reception...'.74 Here the agent was clearly a peer of the small Donoughmore tenantry, but in 1804 Viscount Midleton was disappointed to find that his socially more elevated agent was accepting gratuities on lease perfection.75 Townsend, writing of the practice in 1810, conceded


73. Ibid.

74. Corkran, Cork to Earberry, 29 Dec. 1788; copy of Rightboy notice, c. 1789, Crofton MSS V/2/175, 474.

75. Viscount Midleton to Joseph Haynes, 31 May 1804, Midleton MSS (N.L.I. MS 8,867/10).
that the need to purchase the agent's good-will was an established custom; 76 this was the only general criticism that Townsend allowed, but clearly badly-managed estates could spawn rogue agents whose abuse of power could be considerable: of Mahony it was said, 'His sons keep [two] public houses... and no countenance [is] shown any who do not resort to either of those or both', 77 while John Minton's agent at Kanturk ended up by being successfully convicted for exacting money from labourers, stealing timber and illegally grazing cattle. 78

The quality of an agent's management was determined as much by his performance in informal duties as by his execution of central obligations, functions such as the monitoring of improvements in progress and of land use, the organization of relief measures in times of harvest failure, and the checking for signs of disturbance. These required the continuous residence of the agent, and 'pluralist' agents, Cork-based attorneys and peripatetic local place-hunters were obviously deficient in this respect. Indeed the question of non-residence was enough to force Midleton to dismiss his agent in 1801; he was determined to have a resident gentleman eligible to be a magistrate, in the interests of the estate's tranquillity. 80 In the later part of the eighteenth century a move can in fact be detected reinforcing the preference of landowners for 'substantial' agents, 81 not just because

76. Townsend, Cork, p.78**********/sic/.
77. Corkran, Cork to Earberry, 24 Aug. 1787 (loc.cit.).
81. Cf. J. E. Curwen, Observations on the state of Ireland (London, 1813), ii, p.134 for comments on the recentness of the emphasis on men of 'talent and character'.

these could act as magistrates, nor because of the landed assumption of the dishonesty of the undereducated, but because of the professionalization of the office, to the extent that those with a knowledge of improved agriculture were desired by 'improving' landlords. The most famous example of this was the employment as agent, albeit for one year, of Arthur Young in 1777-8 by Lord Kingsborough; the latter, desiring to replace a non-resident agent 'who never saw an acre of the estate but merely on a rapid journey once, or at most twice, a year to receive the rents' appointed Young to be 'a respectable resident agent who understood agriculture; 82 Young's over-radical ideas on tenurial reform seem to have quickly lost him his job. 83 In the last fifteen years of the century other Englishmen such as Pelham, employed on the Lansdowne estates, Bowman, employed on the Devonshire property after the last Conner was dismissed, and Wray on the Colthurst estate had farming experience of some sort, 84 while at the end of the century the locally-born cleric and prolific agricultural writer, Horatio Townsend, was agent for the Earl of Shannon's Clonakilty and Courtmacsherry estates. 85 Writing on agency in 1816, a kinsman of Townsend

83. Ibid. p.76.
85. Horatio Townsend to the Earl of Shannon, 23 April 1803, Shannon MSS (P.R.O.N.I. D2,707/A2/10/2).
discussed and defended this trend, seeing the first role of agents 'to make good farmers of the occupiers'; he argued that to do this the agent must be a source of knowledge, encouragement, cheap implements and wholesale seed; his function was to be educative, and to be so he must be drawn from the educated classes. 86

* * *

The manorial functions of estate administration, by comparison of minor significance, consisted of the legal provision of courts leet, baron and (in a few cases) record, and the economic provision of grist and tuck mills. The jurisdictions of manorial courts were established (or re-established, some actually dating from medieval charters) in seventeenth-century patents and usually embraced the fee-simple property of the patentee; all leaseholders were normally bound to do suit and service at such courts. 87 In eighteenth-century co. Cork, excluding the corporate jurisdictions of Cork city, Kinsale and Youghal, there were probably over fifty manor-court jurisdictions; by no means all the county was covered but it would seem that it was better served than other parts of the country. 88 What proportion never functioned or became dormant at an early date is unknown: Sir John Perceval was told by his seneschal in 1709 that his four manor courts were 'much slighted' by the tenants; the seneschal added that he would try 'to let them understand their duty'. 89 There were thirty-five manor courts active in the county by the 1830s 90 but there were probably others that had only fallen into disuse with the growth of petty-sessions courts after

86. Munster Farmers' Magazine, v (1816-7), 105-6.
87. They could be fined for non-attendance: Dominick Burke to Earberry, n.d. [C. 1787], Crofton MSS V/2/434.
88. Report from the Select Committee appointed to inquire into the operation of the small debt jurisdiction of manor courts of Ireland, H.C. 1837 xv, p.80.
89. William Turner, Burton to Sir John Perceval, 13 May 1709, Egmont MSS (B.L. Add. 46,978* [N.L.I. Mic. p4,6747]).
All manorial courts had two functions; the first was as court leet where practice within the manor was determined relating to weights and measures, market regulation and where internal disputes over boundaries were adjudicated: in a purely rural context they had limited significance. The court leet only met twice in the course of the year, and was normally under the direction of a seneschal, although it was not unknown for a landlord even of the fourth earl of Barrymore's eminence to consider attendance. The role of seneschal as court convener was recognised by landlords as important, not so much because of the (fairly limited) profits that went with it, but because of the potential damage an unsympathetic seneschal could do to an estate by influencing inquisitions concerning bounds or, in some manor boroughs, by controlling the franchise. The office was

91. The estimate of fifty-plus manor courts is based on the 1837 return of thirty-five then active: a number of other manors known to have been active in the eighteenth century can be assumed to be only a fraction of the total that fell into decay - e.g. Burton, Annagh, Liscarrow (all on the Egmont estate), Donaghmore, Fleetwood and the manor serving the Kenmare property in Bear and Bantry. There were fifty-one petty sessions courts in co. Cork outside the city by 1842 (Return of the Petty Sessions held in Ireland during 1842, H.C. 1843 I, pp. 200-13).


93. Earl of Barrymore, Castlelyons to Francis Price, 9 May 1732, Puleston MSS (N.L.W. MS 3,582D [N.L.I. Mic. p3,263]).

sometimes filled by the agent, but more often by an employee on the estate of less than gentle status, although as in the case of agency it was assumed that only by appointing men of substance could the danger of oppression be avoided. 95

The seneschal was equally important as convener of the second form of manorial court, the court baron, for although a jury was empanelled to adjudicate civil cases brought before it, he could largely determine its standards of equity (operating as it was outside common law). It had powers to determine civil cases concerning cash debts, promissory notes, miscellaneous contracts and in some cases trespass in sums of up to £2 (in some courts up to £10 or, in the half-dozen-odd manors where a separate court of record had been granted, up to £200). These courts may have contributed direct income to an estate, and where an active seneschal existed, they seem to have been preferred to the quarter sessions: in 1744, referring to the position of Sir William Heathcote's new tenants on former Burlington lands when their manorial obligations were unclear, John Keane of Cappoquin thought that 'tis much better for the tenants to attend the Lord's courts, than at the sheriff's, the former being easy and inexpensive, and the latter quite the reverse, and somewhere they must attend'. 96 Such a comparison was reiterated by defendants of manor courts when their existence came to be questioned in the early nineteenth century: manor courts according to one Muskerry seneschal, 'are not known to the rich and the powerful,... but I never heard a shopkeeper, tradesman, servant, labourer or farmer, that did not praise their utility and convenience'. 97

95. Copy, Baron Perceval to Berkeley Taylor, 23 Feb. 1720/1, Egmont MSS (B.L. Add. MS 46,986, p.46 [N.L.I. Mic. p4,676]; Purcell, Kanturk to Orrery, 26 March 1742, Orrery MSS (H.U.L. MS Eng. 218.4F/7 [N.L.I. Mic. p789]).


Their pecuniary competence may have been limited, their sanctions (distress of property rather than detention of persons) weak, but where properly run they could be seen as an advantage to an estate. The courts were criticized for the use of the Irish language by litigants or jury, and for meeting in public houses. But the former could also be seen as a positive advantage if the seneschal comprehended Irish, and the latter was a necessity, given the lack of other places of assembly with large rooms; manor-court houses were rarely built, although there were a number of market houses constructed which could be used for manor-court sessions.

The assumption that manor courts were in a secular decline virtually since their legal establishment is questionable, firstly because there is no documentary evidence of their early effectiveness, and secondly, because the legal powers of the court baron were in fact extended by the act of 25 George III c.44 which confirmed and enlarged their right to use the civil bill process. Further, the trend on the part of landowners was towards more, not less participation in other spheres of activity, and in an economy in which petty cash dealing was always expanding, the court baron was a not ineffective institution; a nineteenth-century

98. For an example of a court baron acting apparently against local cattle thieves, cf. warrants issued by the seneschal of Ballydehob manor court, 7 Apr. 1761 (P.R.O. Co2,410). Cf. Joseph Haynes to Bishop Charles Brodrick, 2 Apr. 1801, Midleton MSS (N.L.I. MS 8,867/2).


100. But Barrymore was planning one at Timoleague in 1731: William Taylor, Egmont to Viscount Perceval, 8 Nov. 1731, Egmont MSS (N.L. Add. MS 46,996#, p.134 [N.L.I. Mic. p4,677]), and for the use of Midleton market-house for manor court proceedings, copy, [Charles Brodrick] to Viscount Midleton, 23 May 1784, Brodrick letter-book 1784 (loc.cit.).
judgement of the Bantry manor court was that it had become progressively less defective over time. The probability is in fact that on the one hand the court leet declined in importance as the nature of inland trading changed and as professional surveyors and cartographers made a local inquisition obsolete, while the court baron played an enhanced role as a small debts tribunal in a developing economy. Referring to the suspension of the latter on the Lismore/Tallow estates of the Duke of Devonshire, Richard Musgrave explained in 1792 why this had upset people: 'The corn trade is raising [sic] this country... and it has rendered more complex than usual the dealing of the people. You may conceive then how very injurious the suspension of those very useful tribunals must be.... the expense of suing in the superior courts in this kingdom is enormous'.

The other major manorial obligation on tenants was to grind their corn and tuck their cloth at the manor mill. Manorial milling may have been a medieval survival, but probably the regional peculiarity of the manorial tuck mill (in addition to the more normal grist mill) was an importation from the West Country at the time of the plantation. The two milling activities took place it seems in the same building; the simple manor corn mill was however also to be found on its own. The relationship of manor to mill could vary: there were usually several manorial mills in a manor and, particularly if the latter was part-urban, there were also non-manorial mills. In theory the manor mill or


102. There were for instance about two dozen mills, single or joint, on the three forfeit manors of the Earl of Clancarty, c.1702. Some of these were presumably private.
mills should have had the monopoly because of the covenants in all tenants' leases, but this was clearly flouted. Manor mills were invariably leased out on terms of years. Sometimes it was even left to the lessee to build - or repair - the mill; the responsibility for enforcing the tenants' legal obligation remained in the hands of the landlord or agent. The difficulty in maintaining what should have been a monopoly for the miller clearly affected a mill's level of business; the Kanturk mill, although newly repaired in 1737, had poor prospects 'because the tenants at a distance are hard to be got to do suit and service and the people in the neighbourhood do not much use it because there are mills more convenient...'. Some years later at Youghal the miller was threatening to surrender his lease; the agent explained to his English supervisor that although the tenants had the usual covenants to use manor mills 'many of the tenants grind at other mills contiguous to the town and many have handmills. I have ordered distresses to be taken several times, but in the first place it is very difficult if not impossible to prove what they grind in their own houses and in the next they rise in mobs and rescue the distresses... disputes of this kind have ever subsisted there'.

The level of business was reflected in the movement of rents: Ballygarrett grist and tuck mills on the Newman estate near Mallow was let in 1692 for twenty-one years at £18 p.a. (with an initial abatement of £8), in 1723 similarly for £10, in 1754 for eleven years at £12; in the next record of its letting 1780, the rent was set at £14 on a forty-one years lease. Such stagnation - in contrast to land rents - was


hardly because of tenants reneging on their obligations: it may have been
the result of the local competitive situation between mills\textsuperscript{106}, but if
mill rents in the region generally were as sluggish - and this is
difficult to demonstrate - it would strengthen the probability that there was a
gradual shift by most people from a predominantly cereal diet to a
predominantly potato-based one. The rector of Mallow noted in 1774 that
there were 'more grist and tucking mills in this side of the country than
necessary'; he did not explain the reason for the over-supply of grist mills,
but the decrease in the activity of tuck milling he suggested resulted
from the high price of wool.\textsuperscript{107} Meal consumption of course was to
remain of importance, especially in towns, but even there the manorial
structure was becoming inappropriate with more commercialized corn and
flour trades. Thus with an estate in an area particularly changed by the
growth of these trades, Viscount Midleton could remark in 1800: 'I see
no reason for continuing the stipulation respecting grinding at the manor
mill, those clauses are not adopted \textsuperscript{adapted?} to the state of commerce
in these times...'.\textsuperscript{108}

There were other services provided by landowners, outside the
framework of the manor, notably schools: in the early eighteenth century
there were classical schools designed specifically for tenants' children
on at least the Burlington, Barrymore, Orrery and Aldworth estates.\textsuperscript{109}

\textsuperscript{106}. The main mills at Mallow town ('one for wheat, one for malt and
shelling oats, one for grinding barley and shelled oats') were being
let in the 1770s for £100: [Rev. James Mockler\textsuperscript{7}, 'A report on the
state of the district around Mallow in 1775' in J.C.H.A.S. xxi
(1915), 20 \textsuperscript{hereinafter cited as Mockler's 'Mallow in 1775']\textsuperscript{7}.

\textsuperscript{107}. Ibid., p.20.

\textsuperscript{108}. Copy, [Viscount Midleton to Samuel Hobson\textsuperscript{7}, c. June-August 1800,

\textsuperscript{109}. Cf. petition of the inhabitants of Kanturk to the Earl of Egmont,
1742, Egmont MSS (B.L. Add. MS 47,007*, pp.31-2 \textsuperscript{N.L.I. Mic. p4,679}).
On a rather different level were the charter schools which several landowners enthusiastically supported — by the 1750s there were six in co. Cork while more extensive, as will be seen, were landlord-sponsored spinning schools. It is difficult to evaluate this type of landed investment: little is known of the scope or effectiveness of these schools beyond the fact that their spread was very patchy and that their functions varied greatly. This is as true of more miscellaneous landed endowments, such as alms houses and charity funds: provision could vary from emergency contributions to the relief of distress on an estate to the lavish scheme of the fourth baron Kingston who, dying without male heirs, left an endowment in 1756 to establish a 'college' at Mitchelstown with a capital fund of £40,000 to provide an asylum for thirty 'decayed Protestant gentlefolk', with a preference for tenants of the estate.

Best practice in relation to estate management was gradually to alter in the second half of the century. Improvement was no longer primarily sought by tenanting an estate with substantial, industrious, resident Protestants, and the length and character of the lease instrument was modified.

The most striking policy change lay in the former area: as leases fell in, landowners increasingly favoured the letting of land in smaller


111. £15,000 was advanced at first (and interest was paid to the trustees on the remainder). How even this sum was spent is not clear, for the buildings were only insured for £6,000 in the 1770s. Cf. Kingston College minute-book i; Courtenay Moore, 'Some account of Kingston College...' in J.C.H.A.S. iv, 2nd ser. (1898), 107-8; R. D. King-Harman, The Kings, earls of Kingston (Cambridge, n.d. Δ1959), p.22.
units and encouraged former undertenants to become direct lessees. This shift in approach can be traced back to the 1740s: the Earl of Egmont, faced with mounting arrears in 1743, began to consider encouraging undertenants to bid for the lands they occupied; he followed a line of reasoning that was to become very familiar: 'when undertenants have land of their own it is an encouragement for them to be industrious, all the profit they make being their own'; he conceded however that 'this is supposing they have some stock of their own to put on their small farms, which I believe they generally have not...'. He felt they would be easier tenants to manage and would accept stricter lease covenants; they would also be examples to the head tenants to be 'cautious of using one ill on presumption that I shall not be able to find another tenant to succeed them...'.

But as has been seen in the previous chapter, there were many arguments that could be used to oppose such a policy—the undertenants' fragile solvency, their tendency to exhaust the land and their inability to make improvements. These of course were open to question: Lord Kenmare noted in the 1750s for his family's future guidance that 'if the poor people are industrious, they [Kenmare's family] can't have better tenants, though the perception [sic] of such rents may be troublesome', although he was by no means convinced that such people were industrious.

On estates such as those of Egmont and Kenmare, attempts to give former undertenants leases were indeed bringing down the average size of lettings (as can be seen in Appendix tables ii and iii). But at first

112. Copy, Egmont to Purcell, 29 Dec. 1743, Egmont MSS (B.L. Add. MS 47,008*, pp. 94-5 /N.L.I. Mic. p4,672/).


there was no definite departure from the old preference for improvers when new tenants were being sought. Lands to be let were frequently advertised through the new medium of the local newspaper after 1753, and it was not unusual for advertisements to state that Protestants would get the preference, that residency was a necessary condition and, sometimes, that the lessee would be required not to sublet or 'cottier' out the land. However the tendency in practice to place the emphasis on solvency meant that the preference would be given to one whose intention was to relet at least in part. And the great majority of newspaper advertisements for land to be let lacked specific conditions.

The buoyancy of agricultural prices, especially those for beef and butter in this period, created a climate where lease speculation became increasingly noticeable, and in 1786 the Cork publicist Bennett spoke of 'the frenzy that has possessed numbers, particularly in these last thirty years, of taking lands. Every spot of ground that was to be let had several bidders...'. The great dairymaster and the lease-jobber were two almost interchangeable forms of the same problem that challenged a landlord's preference for the improving tenants: thus Sir Richard Cox in 1749 referred to 'persons who make a trade of taking land to set again, either with dairies, or to poor cottagers...' when


seeking to underline the importance of introducing supplementary industrial employment. For, given relative costs, the 'substantial' tenant's path to wealth lay more in extensive leasing than in intensive farming. This was illustrated by men such as Christopher Crofts on the Egmont estate who in 1750 was described as 'a very sharp man... applying his money to purchases of interests in farms...', and John Hawkes of 'Sirmount' who, it was claimed, had by the 1780s 'raised a considerable property from a small beginning by taking lands and parcelling them out to cottier tenants at short tenures insomuch that it has been said of him, that he broke more people than any man in the country'.

The surviving records of estates for this particular period are too insufficient to provide further insights into this process. What appears to have happened was on the one hand speculative investment in leases and lease interests grew noticeably during the 1750s and 1760s, accompanying a sharp upward movement of land values, and on the other a growing consciousness on the part of landowners that to prefer even the moderately large tenant was as likely to hinder as to aid the long-term improvement of an estate. By the 1770s the extensive lease holder, the jobber, was not surprisingly becoming the object of polemical attack. Thus in 1773 the action of the Earl of Inchiquin in resisting the offers of 'land jobbers' who undertook to pay fines for three apparently valuable farms out of lease on his estate, and in renewing to the sitting tenants, was applauded

117. A letter from Sir Richard Cox to Thomas Prior... (Dublin, 1749), p.47.
119. Notes on the Rightboys, c.1787 by J. B. Bennett, p.6 (N.L.I. MS 4,161).
by the Cork Evening Post as patriotic and as an example of 'glorious self-denial'. But it was Arthur Young's visit to the region in 1776-7, his subsequent employment as agent for Lord Kingsborough in 1777-8 and the publication of his Irish tour in 1780 that marked the point at which more basic questions of landlord-tenant relations became a matter of public attention, for one of the themes of Young's writings on Ireland was that existing practice required fundamental reformation: landowners should accept one simple maxim, 'to let their estates to none but the occupying tenantry'. As has been seen Young did not start the debate - he agreed that it was nationally 'a question greatly agitated, whether the system has or has not advantages, which may yet induce a landlord to continue in it' - but publicizing (and probably actually coining) the critical term 'middleman' to describe the tenant who sublet, he appears to have placed all subletting tenants - and not just lease-jobbers - on the defensive, and created a climate of opinion among landowners which favoured decidedly smaller letting units.

In giving such advice, Young was assuming what Egmont in 1743 had not assumed: that the occupying tenant had sufficient substance to be worth the extra risk to the landlord, implying in fact that he owned enough to stock a farm. The growth of a cattle-owning undertenantry, and the gradual decline of the dairy system - two aspects of the same phenomenon - were indeed occurring, but some of those who followed Young's oversimplified rejection of 'middlemen' as social and economic parasites overlooked the fact that the process was by no means complete. James Kearney, the south Cork landowner and agricultural pamphleteer was in effect

120. Cork Evening Post, 24 May 1773.

121. Young, Tour, appendix pp.17-21.

122. Ibid., ii, appendix p.17.
answering Young when he defended the continuance of middlemen on the grounds that given a shortage of capital in the country, the dairy system in particular still depended on intermediaries.\textsuperscript{123} The issue was of course wider than the purely dairying context of Kearney's argument, as the private comment of the second earl of Shelburne, made c.1790, suggests: 'The circumstances of middlemen... so much complained of and so justly and universally condemned, has been one stage in the progress of agriculture in all countries... and is the natural consequence of want of capital...'.\textsuperscript{124} Such a view did not take account of all the reasoning behind the preference for the larger tenant in the earlier part of the century, nor of the fact that it was because of a conjunction of forces that had created so many cases of over-large tenants that the whole category of large tenants had come to be damned by the term 'middleman'. But it did recognise the importance of economic circumstances in determining tenurial structures: 'middlemen' were now undesirable because of a changed environment.

The evolution of a new approach is illustrated by evidence from the Midleton estate. On the death of the indebted third viscount in 1765 the Irish property was placed in the hands of trustees until the majority of the fourth viscount ten years later. Some years after his majority, the latter from the time he interested himself in his Irish estate, echoed the sentiments of Arthur Young. In 1782 with lands out of lease on the Waterford portion of his property, Midleton found that his agent, a Cork attorney, was encouraging 'some capital men of the county of Cork to become bidders for part...'.\textsuperscript{125} Midleton in contrast had the farms

\textsuperscript{123} 'A country gentleman' James Kearney, Essays on agriculture and planting (Dublin, 1790), pp.xiv-xv.

\textsuperscript{124} Lansdowne, Glanerought, p.107.

advertised in *subdenominations to accommodate the present occupiers*. Stating that he approved neither 'of the great monopolizers nor of the mere adventurers', he wanted 'men of industry and good character and of substance sufficient to stock the lands... particularly if they have been resident and improved the lands under a former lease'. There was nothing novel in such an aspiration, but the way in which Midleton developed his ideas was typical of a changed manner of dealing: as a result of an earlier survey by Bernard Scalé, Midleton knew the names of improving undertenants and those with stocks of cattle; he declared a preference for an industrious tenant before a wealthy one, adding that he 'would rather take some risk upon myself from his misfortunes if any should befall him than leave him at the mercy of a land jobber to screw him down...'. This willingness to take a risk provided the agent with an obvious opportunity to warn against small tenants, but Midleton in reply lectured him on the difference between 'cottiers' and residents of some substance; some time later he characterized the ideal tenant as being the most substantial possible 'provided he is bona fide the farmer and inspects the work himself. This will hold good both in England and Ireland'.


127. Ibid.


Details of what in fact happened on the Waterford part of the estate do not survive, but it is clear from Appendix table iv that on the Cork estate (in Imokilly and Barrymore) the average size of letting unit fell markedly between 1780 and 1814 as leases expired. However even at the end of the century, proposals for farms on the estate by prospective non-residents were still being submitted. Midleton's opposition to the non-resident tenant was based on some of the traditional arguments against subletting - that profit was unjustly diverted thereby from the landlord, that improvement was being thwarted but other arguments were used too: by allowing large tenants and consequently subletting, a landlord thereby lost control over actual developments on the land. Remarking on this in 1782, Midleton observed that 'where the occupier... is not the tenant to the landowner it is not in the power of the landlord... to show favour or lenity to the tiller of the soil'. Such a patriarchal consideration was less in his mind in 1799 when, referring to the previous year's rebellion, he told his agent that 'if ever I had doubted the expediency of the landowner dealing with the occupier of the soil, last year's events would have removed these doubts... those who have the management of landed property should be well acquainted with the several tenants and... it should not be put into the hands of a land jobber to bring in a new and unknown set of tenantry (fugitives possibly from the seat of rebellion)...'.

132. Copy, Midleton to MacCarthy, 4 Dec. 1782 (loc.cit.).
Young may have been Midleton's mentor, but it is probable that Scallé, the distinguished surveyor and cartographer, had also directly influenced him at the time when he surveyed the estate, apparently in the late 1770s. Earlier in that decade Scallé had been extensively employed in mapping and reporting on the (ex-Burlington) Devonshire estates. In 1773, in a survey of the manor of Lismore, he had suggested dividing several farms as they came out of lease, particularly upland ones, \(^{134}\) so Conner, the agent, was instructed to let 'to such only as will reside and occupy the land themselves'. \(^{135}\) But change on this property only really came with the reform of estate administration in the 1790s. The Irish law agent Thomas Garde, was pressing for the creation of smaller farms in 1792, \(^{135}\) advice which the subsequent local agent, the Englishman Henry Bowman followed up with enthusiasm; in 1794 he announced to the Duke that he intended 'to introduce by degrees a reform in the management of the estate... to divide the present large into smaller farms, each farm to be let to such occupying tenants as are likely to be met with, to be proportioned in size to their respective abilities, at fair rents, for short terms of years...'. \(^{137}\) Such confident logic overlooked the rationale behind earlier letting policy - at least that predating the Conners - and although the letting size on both the Lismore/Tallow and the Bandon estates fell in the mid-1790s during Bowman's agency, the fall was only dramatic on the latter (from an average of nearly 400 acres (stat.) in the 1780s to under 80 in 1794-7 (see Appendix table 1).

\(^{134}\) Bernard Scallé, 'Remarks and observations on the manor of Lismore', 1773, Lismore MSS (N.L.I. MS 6,201).

\(^{135}\) William Conner, Lismore to A.T. Abdv, 10 Dec. 1774, Devonshire MSS (P.R.O.N.I. T3,158).

\(^{136}\) Thomas Garde, Bath to John Heaton, 7 Jan. 1792, Devonshire MSS (P.R.O.N.I. T3,158).

\(^{137}\) 'Bowman's reports', 279.
Can it be said then that middlemen were disappearing from the region by 1800? Horatio Townsend in his essay on Cork agriculture of 1803 wrote of the middleman and the land jobber in the past tense, stating that the old system's 'baneful influence' was recognised, and that 'a more liberal conduct is beginning to prevail'. Both in public and in private Townsend was an enthusiastic opponent of middlemen (in contrast to his neighbour, the pamphleteer James Kearney) and he referred to middlemen, with the optimism of the improver, in his statistical survey of 1810 as 'some years ago... almost universally prevalent' but now 'generally disdained... by the more liberal spirit of landed proprietors' — yet he had to add a rider: 'the practice is by no means abolished, and farms still continue to be taken and managed in a similar fashion'. Furthermore, others asserted that the war period actually saw an extension of landjobbing; as late as 1816 one Cork writer talked of 'the late fatal advance in lands, ... which was quite unnatural and... caused the hordes of semi-squires in the country, who became a multitude of upstart gentry,... oppressive to the poor...'. Admittedly this was not in specific reference to the region, but it highlights the apparently contradictory nature of the printed evidence as to the decline of middlemen.

The partial survival beyond our period of gentleman tenants, of the type of lessee denounced by Young is quite possible for several reasons.


140. Townsend, Cork, pp.183-4.

141. Parker, Observations on... the Irish Grand Jury laws..., p.134. Townsend writing on Irish agriculture generally in 1815 also believed that the war years had seen land-jobbing at its peak: [H. Townsend] A view of the agricultural state of Ireland (Cork, 1815), p.21.
Firstly it must be appreciated that the denial of lease renewal to the gentleman tenant - because he was subletting, or because he was not immediately resident - was subverting a whole social group which, with the development of the economy had become primarily rentiers. The 'parish gentry' and the men 'of good family' so threatened not unnaturally attempted to resist the process. Midleton found few bids coming forward in 1782, and instead received reports of 'the apprehensions of the undertenants there from the menaces of the Powers and Barron which prevents them from proposing...'.\(^{142}\) And when Christopher Earberry, advertising farms on his Donoughmore estate in 1788, got no replies, his agent informed him that he was afraid the lands in question 'to be in the same situation as being in the hands of gentleman [sic], who poor or middling people may be unfond to make enemies of'.\(^{143}\) Arthur Young's own experience illustrated another form of resistance by those who stood to lose if systematic direct letting was implemented.\(^{144}\) A series of 'artful intrigues and deceptions' engineered by the Thornhill family, leaseholders and relations of his employer, led to Young's loss of the agency within a year, and his objectives, it would seem, largely frustrated.\(^{145}\)

\(^{142}\) Copy, Midleton\(^{\sqrt{3}}\) to MacCarthy, 22 Sept. 1782, Midleton letterbook 1782-84.

\(^{143}\) Michael Corkran, Cork to Christopher Earberry, 23 Jan. 1788, Crofton MSS V/2/156. For another explanation of undertenants' unwillingness to bid-fearing such invitations were only a means of finding the true value of a farm - cf. Townsend, Cork, p.260.

\(^{144}\) Cf. Young, Tour, ii. p.276.

\(^{145}\) Young's autobiography, pp.78-9.
There was a further countervailing influence which tended to work against the process of direct letting: this was the unwillingness on the part of many landed families to ruin head tenants traditionally associated with the estate. In a survey of his estate c.1806, the first earl of Bantry on several occasions noted for future reference: 'I would strongly recommend not to set except to persons who reside on their farms', yet contradicting himself, he wrote of a family who held at least seven farms on the estate: 'All the Warner family are fair honest men and have been under my grandfather, father and myself, they are improving tenants, have always got their several farms reasonable and have got considerable incomes under our family, they should certainly get a preference whenever their lives [i.e. leases] expire'; these were presumably a Protestant family, but he referred to the O'Sullivans of Dromgarvan (presumably Catholic) to whom a large lease had been given in 1789 in not dissimilar terms. On the Devonshire estate, Bowman, the hearty advocate of direct letting, when seeking to let a holding near Dungarvan c.1795 to the under-tenants was instructed that it should 'be let as near as may be the first report [i.e. the memorandum recommending direct letting] attending to Mr. Dalton's wish and conveniency'; the latter, no ordinary tenant, was a local J.P. and had been active in maintaining the Devonshire interest in Dungarvan borough, and one whose friendship should not be sacrificed because of current estate policy. And Shelburne, for all his hostility to middlemen on his Kerry estate, could write approvingly (in a summary of estate policy) of the 'old families... [who] still retain the principle of gentlemen, and in case or any public disturbance would I am confident show their attachment to our family...'.

146. Comment on Dromgarriff, in rental and observations on the Bantry estate, 1806-9 (P.R.O.I. M5,945).
147. Ibid., comment on 'Coppanaloha'.
148. Ibid., comment on Dromgarvan.
150. Lansdowne, Clanrobert, p.109.
There were other pressures weakening a landowner's resolve to let to occupiers directly. On the large Dromana estate in west Waterford, little sign of the decline of middlemen was visible at the end of the century. In 1801 thirty-five of the forty-five denominations were leased to esquires, and six further to lesser gentlemen; the thirty-five townlands were in the hands of twenty-five tenants. In the next year Lord Henry Stuart talked of a general extension of existing leases to build up his political influence and to procure a rapid increase in income from the estate. Only in 1808 when two farms were out of lease did he concede that there was 'no plan better' than to let to the occupying tenants. Such a late change in policy, in contrast to attitudes on other large neighbouring estates, was probably a consequence as much of financial as political factors. Since the 1770s the owners of the Dromana estate had been in varying degrees of financial embarrassment. Circumventing middlemen meant foregoing the short-term attractions of fines, or of easily negotiated renewals at higher rents. And electoral considerations, certainly before 1793 and Catholic enfranchisement, predisposed political landlords to preserve existing practices: Lord Glandore in 1790 regarded himself as unusual 'in letting my lands... to make no distinction of religion, whereby the voters on my estate are much less than they otherwise would be, had I followed the common practice of gentlemen who wish to cultivate a county interest...'. Letting advertisements until the

152. Lord Henry Stuart to 'Dear Sir', 6 Nov. 1802, Villiers Stuart MSS G/1.
154. Earl of Glandore, Dublin to Maurice O'Connell, 25 March 1790, O'Connell MSS P12/2/A/49 (U.C.D. School of Archives). Cf. Mockler's comment in 1774 that 'every gentleman that has an estate appertaining to a borough will not set a foot of it to a Roman Catholic': Mockler's 'Mallow in 1775', 23.
1790s often stated a preference for Protestants but sometimes this was only for electoral motives. It was self-evident in the 1781 advertisement of the aspirant parliament man, Lord Kingsborough, which offered three Limerick farms openly, and one in Cork to be divided up and available only for Protestants qualified to take freehold leases. A Carbery Catholic tenant failed to get a renewal of his lease in 1789, although offering the highest rent 'as I had not been qualified to serve the master by giving him a wote [sic], and was a Papist, but if I turned and would be a woter [sic], I may have my house and plot at my own offer; and as I could not swear what he wanted me, as I rather be an honest and honourable beggar than a perjured rouge [sic], I was forced to quit my poor house and farm, which was set to a man from... the Black North...'. The preference for Protestants in whatever form militated against the letting of land to existing occupiers. The 1793 enfranchisement did not remove the residual fondness for maintaining - or even expanding - a Protestant presence on an estate for social and economic reasons. There were some new Protestants introduced on the Devonshire estate after 1800, while Midleton's agent, with a farm out of lease in 1802, wondered 'could some Protestant families be tempted to settle on it, it would be a very desirable event and help to preponderate [sic] against the now too overruling ascendency of the Papists'. Yet Townsend claimed that he knew of no preference on the basis of religion given by either Protestant

155. For an example where such a preference was explicitly denied, cf. advertisement for lands near Chrleville, Cork Evening Post, 17 Dec. 1770.

156. C.E.P., 6 Sept. 1781.


158. Wakefield, Account of Ireland, i, pp.253-4.

159. Joseph Haynes to Viscount Midleton, 10 Sept. 1802, Midleton MSS (P.R.O.N.I. T2,862/10/1).
or Catholic landlords, each wishing only for the solvent industrious tenant. This assertion was not without foundation. The 1793 legislation removed any electoral advantages in consolidating Protestant freeholders, and contributed to greater direct letting. But subtenants could be given lives leases by head tenants for terms identical to their own, and such subtenants were eligible to be registered as freeholders; thus the significance of the 1793 act was more as a precondition than a positive influence in undermining the position of middlemen.

There were other factors responsible for the confused evidence on the decline of middlemen. The transformation of the tenurial structure on an estate was obviously a gradual process. It could only be accomplished as old leases expired, and with the popularity of lives leases and thirty-one years terms up to the 1770s, there could be a long delay between a change in a landlord's letting policy and its implementation. Thus although there was a spectacular fall in letting size on the Bandon estate of the Duke of Devonshire (see Appendix table i) at the end of the century, in 1815 it was noted for its 'considerable number of gentry, respectable both from property and character, resident on their farms, and skilful and industrious improvers'. There were in fact few instances of large segments of an estate falling out of lease at one time which would have provided the opportunity for an instantaneous shift to a smaller type of tenantry. Indeed it seems probable that in those cases where this did happen - on the Kingsborough and Freke estate for example - the existing head tenantry were better able to coordinate their resistance to any dramatic change.

160. Townsend, Cork, 2nd ed. (Cork 1815), append. p.175 (hereinafter Townsend, Cork (1815)).


162. Townsend, Cork (1815), append. p.171.
There were therefore both obstacles delaying the realization of landed opposition to middlemen and a lingering ambivalence in landed policy itself towards the class. Townsend's comment of 1810 that at new settings, leases to middlemen were generally but not completely 'discountenanced' would seem near the truth. But his emphasis on 'the great landed proprietors' who regularly subdivided their large farms implies that on smaller or fragmented estates, the process was less assured. Parker's denunciation of the resurgence of semi-squires in the context of the wartime inflation of land values, insofar as it was applicable to co. Cork, was aimed at those trading in lease interests or enjoying an accelerating rentier income. Townsend picked out the class in 1810 as 'the third order of our gentry... The possessor of a little independent income commonly considers himself qualified to set up for a country squire, in which capacity he apes the worst part of the example of his betters'. Subletting by this stratum was expanding insofar as their farming operations contracted: this came about particularly on the holdings where the original lessee had been a grazier or dairy-owner. Both extensive beef production and the old dairy system were declining in most of the Cork region from the 1780s. Describing eastern Duhallow in 1810, Townsend commented that 'thirty years ago all the gentlemen of this, and the adjoining baronies on the north-east quarter, held large tracts of land under the grazing system. The mode is now changed, and they retain only desmesnes of moderate size... The remaining lands are occupied by farmers...'.

165. Ibid. p.716.
166. Ibid. p.415.
the neighbouring co. Limerick Courtenay estate, Wakefield found that 'the farms... are colonizing, and I am assured by the graziers, that people pay more rent than bullocks without the employment of capital, and therefore the occupiers of larger premises take in all the cotter tenants they can collect'. 167 Similarly the decline of the letting-out of cows turned dairy-owners more explicitly into petty landlords, and in the climate of tillage expansion allowed them to accept a greater number of under-tenants. Such a contraction of farming operations was not just a function of changes in the relative prices of agricultural prices or of demographic expansion; these no doubt initiated the process, but the type of head tenant involved was increasingly conscious of the hostile attitude developing against the class, and Townsend observed that those who had 'no sanguine hope of getting renewed' tended to turn increasingly to subletting, and gain the short-term profits therefrom. 168

If the conventional wisdom among Cork landlords by 1800 was to set land in preference, all things considered, to the resident occupiers, the attitudes of owners of land in the less developed districts of the region were more ambiguous, as the situation on the Dromana estate has shown. In south Kerry and west Cork earlier practice had been to favour the type of 'tacksman' tenant, either Catholic - of former freehold or independent status, 'those of condition... called gentlemen of good families' 169 or Protestant, one who would undertake the inconveniences of making the rent where market influences were weak, by performing various entrepreneurial

167. Wakefield, Account of Ireland, i, p.267.

168. Townsend, Cork, p.413.

169. P. O Maidin, 'Pococke's tour of south and south-west Ireland in 1758' in J.C.H.A.S. lxiii (1958), 90; Pococke was referring chiefly to the O'Sullivans.
functions (such as master-dairyman, smuggler or iron manufacturer for instance).
Most of the major estate owners of the area - Eyre, Petty/Sheburne, Bernard, Evans/Carbery, Trinity College - were non-resident, and here the dependence on tacksman-type tenants was clearest; conditions were not strikingly different on the estates of the partly resident White and Kenmare families. But all these landowners (with the exception of Trinity College) in the second half of the century at least began to modify the existing structure, using several differing methods.

The first approach was to seek to break the hold of 'clansmen' by attracting equally substantial outsiders. For instance in the 1750s Viscount Kenmare sought to weaken the Cronin family's hold of part of his estate by encouraging one of the Mahonys, a substantial family from another part of the Kerry estate, to take part of one of the Cronin's holdings, and Kenmare subsequently noted how Daniel Cronin 'cannot conceal his displeasure and enmity to Mahony for interfering in them mountains, which show[s] I was right in encouraging him there'. 170 In the 1760s the recently inheriting second earl of Shelburne appears to have pursued a parallel policy, only in his case one of introducing outside Protestants. 171 The setting of leases to William Fuller, a Cork merchant, seem in particular to have triggered off disturbances including the houghing of his cattle; in an anonymous threat of 1769 he was described as 'the noted land pirate that has lately encroached into the barony of Iveragh'. 172

170. Observations, c.1755 in MacLysaght, Kenmare MSS, p.209.
The alternative to this approach was firstly to try by legal action or the threat of it (exposure of smuggling activities, or of infringements of certain penal laws) to raise the rents of tacksmen tenants to levels elsewhere. This seems to have occurred on the Eyre estates in Bear in the 1750s; Bishop Pococke, visiting the district in 1758, in reference to the O'Sullivans noted: 'These gentlemen have about 300 acres each, most of it let out, and the tenants are entirely at their command, and [they] are heads of these little clans, which have been of late reduced to great poverty...', because with the collapse of Mortogh Oge O'Sullivan's smuggling combination c.1754 they have since been kept under by excessive high rents they are obliged to pay'. The two processes of introducing outsiders, and squeezing the old head tenantry were commented on by the Catholic bishop of Kerry, in a report to Rome on the diocese in 1785: 'up to recently, Catholics held [i.e. tenanted] the greater portion of the land, on terms that were reasonably fair, so that there was available to them the where-with-all to exercise that hospitality for which they are renowned, and to generously support their pastors. But when gradually their leases expired, according to which they held their possessions, they were either ejected entirely by rapacious landlords [vel totaliter expulsi fuerunt a rapacibus dominis], or they were compelled to pay such heavy and unjust rents for their former holdings that afterwards there scarcely was left to them the means by which they could provide for their families the most meagre subsistence'. In the context it is clear that


174. 'Pococke's tour', 90-1.

the bishop had a particular social class in mind; that their position was challenged is clear, but his picture of social degradation was exaggerated. The approach which was the greatest potential source of change in these western districts was the estate policy which aimed at the setting of leases directly to undertenants, subverting the position of men of 'good family'. Kenmare's policy in the 1750s, noticed above, is the first evidence of this: his observations concerning farms on his estate at that time show the constraints preventing him from initiating any dramatic change in tenurial policy, but if possible - and if available - the small industrious tenant was his favourite. The Earl of Shelburne, after the unsettling attempts at tenurial change in the mid-1760s, seems to have changed tactics a decade later: dealing with various lands out of lease around the intended town of Kenmare, he ordered the setting of it, where improved in lots of twenty acres, and where improveable, in lots of eight acres 'to be given to the poor tenants'.

For neither the Kenmare nor the Shelburne estates has it been possible to ascertain the extent to which such aspirations were translated into reality, but obviously many of the larger tenants survived on both estates into the nineteenth century. In 1810 Kenmare's tenants were estimated to be receiving five times the head rental by subletting, so by implication

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177. Cf. Observations, c.1755 in MacLysaght, Kenmare MSS, p.216. Kenmare was however determined in the case of one of these tenants 'to enlarge him with some better farm'.

178. Lansdowne, Glanerought, pp.67-8, 70.

179. Wakefield, Account of Ireland, i, p.261. The fourth earl had been commended at the time of his death in 1795 for the moderateness of his rents: MacLysaght, Kenmare MSS, p.451.
the policy of direct letting to occupiers had a long way yet to go.

But did the falling in of all old leases automatically bring into play the new letting policy? The evidence from other estates in western districts suggests that old patterns were in many instances continued. On the Bearhaven Eyre estate the huge cluster of sixty ploughlands let to the O'Sullivans for thirty-one years in the 1750s was renewed for three lives to one of the family in 1786, and at that time several other large settings were made on the estate. Well-established families like the Derrynane O'Connells, independent in a social sense but in the main dependent on their leasehold interests - from the Earl of Cork, Trinity College and the Earl of Shelburne - clearly not only survived but consolidated their position at this time: when Francis Bernard had


181. For reference to their leases from the Earls of Cork and Shelburne, see Walter Sweetman to Maurice O'Connell, 17 Sept. 1783; 8 March 1785; 14 April 1786; draft letter, O'Connell, Derrynane to Henry Pelham, 17 Jan. 1788, O'Connell MSS P12/2/A/117-9, 123. Their T.C.D. holdings near Cahirciveen were disguised in a partnership lease, held jointly with the Cunn and Blennerhasset families: settlement of accounts between Messrs Meade, Hasset and Connell, 12 March 1780; James O'Connell, Carhen to Daniel O'Connell 10 Nov. 1807, O'Connell MSS folder 109; P12/2/B/225A. For a general comment on their property, cf. copy, Dominick Trant to John Fitzgibbon, 31 Dec. 1782, O'Connell MSS P12/2/A/131.
decided to let all his Kerry estate in 1767, Maurice O'Connell was seen to be in a strong position if he wished to bid for it as a unit.182 Such families by having a multiplicity of head landlords - Mortogh O'Sullivan of Cuologh was paying rent to thirteen in 1768183 - were well placed to withstand the reforming intentions of any particular landlord. Thus Charles O'Brien in his survey of Kerry in 1800 was able to state that landlords in the county 'generally' let to middlemen, and there were 'few estates whose proprietors prefer an industrious active tenantry to dronish middlemen'.184 Lettings such as that by Richard Hare of part of his Kerry estate to two Cork butter-buyers in 1792 for three lives185 perpetuated the 'land pirates' who Young had been informed in 1776 were the cause of the county's backwardness.186 But as we have seen, such 'pirates' were often new men brought in to weaken the hold of old families. However O'Brien's judgement should not mask the fact that the old dairy system was declining even in Kerry by the first years of the new century,187 although it was to linger on in the remotest districts for much longer.

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185. Articles of agreement, Richard Hare and Jeremiah Brosnahan, Patrick Scollard, Rathkenny, 7 March 1792, Hare MSS (P.R.O.N.I. D585/24).
186. Young, Tour, ii, p.124.
By the 1790s it seems clear that in general when leases expired it was unusual for landowners to relet in units of more than one townland. Townlands were of course flexible and over time subdenominations took on the form of distinct entities. However if it is taken that the townland denominations used for the greater part of the century were usually between 200 and 400 acres (stat.) of arable and pasture, it can be seen in Appendix tables i - iv that by 1800 all the estates tabulated were slipping below the 200-acre average. Those who had railed against the old large lets were getting their way. Fairly low maximum holding size was occasionally being specified in letting advertisements, although huge upland farms with no restrictions were still available. Denomination size of course varied between farming districts. When in 1786 Sir John Freke, recently come of age, was advertising twenty-eight townland units to be let in the baronies of Carbery, Ibane and Barryroe, the average size of those in Carbery was 558 acres (stat.), those in the intensive tillage district of Ibane and Barryroe 141 acres (stat.). It is not clear whether these had been the previous units of letting, but the insistence in the advertisement that there was to be no applications from any who would not reside suggests this had been a problem. At this period the fifteen denominations, i.e. townlands, of the neighbouring Carbery estate of the O'Donovans were let as twenty-five holdings.

189. C.E.P. 28 Aug. 1786.
190. Rental of the O'Donovan estate, n.d. post 1793, O'Donovan MSS (P.R.O.I. M7,051/49).
The term holding (i.e. letting unit) disguises a problem particularly relevant in less developed districts: were holdings let as single or partnership tenancies? Where single tenancies of several hundred acres dominated in such areas, the presumption must be that there was at least a degree of subletting: on the O'Donovan estate this type of single tenancy formed three-fifths of the lessees; the remainder were partnership or multiple tenancies.\(^{191}\) The situation on the nearby Somerville estate around Castletownsend in the 1790s was slightly different: the land was parcelled out to much smaller single tenants, some holding less than a gneeve, and there was no sign of partnership holding in what was a fairly remote district.\(^{192}\) At the same period, tenants of the O'Connells around Derrynane in west Kerry were also holding singly with tenancies of approximately a gneeve each,\(^{193}\) while two-thirds of those under Thomas Sandes in north Kerry were single tenants.\(^{194}\) But on the White estate at Bantry, most of which was relet between 1789 and 1796, letting was by the townland, mainly to single tenants.\(^{195}\) Given the generous amount of marginal land on some of the townlands on the Bear peninsula, this left scope for the development of subletting in the course of a lease. One lessee of a pair of denominations in Kilcaskin parish in 1789

\(^{191}\) Ibid.

\(^{192}\) Rental and account-book, 1793-1801, Somerville MSS (Drinagh House, Castletownsend).

\(^{193}\) Account-book 1789-90, O'Connell MSS folder 111.

\(^{194}\) Rent ledger 1797-1831 of Thomas Sandes (N.L.I. MS 1,792).

\(^{195}\) Rental and observations on the Bantry estate, 1806-9 (loc.cit.)
was given a one-life extension of his lease in 1814 'in consequence of his having... registered near sixty freeholds', implying that he had as many undertenants to whom he had given lives leases and thereby had enfranchised.

In the north-western part of the region, single tenancy was standard on the still large Egmont estate - where average letting size passed below the 200-acres mark for the first time in the decade 1800-9 (see Appendix table ii) - and on the very small Allen property at Clashenure (Muskerry). Yet on the fragmented Tynte estate around Charleville (and with the owner resident in another province) two farms were let on long leases in 1806 averaging 425 acres (stat.) each. The Barrymore estate, stretching from Castletelyons to Cove, was unusual in that letting size seems to have been smaller than average for the greater part of the century. In 1768/9 on 105 farms out of lease, the average size of the old tenancies was ninety-seven acres (stat.), mainly held by single tenants. The reason for this would seem to have been the absence in earlier estate policy of a preference for the 'industrious improving Protestant', for most of the old tenants bore Irish names. When sixty-one farms came up for reletting in 1791 (many the same as in the previous major letting) the average size of holding was in fact marginally larger, 102 acres (stat.): the inclusion of arable and pasture newly reclaimed

196. Ibid., comment on Derrylough and 'Derrincarvin'.
197. Rental of Clashenure north, 1807, Allen MSS (Clashenure House, Ovens).
198. Notice of lands to be sold, c.1816 (including Rathmorgan and Knockardamrum), Tynte MSS (Birdstown House, co. Donegal). Both these farms were sublet, and by 1815 the average size of undertenants farms was 35 stat. acres: rent-roll of Rathmorgan and Knockardamrum, 1815, Tynte MSS.
from previously unprofitable mountain would seem to explain this. About one-fifths of the holdings in 1768/9 were joint or multiple tenancies; by 1791 the proportion had risen to 44%.\(^{199}\) On the neighbouring Midleton estate - where letting size fell dramatically between 1780 and 1814 (see Appendix table iv) - partnership or multiple tenancy was quite important; about 45% of the lettings between those years were initially, or became in the course of the term, joint tenancies.\(^{200}\)

The settlement aspects of partnership tenure are explored in the next chapter, but it is necessary at this point to note some of the problems in analysing joint or partnership tenure. The analysis of the Barrymore estate in 1768/9 and 1791 describes the position at the end of lease terms, not the beginning. Lease interests were normally granted to the lessee, his heirs and assigns, so that where partible inheritance was operating, subdivision during a lease term could transform an estate of single tenancies into one where multiple leasing appeared to be the norm. Indeed the date cited above for the Midleton estate, drawn from a lease schedule of 1838, probably exaggerates the degree of joint tenancy in our period. Partible inheritance between sons was self-evidently the preferred custom among the farming classes in the region by this time;\(^{201}\) the resulting subdivision and consequent congestion were later to become the foremost problem in estate management.

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201. For a discussion of this cf. O Buachalla, 'Barrymore estate', 32-3. Cf. Townsend, Cork, p.252n.; for an instance of a farmer being attacked by Whiteboys apparently for limiting the division of his farm to his sons only and not allowing for his daughters, see Cork Gazette, 16 Nov. 1791.
A second problem in evaluating partnership tenure lies in the difficulty of distinguishing between joint tenure arising from the process of subdividing a lease interest, and multiple or village tenancy where a denomination was initially let to a group of gneever-type tenants, not necessarily of the same family, who farmed the outfield in common and may also on occasions have worked the arable on some agreed system. In the previous chapter, it has been shown that the preference for the larger type of tenant, together with the influence of market forces, partly submerged and partly banished such multiple tenancy; it was a process dating back to the plantation itself. It should not however be assumed that the type of village or 'coar' tenure to be found so clearly in eighteenth-century Connaught had ever been the norm in the older areas of settlement in the region. And the findings on settlement patterns in the next chapter suggest that clustered settlement and perhaps 'rundale' itself was a less striking feature in the region than in other parts of the country.

As already seen, partnership tenure at either main tenancy or subletting level seldom involved more than several lessees in the joint lease contract and further, this form of leasing arose as much from its advantages to the lessor (for instance where rent was not paid in a lump, receipts could be withheld until all the parties had paid their portions) as from its convenience to the

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202. For an example of specific emphasis on the joint-tenancy practices of Connaught, cf. comments on Clare, Galway, Mayo and Sligo in New and correct Irish atlas (Dublin, n.d. [c.1818]).


204. E.g. Michael Corkran, Cork to Christopher Earberry, 1 Dec. 1787, Crofton MSS V/2/151.
lessees. Admittedly later observers emphasized the latter aspect: Townsend, writing in 1810 of his own district of Ibane and Barryroe, stated that farms exceeding thirty acres 'are often held in partnership... Two or more families, each bringing a little, are enabled thus, by combining their forces to accomplish what they were individually unequal to'. And Isaac Weld referring apparently to the west of Killarney, wrote that where land was leased by the lump, after agreement had been made with a landlord for their respective rents 'it is usual for many different families to form a partnership, and make a joint concern of their several farms. Where pasturage alone is followed, great benefit accrues... it saves the labour and expense of multiplied superintendence'. Although Townsend was writing of a coastal region, it was really in the upland areas described by Weld that partnership was important; thus the contrast between the structure of holdings on the Somerville and O'Connell estates, and that on the Barrymore. Wakefield remarked that in co. Cork land was let 'in very small divisions... particularly on the sea-coast. In mountainous districts land is let in partnerships...'.

* * *

205. Townsend, Cork, pp.251-2.
206. Weld, Killarney, p.163.
207. Wakefield, Account of Ireland, i, p.254.
There was no simple transition from middleman tenants to occupiers, for changes in the economy (the extension of tillage) and the demographic structure (the continuing growth of population) gave ample scope for the problem of subletting and profit renting to be translated onto the smaller scale of the townland. Thus the question whether middlemen were or were not disappearing by 1800 overlooks this miniaturization of the phenomenon of subletting, and its continuation into the pre-Famine period. Of course the remedy for this was to lie not in a further process of direct letting to a new layer of undertenants but, as most early nineteenth-century landlords perceived, in consolidation.

In the later eighteenth century, letting land in smaller units required less dramatic intervention, but when compared to the earlier years of the eighteenth century, landed participation in tenants' activities was considerable. The most noticeable change — after the shift in the type of tenant preferred — was in the nature of the lease. Lease length in the first half of the century, as seen above, had generally become longer, at least for main tenants; the three-lives lease for Protestants had become even more common, a process that continued during the third quarter of the century. Indeed a formula evolved to create more effective improvement leases for Catholics, still barred from non-determinable leases: this was for the landlord to give a promise or even a bond (with a substantial penalty for non-observance) that a thirty-one years lease would be renewed at expiry for a similar term, or renewed.


every year for the life of the lessor or lessee, which was a method that apparently did not infringe the penal laws. For instance Thomas Piggott in advertising several farms in the Hibernian Chronicle in 1774 openly announced that those taking thirty-one years leases would have them renewed constantly in the first ten years if tenants complied with ditching and manuring requirements. 210

Before the 1780s the assumption that long leases were the obvious instrument for securing improvement was hardly challenged. Mockler argued in his essay of 1774-5 that the shortness of a thirty-one years lease term discouraged Catholics from improving and suggested hundred-years terms, at least for mountain farms; 211 this indeed became possible after the Catholic relief act of 1778, but there is no instance of leases of such length being granted. The call by the radical editor of the Cork Gazette in an essay on land reform in 1794, for a minimum lease length of ninety-nine years 212 was equally remote from reality.

There was a counter-argument. Arthur Young in the appendix to his Irish tour, after advocating direct letting to undertenants, added, 'The meanest occupier ought to have a lease, and none shorter than twenty-one years, which I am inclined also to believe is long enough for his advantage', 213 a sentiment which echoed ironically the arguments of the first Earl of Egmont half a century earlier. And the Earl of Shelburne in his memorandum c.1791, warned his family 'to grant no long tenures'. 214


211. Mockler's 'Mallow in 1775', 22.


214. Lansdowne, Clanerought, p.108.
Henry Bowman, when arguing for direct letting on the Devonshire property in 1794 proposed to let to the occupiers 'at fair rents, for short terms of years' and added the more revolutionary suggestion: 'The granting of leases may be gradually laid aside, if on trial it should be found practicable to do so. It can only be done, I conceive, by gaining the confidence of the tenants, by a liberal and steady treatment of them.'

However on the neighbouring Midleton estate at this time, older attitudes prevailed: both agent and employer believed that three lives leases were still necessary, until there was sufficient 'progress of agriculture'. Midleton as many before him regarded such terms as the tenant's reward for whatever improvements he made: 'We in England are much inclined to think that the long term of thirty-one years or three lives are the consideration which the tenant receives for the improvements which he is to make, and I should not willingly adopt the principle and set the precedence of covenancing to pay for buildings at the end of the term of which the lease gives the tenant so long a use, and if it ever was to be agreed to, I think the necessity of granting such leases is at an end'.

Townsend in 1810 summarised objections he had heard to the twenty-one years lease, but came down in favour of that term. In the bitter aftermath of the wars, even twenty-one years with one life was thought too long: G. C. Jefferys, writing in 1819 asserted that 'many great improvers... have done more

215. 'Bowman's reports', 279-80.
injury by making freeholderies of their estates, than they will do benefit by all their present and future exertions'.

The discussion over lease length clearly arose in large measure out of the greater issue of direct letting. It was taken as almost axiomatic that the cutting out of middlemen would among other things give the undertenantry longer leases even if they only received twenty-one years terms. When expressing his frustration with undertenants' tardiness to make offers for land out of lease in 1782, Midleton could not understand why: 'Surely they would be better off with a lasting term, holding immediately of me than paying an advanced rent upon short terms under the present landlords whom I believe to have been very oppressive.'

Writing in 1798 Townsend, not specifically referring to the region, stated that 'many of our occupiers are mere tenants at will'; in 1803 he thought that in the past middlemen in co. Cork had 'deemed it injurious to their interest to give leases, looking to future emolument in what they called the rise of times... Sometimes short leases were given, and sometimes promises were made...'. However, leasing by middlemen was growing, and seven years later he emphasized this shift: 'The general practice of these adventurers [land jobbers] (some of whom give no leases) is to let for seven years at a rent, little and sometimes not at all exceeding that, which they pay themselves... judging of the future by

219. Munster Farmers' Magazine vi (1818-9), 228.
221. [Townsend], Letters from a gentleman..., pp.37-8.
the past, they presume, that the remaining part of their tenures will afford a handsome profit,... as the speculation has hitherto been attended with success...".224

From this evidence two points emerge: as direct letting expanded so also may have leasing by the surviving middlemen to their undertenants. Secondly that prior to this there were few subleases; this latter conclusion conflicts with the modest evidence presented in the previous chapter of the commonness of underletting by lease in the first half of the eighteenth century. As there is no reason to doubt Townsend's statements, what seems to have happened (although there is no direct evidence of this) was that from the heady years of rapidly changing land values in the 1750s and 1760s the incidence of subleasing declined and the terms granted where it did continue shortened.225 The intensification of dairying and beef production in those decades weakened the gneever tenant in many districts, and it is quite likely that the larger head tenants with finite lease interests were more sensitive to the accelerating upward trend in rent levels after 1748 than landowners were. The former had less incentive to grant longer improvement leases to subtenants, and with land-extensive pastoral farming more profitable, small tenants being in less demand were less hard to come by; therefore no need existed for a favourable leasing policy. Minimum contracts would have allowed the main tenant to reap maximum advantage from the upswing. The evidence from two small estates in Muskerry, those of the Earberry and Allen families, both technically middlemen, is inconclusive; (the Earberry property included land leased from the Bishop of Cloyne, the Earl of Shannon and


the Grove, Wallis, Cross and Daunt families). In both cases several leases of somewhat less than twenty-one years were being set in the 1770s and early 1780s, but the most frequent term was twenty-one years until well after the turn of the century, and most exceptions were longer not shorter. On the north Kerry property of Thomas Sandes, mainly held under Trinity College, the lease structure was closer to the supposed practice of middlemen: in the last quarter of the century there was a variety of short terms used to lease his eighteen holdings, ranging from seven to twenty-one years, but of leases set between 1779 and 1807 most were for either fifteen or seventeen years.

Leasing practice of the greatest landowners and of the smallest began to converge. Table 4: i points to the sudden change on the Devonshire estates: Bowman's advice that shorter terms should be granted was

<table>
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<th>Year</th>
<th>21 years</th>
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<tr>
<td>1750-9</td>
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<td>13</td>
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<td>1760-9</td>
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<td>1770-9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1780-9</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>23</td>
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<tr>
<td>1794-7</td>
<td>51</td>
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Source: see Appendix table i.


227. Rent-ledger of Thomas Sandes, 1797-1831 (loc.cit.).
demonstrably accepted and the twenty-one years became standard, at least during his time as agent, for after 1800 his second stage of reform - the dropping of leases altogether - was apparently adopted.²²⁸ The twenty-one years lease became the single most common one throughout the region as leases fell in from the 1790s. In such leases it was almost standard to link the term with a life interest (seldom that of the occupier) for political reasons, after the enfranchisement of the Catholic forty-shillings freeholder in 1793.²²⁹ In 1808 Wakefield found in co. Cork that such leases 'of late' were being granted for this combination²³⁰ and several years later James Hall, a traveller, found that twenty-one years was the maximum term then being given.²³¹ In his 1810 survey Townsend found that this tandem of twenty-one years and one life (whichever longer) was the practice 'for the most part' in Ibane and Barryroe, also in Imokilly and was 'latterly... a common lease' in Fermoy and Condon baronies.²³² Yet longer terms did survive,²³³ and they were occasionally applauded by observers as the cause of improvement on some estates.²³⁴ The active

²²⁸. Townsend, Cork (1815), append. p.171.

²²⁹. This formula was not new: in 1763 a twenty years/one life lease was being offered for a farm near Charleville: Cork Journal, 8 Dec. 1763.

²³⁰. Wakefield, Account of Ireland, i, p.194.

²³¹. Hall, Tour, p.211.

²³². Townsend, Cork, pp.253, 468, 617.


improver, the first earl of Bantry, relet most of his estate c.1789–90 on three lives leases, some with thirty-one or forty-one years terms in conjunction, and the only other term much employed was that for thirty-one years without lives. And Viscount Midleton, practising what he preached, continued to let his estate for three lives terms without exception until at least 1814; the lease term remained unchanged as the tenant composition was transformed. Old ways could be retained for less enlightened reasons. The logic behind the letting of 'a large portion' of the Kenmare estate in 1811 for forty-one years and three lives was reputed to have been the fifth viscount's aversion to 'the nuisance of dealing directly with tenants'. This may be an historical fiction, but the decision in 1791 to offer three lives or thirty-one years terms when a large section of the Barrymore estate was advertised was presumably made by the creditors of the spendthrift seventh earl; much of the estate out of lease had previously been held on twenty-one years leases.

* * *

Lease length per se is therefore an imperfect guide both to a landowner's intentions and to the likelihood of 'improvement' on an estate in this period. An examination of the forms in which leases were drawn up, specifically the type of improvement and regulatory clauses employed, is more revealing. The old mode of offsetting a full rent in proportion to the improvements a tenant covenanted to make, was joined by a variety

235. Rental and observations on the Bantry estate, 1806–9 (P.R.O.I. M5,945).

236. Schedule of Midleton leases, 1839, Midleton MSS (P.R.O.I. M978/2/4/3).


238. This is inferred from a comparison of lands offered in 1768–9 and 1791: C.E.P., 2 Feb. 1769, 7 March 1791; O Buachalla, 'Barrymore estate', 35–40.
of other means that were developed towards the end of the century: the
granting of bounties or rebates on specific improvements already executed;
the staggering of rent levels over the lease period linked to the progress
of improvement; reciprocal agreements where the lessor agreed to match
pound for pound the lessee's improvements, and agreements where the lessor
undertook to make advances to finance improvements or carry them out him-
self. The growth of such methods accompanied the move to smaller letting
units, and indeed was partly a result of landowners encountering new
problems when dealing with smaller, less capitalized tenants. By
lengthening the rent-roll to increase the rental, the costs of management
mounted and the degree of participation by landowners or their agents in
controlling land use had to be extended.

The old method of limited rent reduction was still common, usually
in the inverted form of the threat of rent loading if specific improvements
were not carried out within a fixed period. This was the situation with
the Egmont leases in the last quarter of the century; improvements required
were here restricted to the laying out of fixed quantities of lime; fines
could be levied at the end of a certain number of years for non-compliance. 239
On the leases set by John Hyde after 1800 it was standard that a
specified number of acres was to be planted with trees (supplied free)
and one perch of quickset was to be made per five acres p.a., with the
threat of an annual levy for non-performance. 240

239. E.g. articles of agreement for lease, James Purcell and Francis
Wise, Kilgrogan, 20 March 1773, Egmont MSS (Cork Archives Council);
most of the other leases in this collection (ranging over
the following quarter-century) have the same covenants.

240. Lease, John Hyde to John Lombard, Knockannanig, 17 March 1802
(loc. cit.)- this lease is taken as an indicator of standard
practice because the improvement covenants (as with much else
in the lease) are printed - specifically for the Hyde estate.
estate in Kerry before 1812 there had been a regular 20% rebate on rents - and tenants were bound to build roads, and fences, and to lime and plant; it is not clear how much of the estate was relet at this period, but the scheme was abandoned because of fraud and difficulties of implementation.

Not very different was the practice of granting rebates to tenants for capital expenses: a scheme operated in the 1760s (and probably later) on the Kenmare estate whereby tenants (and undertenants) were reimbursed for whatever they spent on purchasing lime at quarries, which admittedly were sited on the estate. A simple premium system, with a fund of £80 p.a. was being operated by Lord Kingsborough in 1777 'for a variety of improvements in agriculture the most wanted on the estate'. On the Earberry estate in the 1780s first bounties for liming and ditching were being given, and then reciprocal agreements were adopted.

A graduated rent linked to improvement provisos was usually an indication that the demised land consisted at least in part of virgin land. And it was in reclamation projects that landowners participated most actively in estate development. Viscount Midleton was content to

242. Lists of lime burnt by tenants 1762-4, in MacLysaght, Kenmare MSS, pp.431-7.
243. Young, Tour, ii, p.278.
244. Michael Corkran, Cork to Christopher Earberry, 1 Dec. 1787, Crofton MSS V/2/151.
245. Draft, Earberry to Corkran, Dec. 1787; cf. Corkran to Earberry, 23 Jan. 1788 and draft, Earberry to Corkran, 27 Feb. 1788, Crofton MSS V/2/152, 156, 162. For an example of a lease containing such covenants, cf. lease, Earberry to Darby Murphy, part of Gowlane, 24 Sept. 1789, Crofton MSS E/7/190.
instruct his agent in 1782 that in case 'any of the tenants on farms being let' choose to enclose from a mountain adjacent to their farm they ought to be encouraged in it'.

But others took a less passive view of reclamation possibilities. Evidence survives of several major programmes where tenants were settled on mountain or bog land on initially very favourable terms. Probably the largest single project in co. Cork was that of Edward Roche on the southern side of the Nagle mountains in the years after 1770, where on land partly leased from his brother and partly his own, he supervised the reclamation of over 2,000 acres (Irish) of waste land, creating both a desmesne for himself and establishing a number of small holdings of between twenty and forty acres (Irish). The initial offer he made was of land rent-free for seven years with money advanced for the building of cabins, but the mode later adopted was to allow the first seven years' rent to be spent on ditching and enclosing. Tenants were provided with limestone, had the services of the landowner's plough-team and were permitted to raise and sell turf to outsiders from a bog on the estate. After the first seven years, tenants made up their very low rents by working on Roche's own desmesne, ditching it. Leases were for thirty-one years and in the latter half of the term rents were paid in cash.

Roche was clearly a keen agriculturalist, and his experimentation contributed to the success of his venture. But there were many reclamation projects, particularly in the uplands between Cork city and the Blackwater valley.

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247. Townsend, Cork, p.542. Young had been told of the taking-in of 300 acres by 1776 (Young, Tour, ii, p.62); it is presumed that Irish measurement was used in the district.


on mainly unreclaimed land seems to have been important; Earberry was told by his agent in 1789, when referring to upland in Donoughmore parish, 'I would get tenants for 500 acres of said mountain if there were houses built on it which you are to begin with the building of them next season [sic] and I shall take proper care of building them in the separate farms that I have pitched upon as I am sure of letting said mountain, what can be tilled of it...'. In the upper Bandon valley, Townsend found in 1810 that a 'dreary waste' was being transformed on the Poole estate, where twenty-one years leases were given after farm houses had been built; in the first seven years tenants were provided with seasand (for manure). In south and west Kerry, where the possibilities for reclamation at least appeared to be great, favourable agreements with tenants prepared to settle on coarse land can be found.

Intervention could thus extend to the actual provision of at least the materials for improvement. In an agreement with three gneever-type tenants in 1783, Kyrel Allel undertook to provide oaten straw and a thatcher for the repair of two houses, a quantity of barley straw for use as manure, and loans for buying a cow and horse. In 1789 Earberry was advancing money to his new mountain tenants for their improvements, being told by his agent, 'I am so certain of their industry and honesty and I will give security for them as I know those men will be a good 'patron' to the country'. The setting of farms with a degree of improvements already

251. William Blake, 'Forrest' to Earberry, 10 Feb. 1789, Crofton MSS V/2/196.
252. Townsend, Cork, p.760.
253. E.g. Landsdowne, Glanerought, pp.68,70; Radcliff, Agriculture of Kerry, p.43.
255. Blake, Cork to Earberry, 6 May 1789, Crofton MSS V/2/209.
carried out by the lessor was also not unknown: for instance in 1749 the Bishop of Cork was letting part of Riverstown well-fenced and 'lately' laid down with grass seeds, while a 260-acres (stat.?) farm near Kinsale was offered in 1756 in a number of divisions with 'several new-built slate houses for labourers' and some thousands of loads of 'rich compost' ready to be laid out; in 1790 a 150-acres (Irish) farm near Doneraile was being let on which 40,000 barrels of lime and compost were being put out. Or a landlord could let a farm, promising to lime the land subsequently or else accept a lower rent. The most complete programme of landed investment was that proposed by Bowman, fresh from England in 1794: as farms came out of lease general rebuilding, especially of outbuildings, was recommended. Undertenants on existing leases were also to be encouraged to build more substantially by the provision of timber and lime. It was also suggested that some lands should be limed at the Duke's expense and that feeder roads should be built. Agreements committing Devonshire to such expenditure were subsequently made, but it is not clear whether the return of Bowman to England in 1797 marked the end of such a policy.

258. C.E.P., 29 July 1790.
259. E.g. rental and account-book of John Purcell, 1783-1813, pp.104-5, Ryan Purcell MSS (Cork Archives Council).
260. 'Bowman's reports', 279, 281, 314.
261. Ibid. 281.
262. Ibid., 214.
How far can general practice be determined from this scattered evidence? In 1803 Townsend's comments on the subject suggest that various forms of improvement covenant which involved landlord participation were fairly general, but that actual landlord investment in farms prior to their leasing was unusual, and this is probably no exaggeration of the position, in co. Cork at any rate, by the turn of the century. How far this was to change in the pre-Famine period is not altogether clear.

The other way in which landowners became more actively involved was in the regulation of land use. The range of lease covenants inherited from the early eighteenth century which stipulated manuring and cropping procedures, remained in many late eighteenth-century leases but on

263. Townsend, Agriculture of Cork, p.18.

264. Writing of co. Kerry in 1800, O'Brien took a less sanguine view of landlord policy: 'I don't find it general with landlords to impose any but the common clauses. Some few oblige them [the tenants] to lay out lime, but this is ever done in a careless manner': O'Brien's survey (1969), 109.


266. For example cf. lease, James Lombard to Edmund Barrett, parts of Glantane and Lackendarragh, 10 April 1761, Lombard MSS (N.L.I. uncat. collection); heads of agreement, [Kyrel Allen] and John Shaw et al., 18 Feb. 1783, Allen MSS; lease, Viscount Doneraile to Robert Crone, plots near Doneraile, 3 Sept. 1787, Exham MSS (P.R.O.I. Acc. no. 1,035); lease, Peter Deane to Patrick and William Leahy, part of Kilwatermoy, 2 May 1795, Chatterton MSS (in writer's possession).
the whole their inclusion was more a mark of estate tradition than evidence of any continuing commitment by the landowner to enforce them. Regulation was only pursued actively in certain specific matters: the burning of land, tenant non-residence, subletting and subdivision.

Burning topsoil - or 'graffing' it - had often been controlled in early eighteenth-century leases (either forbidden completely or allowed only where the land was subsequently limed or sanded), but the legal position was transformed by the statute of 1743 which laid down a blanket prohibition on the practice, except with the specific permission of the owner of the land. The measure was controversial at the time - it could be seen as discouraging reclamation and tillage on coarser soils - but one consequence was obvious: 'certainly nothing ever so effectually threw the tenants into a state of dependence on their landlords' was the judgement of Lord Perceval's steward, although he noted that 'most landlords who do not rack their tenants, exempt them, for a consideration'. Indeed the act removed one of the standing objections against gneever tenants, that their graffing would inevitably damage land. Arthur Young, in his comments on north Cork, observed that paring and burning 'they are very fond of for potatoe, and sometimes for bere barley, but the landlords prevent the practice', a remark typical of the author in its ambiguity; in Imokilly he found burning was being practised 'upon such estates as their landlords will permit'.

267. 17 George ii c.10, which was renewed every two years until made permanent in 1 George iii c.17.


269. Cooley, Lohort to Lord Perceval, 29 June 1744, Egmont MSS (B.L. Add. MS 47,004B, f.82).


272. Young, Tour, ii, pp. 10, 60.
no less clear is the vigorous landed objection to it: Richard Hare directed his agent in 1771 to make sure that all burners were prosecuted under the act 'unless where you see it necessary and that they manure or have a lease for ever'. When there was breakdown in continuity of administration on the Barrymore estate in 1759, 'amazing waste' on some lands was the consequence; on one farm it was found that 'the surface of hundreds of acres hath been cut away in a most extraordinary manner,... about twenty heaps of this surface collected together, so large as that some of them contained above 500 [cwt.] load each, smoking and in flames...' Tenants could seek permission to burn unimproved lands and those that did not, even men of social standing, could be threatened, as George Newsom was in 1787 by Hayward St. Leger when his undertenants had burnt four acres. Even Christopher Earberry was threatened by the Earl of Shannon because of some undertenants' burning. When the practice was extensive on the Dowager Lady Midleton's property in 1784, the agent noted that the fine money 'if upon consideration I must insist upon it' would be laid out in land improvement. Policy on Viscount


276. Diary of George Newsom, 17 Nov. 1787, 3 April 1788 (Library of the Soc. of Friends MS Rm. 4/Sh. P/5).


278. Copy, [Charles Brodrick], Midleton to Lady Midleton, 14 May 1783, Brodrick letter-book 1784 (Midleton U.D.C. office (N.L.I. Mic. p4,295)).
Midleton's estate was to levy the fine on 'the richer sort' and take promissory notes from others, to be enforced if they did not manure the land subsequently; Midleton's brother and acting agent told how 'I sent to the priest this day sen'night to give the notice you desired concerning the graffs: it was the means of stopping a considerable part, though I shall probably have to levy a fine for between eighty and 100 acres. I shall have no mercy on the rich tenants, though it may be prudent to remit a little to those that are backward, for fear they should be overpressed'. At £5 per acre (stat.) the fine was certainly penal, but the practice remained, indeed probably increased with the expansion of tillage in the 1790s and after; the statutory penalty had been substantially raised by statute in 1771, and was changed again in 1800. Burning rose to new heights on the Midleton estate in 1796, and in 1800 Midleton determined 'to levy the whole penalty in all cases where leave is not previously applied for'. On the Devonshire estate, fines were imposed intermittently in the 1790s; the year of the rebellion saw a great expansion of burning on the estate around Lismore, but by the summer of 1799 the agent observed that 'the lower order of people... are now submissive, quiet and obedient to the laws; and I think it is a proper time to enforce the law against graffing and burning...'.


281. The fine specified in the original act of 1743 had been £2 per stat. acre; this was raised to £5 by the 11 George iii c.2, and to £10 per Irish acre by the 40 George iii c.24.


Tenant non-residence continued to be regarded as inimical to improvement, as likely to give rise to subletting, and so leases and agreements sought to prevent it in a variety of ways: in 1761 James Lombard in a thirty-one years lease obliged the tenant and his heirs to pay a 25% surcharge on the rent if they did not reside. Four years after Peter Deane had set part of Kilwatermoy (west Waterford) for three lives in 1795, the lease was endorsed with an agreement abating the rent by one-sixth if either of the joint tenants 'comes and resides'. John Hyde's standard procedure c.1802 was set the rent at a level that was halved when improvements had been performed and the tenant had taken up residence. Hyde also included clauses against alienation, mortgaging and subletting 'excepting the necessary portions assigned to the labourers and servants...'. Clauses against subletting, not unknown before 1750, were probably a more common feature of late eighteenth-century leases. A distinction grew between subletting to smallholders and making necessary provision for farm labourers. For instance, when Robert Fitzgerald was advertising four holdings outside Mitchelstown in 1762, he announced that they would not be set to cottiers, nor could they be sublet to them, only to what labourers the tenants should require to work their farms. And the ambitious plans for landlord

284. Lease, James Lombard to Edmund Barrett, parts of Glantane and Lackendarragh, 10 April 1761, (loc.cit.) cf. footnote 354.

285. Lease, Peter Deane to Patrick and William Leady, part of Kilwatermoy, 2 May 1795, with endorsement 15 Jan. 1799, Chatterton MSS.

286. Lease, John Hyde to John Lombard, Knockannanig, 17 March 1802; see comments in footnote 268.

investment in improvements on the Devonshire estates in the 1790s involved agreements with tenants that in return for the provision of capital improvements, they would be completely forbidden to sublet. 288

Midleton, noting a farm out of lease where the 'ruinous system of cottiering out by which so large a part is now uncultivated was uniformly carried on' determined to include a residency requirement in all leases. 289

Residency was of course no protection against what was to become a major problem after the turn of the century: subdivision by a tenant of a holding among his sons. To Townsend 'the frequent overflow of population on a small farm' was already evident in 1803, as well as disagreements about the partition of holdings. 290 No instance of lease restrictions on such subdivision has been discovered before this time, but before the end of the wars landowners began to attempt to stem this alternative subversion of improvement: Meade of Ballymartle introduced a lease clause prohibiting the building of additional houses on a farm (with a fine as penalty). 291 Baron Ventry although continuing to allow subdivision of holdings on his Dingle estate, also forbade new house construction; the result was that by 1814 some houses had been physically extended so as to become 100 feet long, holding it was claimed up to four generations. 292

This phenomenon of congestion, or at least the discussion of the problem, belongs in the main to the pre-Famine decades. Lord Henry Petty, writing

288. 'Bowman's reports', 314; however existing tenants were to be allowed so to do in return for encouraging undertenants to build: ibid. 279.

289. Copy, /Midleton/ to Joseph Haynes, 20 May 1801, Midleton letterbook 1796-1801.

290. Townsend, Agriculture of Cork, p.25.

291. Townsend, Cork (1815), append. p.221.

from Kenmare c.1805, was 'inclindd... to think... that the subdivision of land among the peasantry is too minute, and the country consequently overstocked with population', but the emergence of a general landed response—the pursuit of consolidation—only came in the years of post-war difficulty. However Bowman had been confronted with the problem in the 1790s when initiating the policy of direct letting on the Devonshire Bandon estate: with four large farms (2,682 acres statute) out of lease, he had the choice of directly letting to the ninety occupiers, or of letting part to the existing undertenants and turning the rest 'into farms of sizes worth the notice of desirable and improving tenants', in which case it would be necessary 'to induce near one half of the present occupiers to remove to other habitations'. He suggested that the equivalent of a year's rent should be given as compensation to tenants moved off, indeed 'even if more than that sum were given to preserve peace and a good understanding upon the estate, and to obtain the power of dividing the estate into proper farms, mostly above £50 a year for occupying tenants, the money would be very advantageously employed'; given current rent levels on the estate, Bowman was implying that 'proper' farm units would be forty acres (stat.) at minimum. His advice, which was certainly not put into practice at the time, was a presage of conventional wisdom to come, but differed from most later approaches at consolidation in one respect: it still clung to the hope that progressive farming would be best realized by bringing in new, capitalized improvers.

293. Lansdowne, Glanerought, pp.116-7.
295. 'Bowman's reports', 300-1.
Townsend in his writings did not dwell on the question of consolidation; admittedly in 1803 he sketched out a plan of how farms might be re-modelled with a more regular field-system, but the aim was in this case greater agricultural efficiency, not the clearance of anybody off the land, although in 1810 he spoke in general terms of removing some of the occupiers off small farms that were too crowded. On the whole landowners in the pre-1815 period, rather than attempting consolidation, were engaged in dividing joint tenures: for instance on the Allen estate in 1804, agreement was secured of partners to divide their holding, with the allocation of divisions determined by the casting of lots, while in Kerry the activity of Major Mahony in 'dividing some joint tenures into single holdings' was noted by Radcliffe in 1814.

The evolution of a new type of main tenantry brought with it no dramatic change in the way in which rent was paid. The growth of direct letting did not occasion any marked increase in payments by kind to landlords, for ahead of this process had been the deepening and widening of market penetration of most strata of rural society. This was aided by the growth in the circulation of butter merchants', maltings owners' and flour-millers' credit notes with which tenants could at times make their payments. Many tenants under the dairy system were still of course paying

296. Townsend, Agriculture of Cork, pp.41-3.
297. Townsend, Cork, p.713.
298. Agreement re division of farm, Nicholas Callaghan, John Coughlan, Timothy Desmond, 21 Oct. 1804, Allen MSS.
299. Radcliffe, Agriculture of Kerry, p.48.
300. Cf. copy, John Purcell to Lady Glereawley, 30 Nov. 1784, 8 Jan. 1787, Ryan Purcell MSS (Cork Archives Council).
mainly a fixed quantity of butter, but the responsibility for selling the butter in Cork city seems to have passed to the dairymen tenants themselves, who settled up with the dairy owners by handing over butter merchants' receipts. Payments in kind were not totally absent in ordinary tenurial relations - the smaller tenants of some of the farms in north Cork under John Purcell's care in the 1780s and 1790s were paying intermittently by barley, wheat and butter - but this mode can only have been of any significance in the more remote districts.

In leases set on the Somerville estate around Castletownsend in the 1790s, there was a clause requiring tenants to bring all barley grown on the land to the estate stores in the village, and accounts of that decade show that the vast majority of tenants paid their rents in part by barley and potatoes, and the balance in cash; there was considerably fluctuation from year to year in the relative proportions of kind and cash. It is not clear how prices were fixed, but probably they bore at least some relation to external market rates. Such a system may have been atypical, the legacy of Thomas Somerville who had died

301. E.g. John Purcell's account of butter receipts 1798, Ryan Purcell MSS; Charles Casey, Cork to Maurice O'Connell, 27 Dec. 1793, O'Connell MSS P12/2/A/163 (U.C.D. School of Archives); Young, Tour, ii, p.11.

302. Account of John Purcell of receipts and disbursements relative to Moorstown and Ballydonough, 1785-6; rental and account-book of John Purcell 1783-1813, passim, Ryan Purcell MSS. For other evidence of part payment in kind in the 1770s, cf. rental and account-book of George Randall, 1756-89, f.42 (Reginald's Tower Museum).

303. E.g. lease, Thomas Somerville to Patrick Sweeney McOwen et al., part of Toe, 30 Oct. 1799, Somerville MSS deeds bundle 3; other leases of this period have similar covenants.

304. Rental 1793-1801, Somerville MSS.
in 1793; he had combined the roles of merchant and landlord, owning several ships, purchasing provisions and butter beyond the confines of his estate and actively participating in transatlantic ventures. There was also a tradition of entrepreneurship on the neighbouring White estate at Bantry but this had been confined to iron manufacture and fishing before mid-century; by the 1760s nearly all rents were being paid in cash, although rent receipts included occasional reference to butter, herrings, brandy, linen cloth and cattle. Many tenants were bound by covenant on this estate to deliver specific amounts of turf at the waterside if requested (and another pointer to the family's activities was the clause in all leases from the 1750s that bound tenants to buying all their malt requirements from their landlord's malt-house at Bantry). It seems probable that in the periods when inshore fishing in this district had been profitable rent had been rendered largely in kind: James Fontaine at the beginning of the century had discovered that to enter the pilchard business 'it was impossible to carry on fishing with success unless you had a large farm, with many tenants upon it, bound to fish only for you'. Duty obligations could in special circumstances therefore transcend the normal trivia of a pig or a chicken required once a year. Prospective tenants to an Annesley farm

305. Copy, 'Memoirs of the early life of T. S. Reeves, written by himself', p.7, Somerville MSS.

306. Account-book 'A' (1734-76); account-book and rental 'B' 1755-64, Bantry-White MSS.

307. Account-book and rental 'B', 1755-64, passim; lease, Simon White to John Wickery, Dunbrittern, 6 Jan. 1770, Bantry-White MSS. Many other leases survive in the archive which confirm the existence of such clauses from at least 1754.

lying over part of the Duhallow culm deposits were prepared in 1790 to offer to deliver each year twenty barrels of 'western or Duhallow coal' the dozen-odd miles to Annsgrove house. 309

If the way in which rents were paid altered little, changes in their level were more dramatic. The movement of rent between 1748 and the later years of the Napoleonic wars was at a rate at least as fast as in the previous sixty years, and on the best soils considerably faster. For this period there is a wealth of speculation - by travellers and local agricultural writers - as to the level and trend of rents in the region. But in making averages (for barony or county) there were two problems: firstly there was the difficulty over distinguishing between the rent paid by the large, and in all probability subletting tenant, and that paid by the smallholder, whether to middleman or head landlord. The author of Grierson's New and correct Irish atlas (published c.1818) was perhaps unique among contemporaries in distinguishing, county by county, the average rent paid by cultivators or occupiers to 'landholders', and that by landholders to proprietors; at such a late date it was unrealistic to overlook the proportion of occupiers who held directly of proprietors, but before the turn of the century the differential between 'full' and 'rack' rents, discussed in the previous chapter, was still very real. 310 A city-based tenant of a farm on Richard Supple's Imokilly estate was subletting to 'cottagers' at double the head rent in the 1770s. 311

309. Proposal for Ballymacmurragh, B. Webb and S. Purdon to the Earl of Anglesey, 5 Oct. 1790, Ryan Purcell MSS.

310. Young recognized the existence of the problem: cf. Tour, ii, append. p.11.

And in a complaint in 1790 that Devonshire's agent had been stocking the Lismore estate with his relations, it was stated that they had got land at eight shillings per acre and had underset at sixteen shillings or more, whereas 'if the land were divided into lots, fit for yeomen to occupy' it could be let at twelve shillings to both the Duke's and the tenants' advantage. These examples undoubtedly exaggerate the differential, but the remark of John Segerson, pleading on behalf of his uncles for a renewal of lands in Iveragh from Baron Carbery in 1778, shows how the existence of a differential was taken as axiomatic: his uncles had initially offered double the old rent, now in extremis they offered a rent 'the lower class of people whom we call cottiers paid themselves'. However Townsend as seen above, asserted both in 1803 and 1810 that middlemen had generally bid up to, or approached the rent at which they initially charged their subtenants, trusting to 'the rise of times', which implies that at the time of setting a landlord stood to gain equally whether he chose large or small tenants. Probably the margin between the two types of rent level was narrowing over time; the acceleration of land values after the mid-1780s may have been responsible for producing the behaviour of potential subletters that Townsend described, and as direct letting grew, the problem of the differential declined in importance. The second difficulty


313. Copy, John Segerson, Killarney to Baron Carbery, 16 Nov. 1778, O'Connell MSS P12/2/A/65 (U.C.D. School of Archives).

314. A contemporaneous letting on the Tynte estate would seem to support Townsend: two townlands near Charleville were let together in 1806 to two tenants at the very high rent of £2.66 per acre (Irish), yet after ten inflationary years their profit rent (on paper) was only about a third above the head rent; notice of lands to be sold, c.1816 (including Rathmorgan and Knockardamrum); rent-roll of Rathmorgan and Knockardamrum, 1815, Tynte MSS.
in assessing regional rent levels arises from the degree of internal diversity. When Young toured the south-west in 1776 he collected information on the various rates at which lands were being let: he was given three estimates of the average for co. Cork, two for co. Kerry, and a number of baronial and local estimates. The county figures carried widely because informants made conflicting guesses at the proportion of waste land: in Cork, the Earl of Shannon believed one-third of the county was waste, the rent of which although 'risen extremely in a few years' he put at one shilling; however his neighbour Richard Longfield believed that two-thirds were waste 'at a very low or no rate'. The former believed that the average rent of the remainder was eight shillings, the latter that it was fifteen shillings, while Richard Aldworth (one of Young's hosts in north Cork) averaged all land in the county at seven shillings.  

It may be that Shannon and Longfield had differing definitions of waste, for the figures of both give an average for all land, waste and profitable, of somewhat under six shillings; (all were apparently referring to Irish acres). However taking the various baronial estimates which Young was given - these include all the major baronies except Carbery, Bear and Bantry - the average works out at about sixteen shillings per acre (Irish); this average would of course be considerably reduced if estimates for the missing baronies, where much of the waste land of the county was located, had been provided. The baronial rent estimates ranged from a little over six shillings in Barretts and Muskerry to between twenty-

315. Young, Tour, ii, pp.58, 64.
316. Calculated by Young himself in append. p.10; Young was given 5/= as the average for Cork by a Tipperary correspondent in 1777: Tour, ii, p.257.
317. This estimate is established using Charles Smith's acreage figures (tabulated in Townsend, Cork (1815), append. p.118). If Young's rent levels for Barrymore, Muskerry and Barretts are taken as referring to Irish acres, the average is slightly above 15/=; if they are taken as English acres, then the average is slightly above 16/= (the figures in append. p.8 imply the latter).
five and thirty shillings in the rich limestone barony of Orrery.318 And in Kerry although there was less discrepancy in the estimates of waste (Edward Herbert suggested three-fifths, Blennerhassett two-thirds and Robert Fitzgerald three-quarters), the rates for profitable land were variously put at seven shillings, ten shillings and fifteen shillings.319 Later estimates are also problematical: Thomas Newenham believed c.1810 that about two-ninths of co. Cork was 'mountain and uncultivated waste', worth perhaps 6d. per acre, whereas the rental value of the rest he put at £1.14s.;320 Townsend in 1810 disagreed that all the 'arable, meadow and pasture' could be rated so highly because of the 'argillaceous tracts, comprising a large proportion of the county, contain so great an intermixture of hill, dale, and unprofitable ground', and adjusted downwards Newenham's average for all land in the county by almost a third from £1.9s.2d to £1.3. This latter figure was also the estimate that Wakefield had been given in 1808 by Lord Shannon and Doneraile, and by John Hyde.322 Post-1800 estimates for co. Kerry lack any such consistency: they vary between an average of £1 (1809) and five shillings (c.1818).323

All these figures were referring of course to the current rent levels — to what lands, in Newenham's words 'in some cases, yield, or would, if now out of lease, yield...' — and not to average levels on estates

318. Ibid. ii, pp.8,9,58.
319. Ibid. pp.118, 121-2,130.
320. Townsend, Cork, p.78*. Newenham himself published in 1809 estimates provided for him of rent levels in the Catholic dioceses of Cork, Ross and Kerry which were considerably higher: 36/5½ per acre (Irish presumably) for Cork, 33/2 for Ross — T. Newenham, A view of the natural, political and commercial circumstances of Ireland (London,1809), append. pp.25,31.
321. Townsend, Cork, p.78**.
322. Wakefield, Account of Ireland, i, p.254. £1 is also given as the average in the New and correct Irish atlas (Dublin, n.d. [c.1818]).
323. Newenham, Circumstances of Ireland, append. p.30; New and correct Irish atlas.
fully let. If it is accepted that a majority of farming tenants continued to enjoy leasehold status, then landlord receipts per acre would on average be considerably lower. The limited evidence of rent movement on the Devonshire, Egmont and Midleton estates (Appendix tables i, ii and iv) serves only to authenticate the approximate orders of magnitude of current rent levels suggested by observers: the new settings on the Devonshire estates around Lismore, Tallow and Bandon were about fifteen shillings per acre (Irish) by the 1790s, the decade which saw a decisive move towards direct letting; these levels were considerably lower than those on the Egmont and Midleton estates, partly because of the poorer soils on the former estates, but also a consequence of a less determined attitude towards rent maximization. On the Egmont estate, new settings in the decade of Young's visit averaged almost £1 per acre (Irish), rising by about a half over the next thirty years. This was not accompanied by any major change in holding size, whereas on the Midleton estate in Imokilly holding size fell by about two-thirds between the 1780s and 1810-4, during which time new rents rose from the fairly low level of about fourteen shillings to almost thirty-three shillings in the later years of the war. In the light of this data, and of Townsend's evidence, it seems reasonable to accept as an average of the 'potential rent' of profitable, i.e. reclaimed land in co. Cork, twenty-five to thirty shillings per Irish acre at the wartime peak of the long upward trend. The average was significantly lower in south Kerry and west Waterford, but the evidence is too inadequate to allow a precise comparison.

324. Townsend, Cork, p.78*. However Young (Tour, append. p.11) refers to his estimates as 'not those paid by the occupying tenant, but a general average of all tenures'.
Two periods of pronounced growth stand out: firstly, after the setbacks of the early forties there was sustained growth for more than twenty years after 1748; secondly from the mid- or later 1780s until the final years of the French wars. In the former period, growth was probably strongest in the first few years: in 1752 Richard Purcell was commenting on 'the most unexpected extraordinary rise of lands within these last two years', while in the same year Burlington's agent seemed quite perplexed by the rise. Rental growth in the sixties was almost as marked: on the Egmont estate (where explicit evidence on the 1760s is scant) rent levels of the 1770s were about two and a half times those of the 1750s, while the rector of Mallow wrote in 1774 of 'the extraordinary and exorbitant rise on lands within those fourteen or fifteen years past', although he added that the drop in commodity prices in 1773 had caused a jolt. Devonshire's agent at Lismore observed that lands were in general down on their value of five years previously, 'indeed, at that time, they were so high that most of those who took then have quitted without being able to pay'. Young in his travels two years later found throughout

327. The great majority of the settings recorded in App. table ii for 1750-65 (derived from a deed of settlement in the latter year) were almost certainly agreed upon before 1760.
the region and beyond a similar fall-back; the only exception he noted was in the Castlemartyr district. The fall had been in the order of one-fifth, but the coming of the American war ended the decline. The movement of rents in the following ten years is not altogether clear, but the two estates for which tolerable data exist at this time both record a distinct fall between the 1770s and the 1780s: this would suggest that the depression of the early 1780s may have been longer drawn out, if perhaps less severe than that of the early 1770s (see Appendix tables i and ii). There was a resumption of rapid growth from the late 1780s which seems to have been fairly uninterrupted for quarter of a century. But whereas beef and dairying areas probably saw the greatest rises after 1748, it was the prime tillage areas that saw the most emphatic rises in the later period; this probably explains the differing rates of change on the Egmont and Midleton estates (Appendix tables ii and iv). On the basis of a questionnaire, Thomas Newenham produced in 1809 estimates of rent movement since 1782 for nineteen parishes or districts in co. Cork: in three rent was said to have doubled, in four to have more than doubled, in nine to have trebled and in three to have more than trebled. Yet this was a biassed sample, for twelve of the districts were either maritime or very close to Cork city where increases were likely to have been greatest. And taking the early 1780s as the base point for comparison also helped to inflate the degree of change. In all

330. Young, Tour, ii, p.60; he noted the fall in north Cork (ibid. ii, p.12), most of Kerry (ibid. ii, pp.87,124,132), co. Limerick - where the peak was 1765 - (ibid. ii, pp.6,142) and co. Tipperary (ibid. ii, pp.159,265).

331. Cf. ibid. ii, pp.12,124,142,265.

332. Newenham, Circumstances of Ireland, append, p.26; cf. comments by Wakefield about this time on the Corkbeg and Coolmore districts (Wakefield, Account of Ireland, i, p.252) and Townsend on west Carbery (Townsend, Cork, p.320).
probability the rental value of all types of land in co. Cork did not exceed a three-fold increase between the mid-1770s and the war-time peak (from the region of 8/= to perhaps 22/= per Irish acre).

This growth, if slightly less spectacular than some implied, was nonetheless striking. Townsend, generalizing about co. Cork in 1810, observed that 'the price of farm land, experiences such a progressive increase, that it is hard to form any fixed estimate of its state'; he was however fairly sure of the explanation: 'The competition, occasioned by an overflowing population, in some degree contributes to the advancement'; but he emphasized that land values were also related to current high prices, and were therefore precarious: such rates 'must be considered as temporary, and, though they may continue longer than the lovers of peace could wish, the time of their depression must sometime arrive'. But did prices, or rather the value of agricultural output, bear a constant relationship over the period with rent levels?

In the early eighteenth century although landlords conceded in theory the right of a tenant to get a fair living over and above his outgoings, true value or a 'fair' rent was largely determined by market forces, by the canting of farms out of lease. This could have the effect of over-pricing land, and in periods of difficulty such methods of letting land were regarded with distaste; on the Egmont estate in the 1740s negotiation, usually with the sitting tenants, was more normal than the automatic advertising of farms out of lease as had been the case in the 1720s and 1730s, while on the Burlington estate, John Usher stoutly defended a similar change in 1743: 'I will engage to get tenants whose pay will be as sure as the bank, and let them have reasonable head out of their farms, which will

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334. Ibid. p.320.
not be the case if they are set up cant as the practice here has been, and the highest bidder taken'. And amid a similar if less serious failure of tenants in the 1770s, Usher's successor agreed in 1774 that on new lettings it would be right to prefer only a 'moderate' rise, 'by which the tenant will be able to pay his rent, improve the land and have a reasonable profit for his labour...'; consequently in one case the bid of a tenant 15% under valuation was accepted.

The growth of direct letting implied the abandonment of free competition for leases; Lord Midleton was prepared to concede that in negotiating agreements with any former undertenant, the latter should - if industrious - be entitled to 'an honest profit', so that when 'his own rent £1,387 being advanced his profit may not be reduced'. The practice of having farms to be let valued was regularly performed by agents throughout the century, but the professional surveyor, whose primary functions had always been to determine boundaries and to map out the proportions of arable, pasture, bog and mountain, began to combine these with land valuation; the latter was an intrinsic part of some of the major cartographic surveys in the later part of the century. However professional valuation was not used to fix new rents; it was apparently no more than a guide to assist a landowner in his choice of bids. Lord


336. William Conner, Lismore to A.B. Abdy, 10 Dec. 1774 (loc. cit.).

Midleton was untroubled at ignoring a valuation in instructing his agent in 1797. He adopted a more prudent attitude in 1801: in referring to farms recently set, he directed that 'if it should appear that the fair value of the land calculated on average price is not equal to what they pay I should not object to reduce it on a moderate and equitable computation'.

Old methods of valuing land by testing the market remained beyond the turn of the century, and Devonshire's agents (before the reforms of the 1790s) were criticized for their neglect and corruption precisely because they had not publicly advertised lands to be let. Uncertainty as to Lord Carbery's intentions on his Kerry estate led John Segerson to observe in 1778: 'your tenants in this country expected that you Lordship would have your estate in this county advertised as is the system with the best landlords in this kingdom, who are at the same time previously determined to give deserving tenants the preference of their farms...'; the latter clause however begged several questions: was there a greater respect accorded the sitting tenant in the later years of the century? Was the lease market as open as by appearances it had been earlier, or was the elasticity of rents held back by the unwillingness of outsiders to bid for lands out of lease?


340. E.g. Robert Eustace, Dublin to Fitzmaurice Caldwell, 12 Nov. 1803, Tynte MSS.

341. Richard Musgrave, Dublin to Lord Frederick Cavendish, 14 Dec. 1790; Musgrave, Garryduff to John Heaton, 10 April 1792, Devonshire MSS (P.R.O.N.I. T3,158); cf. 'Bowman's reports', 276.

342. Copy, John Segerson, Killarney to Baron Carbery, 16 Nov. 1778, O'Connell MSS P12/2/A/65 (U.C.D. School of Archives).
Certainly the publicizing of farms out of lease, notably through newspapers, remained. Christopher Earberry was encouraged by a Cork city correspondent to follow this practice in 1787 when a farm was to be let in Muskerry: 'I believe few in that country [i.e. district] would wish to interfere without it was published [sic], midling people and farmers gets them [newspaper], and it immediately spreads...'. Henry Bowman believed general practice up to the 1790s had been for landlords 'who wish to have the choice of tenants, advertise their farms... expressing that proposals will be received at a certain place, and the tenants declared at a certain time; at that time the tenants are chosen... regard being had to the responsibility of the tenants, as well as their proposals for rents'.

Nonetheless a comparison of the level of advertising in the 1750s and 1760s in Cork newspapers with that in the last years of the century does suggest a falling off in the number of such public calls for bids, except where newly reclaimed land was being offered.

On the occasions when landowners defined their general attitude towards the claims of sitting tenants for lease renewal, they came out with the familiar platitudes. Non-improvement was the most obvious


344. 'Bowman's reports', 275.

345. This is based on examination of a random sample of newspapers. The appearance of large blocks of farms appearing for letting in one advertisement was fairly unusual; the best instances of this are the advertisements of twenty-three townlands to be let by Lord Kinsale (Cork Journal, 18 Oct. 1756); those of about 115 farms on the Barrymore estates in 1768/9 (C.E.P., 2 Jan. 1769; O Buachalla, 'Barrymore estate', 35-40) and seventy-five in 1791 (C.E.P., 7 March 1791); those for thirteen holdings on the Morgell estate (Hibernian Chronicle, 30 Oct. 1783); those for a major part of the Bear/Bantry White estate (Hibernian Chronicle, 2 May 1785); those for about thirty-eight ploughlands in Carbery and ten in Ibane and Barryroe on the Freke estate (C.E.P., 28 Aug. 1786).
disqualification; uncleared arrears was another reason for disentitlement. If the new rent proposed by the sitting tenant seemed too low, the reaction was predictable; the Dowager Lady Midleton summarized her views to her son in 1784, 'I do not wonder that you are inclined to the old tenants where they are of good character, but at the same time they have no right of preference where they bid less than the fair value and others are ready to give it, only because they have held the farm for many years at an under rate... All competition will be destroyed by the notion of the old tenant having a second chance, if he will come up to the highest offer, for no one will bid only to raise the rent upon the tenant in possession without any prospect of advantage to themselves', and yet some years later, on agreeing to relet several farms to the sitting tenants, she observed, 'the sitting tenants are always the objects of my predilection (when it can be done with safety) to let a farm to'. These two statements are no more contradictory than the third earl of Egmont's declared policy in 1792: 'My plan has always been to give the preference to an old industrious tenant, but if others are

346. E.g. Rental 'C' 1764-76, p.52, Bantry-White MSS.

347. E.g. Edmund Burke to Garret Nagle, 6 May 1771 in L. S. Sutherland, ed. The correspondence of Edmund Burke (Cambridge, 1960), ii, p.212.


349. Dowager Viscountess Midleton, Peper Harow to Brodrick, 3 Dec. 1791, Midleton MSS (N.L.I. MS 8,885/8).
found who will give more, with the same character and security, I know no reason why I should not take the same for... advantage', and new rent levels on his estate in that decade were decidedly buoyant. A rather different way of maintaining the sitting tenant while ensuring a growing rental was the approach of Lord Henry Stuart to his wife's Dromana estate: on his first visit in 1802 he described to a correspondent how he was investigating the property 'not only to curb present irregularities but [to] frighten many tenants into such a conviction of their insecurity that they esteem themselves well off in having agreed to renew their leases upon very advantageous terms to this estate without pressing heavily upon themselves'.

Landlord attitudes to renewal were closely linked to policies concerning direct letting: the act of 'dispossessing' an intermediate tenant and leasing to the undertenants meant that the sitting tenant's claim for renewal, whatever the rent offered, was not being accepted; it also implied that the sitting undertenants were in a distinctly favoured position. Viscount Midleton (whose preference for direct letting has been discussed above) reminded his agent in 1801 that it had 'always been my wish, where I could find on the land an occupying tenant, industrious and with competent means of managing his land, provided the land has been well used in his hands, to give encouragement and by no means dispossess him...'. But where suitable occupiers did not exist his

350. Earl of Egmont, Buxton to John Purcell, 4 July 1792, Ryan Purcell MSS (Cork Archives Council).

351. Lord Henry Stuart, Dromana to 'Dear Sir', 6 Nov. 1802, Villiers Stuart MSS G/2.

352. For a mid-century example of an agent arguing for fair treatment of a 'sitting tenant' of a farm near Bandon, who was in fact a Cork merchant and had made a practice of subletting to the highest bidder, see copy, William Conner to Sir William Abdy, 19 Sept. 1751, Conner letter-book 1748-58, Devonshire MSS (P.R.O.N.I. T3,158).
inclination was 'to let to substantial farmers... who would... improve...'. 353

The competing claims of non-resident tenants and actual occupiers were difficult to disentangle. Townsend in 1810 confined himself to the assertion that 'the landlord has the right to choose his tenant, yet honour, humanity and common justice enjoin an attention to the interests of the old occupier', 354 failing to distinguish the problem when old occupier and old tenant were not one and the same; however the implication here was that a moral right arose from occupancy, a claim that the idle and 'the ill-conducted' could forfeit, and 'when a small farm is too crowded, some of the tenants must be removed'. On the whole he took a decidedly more sanguine view of landed behaviour than had earlier local commentators: 'most of the landed proprietors, in this [county], evince a regard to the comfort and welfare of their tenantry, which does equal honour to their liberality and good sense'. 355 A partisan judgement perhaps, but in his comments on the various Cork baronies, only in Barrymore/Kilnatallon did he refer to the continuance of a system where landowners advertised to get the highest bidder 'without any consideration for the claims of the occupying tenant'. 356 And later in response to adverse comment by Wakefield he maintained that on the Devonshire estates 'lands are let on terms of great moderation, and with favour and preference to the occupier'. 357


355. Ibid. p.713.

356. Ibid. p.583.

There were also influences at quite a different level to landed 'liberality and good sense', working against a free market in lands out of lease. Tenant combination against open bidding for land had existed - at least in the minds of certain landlords - long before the later eighteenth century, but it is quite apparent that the growth of oath-bound, loosely organized 'redresser' movements from the time of the first Whiteboy disturbances on the edge of the region in the 1760s provided a new and more effective means of counteraction to the open competition for leases. A convicted Whiteboy from the Lismore district in 1762, detailing aims of his group apart from the levelling of ditches, stated that one had been 'to do all in our power to hinder any one from taking the little concerns we held, when out of lease', an aim placed before the more recurrent grievance over tithe collection. From the same neighbourhood Christopher Musgrave complained of Whiteboy activity in 1765, but tithes were the primary issue; however he warned his Dublin correspondent, 'the evil will not end in tithes only, for there was a farmer threatened lately to have his throat cut, if he dared to take a farm which he proposed for and he was obliged to decline on that account'. But agrarian violence until the next major outbreak of activity in the mid-1780s does not appear to have perceptibly affected letting or rent levels. However the 'Rightboy' disturbances in the years 1785-8, concentrating in the first place on the tithe issue again, expanded to include tenurial demands. Until the latter part of 1786 there is little evidence of interest in this direction, although a notice

358. An alarm to the unprejudiced and wellminded Protestants of Ireland (Cork, 1762), pp.31-4.

359. Christopher Musgrave, Taurin to Aland Mason, 5 Nov. 1765, Villiers Stuart MSS C/15.
appeared on Blarney chapel in December 1785 threatening all who treated
for a farm in Garrycloyne parish out of lease in the following March.

By the autumn of 1786 there were reports that Whiteboys, observing their
success in lowering tithes, were turning their attention to hearth-money,
to the regulation of rents and to the renewal of leases. The demand that 'the
price of lands should be reduced to a proper standard' was apparently
having its effect in the Clonakilty districts so that 'gentlemen' were being prevented from setting lands. Two new tenants on different estates in east Carbery for which 'advanced rents' had been agreed had their farmhouses burnt at this time, and received written notices declaring that rents should not rise, nor lands taken over the heads of old 'proprietors'. A distinct 'rule' was being publicized before the end of 1786 that when an old tenant was not renewed, the land should remain unoccupied - 'waste' - variously from one to three years, and this was soon reported to be having an impact. At the beginning of 1787 John Purcell described the position in Duhallow: 'The Whiteboys are still busy ...
last Tuesday they posted up notices at many chapels in this country desiring that no man bid for the farm of another, and that no man should dare take down that advertisement...'; one such chapel notice in the


361. 'Queries and answers relating to Whiteboys', c.1786-7, Bolton MSS (N.L.I. MS 15,959); D. Trant, Considerations on the present disturbances in the province of Munster (Dublin, 1787), pp.5-8.


363. C.E.P., 13 Nov. 1786.

364. The first reference appears in C.E.P., 16 Nov. 1786.

365. E.g. C.E.P., 8 Jan. 1787, 15 Feb. 1787.

366. Copy, John Purcell to Lady Glerawley, 29 Jan. 1787, Ryan Purcell MSS (Cork Archives Council).
Dunmanway district warned that attention was now being turned from 'thide canters' to land canters: 'By the powers above, any of you that takes lands from any landlord in that way, I will use you worse than 'thide' canters, and the landlords worse than you'. On Newmarket chapel a notice denounced setters of land who had promised renewal to tenants of three lives or thirty-one years if they carried out their improvements of liming, ditching and building, and who had failed to keep their word, and the notice also declared that no man but an occupier or his children should get farms; however its appeal to 'English fair customs' and the fluency of its English suggest that the drafter of at least this directive from 'Captain Right' was no mean farmer.

Such demands grew out of the ferment of popular excitement, and on the whole subsided more easily than agitation over tithes. The articulation of such grievances taken out of context might imply a more fundamental popular antagonism against those that bid for leases than probably existed, for Whiteboyism was giving a cloak of defence to vulnerable tenants seeking renewal at that time, who could use the disturbances to their advantage. This is illustrated by happenings on the Earberry estate on which, the agent observed in the autumn of 1786, were 'a very turbulent and troublesome set'. The occupiers of one farm out of lease were accused of 'applying to the Whiteboys to visit them' and to swear everybody to pay no rent to the existing agent; they were also seeking to obstruct new lessees: 'they flat and plain said no stranger should hold


368. C.E.P., 12 Feb. 1787.

369. Richard Ashe, Ashgrove to Christopher Earberry, 7 Sept. 1786, Crofton MSS V/2/125.
or have any ground belonging to Mr. Earberry they might put it out
of their heads... they added 'known' should reside amongst them
but such as was pleasing to them and a native...'. Two brothers,
apparently outsiders, agreed to leases on part of the estate in the spring
of 1787, but one quickly changed his mind, for when his servant took
possession, 'that night a number of Whiteboys with a piper 'sirnaded'
the house... and demanded... men out, tore and abused him grossly,
called for a book and swore him to deliver his master the message,
that if he offered to send corn or cattle to sow this tillage or come to
occupy the place at all, that his cattle should be boughed and maimed,
himself so treated that if he escaped he would dread coming there again...';
later the tenant being 'informed (as he says by some women) that no
man but a parishoner or native of the place would be permitted to reside
... is frightened to that pitch that he is now selling the stock
he bought for it and gave up his article...'. The second
brother was more determined, but the sitting undertenants refused to
declare their intentions: 'between them... are puzzling the man';
their behaviour was presumably not unconnected with the oath they had
sworn not to take land from him except at the rent he himself paid; later
his cattle on the farm were maimed. Tension on the estate again came to
a head in 1788 with the near-assassination of Mahony, the local agent,
for which three were executed.

370. John 'Fowlow', Coolmona to Earberry, 8 Sept. 1786; James 'Mearson',
Ballytrasna to Earberry, 12 Sept. 1786, Crofton MSS V/2/126,127.

371. Michael Corkran, Cork to Earberry, 10 April 1787, Crofton MSS
V/2/133.

372. Ibid.

373. C.E.P., 9 April 1787.

374. Corkran, Cork to Earberry, 29 Dec. 1788; John Hely Hutchinson,
Palmerston to Earberry, 9 Jan. 1789, Crofton MSS V/2/175,182;
C.E.P., 11 May 1789.
If tenant combinations were less prominent in tranquil periods, the Rightboy rules on the taking of land were not subsequently forgotten. Thus threats were being made in the liberties of Cork in 1790 concerning a certain farm that would lie waste if the sitting tenants were not renewed. The revival of combination under an ostensibly political guise c.1797 brought with it among other things attempts to enforce the one- or three-years rules: Lord Longueville, the Governor of the county, reported in October of that year that discontent 'goes near Youghal further than tithes - it goes to not taking land until it shall be three years out of lease - all this against Mr. Ponsonby and a Mr. Synge who lately set a farm of Ballymacoda for £1,100 a year from the old rent of £150... all must throw the farms up...', and approaching Ladyday (when lettings were finalized) in both 1798 and 1799 there were reports of transgressing persons suffering incendiaryism or the houghing of their cattle; three dozen men were arrested in Blarney and Whitechurch after such a cattle houghing at Lisduff, where a tenant's herdsman had been ordered to tell his master to surrender his holding to the former tenant or face the consequences.

Such developments, however exceptional they were, doubtless modified the open letting of farms in the last fifteen years of the century; whether they really affected rent levels significantly is doubtful, but the desire for peace on an estate and the fear of disturbance probably somewhat enlarged the chances of renewal for the sitting tenant. But the areas of disturbance were fairly localized - the poorer lands to the

375. C.E.P., 11 March 1790.
377. C.E.P., 13 March 1798, 2 March 1799.
378. C.E.P., 21 March 1799.
west and north of Cork city seem to have been particularly prone to incidents, while coastal districts seem to have been less involved.

* * *

The tensions displayed by a rural community growing in numbers and exposed to fairly rapid economic changes as farming patterns altered with the extension of tillage, should not disguise one fundamental fact of tenurial relations: as long as prices were buoyant and leasehold tenure survived - albeit in shortened terms - the farming stratum of society stood to enjoy some of the benefits of an expanding economy; conflict over lease renewal was a sure sign that possession of a lease was the key, not to subsistence, but to a distinctly higher standard of living.

The question has been earlier posed as to whether the proportion of total output channeled to make the rent was changing in the later eighteenth century, in other words, was the burden of rent altering? Certainly it was often said nationally that rents were too high, or at least higher than in England. This latter view was often debated; Midleton for instance rejected his agent's view in 1783 that in England in contrast to Ireland there were three rents, one for the landlord, one for the tenant and one to cover costs, and suggested that at least the tenant's third was somewhat illusory. 379 A Cork pamphleteer of 1810 accepted that acre for acre rents were higher than in England, but with lower county charges and other direct taxes, better soils, cheaper labour and cheaper dietary habits, higher rents were not a problem; indeed the writer argued that heavier rents would positively improve

agriculture. But another argument of this period was that the visible decline of Cork's provisions trade had been caused by uncompetitiveness internationally, the consequence of high land rents. And as has been seen above, rent reduction appeared as a Rightboy demand; even Horatio Townsend, commenting in 1798 on the rebellion, conceded that high rents had been a legitimate grievance, but he was referring to the conditions of those holding under middlemen, where certainly rent movement had kept closer to price movements, a function of the shorter tenures granted. Indeed it seems likely that the size of a holding and the status of a lessor were in inverse proportion to the rent/output ratio. It is not possible to validate this quantitatively, but the inflated level of labourers' conacre rents as paid to farmers and the relative moderation of rent demands on the larger estates are abundantly clear.

The only estimate of the local rent/output ratio dates from after the end of the wars, at which time the average rent per acre for co. Cork was given as £1, and the value of output as £3. For the war period both probably need some upward adjustment, but the basic ratio of 1:3 seems plausible, and suggests if anything a situation slightly more favourable for the tenant than was the case on those farms on the Egmont estate where data on output in 1744 survives. There is repeated comment on the improvement of tenant farmers in the region by the end of the period. Hincks of the

380. Thoughts on the expediency and means of improving the agriculture of Ireland (Cork, 1810), p.5.

381. Daniel Beaufort, journals of travels 1806-7, 2/ii, pp.1-2 (Representative Church Body Library, Dublin MS 0/9).


383. New and correct Irish atlas; the figures given for Kerry were 5/= : £1 and for Waterford £1: £3/10/=.
Cork Institution was quoted c.1806 as observing how 'the middling and lower farmers in co. Cork have of late years improved much both in wealth and manner of living', while in 1808 Wakefield commented of one district: 'in no part of Ireland did I observe superior cultivation, better fed, better clothed, or more industrious peasants than in the neighbourhood of Corkbeg', where he was told that the farmers 'here are all saving money'; John Hyde of Castle Hyde told him that the tenant 'is thriving in consequence of the rise of times, and is never under the necessity of paying any thing for labour', given the conacre system. And similarly a Cork writer of 1810 observed that 'those persons who took farms about twenty years ago, on leases of lives, or for thirty-one years and at a then high, or even exorbitant rent, certainly cannot complain of the pressure of rent now, when all the products of the earth, taken together, are at least one-half more valuable than they then were'. These two last comments highlight one of the more striking developments of the period, the consolidation of the small to medium lease-holding farmer class, more likely to be holding directly than before from the owner of the fee, more assured of their tenure and probably enjoying a new standard of living in the wartime upswing: in contrast the increasingly disadvantaged regular labourers, whose terms of tenure disimproved and whose meagre standard of living was if anything worsening. It was in the context of agricultural and demographic transformation that this process of stratification had evolved.

385. Wakefield, Account of Ireland, i, p.604.
386. Ibid. p.252.
387. Ibid. p.253.
388. Thoughts on the agriculture of Ireland, p.5.