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THE LANDED GENTRY OF GALWAY

1820 - 1880

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Abstract

The Landed Gentry of Galway 1820-1880

By Patrick Melvin

This is a study of the origins, structure and social dimension of the Galway gentry as that class stood in the 19th century. It is not a study of landlord and tenant in Galway though it inevitably has to analyse the landlord role of the gentry since they were, in most cases, extensive landowners. The thesis attempts to examine those social aspects which were common to all landed classes and to get away from the one-dimensional landlord and tenant approach. The gentry had a not in-considerable European dimension through family and property links in addition to travel and culture. The approach is comprehensive rather than selective. In no other way can the large number of medium sized and smaller gentry in Galway be adequately explained. A selective approach could describe how the top landowners compared with their peers on a British Isles or European basis, and the thesis does examine the social life of the greater gentry in some detail. But the interest of Galway landed families largely arises from the activities and expansion of the so-called Tribes of Galway. Their land acquisition and gentrification is a large subject in itself. The account of this process in chapter 2 of the thesis, although involving considerable detail, is in reality little more than a basic analysis of the subject. The Tribal families, because of their numbers and complex marriage network, appear almost as a self-contained or separate subject. Indeed their family pride gives the impression that they saw themselves as an elite within an elite. In answer to the charge that they had merchant origins they could reply that they were in possession of their ancestral lands for some six centuries.

The thesis shows how the presence of a large resident gentry dominated most aspects of county affairs through the nineteenth century. The significance or importance of any particular aspect of the gentry's role is of less interest than the wider historical process of the emergence, survival and cohesion of such an extensive and varied gentry and particularly the widespread proliferation of Tribal families like the Blakes and Lynches.

Chapter 1 describes the geographical and genealogical origin of the gentry and how, by the 19th century, they came to be made up of many different strands. Chapter 3 discusses their general attitude to estate matters and agriculture and assesses their record in local development. Chapter 4 analyses the social and sporting life of the gentry and describes the culture of their houses. Chapter 5 describes the main features of family life and the factors governing marriage patterns. Chapter 6 deals with the gentry's attitude to family history and historical identity. Chapter 7 discusses the role of the gentry in local and county affairs and their record in benevolence and charity. Chapter 8 examines the extent and implications of their social interaction with tenantry, and details the various tenant festivities surrounding the mansions of the gentry, particularly, the stage-managed post-Famine 'harvest-home' festivities. Chapter 9 describes how most of the gentry supported liberal national causes in the early nineteenth century but by the end of that century were Unionists to a man.

THE LANDED GENTRY OF GALWAY 1820-1880

BY

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Patrick Melvin

March 1991

CHAPTER 1

THE COMPOSITION OF THE GALWAY GENTRY

The English surveyor and land agent Edward Wakefield published an Account of Ireland statistical and political in 1812, and he wrote of Galway that in the inhabited parts of the county "there are more gentlemens' seats than in any other district of Ireland".[1] This numerous gentry, which impressed Wakefield, was composed of many different strands and had acquired estates at different times and in various ways. The majority consisted of Irish and Norman families and the rest entered the gentry through grant, purchase and marriage from the 16th to the 19th centuries. Some Irish landowning families like the Dalys, Donelans an Kellys and Norman families of Burkes, Dillons and Martyns had, by various means, survived the 17th century confiscations. Those Irish and Norman families who did not survive the 17th century confiscations were replaced by an important group of Protestant newcomers such as the Trenches, Eyres and Persses. The Cromwellian transplantation of Catholic landowners to Galway, mainly from Leinster, brought in families like the Nugents, Aylwards and Bellews. The 17th century was the period of major change in land ownership when the earlier landed magnates like the O'Maddens, De Burgos and O'Kellys gave way to newcomers. De Burgo and other Norman castles still dot the landscape, many of them in significant proximity to later mansions. The De Burgo grip was broken in the 17th century and much of their extensive property was divided between new proprietors. Thus the Burkes of Pallas were replaced by Nugents, the Burkes of Tulira by Martyns, the Burkes of Dunsandle by Dalys, and the Burkes of Iser Kelly and Moyode by Persses. O'Madden lands

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1. i, 32. Wakefield went on to observe that none were remarkable for their magnificence except Dalystown.

went to Eyres, Dalys, Lawrences and Seymours and O'Kelly lands went to Dillons, Frenches, Blakeneys and Bellews. In west Galway the estates of local chieftains like the O'Flahertys went to land hungry Galway merchants like the Martins of Ross. The history of the Burkes illustrates the process of change and continuity which developed in the 17th century. Although they lost heavily in the turmoils of that century they succeeded nevertheless in maintaining a high profile in the county. They were represented in the gentry by the Burkes of Glinsk, Marble Hill, St. Clerans, Tyaquin, Ballydugan and Ower. The head of the family, Lord Clanricarde, gave them their main influence. The firm of Burke's Peerage, which was established to record family history and genealogy was founded by Burkes who were descended, through the Burkes of Meelick and Tintrim, from the Clanricarde family.[2]

One of the major facts in the history of the county was the way in which the dominance of the De Burgos or Burkes was replaced in the 17th century and major grants of their lands given to new protestant gentry. An equally striking feature was the rise of the 'Tribes' of Galway as landowners. These merchant families had been investing their money in land since the late 16th century. For instance the Martins of Ross and Martyns of Tulira first acquired their estates at that time, the former by purchase and the latter by marriage[3]. The 'Tribal' families established a social and economic dominance over Galway and into Mayo and adjoining counties, and this dynamism was in turn reflected in business interests on the Continent and the West Indies. The various families of French had about seventeen houses in the county in the 18th century

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2. Burke's family records (1897), p 122.

3. J. Fahey, History and Antiquities of the diocese of Kilmacduagh (Dublin1893),p.249. Hereafter cited as Fahey, Kilmacduagh.

besides others in Mayo and Roscommon.[4] The main French families were those of Monivea Castle, Tyrone, Castleffrench and Frenchpark. The Blakes were even more numerous and had up to thirty houses in the county. Most of the smaller French estates were bought out in the 18th century and replaced by other rising families. There was therefore a combination of change and continuity going on throughout the 18th and 19th centuries. This has relevance not only for history and genealogy but also in relation to the development of houses and demesnes and the study of placenames. An excellent illustration is provided by the history of Castledaly. Castledaly, or Corbally as it was earlier known, was originally a Burke castle and was acquired, in Elizabethan times, by Robert Blake, merchant of Galway, who was the ancestor of the Blakes of Ardfry.[5] The Blakes fell into debt and sold Corbally in 1829 to Peter Daly. He was a younger son of the Dalys of Dalysgrove, near Ahascragh, and had made money in Jamaican coffee plantations. The Dalys of Dalysgrove were a junior branch of the Dalys and had been transplanted to Dalysgrove in Cromwellian times and had remained Catholic. Peter Daly remodelled the castle of Corbally, added a Georgian front something similar to that of Dunsandle, and renamed the place Castledaly. The best known of the Blakes of

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4. Taylor and Skinner's road maps of 1778 listed 13 in Galway and 5 in Roscommon. Abbert, Tyrone, Brooklodge and Aggard had also been French houses but by 1778 were occupied, respectively, by Blakeneys, St. Georges, Blakes and Lamberts. (Taylor and Skinner, Maps of the roads of Ireland, ed. Dublin, 1969. Hereafter cited as Taylor and Skinner). All families of French are spelt thus throughout the thesis with the exception of the Ffrenches of Castleffrench. Note also the particular spelling of the following names: Jenings, Concanon, Redington and O'Rorke.

5. Daly Papers, p 76. This is a MS memoir of Dalys of Dalysgrove and Castle Daly based on family and other original sources, and compiled by James Dermot Daly of Castle Daly (1868-1914). Copy in my possession. Hereafter cited as Daly papers.

Corbally was Sir Henry Blake who was governor of Ceylon and a member of the Irish Convention in 1917[6]. These Blakes of Corbally had also been the owners of Aghrim Castle which was the original name of Castle Lambert. They became indebted to the Lamberts and sold Aghrim to them in the mid - 18th century[7]. The Lamberts then replaced the castle and bawn with a modern mansion and changed the name from Aghrim to Castle Lambert.[8] The Lamberts bought an adjoining estate from the Brownes of Coolarne and changed the name from Castle Browne to Castle Ellen.[9] These earlier names of Aghrim, Corbally and Castle Browne disappeared from the landscape as well as from subsequent maps. Many other examples can be given of how changes in house - structures and place-names reflected change of ownership. When the Blakeneys ousted the O'Kellys from Gallagh the place was renamed Castleblakeney. The O'Kellys of Clogher were replaced by the Ffrenches who renamed the place Castleffrench. The mansions of the new proprietors were often built onto the castles of the previous owners. This happened at Monivea where Frenches also replaced O'Kellys and at Tulira where Martyns replaced Burkes. The Taylor family were granted the lands of the rebellious McGraths of Ballymacgrath by Cromwell and renamed the place Castle Taylor.

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6. He was the author of Pictures from Ireland, published in 1880 under the pseudonym Terence Mc Grath, and originally contributed as letters to the Pall Mall Gazette.

7. Registry of Deeds: book 107, p.516. (Hereafter cited as Reg. Deeds). This deed, dated 1742, refers to 'several debts'of Martin Blake of 'Aughrim' (i.e. Aghrim) to Walter Lambert of Cregclare. In 1756 Patrick Blake of Corbally sold to John Lambert of Cregclare 'the Castle Park of Aghrim and Moor Aghrim' (Ibid, book 185 p.518).

8. Reg. Deeds: bk 403, p.107.

9. One of these Lamberts was the mother of Sir Edward Carson, and her less well known cousin, Mrs. Power O'Donoghue, was a prolific contributor to the fashionable journals and periodicals of the time.

The Taylors were one of the group of Protestant families who acquired estates in the county in the 17th century. The main families in this group were the Trenches, Eyres, Gregorys, Persses, Wades, Seymours, Galbraiths, and Lopdells. They were concentrated mainly in the southern and eastern parts of the county, or below a line drawn between Ballinasloe and Galway. They were also to some extent a separate social group, at least as regards marriages. These families owed their fortunes generally to the Cromwellian and Williamite governments. The Trenches of Garbally and Woodlawn were the most important of the 17th century newcomers. They were, according to their family memoir,[10] persecuted Huguenots who had been driven from France and came to Ireland via Northumberland. They acquired huge estates and great wealth through purchase and good marriages. They bought the Garbally estate and acquired other estates previously owned by the Tully family[11]. Greater fortunes came with their marriage in 1732 to the heiress of the Power family. These were Cork Powers[12] whose Munster estates had been forfeited and who had been granted over 4000 acres in Galway by the Cromwellian commissioners.[13] These estates were brought to the Trenches of Garbally by the Power heiress as well as the prestige of an additional Norman surname[14]. The Powers had married into the

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10. Earl of Clancarty, Memoir of the le Poer Trench Family (Dublin 1874). Hereafter cited as Trench memoir.

11. P.K. Egan, The parish of Ballinasloe (Dublin 1960), p.95.

12. of Kilbolane (Trench memoir, p.17).

13. Ormonde MSS., ii (H.M.C. 1899), p. 173.

14. She also brought to them Keating estates in Kilkenny, Carlow and Dublin which she inherited from her mother.

McCarthy family, one of whom was created earl of Clancarty in 1658. In consequence of this descent "his Majesty was graciously pleased to revive the title of Earl of Clancarty in his person, and... his Lordship was advanced to be an Earl of Ireland by the name, style, and title of Earl of Clancarty, of the County of Cork"[15]. The Trenches of Woodlawn originated with John Trench, Dean of Raphoe, who was a younger son of the first Trench of Garbally. John Trench had got the deanery of Raphoe as a reward for having warned William of Orange about a Jacobite Plot[16]. Woodlawn was originally an O'Kelly seat under its old name of Moate. These O'Kellys and many of the Gaelic proprietors had already declined by the early 17th century. The result was that newcomers like the Trenches bought from intermediate owners, often Galway Tribesmen merchants and many of whom were forfeiting Jacobites. For instance the Jacobite judge Peter Martyn was one of the seven Martyns outlawed after the Revolution of 1688. Peter Martyn's property, including the Abbey of Kilconnell and its possessions, was vested in the Crown. His Galway estates, including Woodlawn, were brought by John Trench[17]. The Trenches later got the title of Ashtown which was a translation of an Irish placename on the estate.

The first Persse is believed to have come from Northumberland early in the 17th century. They were regarded by family tradition as an offshoot of the Percys, Dukes of Northumberland. Dudley Persse, Dean of Kilmacduagh, got large

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15. Trench memoir, p22.

16. P. Melvin, 'Irish soldiers and plotters in Williamite England', Irish Sword, Xlll, (1979) pp. 259-60.

17. O. J. Burke, Anecdotes of the Connaught circuit (Dublin 1885), p. 58. Hereafter cited as Burke, Connaught circuit.

grants of land in the reign of Charles II and James II.[18] Much of this had been owned by the Burkes of Iser Kelly. A younger son of the Persses later acquired the estate of the Burkes of Moyode. The Gregory family came to Ireland in the Cromwellian period and were a branch of a Gregory family in Warwickshire. Robert Gregory made a fortune in India and purchased the Coole and Kiltartan estates from the Martyns of Tulira in 1768 and the Kinvara estate from the Frenches of Duras in 1769[19]. The Eyres were also of Cromwellian origin. They acquired extensive O'Madden property and they built the mansions of Eyrecourt and Eyreville. Other O'Madden lands went to the Seymours who came to Ireland as army officers in the reign of William III. They established branches in Galway at Somerset and at Ballymore, where they built a residence onto the old O'Madden tower house. The Galbraiths of Cappard were also of Williamite origin and they acquired estates previously owned by the O'Fahys[20]. O'Madden estates had also passed by marriage to the Lawrences of Belview who had settled in Galway in the Elizabethan period, as had the Lamberts and Blakeneys. Many outside families had estates or property interests in the county. The Warburtons for instance, were a non-resident family who got a lease of the manor of Aughrim in 1691 from the Duke of Ormonde?[21] They leased the Aughrim estate to the Handy family of Westmeath who sold part of it to

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18. For this grant see G. Hatchell, Grants of lands, etc., under the Commission of Grace 1684-1688 (Dublin 1839), p.46.

19. Fahey, Kilmacduagh, p. 352. For the early history of the Gregory family see R. Bearman, The Gregorys of Stivichall in the sixteenth century (Coventry, 1972); V.R.T. Gregory, The House of Gregory (Dublin 1943); F.E. Mosedale, Stivichall parish Coventry and the parish church of St James (Coventry, 1982).

20. H. Blackall, 'The Galbraiths of Cappard', Irish Genealogist, iv. (1968), p.25.

21. For their Galway estates see Warburton memoir (Dublin 1848), pp. 22-23.

the Wade family who became seated at Fairfield in the mid-18th century. In 1710 John Ussher of Dublin, Master in Chancery, got a fee farm grant of the Eastwell estate, which was also part of the manor of Aughrim, from Charles Butler Earl of Arran.[22] The new Protestant families, Wades, Persses, Eyres, Gregorys, Seymours, Trenches and Galbraiths, were largely intermarried. Some of them had large estates and even by the late 19th century they owned, as a group, up to 70,000 acres in the county. The Trenches of Woodlawn had, in addition, large estates in Limerick, Tipperary and Waterford. A distinction must be made between these 17th century settlers and the Lamberts, Blakeneys and Lawrences who first came to Ireland in the late 16th century. The Blakeneys got estates through service on the Parliamentary and Cromwellian side whereas the Lawrences and Lamberts were in the Royalist and Clanricarde sphere of influence. Military service on the Parliamentary side helped to establish the Morgans of Monksfield. Military service on the royalist side brought the St. Georges to Connaught.

The new Protestant gentry were concentrated in the southern and eastern parts of the county. The Catholic families on the other hand who were transplanted into Galway by the Cromwellian government were numerous in the northern part of the county. The Bellews and Nettervilles were transplanted from Louth. The Beytagh and Chevers families came from Meath. The O'Carrolls were represented among the transplanted by John Carroll who, according to pedigrees, was sent to Galway by the Cromwellians at 5 years of age.[23] Other Carrolls were

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22. Reg. Deeds: bk 156 p.325; bk 6 p40. The Ussher family had some earlier connections with Galway.

23. Their Galway seat became known as Carrollton and they claimed affinity with Charles Carroll of Carrollton in Maryland who was a signatory to the Declaration of Independence ('True version of the pedigree of Carroll of Carrollton, Maryland', R.S.A.I. Jn., XVI (1883) pp187-98).

transplanted to Killoran and they married into the Burkes of Marble Hill. Tobyns were transplanted from Kilkenny and settled at Tobynstown near Glinsk.[24] The Carrolls and Tobyns did not survive as gentry into the 19th century. But they formed part of the web of marriage links between the transplanted families and the other surrounding Norman and Irish families, like the Burkes of Glinsk, the O'Flynns, the D'Arcys of New Forest and the Ffrenches of Castleffrench. All of these families resided within a short coach-drive of each other. The families of Aylward and Leonard were transplanted from Waterford. The Aylwards became seated at Ballinagar near Woodford and the Leonards at Queensfort near Tuam. Some of the Butler family were transplanted from Tipperary and Kilkenny to Clare and Galway. They became seated at Ballygeagin and Cregg in the Gort area.[25] Most of these transplanted families remained staunchly Catholic, but the Butlers conformed[26] as did the Powers who married into the Trench family[27]. Some transplanted families had reason to complain about their treatment by the Cromwellians. The Chevers family of Killyan found that the land given to them was insufficient and that they were given no residence. They had to construct a crude thatched dwelling to begin with. In later years it was discovered that the walls of the original house were formed of huge boulders of uncut stone, the spaces

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24. 'The genealogy of Walter Tobin and his family', Ossory Arch. Soc., II (1880-3), p94.

25. H. Blackall, 'The Butlers of Cregg', Galway Arch. and Hist. Soc. Jn, xxxviii (1959), p 23.

26. Ibid: 'The Butlers of County Clare', North Munster Antiq. Jn., Vll (1953), p 157.

27. W. P. Burke, Irish priests in the Penal times 1660-1760. (Waterford 1914), p.423. David Power, High Sheriff of Galway, was actively proceeding against Catholic priests in 1712.

between them being filled with sods of turf[28].

Landowners were also transplanted within the county and within the province. For example a junior branch of the Dalys were transplanted to Dalysgrove and the Burkes of Castle Hacket to Ower, near Headford. The Nolans were removed from Ballinrobe Castle to Ballinderry near Tuam. The decline of some families and the rise of others resulted in some estates having a varied succession of owners. When the Nugents were transplanted from Westmeath they were given the old Burke estate of Pallas and the O'Flaherty estate at Renvyle. Nugent was restored to his ancestral property and he gave Pallas to a younger son, who became Lord Riverston and was chief justice of Ireland in the reign of James II.[29] The Nugents sold Renvyle to a younger son of the Blakes who had returned from the West Indies. The Blakes did not take up residence at Renvyle until the early 19th century and in the meantime the O'Flahertys remained on and farmed their ancestral lands from the Blakes.[30] Similarly when the Kilkellys were ousted from their stronghold at Cloghballymore they preferred to remain as tenants under the Frenches of Tyrone, who were the new landlords in the area. These were cases of Irish families

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28. F.S. Chevers, Chevers of Killyan (privately printed 1936), pp. 2,7. One of the Chevers family, Dr. Augustine Chevers, became bishop of Meath in 1756 (Cogan, The diocese of Meath (Dublin 1870), iii, p.164).

29. The title of Riverston was disallowed as it was conferred, as was alleged, after King James had abdicated the throne. Nevertheless the owners of Pallas continued to be recognised by general courtesy as Lords Riverston down to the middle of the 19th century. The Nugents were granted a total of 11,574 acres in Connaught. (Complete Peerage, xii, p529).

30. R. O'Flaherty, West or H-Iar Connaught (Galway, 1978) p 412. Hereafter cited as O'Flaherty, Iar Connaught.

being succeeded by Tribesmen and being unwilling to give up their ancestral lands, or at least being on friendly terms with the newcomers. Tribesmen, however, could be equally reluctant to give way to Irish landowners. Although for instance the Blakes of Corbally had agreed to sell out to the Dalys of Dalysgrove, they had to be forced by Chancery decrees and the county sheriff to relinquish their possession.[31]

It can be seen, therefore, that the English Protestant families of 17th century origin have perhaps the least complicated history of all the county gentry. Many of them had large grants or purchases and most remained seated in their original mansions. The transplanted families likewise have a relatively straightforward history. This leaves the great mass of Irish and Norman families. Their survival as landowners depended on how successfully they adapted themselves to what, in national terms, was the age of Protestant Ascendancy. The most successful of them were those who were skilful in combining various factors. These factors included re-grants of part of their original estates; good marriages; a business-like approach to estate management; patronage of influential figures like Clanricarde and conformity to the Established Church. Irish families like the Dalys of Dunsandle, Kellys of Castle Kelly, Mahons of Castlegar, and Norman families like the Dillons of Clonbrock, and Prendergasts of Lough Cutra owed their survival and prosperity to factors such as these. These successful families secured large estates, married well, and conformed to the Established Church. Clanricarde in his Memoirs commented on the opportunism of landowners when he referred to Dillon of Clonbrock as the leader of that part of the gentry of Connaught who care neither for King nor Pope nor Parliament but only for the salvation of their own estates. After the Jacobite war Dillon survived an attempt by the Trenches to get

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31. Daly papers, pp 119, 141.

part of his estate as a reward for claiming that he had fought on James's side at Aughrim. The first Lord Clonbrock, who died in 1795, left to his son estates in Galway, Roscommon, Longford, Westmeath, Tipperary and Limerick. When, however, the third Lord Clonbrock died in 1893 all except the Galway estate had been sold. Survival through the Cromwellian and Williamite periods was the most crucial factor. Some families, like the Burkes of Marble Hill, were saved by the Articles of Limerick. Others, like the Burkes of Carrantrila, were not.

Families who remained Catholic were able to survive the Penal era by ceding their estates in trust to Protestant relations or neighbours. Thus the Burkes of Marble Hill were protected by the Masons of Masonbrook, the Bellews of Mount Bellew by the Dillons of Clonbrock and the Burkes of Ower by the Brownes of the Neale. The Martyns of Tulira remained Catholic, but were allowed by special enactment to retain their estates, as a reward for having befriended Protestants during the 17th century rebellions.[32] The question of religious conformity and evasion of the Penal Code is important because what was distinctive about Galway was the survival of so many Irish and Norman landowners. In some cases one member of a family officially or outwardly conformed in order to save the estate while secretly remaining a Catholic. In other cases heads of families conformed for a time, as in the case of the Blakes of Tower Hill in Mayo. But this was a conformity of convenience as these Blakes were, and continued to be, a very Catholic family.

The Irish and Norman families made up the great bulk of the gentry in the 19th century. There were about thirty Irish families. These included families of Concanon, Daly, Donelan, Kelly, McDermott, Mahon, Nolan, O'Flaherty and O'Hara. The

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32. Fahey, Kilmacduagh, p 322.

Donelans of Ballydonelan were probably the longest settled on their ancestral estate and are alleged to have built their first castle there in the 10th century. The Norman families were made up of Berminghams, Burkes, Dillons, Dolphins, Jenings and Usshers. The main transplanted families were also Norman, as were most of the so-called 'Tribal' families. Families in the Peerage included Lords Clanricarde, Ashtown, Clancarty, Dunsandle, Clonbrock, Clanmorris, Ffrench, Wallscourt, Westmeath, Gort, and Killanin who was raised to the Peerage in 1889. The rank of baronet was held by the Blakes of Menlo, Bellews of Mount Bellew, Burkes of Glinsk and of Marble Hill, Mahons of Castlegar and Shees of Dunmore. All of these families were in the country since at least Norman times, except those represented by Lords Ashtown, Clancarty and Clanmorris.

Most of the older families had members or relations in the legal profession. The admission lists of the King's Inns contain an enormous number of Burkes and Blakes. It was not surprising that in some cases lawyers founded, or helped to found, family fortunes. Thomas Dillon who bought the Clonbrock estate in Elizabethan times was an eminent lawyer and judge. Denis Daly of Carnakelly was a judge and privy councillor in the reign of James II and established the fortunes of the Dalys of Dunsandle. Lynches and D'Arcys were also prominent as lawyers. Patrick D'Arcy, the celebrated lawyer of the Confederation of Kilkenny, had estates in Galway, Mayo and Clare, and was ancestor to the D'Arcys of Kiltullagh and Clifden. His brother Martin D'Arcy, the High Sheriff of Galway who defied Wentworth's plantation scheme for Connaught and died in prison in 1636, had extensive estates in Galway, Sligo and Mayo. He was ancestor to the D'Arcys of Rockvale and Newforest. The foundation of these estates had been laid by their father, James Riveagh D'Arcy, who was vice-president of Connaught in Elizabethan times. The relationship between land and law was circular. Lawyers founded landed

dynasties; in turn law was an attractive and lucrative career for sons of gentry. The links with law were already well established by 1600, and indeed Galway families were already disproportionately well represented in the Inns of Court in London[33]. As well as having members or relations in the legal profession, many Irish and Norman families had profitable links with the world of commerce. But the most important single factor in explaining the survival of so many Catholic families was the protection and influence of Clanricarde. In the Composition of Connaught in 1585 Clanricarde was given rents out of most quarters in his six baronies. It was believed that the last Lord Clanricarde had head rents from over half the landlords of Galway, and at his death in 1916 he left £2 1/2 million.

Reference has been made to patronage as a factor in the rise of families and also to the general theme of change and continuity which characterises the history of landed estates in the county. The best example of these processes is illustrated by the history of the Mahons of Castlegar. It also shows how a family's fortunes, movements, and even their very surname, was affected by the turmoils and upheavals of the 17th century. The Mahons were originally O'Briens who lost their estates in County Clare and were driven into Galway. Their service to Clanricarde was rewarded with friendship and patronage which gradually enabled the Mahons to repair their fortunes and acquire considerable estates. Their O'Brien ancestors had been killed in the service of the Clanricardes at the beginning of the 17th century. The Mahons were from the beginning socially accepted by the native gentry

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33. Darcy Burke, The Genealogy of the Darcies of Clonuane, in the county Clare, and Kiltolla, in the county of Galway (Dublin 1796), p. 28. Hereafter cited as Darcy Burke, Genealogy of the Darcies. See also D. Cregan, 'Irish catholic admissions to the English Inns of Court, 1558-1625', in The Irish Jurist, V (1970), pp95-114.

of Galway because of their previous position in Clare. The family at first resided in Loughrea where they held leasehold property from the 7th and 8th Earls of Clanricarde. This included several houses and plots in the town and also the tolls of the fairs, markets and mills. An elder son married the heiress of the Cullen family of Beech Hill near Woodlawn who had been transplanted there from Wexford. This was the origin of the Mahons of Beech Hill, who were the senior branch of the family. The Castlegar family was founded by a younger son, Captain Bryan Mahon. According to tradition, Bryan Mahon first aroused Clanricarde's interest while he was visiting his castle at Lackafinna. He noted Mahon's athletic prowess and learning and took him to Portumna as tutor to his heir. The tradition further relates how Mahon saved Clanricarde from a mortal plot by his wife. In repayment for his services Clanricarde appointed him agent over his estate, captain of his troop, and seneschal of his manor of Calla. He eventually gave him the Castlegar lands previously held on lease by the O'Shaughnessys.[34] This account from tradition is closely borne out by historical sources. The Mahons had a Clare origin as had the Dunsandle Dalys. Both families had a tradition of close friendship and their family vaults were side by side in Loughrea Abbey.

A related branch of the Mahon family had resided at Gort and enjoyed the patronage and protection of the O'Shaughnessy family.[35] They were ancestors to the Mahons of Belleville the

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34. This account comes from an extensive history of the family, in manuscript, researched by George Charles Mahon, a nephew of Sir Ross Mahon, 1st Baronet, of Castlegar. There is a copy of this work in N.L.I. Hereafter cited as Mahon, Mahon history.

35. The two families were related (C. Ffrench Blake-Forster, The Irish chieftains or a struggle for the Crown, Dublin 1872), p 51. Hereafter cited as Blake-Forster, Irish chieftains).

last of whom, General Sir Bryan Mahon, was appointed a Senator in the Irish Free State. The Mahons of Belleville did not have the advantage of a fixed estate, as did the Mahons of Castlegar. But they gradually acquired wealth through stock, wool and leases. An important factor was friendship with the rising Prendergast family, who had acquired the confiscated Gort estates of the O'Shaughnessys. The Mahons leased land from the Prendergasts and they also leased the mansion of Ryndifin, where the earlier generations of the family resided.[36] They bought the Belleville estate from the Brownes of Coolarne in the late 18th century.[37] The Prendergasts, like the Mahons, survived the 17th century upheavals and emerged with a large estate. They were descended from one of the Norman knights who came to Ireland with Strongbow. Just as the Mahons had a previous history in Clare, the Prendergasts had an earlier history in Tipperary where they had estates since Norman times. These estates were seized by Cromwell and the family were later active on the Irish Jacobite side. But they changed their allegiance to the Williamites and founded the fortunes of Lough Cutra. Just as the first Trench of Woodlawn had been rewarded for revealing a Jacobite plot to William of Orange, so also Thomas Prendergast was rewarded with a 7,000 acre O'Shaughnessy estate for revealing the assassination plot of 1696.[38] The 17th century confiscations and upheavals and the general history of the county meant that the gentry came to be composed of a great

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36. Reg. Deeds: bk 149, p 20. They also leased property from the Frenches of Drumharsna (ibid, p 21; book 196, p 144, book 221, p 161-3); H. Blackall, 'The Butlers of County Clare', North Munster Antiq. Journal Jn., vii (1955) p 15.

37. Reg. Deeds: bk 333, p 485.

38. Report of the commissioners appointed by parliament to inquire into the Irish forfeitures (London 1700), p7; P Melvin, 'Irish soldiers and plotters in Williamite England', Irish Sword (Xlll, 1979) p 366.

variety of families. This diversity can be illustrated by the Redingtons, Blake-Forsters and Kellys of Castle Kelly. The Redingtons were Cromwellians who married into the Burkes of Kilcornan and became a very Catholic family. Sir Thomas Redington became the first Catholic Under Secretary in 1846. The Kellys of Castle Kelly in north Galway, emerged from the aftermath of the Elizabethan wars with a vast estate and later conformed to the Established Church. Denis Kelly of Castle Kelly was a scholar and collector of Irish manuscripts. But unlike the Catholic and liberal Redingtons, he was a Tory and Orangeman. The Forsters originally were dispossessed Jacobites in Northumberland who acquired extensive estates in Galway and married into the Blakes of Menlo.[39] The Jacobite background was an important element in the historical memory of many Galway families who had lost estates because of it. Charles Blake-Forster's book The Irish Chieftains or a struggle for the Crown was an interesting literary recreation of Jacobite times. The author had at his disposal sources from the library of Ashfield House, the family mansion near Gort, although the Ashfield estate had passed from the family in the Incumbered Estates Court.

The landscape of the county in the 19th century showed a variety of gentry seats and estates. Apart from the major houses, there was also a great number of smaller houses, most of them occupied and a few in ruins. Leet's Directory of Ireland, published in 1814, listed about 420 of what were described as 'gentlemen's seats' in the county. This huge proliferation of gentry, great and small, was the result of two main processes which had different origins but which gradually became linked in various ways. These two processes were firstly the long-term effects of the 17th century

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39. An extensive pedigree of the Blake - Forsters was published in Galway Vindicator of 20 October, 1866.

dispossessions and the consequent fragmentation of estates and families, and secondly the land buying activities of the 'Tribes' of Galway, particularly the Lynches, Blakes, D'Arcys and Frenches. The 17th century dispossessions left behind a large number of offshoots of Irish and Norman families, particularly Burkes and Kellys. The history of these lesser-known families is a neglected, but important, facet of social history. The number of Burkes remaining shows what their power and position must have been in earlier times. Burke families had houses or estates at Annagh and Lisbrine in the Gort area; at Meelick and Tintrim in the Woodford area; and at Burkeville, Ballybroder, Carrowkeel, Spring Garden, Foxhall, Reaghan and Castle de Burgh, in the Loughrea area. Spring Garden was originally a Persse property and was leased to the Burkes who had large estates.[40] There were Kellys at Ashbrook and at Kellysgrove. In some cases houses were occupied by related branches of the same family. A forgotten Kelly family lived at Carraroe near Dunsandle. They were related to the Kellys of Liskelly, near Aughrim, and to the Kellys of Clooncannon Kelly, near Ahascragh. These smaller Burke and Kelly families were in the category of minor landed proprietors in the 19th century. Some of them had sold all or most of their land in the Incumbered Estates Court after the Famine. These included the Kellys of Clooncannon, Ashbrook and Kellysgrove, and the Burkes of Lisbrine, Tintrim and Burkeville. In many cases their pedigrees were probably longer than their bank accounts. One of the Kellys of Liskelly, for instance, was imprisoned for debt in the 18th century. But, while they may have been minor gentry in economic terms, their social status may have been a different matter. The Burkes of

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40. Reg. Deeds: bk 507, p. 571; bk 657, p. 411; bk 624, p. 197. One of these Burkes of Spring Garden was the commander of the Constabulary who defeated the Fenians at Tallaght in 1867, as a result of which the force was renamed the Royal Irish Constabulary.

Meelick were the nearest relations of Clanricarde and the Burkes of Lisbrine were descendants of the Burkes of Pallas. The Kellys of Carraroe and Liskelly were married to younger sisters of Lord Clanmorris. Some of the Carraroe Kellys went to Oxford and married into English gentry families. Ten of these Kellys became officers in the British Army which illustrates the role of the Empire in providing career outlets for younger sons and even heads of families in some cases. It also illustrates the many forgotten links between Irish and English family history.

Another result of the 17th century land confiscations was that some members of most defeated families took their fortunes into the world of commerce or military service abroad. These might include the Galway Tribal families like the Blakes and Lynches or Irish families like the Kellys, MacDermotts, O'Connors and Dalys, who had widespread merchant connections in Dublin, London and the West Indies. The Kellys of Newtown and Kellys of Lisduff returned from abroad and bought estates in the county. The Newtown estate was bought from the Brownes in 1802 by a branch of the Kellys who had property in Jamaica.[41] Another Kelly who was Chief Justice of Jamaica bought the Ramore and Lisduff estates which formed a single estate at that time. The history of these estates is an excellent example of the combination of various features all of which characterised the general process of continuity and change. The Ramore and Lisduff estate had been Daly property held under the Clanricarde family, and was sold to Denis Kelly - "Jamaica Kelly" - in the mid-18th century.[42] Kelly's

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41. The buyer, John Kelly, of Green Castle, Jamaica, belonged to the Kellys of Lisdalon in Roscommon (Reg. Deeds: bk 549, p.214; 'Kelly of Newtown', Burke's landed gentry of Ireland, ed. 1904).

42. Reg. Deeds: bk 133, p.382. Kelly was one of the Kellys of Turrock in Roscommon (ibid, bk 45, p. 526, refers to a collusive discovery of the

daughter and heiress married into the Brownes of Westport and brought them the family's Jamaican property as well as the Ramore and Lisduff estate.[43] The Ramore division of the estate was bought in 1831 from the Marquess of Sligo, head of the Browne family, by James MacDermott whose father had been an officer in the Austrian service.[44] These MacDermotts, like the Kellys of Newtown and Lisduff, were a Roscommon family who sought their fortune overseas. They had lost their estates through Jacobite activity and entered military and commercial life. Some became wine merchants in Dublin. Others became merchants in France. MacDermott's mother was a daughter of Robert Garvey, merchant in France, and this was an example of the continued link between families who had a common political, religious and economic history.

The fragmentation of estates and families which resulted from the 17th century confiscations is illustrated by the Kilkelly family. The Kilkelly's ancient stronghold was Cloghballymore Castle near Kinvara. They lost most of their estates in 1641, but had been mortgaging property to Galway merchants since the early 17th century. The Kilkellys were transplanted to the nearby estates of Raheen and Lydican. They were forced by their debts to sell their estates to the O'Hara's in the 1790's.[45] They continued however to be represented in the county gentry when another branch of the family bought the

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family estates by the Lysters of Lysterfield).

43. Ibid, bk 526, p. 291; one of the Brownes resided at Ramore (Taylor and Skinner, p. 88).

44. Reg. Deeds: bk 866, p. 190, bk 870, p.499. MacDermott had already been holding part of the lands on lease. His father, Major MacDermott, was residing at a nearby house called Nutgrove in 1814 (A. Leet , Directory of Ireland, Dublin 1814, p311. Hereafter cited as Leet).

45. Reg. Deeds: bk 423 p. 324.

Drimcong estate from the Lynches in the early 19th century.[46] An interesting feature of the Kilkelly's history was their relationship with the Frenches of Tyrone who, under Cromwell's transplantation policy, were given a substantial part of the Kilkelly estate. These Frenches later assumed the additional name of St. George when they became related by marriage with the St. Georges of Hatley Manor in Leitrim. When the Kilkellys were transplanted to neighbouring properties they preferred to remain on their ancestral lands as tenants of the Frenches. A close friendship developed between the two families which was employed to mutual advantage. The Frenches employed Kilkellys in business and the professions in Dublin to look after their legal and financial interests. They appointed another Kilkelly as agent over an outlying estate which they had won in a legal battle from the Kirwans of Castle Hacket.[47] Kilkellys were also prominent as merchants in Spain and the West Indies and made a fortune in Manila.[48]

The Kilkellys therefore illustrate in an unusual and revealing way the change and continuity which characterised the history of the county. Their close association with a 'Tribal' family like the Frenches of Tyrone brings us to the second of the two processes already referred to as causes for the large number of gentry in the county. This second process was the land buying activity of the 'Tribes' of Galway, particularly the Frenches, Blakes and Lynches. The Blakes were the most numerous of the gentry families in the 19th century. The membership lists of the Galway County Club in 1880 had sixteen

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46. M. J. Blake, 'Family of Lynch of Drimcong in Moycullen Barony', in Tuam Herald, December, 1928.

47. This was the Beaghmore and Mossfort estate near Tuam which was bought out by the Kilkellys in the Incumbered Estates Court.

48. The Kilkellys of Drimcong commissioned a detailed family pedigree which was produced by Philip Crossle in 1921.

Blakes which was more than twice the number of any of the other 'Tribal' families on the list. The common ancestor of all the Connaught Blakes was granted estates in the Claregalway area in 1278, which included the lands of Kiltolla. The senior branches of the Blakes, those of Kiltolla and of Renvyle, succeeded either in keeping part of their ancestral lands, or in getting large compensatory grants when they suffered confiscation of their town property under Cromwell. Some of these ancestral lands were held by members of the Blake family for over six centuries.[49] Their early and widespread investment in land enabled them to survive the confiscations of the 17th century. The decline of Irish landowners and the uncertainty of many titles provided a welcome opportunity of using their merchant wealth to get a financial grip on indebted property. One result of this was the uneven distribution of land acquisition. This in turn affected the pattern of house building and occupation by various branches of the Blakes. An example of this tendency is provided by the Blakes of Ardfry who were granted the estates of Ardfry and Wallscourt in 1612.[50] These two estates were about twenty miles apart. Wallscourt was part of the estate of the Wall family[51] and it provided the Ardfry Blakes with their title when they were raised to the Peerage in 1800. Involvement in politics and public office was one of the most certain avenues to fortune and it was significant of particular skill if this could be achieved in a turbulent period like the 17th century. A large estate was amassed by Sir Richard Blake of Ardfry who was mayor and M.P. for Galway county and chairman of the Supreme Council of the

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49. M. J. Blake, Blake family records 1300-1600, p.5; ibid., Blake family records 1600-1700, pp. 136, 169. Hereafter cited as Blake family records 1300-1600 and Blake family records 1600-1700.

50. Blake family records 1300-1600, p 5; Blake family records 1600-1700, pp 136, 169.

51. Blake family records 1600-1700, p 179.

Confederation of Kilkenny. The mansion of Ardfry was built in the late 18th century. The Blakes had previously lived at Newgrove on their Wallscourt estate and in the 17th century had probably occupied the old castle at Ardfry near Oranmore. The manner in which Blakes were involved in land transactions among themselves is seen in the case of the Dartfield estate near Loughrea. This was part of the Wallscourt estate and it was sold by the Ardfry Blakes in 1800 to Robert Blake who was a Dublin attorney and probably a relation. Robert Blake was the founder of the Blakes of Dartfield. In a similar way, the Blakes of Merlin Park and Renvyle had originally lived in different houses. Some were established in their seats at the beginning or early in the 17th century like the Blakes of Menlo and Castlegrove. The Blakes of Ballyglunin were transplanted from Galway town and bought their estate from a Cromwellian planter. The Ballyglunin Blakes were among the wealthiest gentry in the county with a 10,000 acre estate, well farmed, and an annual income in the late 19th century of £20,000 a year from rents and investments handled by Rothchilds of London.[52]

The Blakes built or acquired several houses during the prosperous period of the Napoleonic Wars. The number of Blake houses listed in Leet's Directory of Ireland, published in 1814, is twice the amount depicted in Taylor and Skinner's Maps of the roads of Ireland, which was first published in 1778. Some Blakes sold out after the Famine, such as the families of Castlegrove, Merlin Park and Oranmore. Yet there remained twelve Blake estates in Galway of over one thousand

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52. Tuam Herald 3 October 1891, p.2; 10 October p-2; 30 January, 1892, p.2 The Blakes were saved the expense of dowries in the 19th century. Martin J. Blake, who died unmarried in 1861, had been M.P. for Galway from 1832 to 1857. He was succeeded by his nephew Walter Blake, who died unmarried in 1891, leaving personal property worth £200,000. Martin J. Blake, the historian, was a Blake of Tower Hill in Mayo.

acres each.[53]

The Lynches were not quite so numerous, having seven estates in the one thousand acres and over category. Five Lynch families with large estates descended from Sir Henry Lynch who was created a baronet in 1622. Both Sir Henry Lynch and his son Robert or Robuck Lynch were prominent in public life and succeeded, like Sir Richard Blake of Ardfry, and Patrick and Martin D'Arcy, in building up a large estate.[54] These major landowning 'Tribesmen' were, incidentally, all closely intermarried. Sir Henry Lynch was the ancestor of the Lynch Blosse family, the Lynches of Partry, Clogher, and Ballycurrin, all in Mayo county, and the Lynches of Petersburgh Castle near Clonbur in Galway. Other Lynch families with large estates included the Lynches of Barna, Renmore and Lavally. There was a further huge complicated network of Lynch families below the level of these major estates. Most of these, like the lesser-known Burke and Kelly families discussed earlier, were inter-related. A good example is provided by the Lynches of Rathpeak, Cartron and Rathglass. A connected feature was the succession of different families in many houses. This makes it difficult to establish with any certainty when houses were built and by whom. A typical smaller house of the kind occupied by Lynches was Carrowbeg, near Belcare, and Carrowbeg had a succession of Skerretts, Bodkins and Lynches as owners. This trend was not confined to smaller houses and estates. For instance

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53. U.H. Hussey de Burgh, The landowners of Ireland (Dublin 1878); Landowners in Ireland: Return of owners of land of one acre and upwards.... (Dublin 1876).

54. Sir Robuck Lynch, Sir Richard Blake and Sir Thomas Blake (of Menlo) owned 30% of the land owned by Galway townsmen in Galway county in the 17th century (B.M. Ó Bric, 'Galway Townsmen as the owners of land in Connacht 1585-1641', unpublished M.A. Thesis, University College Galway, 1974 p. 446). Hereafter cited as Ó'Bric).

Rockfield, near Athenry, was owned through the 18th and 19th century by Burkes, Brownes, Blakes and Concanons. Rockfield belongs to the interesting category of houses which did not develop into settled gentry seats or demesnes. Kirwan families were seated in the Tuam area at Castle Hacket, Hillsbrook, Gardenfield, Blindwell, and Dalgan Park in Mayo. Most of them were descended from the Kirwans of Cregg Castle near Claregalway.[55]

One of the major aspects of the 'Tribes' as landowners was the way in which they related to other families. There was for instance throughout the 18th century a close involvement between Burkes and Blakes, usually to the advantage of the letter. New families bought up the estates of Tribal families in financial difficulty. The estate of the Brownes of Newtown was, as already described, bought out by Kellys who returned from Jamaica. The most prominent of the Browne family were the Brownes of Castlemacgarrett who were raised to the Peerage in 1836 with the title Oranmore and Browne. Their Galway estates, including Oranmore, and totalling over 26,000 acres were sold after the Famine and the Ashford division was bought by the Guinness family. Several mostly smaller estates changed hands before the Famine. The Blakes of Windfield were bought out by the Jameson family. A large number of French estates went to new owners through purchase or marriage in the 18th and 19th centuries. The bankrupt Frenches of Aggard were bought out by the Lamberts in 1729. The Frenches of Rahasane became indebted in the early 19th century to the rising Smyth family who bought large portions of their estate. Lord Clanmorris had also acquired a substantial interest in the

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55. D.A.R. Kirwan and J. W. Kirwan, Pedigree of the Kirwan family compiled from originals (unpublished typescript, 1939. Copy in R.I.A. library).

Rahasane estate.[56] Clanmorris belonged to the Bingham family, originally from Melcombe Bingham in Dorset. The Binghams, including Lord Lucan, had estates of over 100,000 acres in Mayo.[57] The Smyths became seated at Masonbrook which had been sold by the Mason family to the Dalys of Dalyston in the 18th century.[58] The Dalyston estate was acquired by the O'Farrell family in the early 19th century. Some of the lesser known 'Tribal' families like the Deanes and Skerretts had also been replaced or bought out by other families. The St. Georges ousted the Skerretts from Headford Castle in the mid 17th century. The bankrupt Deane family sold out to the Henrys of Tohermore in the late 18th century.

Many estates were involved in complicated legal wrangling in a lawyer's world of endless mortgages, trusts, and disputed wills. These were often estates which were acquired by marriage or purchase. Two such estates were the Springfield estate at Williamstown and the Carrantrila estate at Dunmore. They are also good examples of estates with a succession of different owners. The Springfield estate had been sold to the Dalys by the Burkes of Glinsk. The Dalys however were forced to sell off these outlying portions of their huge estates in the 18th century. Some portions were bought by the Bodkins of Kilclooney in 1757 who, with the Bodkins of Annagh, were the

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56. James Smyth 'of Loughrea' paid £15,500 for part of the estate in 1828 (Reg. Deeds: bk 835, p.389; bk 758; p.240, French to Clanmorris, 1820).

57. Lord Clanmorris brought £23,000 worth of land in Galway in 1803 (ibid, bk 580, p.252). For other Galway property of the Binghams see R. E. McCalmont, Memoirs of the Binghams, p.142.

58. Pedigree of Mason of Masonbrook, Burke's dictionary of the landed gentry, ed, 1853. Denis Bowes Daly of Dalyston died in 1821 in debt, and the Masonbrook portion of his estates was placed in the hands of trustees. It was bought in Chancery in 1834 by James Smyth 'of Loughrea'for £12,100 (Reg. Deeds: 1834/12/298).

main Bodkin families in the county.[59] The Kellys of Springfield also bought back their estate from the Dalys to whom it had been mortgaged.[60] These Kellys had been gentlemen tenants on the estate under the Burkes of Glinsk. The Kelly heiress married the first McDermott of Springfield in 1791.[61] The McDermotts of Springfield, like the McDermotts of Ramore, were descended from Roscommon McDermotts who had lost their estates in the 17th century. The complicated history of the Springfield estate, with its succession of Burke, Daly and McDermott owners, resulted in expensive law cases. Although it is simply a coincidence that both the Springfield and Ramore estates were Daly property in the 18th century, it shows the extent of their possessions at that period. Denis Daly, the politician and friend of Grattan, succeeded to estates in Mayo, Galway, Clare and Limerick. Part of these estates had to be sold off to pay debts, but further fortunes accrued on his marriage to Henrietta Maxwell, only daughter of

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59. An Act for vesting part of the estate of Charles Daly ... in trustees to be sold for the payment of incumbrances ... p.5 (Private statute, in manuscript, among Dunsandle papers).

60. Reg. Deeds: bk 262, p.198; Parliamentary Papers (H.C.) 1826-27, IV, p 47. The recollections of Skeffington Gibbon from 1796 to ... 1829 (Dublin 1829), p.17. Gibbon, whose real name was O'Kelly, claimed that Skeffington was an anglicisation of O'Sceinín, brehon lawyers of Kilbegnet Castle, near Glinsk. He claimed descent from this family and was related - as was Archbishop Oliver O'Kelly of Tuam - to the Kellys of Turrock and Buckfield, who were cadets of the O'Kellys of Gallagh and Tycooly.

61. Reg. Deeds: bk 432, p.59. The Kellys were closely connected with the Lewises of Castletogher nearby, who had bought an estate from them in Williamite times (Ibid: bk 5, p.379; bk 14, p 1; bk 279, p 710).

the Earl of Farnham and a great heiress.[62] Even by the late 19th century the Dunsandle Dalys had estates of 37,000 acres. These included an estate in Tipperary which they acquired from the Matthew family of Thomastown Castle and which included the town of Thurles.

The Springfield estate which the McDermotts married into was therefore simply a portion of what had previously been Daly property, acquired earlier from the Burkes of Glinsk. But the most celebrated case of a property bedevilled by litigation was the Carrantrila estate near Dunmore. The Burkes of Carrantrila were outlawed for Jacobite activity in the 17th century.[63] The estate however was part of the Clanricarde family lands and the Burkes obviously enjoyed the protection of Clanricarde who sold the estate back to them in the mid-18th century.[64] Carrantrila next became the property of the Henry family[65] who also bought the Tohermore estate from the bankrupt Deane family.[66] The first law case resulted from an odd will which governed the marriage of the Henry heiress. The will stipulated that her accession to the Carrantrila estate depended on her marrying a spouse who had a fortune equal to her own. Miss Henry married William Handcock whose

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62. An Act for sale of part of the settled estate of the Right Honourable Denis Daly ... for the payment of certain incumbrances... (Private statute among Dunsandle papers).

63. Burke, Connaught circuit, p. 69.

64. Denis Kelly of Castle Kelly had in 1713 bought the lands in trust for the Burkes. Kelly had been included in the Capitulation of 1691 and his son married Clanricarde's daughter. Clanricarde sold the fee simple title to the Burkes in 1744 (Reg. Deeds: bk 114 p. 369; bk 116 p. 20).

65. William Burke of Carrantrila sold the estate in 1753 to Anne Henry, widow of Hugh Henry the banker (ibid: bk 158 p.506).

66. Ibid: bk 420, p.52.

immediate ancestors were Protestant clergymen in Cavan, and as he was a man of no fortune the Henry family opposed her right to the estate under the terms of the will. Handcock took the case through Chancery to the House of Lords, achieved success in 1816[67], and established the Handcocks at Carrantrila. Carrantrila was later involved in a more notorious law case of alleged adultery which involved Lord Clanricarde. The case was brought by John Stratford Handcock against John Delacour. Handcock's elder brother had died leaving no male heir and the entire estate was willed by Mrs. Handcock to Delacour who was, according to John Stratford Handcock, her illegitimate son. The implication was that the father was Clanricarde, who was at this time Postmaster-General in the British Government. It emerged that Clanricarde was a close friend of the Handcocks even before their marriage. Mrs. Handcock was then a Miss Kelly of Ashbrook, a family discussed earlier under the context of minor gentry. Clanricarde wrote a pamphlet on the case in an effort to clear his name.[68] A compromise was eventually reached by which the Carrantrila estate were left to John Stratford Handcock, the heir-at-law, on his giving a sum of £20,000 to Delacour, and all imputations and allegations were unconditionally withdrawn. The sum was raised on mortgage by the Handcocks, but the interest was a heavy charge on the estate. The mortgagees eventually foreclosed and one of them bought the estate. He was Captain Fitzwilliam Hume Dick of Humewood in Wicklow.[69]

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67. The case is detailed in Journals of the House of Lords, xlix, 1812, pp23-4. Handcock belonged to a cadet branch of the Castlemaine family.

68. An inquiry into the truth of the accusations made against the Marquis of Clanricarde in the cause of Handcock v. Delacour, lately heard in the Irish court of Chancery (London 1855. Hereafter cited as Handcock v. Delacour).

69. Tuam Herald, 7 December, 1895, p 4, 25 January 1896, p 2, 15 July 1922, p 4. Delacour joined the 11th Hussars and married Miss Towneley of Towneley

Several other estates too fell into difficulties of a less sensational nature. The most common causes of such difficulties were electioneering expenses, extravagant house-building, gambling, and the ruinous effect of the Famine. Even before the introduction of the Incumbered Estates Court in 1849, some families had already sold their estates in the court of Chancery. The Morgans of Monksfield for instance, who were of Cromwellian origin and Welsh ancestry, had to sell their house and demesne in 1835 because of debt.[70] Although seventeen estates were sold out in the Incumbered Estates Court this made no significant change in the overall structure of the gentry. This was because the majority sold nothing of any significance. Many had estates big enough to absorb even large sales. Such was the case with Sir William Gregory of Coole, who admitted in his Autobiography that he had to sell two thirds of his estate because of gambling debts. The biggest outright sale was that of Martins of Ballinahinch, whose 192,000 acre estate was the biggest in the county. The Martins, like the D'Arcys of Clifden, were ruined by the Famine. Some estates were bought by other members of gentry families already in the county. For example, the Castle Kelly estate at Ballygar was bought by one of the Bagots who had

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Hall in Lancashire (one of the oldest Catholic families in England). Her sister married Lord Clifford of Chudleigh and her cousin married Lord O'Hagan, Lord Chancellor of Ireland.

70. Connaught Journal 23 April 1835, p. 2; another account states that the Morgans were settled in Galway since the reign of Elizabeth (Ibid, 31 October, 1833). Similarly although the Taylors of Castle Taylor are usually referred to as of Cromwellian origin there are references to Taylors having grants in south Galway at the time of James I (Irish patent rolls of James I, Dublin, 1966, p441).

made a fortune in Australia.[71] The Bagots had acquired an estate at Ballymoe in the late 18th century by marriage.[72] The estate of the Lamberts of Cregclare was bought by Lord Clanmorris. Extensive portions of Lord Gort's estate at Lough Cutra were bought by the Lahiffs of Cloon, who had been large freeholders on the estate. The Lough Cutra estate had also been ruined by the Famine. The Cowan family also bought up land in the Incumbered Estates Court sales and had houses at Prospect and Tully near Eyrecourt. The sale of Ballydonelan according to one of the Donelan family, came about as a result of the dishonesty of their agent who fled to Australia in 1849 with a large sum of stolen money.[73] The estate later passed to a branch of the Mahons of Castlegar.

The most prominent outside families who entered the gentry as buyers in the Incumbered Estates Court sales were the Berridges of Ballinahinch, Meldons of Coolarne, Polloks of Lismany, and Guinness of Ashford. The Meldons bought the Belmont estate of the Blakes and the Coolarne estate of Lord Oranmore and Browne, who had debts of over £200,000. The Ashford division of the Oranmore and Browne estate was bought by the Guinness family. The Incumbered Estate Court sales also brought a Scots element into the gentry with families like the Polloks and the Gairdners who were their agents and

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71. The celebrated case of Bagot v. Bagot which occupied the Irish Probate Court from the 25th April to the 20th May 1878 (London 1878), p.3. Hereafter cited as Bagot v. Bagot.

72. With the Cuff family (pedigree of Cuff - Baron Tyrawley in Burke's dormant, abeyant, forfeited and extinct peerages, ed 1883, p 149.

73. Tuam Herald, 18 October, 1890, 22 November, 1890.

relations.[74] Pollok bought the Burke of Glinsk estate and the West estate near Ballinasloe which was orginally mostly Eyre property. Pollok became one of the biggest stockmasters in the county with an estate of 30,000 acres and valuation of over £13,000 which was the fourth highest valuation in the county next to that of Lords Clanricarde, Dunsandle and Ashtown. The Scots element varied from agents, agriculturists and large farmers to people like Lord Campbell the author of Lives of the Lord Chancellors of England, who owned an estate in Connemara. The Gairdners were originally Ayrshire merchants and bankers. The Galbraiths of Cappard were from Balgair Castle in Stirling. The Kirkaldys of Hearnesbrook came into the county when the Hearne heiress married George Kirkaldy of Baldonie in Forfarshire in 1832. The Persses, according to their published pedigrees, came from Northumberland but it is interesting that they named one of their houses Roxborough. Below the level of the gentry there were other graziers who bought land in the Incumbered Estates Court, such as William Ogilvie from Hawick, who bought part of the Jenings of Ironpool and Blake of Castlegrove estates near Tuam. Some were leaseholders like George Sanderson who leased the Healthlawn estate fromn Judge James Henry Monahan.

Despite sales the gentry, old and new, still held about 60% of the total land of the county. There were 107 proprietors of 3,000 acres and over, which was the biggest instance of that category in the country, Cork being second with 102 and Mayo third with 83.[75] These then were the major gentry of the county and they were composed of members of the various groups described and explained so far, Irish and Norman families long

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74. Gairdner formerly of Lisbeg House (Burke's landed gentry of Ireland, ed. 1958). There were about seven times more large Scots proprietors than English in Ireland in 1858 ('The Scotch settlement in Ireland', Galway Express 12 June 1858).

75. Hussey de Burgh, Landowners of Ireland (1878).

settled in the county, 17th century Protestant settlers, transplanted Catholic families, and outside families who bought estates or married into estates in the county. Example of families who married into the county are the Bagots and Handcocks. Two families of Comyn entered the county gentry by marriage. One came from Roscommon and married into the Wards of Ballinderry near Kilconnell. The Comyns of Woodstock, near Moycullen, had been transplanted from Tipperary to Clare and married into the Lynches of Barna in the late 18th century. Gentry who bought into the county include the Henrys, Jamesons and Digbys.[76] Sir George Shee of Dunmore was one of the few absentee proprietors in the county. The Shees, like many other families, had their own individual history. They lost their estate in Kilkenny in the 17th century, migrated Westwards, became merchants in Mayo and married into the Kirwans.[77] Sir George Shee made a fortune in India,[78] like Robert Gregory of Coole, and bought the Dunmore estate from the Gore family, who had inherited it from the St. Georges.[79] The Veseys were also absentee proprietors who owned extensive estates in Galway and Mayo like the Binghams and Blakes of

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76. Throughout the 18th century the Digbys were mortgaging their Galway estate back and forth with the Domvilles of Santry (Reg. Deeds: bk 158, p.8; bk 159, p.102, bk 160, p.27, bk 548, p.433, bk 586, Charles Domville of Santry to William Digby, 29 Aug., 1806).

77. 'O'Shee of Gardenmorris', Burke's landed gentry of Ireland, (ed.) 1912; Life of Martin Archer Shee, i, pp. 124-5.

78. Tuam Herald 2 Jan. 1915, p.4. For Shee's various official posts in England and Ireland see Castlereagh correspondence (ed. Marquess of Londonderry 1848-54) IV, p52; Cornwallis correspondence (ed. C. Ross 1859) iii, p.108.

79. Lodge's peerage of Ireland (ed. Archdall 1789), iii, 284. Shee bought the Dunmore estate from the trustees of Ralph Gore Earl of Ross in 1791 (Reg. Deeds: bk 433, p.60). Gore, like the Dalys, had to sell part of his estate to pay debts.

Tower Hill. They were descended from John Vesey Archbishop of Tuam in Jacobite times and the ancestor of the Veseys of Lucan and De Vescis of Abbeyleix. Much of the Vesey property around Tuam came from the Echlin family in the 18th century. The Butsons of Clonfert were of London origin.[80] When the Bishopric of Clonfert was abolished in 1834, the Episcopal Palace and See lands were bought by a branch of the Trenches.[81] Bishop Butson's descendants continued to hold a substantial estate and were seated at St. Brandon's Glebe, which was earlier a Seymour residence known as Clonfert Lodge.[82]

The gentry were a social class when considered as a group or viewed collectively. But they were also a collection of individuals. The origin and development of many estates illustrate the role of a forceful figure in establishing family fortunes. Sir Robuck Lynch and Sir Richard and Sir Thomas Blake all amassed considerable estates. Captain Bryan Mahon established the Castlegar estate. Peter Daly founded the Castledaly family. James Smyth established the fortunes of the Smyths of Masonbrook. Sir John Kirwan, who was a politician and wealthy merchant, bought the Burke of Castle Hacket estate.[83] Individuals ruining estates appear to have been less frequent, with the exception of Richard Kirwan the scientist who neglected the family estate at Cregg Castle. It normally took two generations to bankrupt an estate as in the

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80. J. B. Leslie, Ferns: clergy and parishes, p.40; H. Cotton, Fasti ecclesiae Hibernicae, i, 141, 475, iv, 175-7.

81. 'Trench formerly of Clonfert', Burke's landed gentry of Ireland, (ed.1958).

82. Leet, p.116.

83. He bought the estate from other Kirwans (information from the late Percy Paley of Castle Hacket).

case of Giles Eyre of Eyrecourt and his son John who continued to father a family from the debtor's prison in Dublin.[84] The sporting career of Giles Eyre was matched only by that of John Dennis the legendary first master of the Galway Blazers. Dennis kept his kennels at Carraroe, the old Kelly residence, which he leased from Lord Dunsandle. John Dennis inherited the Bermingham estate which his uncle had bought in the Incumbered Estate Court. This was a portion of the large estate left by Thomas Bermingham, Lord Athenry, at his death in 1799 without a male heir.[85] John Dennis left no family, but his sister married John O'Rorke, rector of Moylough parish. O'Rorke was the unpopular tithe collector featured in Hyde's Love Songs of Connacht and Raftery's Poems and attacked by the press as a seducer and harsh landlord. O'Rorke certainly conforms to the theory of the strong founder of fortunes. He bought or leased land from neighbouring gentry like the Bellews and Digbys and bought the nearby Clonbern estate from the Beresford family. His son Charles Dennis O'Rorke built Clonbern Park which was regarded as one of the finest houses in the county.[86] There was, finally, the case

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84. I. Gantz, Signpost to Eyrecourt (Bath 1975), pp. 203-4.

85. The estate passed through his daughter (Lady Howth) to her three daughters: Harriet, who married Arthur French St. George of Tyrone, Mary, who married into the Trotter family (later Otway-Ruthven), and Matilda, who married Major William Burke of Quansborough (of the Glinsk family). The Berminghams of Rosshill were also left without a male heir. One daughter became Countess of Leitrim and the other Countess of Charlemont. Their estates, totalling 14,000 acres were sold in the Incumbered Estates Court by Lords Leitrim and Charlemont.

86. For a detailed account of the background of the Dennis O'Rorke family see P. Melvin, 'Colonel Maurice Griffin Dennis, 1805-63'; Irish Sword (Xlll, 1977). For the O'Rorke seduction case see Alexis de Tocqueville's journey in Ireland July-August, 1835, ed. E. Larkin, Dublin 1990, ppl03-7.

of the founder of a 12,000 acre estate who was not admitted into the gentry. This was Martin McDonnell of Dunmore. McDonnell was a Nationalist, Gaelic speaker, and of obscure Roscommon origin. Worse still in gentlemen's eyes, he was the owner of a string of shops. McDonnell however obviously regarded himself as a gentleman. He engaged in a bitter and abusive correspondence with William Downes Griffith when that gentleman objected to his use of the title 'Esquire'.[87] Griffith was a step-brother to Sir Richard Griffith,[88] of Griffith's Valuation fame, and, as a barrister and agent on Sir George Shee's estate, regarded himself as McDonnell's social superior. In a long defensive letter McDonnell contrasted Griffith's mean salary of £200 with his own £2,000 a year from rent alone. Griffith replied caustically that he did not feel disposed even to read such a long and pointless letter. Further heated correspondence followed which McDonnell thought sufficiently important to have published in its entirety in the Tuam Herald. McDonnell managed to scrape into one edition of Walford's county families. He sat only once on the grand jury and he was last on the list.

Dutton, in his Statistical and agricultural survey of county Galway, of 1824, listed 162 landed proprietors, including seventeen absentees. The membership of the Galway county grand jury from the 1820's onward was drawn from about 180 gentry families. The Galway county club in the 1880's had 181 members. The various editions of Burke's Peerage and Landed Gentry contain 127 pedigrees of Galway families. Gentry families who did not have pedigrees in Burke included the

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The traditional spelling of the name, by the family, is O'Rorke, not O'Rourke.

87. Tuam Herald, 5 April, 1856, p.3. Although not a Fenian himself Fenians drilled in his warehouses (M. Ryan, Fenian memories, Dublin 1945, pp37-38).

88. Ibid, 9 April 1892, p.2 (obituary); King's Inns admission papers, ed. E. Keane, P.B. Phair and T.U. Sadleir (Irish Manuscripts Commission 1982, p.203. Hereafter cited as King's Inns admission papers).

Burkes of Danesfield, Bodkins of Kilcloony, and O'Rorkes of Clonbern. These Burkes were merchants in Galway who bought an estate from the Lynches of Drimcong in the late 18th century and married into the Blakes and MacDermotts of Ramore. One of them became Lady Fingall. Other families with smaller estates and links with the professions included the families of Holmes of Rockwood, Davies of Fahy and Hampstead, and Clarke of Graig Abbey. The main entrants to the gentry in the 19th century were the buyers of large estates in the Incumbered Estates Court. These were the families of Berridge, Guinness, Pollok, Meldon, Lahiff, Waithman and Cowan. John O'Rorke was the son of a Catholic priest who converted, though the O'Rorkes would always have regarded themselves as gentry. A marriage connection with the Trenches of Garbally increased their standing in county society. Some of the successful new gentry families, like the Smyths of Masonbrook, were of obscure ancestry, as indeed were some of the 17th century newcomers such as the Redingtons of Kilcornan. The main gentry in the Connemara region were the Blakes of Renvyle, Martins of Ballinahinch and D'Arcys of Clifden. There was also a strong Ulster and Scots element in the area with large landowners like the Grahams of Drumgoon in Fermanagh[89] and Thomsons of Salruck. The Thomsons acquired their estate through marriage with a widow of a Miller of Milford in Mayo in the early 19th century. Other smaller properties in the area changed hands frequently. One such property, Shanboolard, was bought from the Chancery Land Judges in 1889 by the Graham-Lushington-Tulloch family who had connections with the area.

It is clear therefore that Galway gentry families, considered in their widest aspect, provide a huge area of interest for the genealogist and social historian. Some idea of the prominence of families like the Burkes, Blakes and Kellys can be gained by surveying the lengthy lists of such families in

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89. Francis Graham bought a 6,000 acre estate from the Lynches of Barna in 1841 (Reg. Deeds: 1841/15/64).

King's Inns admission papers and Index to the prerogative wills of Ireland. The dispersal of declining families and outward movement of some members of most settled gentry families make it almost impossible to follow the careers of all such family members. There was an enormous traffic in deeds and mortgages especially in property which was not part of settled gentry estates or in areas where gentry families had declined in the 18th century. This activity brought many other outsiders into contact with the county - for a varying duration - and relates to the important and wider question of the nature and social significance of landed property in 18th and 19th century Ireland.

CHAPTER 2

THE RISE OF THE GALWAY TRIBES AS GENTRY

A number of distinguishing and particular features must be examined in order to understand how the detailed analysis of the gentrification of the Tribes relates to the other county gentry. The most striking feature is the contrast between the huge network of families who failed to establish permanent estates and the contrasting success of long - established major landowners such as the Blakes of Ballyglunin, Martins of Ballinahinch, Frenches of Frenchpark and Kirwans of Dalgan Park. Another feature is the fact that much Tribal property was in Mayo - like Dalgan Park - and many of the Tribal proprietors were magistrates for both Galway and Mayo. The entire Lynch - Blosse estate was in Mayo as was the Lynch of Party and of Clogher estates. The third feature relates to the fact that many successful Tribal estates were established by junior branches and younger sons. The adversarial terminology of 'landlord and tenant' is scarcely adequate to describe and explain the ubiquity of Tribal families and their social and economic role both locally and abroad.

The families known as the Galway Tribes invested their merchant wealth in landed property from the late 16th century. The more successful of them succeeded, in spite of the Penal Laws, in extending and consolidating their estates in the 17th and 18th centuries. By the 19th century a huge connected network of families and houses had spread out over Galway and into Mayo and other Connaught counties. The Tribes had established trading links with the West Indies in the early 17th century and Blakes Lynches and Skerretts were as well known in Antigua and Montserrat as in Connaught. Three principal features can be identified in the economic expansion of the Tribal families. Firstly the development of major

estates most of which continued into the 19th century. Secondly the proliferation of smaller estates. In many cases they were established by cadet branches and younger sons particularly in the case of the prolific Blake families, and originated in smaller original grants or purchases. Thirdly the overseas commercial activity of the Tribal families. The interconnection of merchant activity, both at home and abroad, land purchase and intermarriage produced a mobility which, combined with the fluctuation of family fortunes, resulted in frequent changes in land ownership. This was especially true of the numerous branches of the French family in the 18th century. It was also true of some larger estates. For example there were Lynches at Renville before the Athys, Lynches at Merlin Park before the Blakes, and Kirwans at Cregg before the Blakes. A further example is the case of the Clogh estate near Kinvara. This was the Kilkelly stronghold up to Elizabethan times, but in later centuries was held by a succession of Frenches, Lynches and Blakes.

Galway townsmen began to acquire land on a significant scale from the mid - 16th century onwards. The Blakes got their first land grant in 1278 which meant that their title predated the claim of the English Crown[1]. In the late 16th century the townsmen merchants took advantage of the growing difficulties of the Irish chieftains and freeholders. These difficulties were both economic and legal and the economic expansion of the merchants was aided by the gradual establishment of English order and English notions of land tenure and title registration[2]. Law and commerce were the two main avenues of advancement used by the Tribal families and the relatively peaceful conditions in the early 17th century facilitated the further acquisition of landed property. It is not clear when

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1. Blake family records 1600-1700 p58; O'Flaherty, Iar Connaught, p195.

2. Ó Bric, pp222, 224, 460.

the landowning Tribes first lived in their country seats or castles, and whether their residence in them was continuous from the outset. The Martins of Ross and Martyns of Tulira were established on their estates by the late 16th century. The scattered location of much of the land acquired by Tribal families suggests that their first acquisitions had been leased or rented. In the case of the smaller or less successful branches, there is little problem. The small houses erected on their holdings were, in many cases, the only houses built by some families. Among the Tribal families the Lynches, Blakes and Frenches were particularly successful in establishing both large and small estates and practically dominated the northern and western baronies of Galway[3]. The Tribes also acquired substantial lands in Mayo and Clare in the early 17th century. Their power and position was therefore very considerable by the mid 17th century[4]. When the Cromwellian regime arrived they were in a strong position because of their investment in land and overseas property and supporting marriage alliances. Although they suffered confiscation of their town property[5] their status and influence was acknowledged by the scale of their compensatory land grants. Such grants had to take account of the reality that much landed property was already mortgaged to Tribal families.

The Tribal families as gentry are usually exemplified by the owners of major estates like the Blakes of Ballyglunin,

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3. Ibid p447. Blakes and Lynches owned more than half the land owned by townsmen.

4. J.T. Gilbert (ed.) History of the Irish Confederation and war in Ireland 1641-1643 (Dublin 1882) i, p96.

5. Several prominent Tribal townsmen like Patrick D'Arcy and Sir Robert Lynch sold their town property (R. Hughes, 'Galway Town 1692 - 1750: a study in local administration and society'. M.A. Thesis, University College Galway 1985, p14).

Frenches of Monivea and Martins of Ross and Ballinahinch. The history of such families and estates is relatively uncomplicated. Some of the larger estates, like Ross and Monivea, were established by the early 17th century. From then on however the Tribal families began to move outward, both into Connaught land and to the Continent and West Indies. As a result the subsequent relation between the origin of later estates and general commercial activity is less clear. On the one hand overseas opportunities reduced the pressure to provide landed income for younger sons locally[6]. On the other hand however a huge number of estates, small and large, were acquired by younger sons of the Lynches and particularly the Blakes. The further question then arises as to whether the term "younger son" also embraces a fluctuating network of Tribal families who did not become permanent or long term gentry but who nevertheless speculated in landed property and commerce during the 17th and 18th centuries and who are less well documented than the families who established permanent estates.

In the 16th and 17th centuries the Tribal townsmen made successful inroads into the lands of the Irish owners like the O'Connors, O'Kellys, O'Briens and O'Flahertys. In the 18th century they had to grapple with the numerous Burke families who managed to survive the 17th century confiscations. Although some Burkes became involved in commerce they could not in general match the economic resources and legal training of the Tribes. The Clanricardes - head family of the Burkes- were in serious financial difficulties since the Jacobite period and had to sell large portions of their enormous estate. This created further opportunity for land-hungry Tribesmen like for example the Blakes of Merlin Park who bought the Moyne estate in the parish of Shrule from forfeited

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6. L.M. Cullen, 'Galway merchants in the outside world, 1650-1800' in Galway: town and gown 1484-1984 p72.

Clanricarde lands in 1711 and the Kirwans who bought the Dalgan Park estate in Mayo from the Clanricarde estate in 1771. It was also the case that Tribal families who were dispossessed by the Cromwellians often got welcome leases from Clanricarde. Such was the case with the Blakes of Holly Park. They lost considerable property, Anthony Blake told a Parliamentary commission in 1825; "we have since purchased other property, which we will not give up in a vain pursuit of the old"[7]. The Tribes were involved in several Chancery cases against the Clanricarde family in the 18th century[8].

While in the 16th and 17th centuries the decline of Irish or old Norman families brought land into the market, in turn many or indeed most of the Cromwellian patentees in Galway sold their properties. The Blakes bought the lands of Ballyglunin from one such patentee. Also many of those Catholics transplanted into Galway appear to have sold their lands. The Tribes owned substantial landed property before the enactment of the Penal Laws and escaped their intended effect through conformity and collusive "discoveries"[9]. Costly law cases and appeals frequently resulted from disputes arising from the indirect effect of the Penal Laws and the debts incurred, and resulting land sales made up yet another factor which favoured the investment of the more fortunate Tribesmen's money in land

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7. Blake family records 1600-1700 pp192 208; Reports from select committee on state of Ireland, H.C. 1825, Vlll, p43; Reg. of Deeds: Bk 289 p52. If a Catholic bought any part of the Clanricarde estate it became subject to Protestant discovery by the act of 7 Queen Anne for the relief of the Clanricarde family (G. E. Howard, Several special cases on the laws against the further growth of popery in Ireland, Dublin 1775, p28) Edmund Kirwan of Dalgan had conformed in 1775.

8. P.R.O.I: Repertory to the decrees of Chancery, Vol 3, 1685-1732, p15; Vol 4, 1709-1779, p109.

9. See L.M. Cullen, 'Catholics under the Penal Laws', in Eighteenth - century Ireland (ed. A. Carpenter, Dublin 1986), p.27.

purchase and mortgage.

Edmund Kirwan of Woodfield compared the Tribes with the Jews by the manner in which they assisted each other[10]. While this was generally true there were also several cases of Tribal families becoming indebted to each other or perhaps more usually to members of families in trade or business. William Burke of Ower was a member of a family which had been expelled from Castle Hacket in the mid - 17th century. Although that estate fell to the Kirwans Burke praised the Tribes in his family history. He described them as "an untitled Aristocracy... perhaps the best analogy would be the aristocracy of Venice where until the latter days of the Republic titles were unknown, and where the nobles were all engaged in commerce .... commerce is the great civiliser of mankind"[11]. This remark is of interest coming as it does from the head of a gentry family who was born in 1825. The extent to which the Tribes dominated the landscape is seen in the large number of townlands or properties, which bore their name. From the Brownes we get Browneville, Mount Browne, Fort Browne and Brownesgrove, the earlier name of which was Joycegrove. From the more numerous French families came the names Castleffrench, Frenchpark, Frenchgrove, Frenchlawn, Frenchville, Frenchfort, Derryfrench and Moneyfrench, which was an old name for Monivea. Some of these names are in Mayo and Roscommon and others occur in more than one county. Many such placenames were transported to the West Indies and elsewhere. Blakes and Frenches took the names Ballyglunin and Monivea to Australia. Placenames sometimes changed or disappeared with the decline of particular families. Tribal examples are the Lynches of Lynchgrove and of Ashgrove and the Blakes of Corbally, a property which was renamed Castle Daly

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10. N.L.1. MS 9856 (Kirwan MSS. Vol 3).

11. N.L.1. MS 20750 (Teeling papers): History of the Burkes of Ower from original documents, p37.

on its acquisition by Dalys. This free - handed approach to placenames however was not an exclusively Tribal custom. Other families who used placenames, not in the Townlands index, include the Clorans of Lissine, McHugos of Grouse Hill, Donelans of Jockey Hall and Forsters of Castle Forster. The Tribes as landowners can, to a certain extent, be compared with the Butlers in Tipperary. Over seventy Butler families owned land in that county and attention has been drawn to "the complex mesh of management, kinship and marriage alliances which characterised these properties and families-relationships which the Cromwellian settlement certainly fragmented but by no means destroyed"[12].

In Galway, families whose initial properties were small usually remained small. Such families only exceptionally remained in the same place from the 17th to the 19th century. There were some exceptions. Oliver Burke in his history of Ross Abbey, published in 1868, stated that the Brownes of Claran near Headford had resided on their modest estate for 262 years[13]. The Lynches of Rockwell near Tuam were another example[14]. The houses on the estates of such families were extremely modest with evidently little interest shown in developing demesnes. This was the case with Loberry, a gabled house with a two-storey porch and classical features which had a 3000 acre estate[15]. The Lynches of Loberry were part of a complicated network of Tribal families with close merchant connections ranging from the local towns to Dublin and further

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12. W. Smyth in W. Nolan and T. McGrath (eds.) Tipperary: history and society (Dublin 1985) p111.

13. The abbey of Ross p65.

14. These Lynches, known as the Lynches of Tubberoe and Rockwell, "were a very old family" (Tuam Herald 6 August 1921 p2).

15. Lobery is depicted and discussed in M. Craig, Classic Irish houses of the middle size (London 1976) pp58-9.

afield. The Tribes appear to have remained townsmen at heart long after they had begun to acquire landed estates. The Blakes of Ballyglunin were still living in their large stone house in Middle Street in Galway as late as 1766 even though their estate by then comprised almost 3000 acres[16].

The Ballyglunin estate was one of the largest and certainly the wealthiest of the 17 Blake estates in Galway in the mid-19th century. The foundations of almost all of these estates were laid in the 17th century. Geoffrey Blake and his elder brother John Blake were the ancestors of all succeeding Blake families. Walter, Martin, and Andrew Blake were descended from Geoffrey Blake in the 15th century. The Ballyglunin estate was founded by Martin Blake who was transplanted from Galway city in 1655. His older brother Walter founded the Blake of Oranmore estate and his younger brother Andrew founded the Furbough estate. From John Blake were descended the Blakes of Renvyle who were the head family of Blake in Connaught[17]. In 1571 these Blakes got a decree on their original lands at Kiltolla in Oranmore parish by which they were to hold them for ever free from all charges. In 1655 however their ancestral lands were confiscated and they were transplanted to O'Kelly lands at Mullaghmore, near Mount Bellew. A younger son returned from Montserrat in 1676 and bought the Lehinch estate in Mayo in 1678 and the Renvyle estate in 1680. The senior succession fell to him on the failure of male heirs in the Mullaghmore line. The 1571 decree also included other Blake claimants to the original lands at Kiltolla. When they lost their town property in the Cromwellian period they retained the Kiltolla lands. These Blakes became the Blakes of Kiltolla and Frenchfort in 1780 through marriage with the heiress of the Frenches of

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16. P.R.O.I.: Ballyglunin Papers: M6931/86, Edmond Blake to Martin Blake 2 January 1766; M6931/90, description of estate, 1768.

17. M. J. Blake in Tuam Herald 26 May 1894.

OUTLINE OF MAIN BLAKE LINES

Richard Caddell (Blake) land grant 1278

common ancestor of all Connaught Blakes

John Blake

grant of lands from Berminghams 1391

Blake of Renvyle

Blake of Menlo

Blake of Tower Hill

Geoffrey Blake

William

Blake of Kiltolla

Blake of Ballinafad (Mayo)

Blake of Ardfry

Merlin Park

Castlegrove

Walter

Walter

Walter

Martin (transplanted 1655)

Andrew

Blake of Oranmore & Dunmacrina

Blake of Furbough

Blake of Ballyglunin

Frenchfort[18]. The Blake ancestral lands were first granted in 1278 and were held by Blakes for over six centuries without interruption except for 23 years between 1655 and 1678[19].

Apart from their ancestral medieval lands the Blakes invested their merchant wealth in further lands from the early 17th century or earlier. They took advantage of the fluid land market during the 17th century turmoils. They secured a financial and legal grip on indebted property particularly in Galway, Mayo and Clare. This process was at first operated against Irish families and declining Burke families. The Blakes of Ballinafad in Mayo for example, a cadet branch of the Kiltolla Blakes, got grants of Mayo and Galway lands in 1618[20]. They also bought up land previously owned by the O'Kellys of Dunamona who were in debt to them[21]. The Tribes however were continually borrowing money from each other and when debts could not be paid lands had to be sold or mortgaged. The ability to profit from such opportunities was an important factor in the rise of two of the largest Blake estates, Ballyglunin and Tower Hill. This process is well illustrated by the way in which the misfortunes of the Blakes of Menlo favoured the Blakes of Ballyglunin and particularly the Blakes of Tower Hill. The Menlo Blakes were directly descended from the senior Blake line and had part of the ancestral lands. Sir Valentine Blake, Mayor of Galway in 1611 and 1630 and M.P. in 1613, owned lands in Mayo which later

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18. Blake family records 1600-1700, pp136, 168, 171.

19. Blake family records 1300-1600, p5.

20. Blake family records 1600-1700, p175.

21. Blake of Ballinafad papers: lot 45(D). This lot also contains acknowledgements of debts owed by David "Duf" Burke to Marcus Blake, merchant, in 1628. Blake was the founder of the Ballinafad estate. (These papers were seen by me by kind permission of the owner, Mr John O'Dwyer).

formed part of the Tower Hill estate[22]. The family became seated at Coleman's castle in Menlo around 1600[23]. Lands in Clare were acquired from the O'Loghlins[24]. Sir Valentine's son, Sir Thomas Blake, and grandson, Sir Valentine Blake, were also M.P.'s for Galway. Sir Valentine's extensive estates in Galway, Mayo and Clare were confiscated after his death in 1652 by the Cromwellian government but were substantially restored in the following years. Sir Valentine's 2nd son was grandfather of Thomas Blake merchant of Bordeaux. The next son, Francis, got land grants in Carolina and his son, Joseph Blake, became deputy - governor in 1696[25]. The 4th son, John Blake, was the founder of the Blakes of Tower Hill whose estate by the late 19th century was over three times greater than the Menlo estate.

The Blakes of Tower Hill are a good example of how a Catholic landowning family survived the Penal era and built up a large estate. They became connected with both Catholic and Protestant families, often with merchant and banking interests, and frequently their own relations. As a result of

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22. Blake family records 1600-1700, p143. The Tower Hill line was founded by his grandson, who was a younger son.

23. Galway Arch.and Hist. Soc. Jn, viii. p155. In 1620 Valentine Blake held the lands of Abbeyknockmoy (M. Archdall, Monasticon Hibernicum, p268).

24. Irish patent rolls of James I (Dublin 1966) pp501-2; J. Frost, History and topography of Clare (Dublin 1893) p438. The Blakes also leased land from the O'Briens (The Inchiquin manuscripts, ed. J. Ainsworth, Dublin 1961, p84).

25. F.J. Klingberg (ed.) Carolina Chronicle: the papers of Commissary Gideon Johnston 1707-1716 (University of California Press, 1946) pp24-25; Blake family records 1600-1700 p145. Blake was a trading magnate and an aggressive pioneer of the great western trading enterprise of colonial Carolina (V.W. Crane, The southern frontier 1670-1732, University of Michigan, 1929, pp45,65, 141).

this supporting family network the Blakes of Tower Hill were able to overcome legal, religious and financial problems. Successive heads of the family conformed to protect the growing estate, but later reverted to the old religion. This estate amounted to 11,888 acres by the late 19th century while the estate of the Menlo Blakes had became reduced to 3403 acres. Although Tower Hill was in Mayo the greater part of the property was in Galway. John Blake, 4th son of Sir Valentine Blake of Menlo, laid the foundation of the Tower Hill estate by getting, as part of his marriage settlement in 1678, a life interest in part of the family's estate in Clare. The Protestant Brownes of the Neale then passed his certificate in respect of these lands, and the Brownes granted him the lands free from all legal complications[26]. John Blake's son Isidore leased part of the Menlo Blake's Mayo estate, got a financial grip on it because of loans, and bought out large portions through the Brownes[27]. The lands were then held in trust by the Oranmore Blakes who had obliged in the legal processes with a collusive bill of discovery. The process of consolidation was continued by Isidore's eldest son Maurice Blake, who bought out the fee simple of the Mayo lands. The adjoining Tower Hill estate was bought from the Blakes of Ardfry in 1766 by Maurice Blake's son, also called Isidore[28]. In 1788 Isidore Blake bought the Fisher Hill

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26. Indenture of 1685 between John Browne of Kinturk and Valentine Browne of Ellistrina in Mayo and John Blake of Ohery in Galway. This indenture stated that Blake was then in possession of 49 acres in Muckinish in Co Clare, which was part of the estate of his father Sir Valentine Blake (I am grateful to Mr Daniel Gillman for a copy of this original indenture).

27. N.L.I. MS 4132 (Blake papers) pp 82,85, 92.

28. Blake family records 1600-1700, p155.

estate from the trustees of Richard Martin[29]. Lands were also leased from the St Georges of Headford[30]. Further acquisitions of land occurred in the 19th century. In 1810 part of the original Blake lands in Galway were bought from the Menlo Blakes by Valentine O'Connor of Dublin and later inherited from him by Valentine O'Connor Blake of Tower Hill, his grandson[31]. In the Incumbered Estates Court Bunowen Castle and part of the estate was bought by the Blakes and used mainly as a summer residence[32].

The rise of the Blakes of Tower Hill shows how a younger son founded a major estate by securing an increasing hold on portions of the parent estate and by acquiring substantial adjoining lands from other Tribal families in financial difficulties. Factors in the economic decline of the Menlo estate would appear to have been excessive litigation in the 18th century, involvement in politics and neglect of what was probably not the best estate in agricultural terms. In 1790 the Menlo Blakes were in debt to the Tower Hill Blakes for the sum of £10,906[33]. Martin Lynch, last Lynch owner of Drimcong, was also in debt to the Blakes of Tower Hill and sold them lands in 1785[34]. The Menlo Blakes were careless in their estate affairs, if one can judge by Thomas Campbell Foster's criticism of the village of Menlo. It was, he claimed, the largest, poorest and worst built he ever saw and, being held in

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29. Act for vesting the estates of Robert and Richard Martin (of Dangan) in trustees for the purposes therein mentioned.

30. N.L.I. MS 10809(1) (Blake papers).

31. N.L.I. MS 4132 (Blake papers) p116.

32. J. Blake, 'An account of the castle and manor of Bunowen', Galway Arch. and Hist. Soc. Jn, ii (1902) p52.

33. N.L.I. MS 10789 (Blake papers) No 152.

34. N.L.I. MS 10806(1) (Blake papers).

rundale, was "an overgrown democracy"[35]. The Menlo Blakes were also borrowing heavily from the rising Blakes of Ballyglunin, not to invest in estate improvement, but to pursue a law case in the House of Lords. Martin Blake of Ballyglunin was owed £5314 in 1821 and in partial settlement of this debt the Blakes of Menlo sold him some of their better lands in Tiaquin barony[36]. These adjoining lands served to consolidate the existing Ballyglunin estate and the transaction was an interesting parallel with the growth of the Tower Hill estate. The Blakes of Tower Hill had an added advantage in that a branch of the family were bankers in Dublin. When Isidore Blake bought the Fisher Hill estate in 1788 the money was put up by his cousin Isidore Blake son of John Blake the banker of Arran Quay, Dublin[37]. John Blake's 2nd son was a merchant in New York and his 3rd son Maurice was a grain merchant in Dublin and Monasterevin[38]. Maurice Blake, father of Isidore Blake the younger, was a grain merchant in Galway before his marriage to a daughter of Walter Blake merchant of Galway who was of the Oranmore family. John Blake of Arran Quay married a Browne of Ellistron who was widow of Valentine Blake, merchant of London, and of the Menlo family.

When Isidore Blake conformed to the established church in 1720 the rest of his family remained Catholic. When Isidore's grandson, also called Isidore, attained majority in 1765 he also conformed and operated a collusive bill of discovery against his family estate which put him into undisputed

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35. Letters on the condition of the people of Ireland (London 1846), p293.

36. P.R.O.I.: Ballyglunin papers: M6931, 141-2.

37. Deed of trust, 1788, concerning sale by Martins of Fisher Hill estate to Isidore Blake of Tower Hill (D'Arcy of Newforest Papers consulted by permission of the D'Arcy family).

38. N.L.I. MS 10795(7) (Blake papers).

possession[39]. He then reverted again to the old faith[40]. It was mainly this Isidore's efforts which advanced the Tower Hill fortunes and he was active in further purchases and leases up to the end of the 18th century. By now the Blakes were beautifying Tower Hill with mahogany and wedgewood, dressing in fashionable and expensive clothes, and riding out with the Westport Hunt[41]. The Tower Hill Blakes like the Ballinafad Blakes - with whom they were connected- and Ballyglunin Blakes remained Catholic. Maurice Blake's wife was a niece of Anthony Blake the Catholic archbishop of Armagh. Walter Blake of Ballyglunin married in 1789 a sister of Nicholas Archdeckin, Catholic bishop of Kilmacduagh. In general Tribal landowners conformed, at least nominally, to protect their estates. Merchants had less incentive to do so and the strong business links of families like the Tower Hill Blakes was probably a factor which influenced their allegiance to the old faith. These links came from some of their own relations and from their connection with old Catholic families like the O'Connors of Sylane. A growing lack of intimacy seems to have developed between the Blakes of Menlo and of Tower Hill as the former declined and the latter prospered.

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39. N.L.1. MS 10789 (Blake Papers).

40. N.L.1. MS 4132 (Blake papers), p102.

41. For Westport Hunt accounts see N.L.1. MS 10795 (7) (Blake papers).

"Our early acquaintance and intimacy", Sir John Blake wrote to Maurice Blake in 1824, "should not be forgot by you"[42]. Religion may also have been a factor as the Menlo Blakes remained Protestant after conformity. They also appear to have had some sympathy for the Williamite cause[43]. John Blake the ancestor of the Tower Hill Blakes was killed in action at the siege of Athlone in 1691 on the Jacobite side[44].

Sir Thomas Blake of Menlo was imprisoned for debts in the Famine period although his estate was not sold. Blake estates sold in the Incumbered Estates Court included Merlin Park, Castlegrove, Oranmore and Belmont. The Merlin Park and Castlegrove estates were established in the early 17th century by younger brothers of Sir Richard Blake of Ardfry. The Oranmore estate was founded by an elder brother of the first Blake of Ballyglunin. The Belmont estate was acquired in the late 18th century by a cadet of the Merlin Park Blakes through marriage into the Cuff family. These four estates totalled

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42. N.L.I. MS 4132. Maurice Blake married, in 1803, the only surviving daughter of Valentine O'Connor of Dublin (H.F. Reynolds, 'O'Connor of Sylane, Co. Galway', Notes and Queries, 13 August 1927, p114). Valentine's son, Hugh O'Connor, bought the Daly of Benmore estate in Galway in 1814 (M.J. Blake writing in Tuam Herald 22 September 1917). Hugh left the estate to his partner and relation Hugh O'Connor of Mountjoy Square who told the 1825 select committee on the state of Ireland that he had not seen the estate in ten years (Parl. papers, H.C. 1825, viii, pp139-140).

43. Sir Walter Blake of Menlo is described in early editions of Burke's peerage as "the first catholic gentleman of distinction that joined the standard of the Prince of Orange, and obtained a commission from his highness to raise a regiment, which he maintained and clothed at his own expense". He changed sides however, raised a company for King James, and was attainted in 1691 (J.D'Alton, King James's Irish army list, Dublin 1860, ii, p271). Hereafter cited as D'Alton, Irish Army List).

44. Blake family records 1600-1700, p153.

over 16,000 acres. They had accumulated debts over several generations. The Blakes of Oranmore had a judgement of £80,000 on the estate since 1772 and a decree for the sale of the estate was made in 1818 although it was not carried out[45]. Merlin Park and Castlegrove were the scenes of extravagant entertaining and social life. The Castlegrove estate, exclusive of the demesne, produced a mere £1000 a year. The encumbrances however amounted to at least £17000. Edward Blake of Castlegrove was indebted to several persons and conveyed part of his estates to his son to secure these debts. The eventual sale in the Incumbered Estate Court however failed to pay off the debts[46]. The Blakes of Belmont held their estate under the see of Tuam and head rent and renewal fines had to be paid. The estate was dragged down by legal complications resulting from joint ownership and mounting debts. Disputes and litigation arose between father and son over the non-payment of annuities. When a receiver was appointed the son, James Cuff Blake, persuaded the tenants to resist violently paying him the rents. The lord chancellor in his judgement stated that it was "most painful to hear the evidence on the subject"[47].

The Blakes of Menlo were among the multitude of supplicants seeking assistance of various kinds from Martin Blake of Ballyglunin in the Famine period. The founders of the Ballyglunin estate were originally wealthy merchants. In the second half of the 17th century the Ballyglunin Blakes began the process of building an estate by lease and purchase from existing proprietors like the Nolans of Ballinrobe, Burkes of

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45. Irish Equity reports (Dublin 1849), xi, p455, xii, p362.

46. Irish Chancery reports (Dublin 1858), vii, p55-76.

47. Irish Chancery cases (ed. Drury and Warren, Dublin 1844), iii, p125, v, p79.

Carantrila, Blakes of Ardfry, and the Earl of Arran[48]. The Ballyglunin Blakes were originally wealthy merchants and already other Galway merchants like Patrick and Richard Martin were in debt to the Blakes[49]. In 1710 Martin Blake leased his brother Patrick's Montserrat plantation to Sir Walter Blake of Menlo who owed him £2000[50]. Further lands were leased and purchased from the Cuff family and others and judgements were obtained against defaulting debtors. In 1813 the Brooklodge estate was bought from Thomas Hynes, formerly of Jamaica, for the sum of £10,000. This estate had been bought by Hynes from the Frenches of Tyrone in 1808 and they held it on lease from the Deane family[51]. Estate consolidation continued with the purchase of lands from the Blakes of Menlo in 1821 and from the Deane family in 1842[52]. Despite the steady development of the Blake estate it is difficult to pinpoint their transition from townsmen to gentry. They were actively and profitably involved in financial business with fellow Tribesmen during the 17th and 18th centuries. Almost all their marriages were with other Tribal families. They were occupying their house in Galway in the late 1760's though this does not mean that they may not have established a residence in Ballyglunin by that time as well. It is clear that their attention to business brought them substantial wealth and put them in a far more advantageous position than the Blakes of Menlo and Ardfry whose political activities in the 17th century and later appear to have consumed much of the fruits of their early and large land acquisitions. Some of the original portions of the Ballyglunin estate came from "the old ancient estate of Sir

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48. P.R.O.I.: Ballyglunin Papers: M6931, No's 1, 8, 31, 38, 43.

49. Ibid, NO's 1, 19.

50. Ibid, No 53.

51. Ibid, NO's 129-130.

52. Ibid, NO's 134, 141-2, 170-1.

Richard Blake" of Ardfry[53]. The Blakes of Ardfry had debts and encumbrances even at the end of the 17th century[54]. They were still in debt at the beginning of the 19th century[55].

Sir Richard Blake and Sir Robert Lynch were both prominent in public and political affairs in the mid 17th century. Their families were already the owners of substantial estates and these estates were greatly augmented in their own life times. Lynch was great grandson of Stephen Lynch of Doughiska (Merlin Park) who was mayor of Galway in 1546 and 1560[56]. It is not clear when precisely the family began to acquire landed property[57]. Sir Henry Lynch 1st baronet, grandson of Stephen Lynch, was M.P. for Galway in the early 17th century. Sir Henry acted as a business agent for Clanricarde[58]. Sir Robuck Lynch, 2nd, baronet, was also a lawyer and law was obviously the means by which the family acquired and saved their fortunes. Sir Robuck was transplanted by the Cromwellians from Currendulla Castle to Castlecarra near Ballinrobe in Mayo. Sir Henry Lynch, 3rd baronet was a baron of the exchequer under James II[59]. He got a Restoration grant of

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53. Ibid, NO 1.

54. P.R.O.I.: Repertory to the decrees of Chancery, Vol 3, 1685-1732, pp116-7.

55. Ibid, Vol 6, 1804-1816, p 409.

56. J. P. Nolan, 'Galway castles and owners in 1574', Galway Arch. and Hist. Soc. Jn. (1900-1) p113.

57. Stephen Lynch appears to have owned little more than the land adjoining the castle of Doughiska (Inquisition post mortem).

58. L. O'Malley, 'Patrick Darcy, Galway lawyer and politican, 1598-1668', in Galway: town and gown 1484-1984, p93; Burke, Connaught circuit, p58. Sir Henry Lynch was step-father to Patrick Darcy.

59. F.E. Ball, The judges in Ireland 1221-1921 (New York 1927) i, p364.

over 6000 acres in Mayo[60]. Although the family were supporters of James II their estates were later confirmed and further lands were gained by marriage to the heiress of the Moores of Brize in Mayo. In the 18th century the Lynches moved their family seat from Castlecarra to Moat, which had been part of the Moore property. Moat was renamed Athavallie and around this house the town of Balla developed. A further increase of fortune came when the 6th baronet married the heiress of Tobias Blosse, a rich merchant in Persia. Lynch conformed to the established church in 1750[61]. This was the origin of the Lynch-Blosse estate which was the largest of the Lynch estates[62].

The entire estate of the Lynch-Blosse family was in Mayo. Their cadet branches, the Lynches of Petersburgh, Partry and Clogher were descended, respectively, from younger sons of the first, second and fourth baronets. The Partry and Clogher estates were also in Mayo and the Petersburgh estate was in Galway. The Lynches of Ballycurrin, with an estate mostly in Mayo, were a branch of the Petersburgh family. In addition to these five Lynch estates there were five further Lynch estates belonging to the families of Lavally, Barna, Renmore, Clydagh and the estate of Andrew Henry Lynch, M.P. of Lydacan and Lynch's Castle. The main original Lynch families in the 19th

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60. Abstracts of grants under the acts of settlement and explanation, appended to 15th report of public records of Ireland London 1824-25. p251. Hereafter cited as 15th report of public records of Ireland. Details of lands in Mayo claimed by Sir Francis Lynch Blosse 9th Bart. are in P.R.O.I. Quit Rent records (2B/43/24 p232).

61. K.W. Nicholls, 'The Lynch Blosse papers', Analecta Hibernica, NO. 29 (1980), p115; The Convert rolls, ed. E. O'Byrne, p16; C. Lynch - Robinson, The last of the Irish R.M.'S, p23.

62. The estate according to Bateman comprised 22,658 acres. (Bateman's great landowners of Great Britain and Ireland, ed. D. Spring, New York, 1971, p45).

century were the Lynch Blosse family and the Lynches of Lavally, Barna and Renmore. The Petersburgh family was founded by Maurice Lynch, a younger son of Sir Henry Lynch 1st Baronet. Maurice Lynch was transplanted from Galway town by the Cromwellian regime and was granted lands around Ballynonagh Castle near Clonbur. He also had a lease from the Clanricarde family of the lands of Ballycurrin on the Mayo side of Lough Corrib[63]. Maurice Lynch's great grandson Sir Peter Lynch who was a merchant in Gibralter returned to Ballynonagh, built a house there and called it Petersburgh after his own name. Sir Peter conformed to the established church despite his Papal knighthood. The Lynches of Partry were descended from a younger son of Sir Robuck Lynch, 2nd baronet, of Castlecarra[64].

The Lynches of Clogher were part of a close network of Catholic gentry, Blakes, Brownes, Bellews, McDermotts and other Lynches all of whom had links or family connections with the world of trade. Henry Lynch of Clogher married Celia, daughter of Dominick Lynch of Tuam. Their 2nd son was Henry Lynch a merchant at Cadiz. Henry succeeded to the business at Cadiz on the death in 1783 of his maternal uncle Sir Edward

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63. M. J. Blake, 'Families of Lynch of Petersburgh (Ballynonagh) and Lynch of Ballycurren' in Tuam Herald 1 December 1928; ib, 'Ballycurren Castle, Co. Mayo - Historical notes relating to it' in Tuam Herald 24 November 1917 p4.

64. Ibid, 'Early part of the pedigree of Lynch of Cloonlaghan, otherwise Partry, Co. Mayo', ibid. Two brothers in this family, Henry Blosse Lynch and Thomas Kerr Lynch, were distinguished Mesopotamian explorers (D.N.B). The Lynches of Partry referred to themselves as Blosse - Lynch in order to indicate their connection with the Lynch - Blosse family.

Lynch[65]. Henry Lynch's sister married Isidore Blake of Fisher Hill, Co. Mayo eldest son of John Blake banker of Arran Quay, Dublin. In the next generation the Clogher estate passed to the Crean-Lynches of Hollybrook by the marriage in 1811 of Elizabeth Lynch of Clogher to Andrew Crean Lynch of Hollybrook. Elizabeth's elder brother had sold his interest in the Clogher estate to her, even though he had an heir. Hollybrook was Blake property in the early 18th century and was mortgaged to John Vesey Archbishop of Tuam and to his son Thomas Vesey Bishop of Ossory[66]. The estate passed by marriage to the Crean family of Sligo in 1703. The Creans assumed the additional name of Lynch on marriage with the daughter of Dominick Lynch of Newborough, Tuam, in 1751[67]. This Dominick Lynch would appear to be the Dominick already referred to as the father of Sir Edward Lynch of Cadiz. The Crean Lynches formed later marriage connections with the Lynches of Loberry and the Bellews and Mac Dermotts. The male line died out however and the estate passed by marriage to the FitzGerald Kenney family in 1870.

The remaining Lynch families have a relatively straightforward history. The Lynches of Lavally, near Clarinbridge, were transplanted there from Galway and were allotted over 8000 acres by the Cromwellian commissioners. This grant however was greatly reduced under the Acts of Settlement[68]. These Lynches, like the Blakes, held lands in the environs of Galway

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65. N.L.I.: Blake papers: MS 4132 p86; MS10792 (wills); M. J. Blake, 'Family of Lynch of Clogher, Co. Mayo'. Henry Lynch died unmarried in 1819 leaving over £33,000.

66. Reg. Deeds: bk 7 p216; bk 29 p 502; bk 72 p41.

67. Reg. Deeds: bk 238, p223. Newborough is seven miles distant from Tuam and mid-way between Tuam and Hollymount. Hollybrook and Clogher are within three and seven miles distant from Hollymount.

68. M. J. Blake, 'Genealogy of Lynch of Lavally' Tuam Herald December 1928.

in the 13th century. The Lynches however, unlike the Blakes, did not maintain orderly ancestral records and this position was rendered worse by the destruction of records as in the fire at Athavallie, seat of the main branch, in 1808[69]. The Lynches of Barna were also transplanted, but the greater part of their property came through marriage with the O'Hallorans. The Lynches got a Chancery decree against the O'Hallorans in 1638 and this decree "is supposed to have led to the transfer of the Barna estate to the Lynches"[70]. The Lynches of Barna got two major additions to their estate through marriage in the 18th century. In 1765 Nicholas Lynch married the heiress of the Blakes of Ballinakill (Renvyle family) and in 1767 his father Marcus Lynch married, 2ndly, the only daughter of Patrick French of Cloghballymore[71]. The 6000 acre Ballinakill estate was sold to the Graham family of Drumgoon Co. Fermanagh in 1841[72] and the Cloghballymore estate passed by marriage to the Blakes of Ballinafad in 1815. The Lynches of Renmore had marriage links with the West Indies in the 18th century. They enlarged their property by purchase from the de Basterot estate in Duras and through marriage with the Wilsons of Belvoir in Co. Clare. Patrick Lynch of Renmore and Duras, who died in 1864, stated that he was proud to be a commercial man

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69. Nicholls, 'The Lynch Blosse papers', p 200; A Lynch of Renmore manuscript book showed a "Thomas de Lence, senior, Lord of the Manors of Buolygarron, Ballybane, and Mote-Lench who was nominated Provost of the town of Galway in the year 1274" (M. J. Blake, 'An old Lynch manuscript', Galway Arch. and Hist. Soc. Jn, Vlll, 1915-16, pp90-1.

70. O' Flaherty, Iar Connaught, p 255; M.J. Blake, 'An old Lynch manuscript', pp105-6.

71. Blake family records 1600-1700 p137; M.J. Blake, 'The French Tribe family of Galway', Galway Arch. and Hist.Soc. Jn. Vol x (1917-18) p132.

72. Reg. Deeds: bk 1841/15/64.

and was "very extensively engaged in mercantile pursuits"[73]. The Lynches of Renmore were connected by marriage to the Stauntons of Clydagh, near Headford, who were of 17th century English origin and some of whom were diplomats and scholars of Chinese affairs[74]. They had, like the Lynches, connections with the West Indies and George Staunton was attorney general in the island of Grenada in the 18th century[75].

The history of the Lynch of Lydacan estate illustrates the difficulty of tracing links between families involved in land and merchant activity both locally and overseas[76]. The difficulty arises mainly from the evident lack of continuity and failure of these Lynches to establish a successful estate in the 17th and 18th centuries. Members of the family however remained in trade and were the owners of Lynch's Castle in the town of Galway. In 1720 Patrick Lynch "of Lydacan" got a grant of the castle and lands of Lydacan from Protestant trustees[77]. In 1730 the estate, comprising some 1000 acres, was mortgaged to Edward Eyre of Galway[78]. The estate was later taken over by the court of chancery and in 1802 was bought back by Patrick Lynch and his brother James Lynch,

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73. Connaught Journal 12 February 1835, p2 ; Galway Vindicator 12 March 1864, p

74. D.N.B: Sir W. Wilde, Lough Corrib, pp97-8.

75. Burke's landed gentry of Ireland (ed. 1912) p658.

76. The family is dealt with in M. J. Blake, 'Ancestry of Stanislaus Lynch and his relations', Tuam Herald 1 December 1928; Pedigree of Lynch of Lydacan and Buenos Aires 1650-1930 (G.O. MS 812 (31) and 817 (12)).

77. Reg. Deeds: bk 29, p109. Lydacan is in Claregalway parish and is to be distinguished from Lydacan Castle in Ardrahan parish which was a Kilkelly seat.

78. Ibid: bk 62, p467.

merchants of Galway, for £13,350[79]. The Lydacan estate later passed to Patrick Lynch's only son Andrew Henry Lynch who was M.P. for Galway, a distinguished chancery lawyer, and a central figure in the public affairs of Galway[80]. Patrick and James Lynch had also purchased the French of Moycullen estate from chancery for £24,000 and this property also passed to Andrew Henry Lynch[81]. Lynch however died at Tournai in 1847 without a successor to his 10,000 acre estate and "a bankrupt in consequence of his land and land improvement speculations"[82].

Failure of male heirs and indebtedness also hindered the establishment of other Lynch families. Some, like the Lynches of Shrule, lost their estates at home but acquired property in the West Indies[83]. The Lynches of Drimcong got lands from the Clanricarde family in the mid-17th century and were allotted over 1600 acres in Galway as a transplanted family. They sold their estate to the Kilkelly family in 1804[84]. The Lynches of

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79. Ibid: bk 543, p489

80. Andrew H. Lynch married in 1814 the daughter of Charles Butler the eminent Catholic lawyer (D.N.B.). His bride's dowry of £10,000 enabled Lynch to purchase the estate which was placed in trustee's hands in accordance with the marriage settlement (Reg. Deeds: bk 688, p543, settlement between Patrick Lynch of Lydacan, James Lynch "of Castle", and Andrew Henry Lynch of Lydacan).

81. Reg. Deeds: bk 610 p13; M. J. Blake, 'Family of French of Moycullen' Tuam Herald 14 July 1928.

82. Leeds District Archives: Clanricarde Papers: 63 (119); Clanricarde to Clarendon 3 October 1847; Tuam Herald 24 July 1847 p3; A.R.G. Griffiths, The Irish Board of Works 1831-1878, p51.

83. Tabular pedigree of the family of Lynch of Shruel in 1774 (Galway Arch. and Hist. Soc. Jn. Vlll, 1913-14).

84. M. J. Blake, 'Family of Lynch of Drimcong in Moycullen Barony' Tuam Herald, 1 December 1928.

Rathwilladoon, near Gort, failed for want of an heir. Pierce Lynch of Rathwilladoon was described by Francis Blake-Forster - writing of Jacobite times - as "a hospitable and wealthy man"[85]. The fact that these Lynches had gentry status in evident from their marriages. One of the five daughters of Pierce Lynch who died in 1781, married into the Martyns of Tulira, another into the Vesey FitzGerald family. The Lynches of Ballydugan and of Garracloon failed to survive as gentry although they did have heirs[86]. Lynches established estates in Roscommon at Loberry and Mount Delvin. These Lynches were connected with other obscure members of French, Martin, Browne and Blake families, some of whom were merchants locally and in Dublin. Thomas Lynch, a younger brother of Francis Lynch of Loberry, was a merchant in New York[87]. The Lynches of Rathpeak (Woodpark), Ballinasloe, were part of another large network of Lynch families connected with a range of small but mainly fee - simple properties at Rathglass, Cartron and Shannonbridge. The Rathpeak family had marriage links with

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85. Irish chieftains, p53. The author should have known, as the families were related. Some of these Lynches were described as being "of Rathorpe", which was a Forster seat (Vicars, Index to prerogative wills of Ireland, p295). The Lynch Forster connection may have extended to the West Indies as one of the Forster family, Peter Forster, had an estate in the island of St Christopher ('Genealogical sketch of the Blake Forster sept', Galway Vindicator 20 October 1866).

86. N.L.I.: MS 10792 (Blake papers). Will of Mark Lynch of Ballydugan, 1678. The Lynch of Garracloon estate passed to the Blakes by marriage in 1765 (Blake family records 1600-1700, p196; Registry of Deeds: abstracts of wills. Vol 2, ed. P.B. Eustace, p32; vault of Lynches of Garracloon in Ross abbey).

87. Reg. Deeds: bk 262 p 520. The various family connections of the Lynches of Loberry are detailed in ibid, bk 133 p109 and bk 360 p345.

the Concanons, an old but declining gentry family[88]. Some of the Shannonbridge Lynches were army officers[89] and the family married into the Bodkins of Carrobeg near Tuam. Another member of the wider family network Eyre Lynch of Cartrin died in Barbadoes[90]. The small estate (502 acres) of Eyre Lynch was sold in the Incumbered Estates Court as were many other smaller estates of Tribal families. Also sold were the estates of Andrew Henry Lynch and the Lynches of Loberry and most of the Lynch of Lavally estate.

The Frenches, like the Lynches, produced a large network of estates. They had over twenty houses in Galway county in the 18th century and others in Roscommon and Mayo. Many of these were part of small estates destined to be sold out by the end of that century or to be absorbed by larger estates. Five major French estates had continuity from the 17th to the 19th century. These were Tyrone (50,000 acres), Frenchpark (30,000 acres), Monivea (10,000 acres), Castleffrench (over 5000 acres) and Cloonyquin (over 3000 acres). The Duras estate, although large originally, had become greatly reduced by the 19th century. The Frenches of Castlefrench and of Monivea had acquired their estates from the O'Kellys in the early 17th century. Both families lost their property in the Cromwellian period but regained it by purchase[91]. The old O'Kelly castle at Monivea was extended by the addition of wings which was a development shared by other Galway houses like Castle Taylor

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88. Reg. Deeds: bk 608 p 407. These Lynches had acquired the Rathglass estate, near Woodlawn, from Blakes (ibid, bk 60 p338, bk 65, p108, bk 134 p163, bk 190 p225).

89. Reg. Deeds: bk 726 p504. One of the family, Neptune Lynch, had an estate at Roanoke, Missouri (information from Lynch descendants in Madrid).

90. Galway Vindicator 1 March 1851. He was described as "manager and joint attorney of plantations".

91. M. J. Blake, 'An old Lynch manuscript', Galway Arch. and Hist. Soc. Jn. V111 (1913-14) p214.

and Tulira. The old O'Kelly castle at Clogher was rebuilt by the Frenches and they built the final house in 1779 and changed the name from Clogher to Castleffrench. The Frenches of Frenchpark, Roscommon, like their kinsmen in Galway, got their estates in the early 17th century by mortgage and purchase from the MacDermotts and others. They were deprived of much of their large Sligo and Roscommon lands by Wentworth but were, by decrees of the Cromwellian commissioners, allotted 6000 acres in Roscommon[92]. John French of Frenchpark led a troop of Enniskillen Dragoons on the Williamite side at Aughrim. He later bought the forfeited estates of the O'Conors of Ballinagare and amassed so much property that he was known as "An Tiarna Mór". When he died in 1734 he had alotted £1000 for his funeral expenses. The Frenchpark fortunes were further advanced by marriages with Protestant families like the Kings Gores and Marshes. The Frenches however, like most of the Tribes, had mixed religions connections[93].

The Frenches of Tyrone, like the Frenchpark family, built up a large estate mainly through good marriages. They did this in spite of much legal wrangling both within the family and with relations. The nucleus of the Tyrone estate was bought by Christopher French, son of Geoffrey French of Mulpit Athenry, who died in 1610. Christopher French was awarded 513 acres in

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92. Burke's peerage (ed 1923) p680; Dungar (Frenchpark) had been McDermott property (Annals of Loch Cé, ed. W.M. Hennessy, Dublin 1939, ii, pp 421, 423). The annual rent-roll of Frenchpark was, according to Skeffington Gibbon, £18,000 (Recollections of Skeffington Gibbon, 1829, p165).

93. The 4th Lord de Freyne was educated at Downside and Beaumont and married in 1877 a sister of Lord Zetland, a Catholic family.

Galway as a transplanted person and died in 1677[94]. It appears that Christopher disinherited his eldest son Geoffrey French on the grounds of his marrying, without consent, the daughter of Ormsby of Cloghballymore, a Protestant family[95]. Lawsuits followed until Geoffrey conveyed his title to his younger brother Arthur in 1690. Arthur then had further litigation with the Kirwans of Castle Hacket over claims and charges against that estate to which he became entitled on his marriage with Miss Kirwan. Arthur French won his case and gained a portion of the Castle Hacket estate, although his debts grew larger. His financial difficulties however do not excuse his treatment of his son Christopher French of Tyrone. When Christopher conformed in 1704 his father turned him and his family out of doors. Arthur French eventually became involved in fraudulent activities with Sir John Kirwan's son Simon Kirwan, who was his son-in-law. These activities related to collusion with Simon Kirwan in his efforts to recover the Beaghmore portion of the Castle Hacket estate from the Frenches. The Frenches however retained Beaghmore and as that estate lay some 21 miles to the north of Tyrone they employed members of the Kilkelly family as agents to look after their interests there. The Kilkellys had been removed from Cloghballymore by the Cromwellians but opted to remain on part of their ancestral lands as tenants of the Frenches of Tyrone instead of removing to their transplanted estate. Apart from the fact that they were related through the Ormsbys a close friendship developed between the Kilkellys and the Frenches. The Kilkellys acted as their legal and financial agents in Dublin and both families had links with the overseas

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94. M. J. Blake 'Genealogy of French of Tyrone' in Tuam Herald 1 September 1928 (based on House of Lords appeal cases and other sources).

95. The Ormsbys were the Cromwellian grantees of the Clogh estate which were granted, in 1677 to the Frenches (of Cloghballymore).

world of trade[96].

The foundation of large estates like that of the Frenches of Tyrone was shaped by particular circumstances and local factors. The complex relations between original proprietors like the Kilkellys and both the intermediate occupants like the Ormsbys and the new permanent owners like the Frenches should be noted. Prosperous Tribal families who were transplanted from the town of Galway were already most probably involved with landed property. Land transactions also took place between Tribal families who were being transplanted. Robuck French, for example, the founder of the French of Duras estate, was deprived of his house property in the town of Galway. In 1656 he was allotted as a transplanted person part of the Kilkelly estate. Further Kilkelly lands were then conveyed to him by Christopher French of Tyrone who had himself been awarded these lands as a transplanted person[97]. Robuck French also got lands from Sir Robuck Lynch which he had been awarded as a transplanted person. Robuck's son, Patrick French, was exempted from the action of the penal laws for having provisioned the troops of Ginkel after the

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96. Details of the Kilkellys' relations with the Frenches and Kirwans of Castle Hacket were noted on an elaborate Kilkelly pedigree prepared by Philip Crosslé for the Kilkellys of Drimcong. The background notes were drawn from chancery, exchequer and other records in the Public Record Office in Dublin before its destruction in 1922. They are contained in P.R.O.I: Crosslé genealogical abstracts: Kilkelly notebooks 2, 3 and 5.

97. M. J. Blake, 'The Families of French of Duras, Cloghballymore, and Drumharsna, with tabular pedigree', Galway Arch. and Hist. Soc. Jn. X (1917-18) p127; Philip Crossle, Pedigree of Kilkelly of County Galway (1921). Original held by Charles Kilkelly of Killiney.

battle of Aughrim[98]. Patrick French added to his estates by purchasing further land from Lynches who had recently acquired it from other transplanted persons and by property transactions with the Martyns of Tulira. Patrick French died in 1708 having divided his large estates between three sons into the Duras, Cloghballymore and Drumharsna divisions. Just as the Frenches of Tyrone were on friendly terms with the Kilkellys so also the Frenches of Duras seem to have been socially close to the Heyne or Hynes family who were the displaced proprietors. Patrick French's will was witnessed by members of the Heyne family just as similar functions were performed by the Kilkellys for the Frenches of Tyrone. The Heynes were in fact still treated with much of the consideration "due to their character, integrity, and descent"[99]. Patrick French's grandson, James French of Duras, conformed in 1762 and resided mainly in France at the chateau at Chaillot near Paris. When the next French died without an heir in 1785 and left the Duras estate to a cousin, his will was contested by the Basterot family one of whom had married a sister of the Frenches in 1770. The Basterot's legal expenses over several years in establishing their claim forced them to sell part of the estate to the Gregorys of Coole and the Lynches of Renmore. The Famine forced them to sell most of the remainder to Henry Comerford a Galway merchant. The Cloghballymore estate was also affected by failure of male heirs and passed by marriage to the Lynches of Barna and from them to the Blakes of Ballinafad. The Blakes later sold the estate to a religious community[100]. Failure of

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98. M. J. Blake, 'Families of French of Duras', p129; Patrick French had, according to Sir Jonah Barrington his great-grandson large estates and was "proud to excess" (Personal sketches of his own times, i, p26. Hereafter cited as Barrington, Personal sketches).

99. Fahey, Kilmacduagh p312.

100. M. J. Blake, 'French of Duras'. pp132-3.

male heirs also afflicted the Drumharsna estate which passed through the female line to Henry French Barrington, brother of Sir Jonah Barrington.

Several other mostly smaller estates were founded or acquired by younger sons or members of the extended families of the Frenches of Tyrone and of Monivea. Cloonyquin had been confiscated from the Farrells and sold by the trustees of forfeited estates to the Rt. Hon William Conolly. Conolly then sold it to Arthur French of Tyrone in the name of Robert Shaw, a trustee. Although Arthur French was a Catholic he sent his eldest son (by his Farrell marriage) to Dr Andrew's school in Kilkenny to be brought up a Protestant, so that he might hold Cloonyquin in his own name. He also succeeded in getting the Farrell attainder reversed by a private statute thereby saving the estate for his step-children[101]. The Frenches of Tyrone continued to prosper and daughters got portions of £3000 in the late 18th century. Younger sons became wealthy through stock breeding. Patrick French (younger grandson of the Arthur discussed above) and his son Christopher had "a large stock of cattle consisting of horned cattle horses and sheep of different sorts and kinds"[102]. This Christopher married his cousin, a sister of Christopher French of Tyrone, and in 1775 he got a lease of Brooklodge from the Deane family[103]. He built a residence there and developed extensive plantations and improvements costing

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101. Early history of the French family written by Sir Alfred Irwin who married a Miss French of Cloonyquin (sister of Percy French the song-writer), pp241-3. This document is in the possession of the author's grandson Maj. Gen. B. St George Irwin. Arthur's younger son Jeffery had a Jamaican estate worth £3000 per annum (Reg. Deeds: wills vol 3, p20).

102. Reg. Deeds: bk 262 p359.

103. Leases "were then on account of the great advance price of lands of so great a value" (ibid).

£12,184 over his 30 year tenure of the estate[104]. The family however became heavily indebted to Thomas Hynes a merchant, formerly of Jamaica. Brooklodge was sold to Hynes in 1808 and in 1813 Hynes sold the estate to Martin Blake of Ballyglunin[105]. The Frenches therefore failed to establish a family at Brooklodge whereas Cloonyquin continued in occupation until the 1950's.

The Frenches of Rahasane were the principal cadet branch of the Monivea family and bought their estate in 1671 from Geoghegans who had been transplanted there from Westmeath[106]. Marcus French of Rahasane, a captain in the Jacobite army, was described as "a highly respectable Catholic gentleman of large property and ancient descent"[107]. These Frenches became connected with the wide network of Catholic merchant families and made good marriages as when Robert French in 1758 married Elizabeth Nagle who had a fortune of £12,000[108]. They were however borrowing money both from Denis McCarthy and from Walter Joyce, merchant of Galway[109]. Robert French, the last

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104. P.R.O.I.: Ballyglunin Papers: M6933 (57c).

105. Ibid., M6931 (129, 130 a).

106. M. J. Blake, 'Abstracts of deeds relating to the family of French of Rahasane' (Galway Arch. and Hist. Soc. Jn. Vlll (1913-14) p219.

107. Blake-Forster, Irish chieftains p258.

108. B. O'Connell, 'The Nagles of Ballygriffin', Irish Genealogist iii (1957) p 72; M. J. Blake, 'Tabular pedigree of the family of French of Rahasane, Co. Galway and its branches', Galway Arch. and Hist. Soc. Jn. Vlll (1913-14) p222. West Indian connections included the Scotts of Cappavarna (in Galway).

109. L.M. Cullen, 'The Dublin merchant community in the eighteenth century', in Cities and Merchants: French and Irish perspectives on urban development 1500-1900 (ed. P. Butel and L. M. Cullen, Dublin 1986) p204; P.R.O.I: Ballyglunin Papers: M6931 (73).

French of Rahasane, suffered a judgement of £4000 in favour of the Lynches of Barna and also became heavily in debt to the Smyths of Masonbrook[110]. The Frenches of Aggard, Cregclare, Portacarron, Colemanstown and Derryfrench originated from younger sons of the Rahasane family. Some of these were Jacobite officers and the Frenches of Aggard were tenants of Lambert of Aggard who was a forfeiting proprietor[111]. Gregory French of Aggard was deeply in debt and sold his estate to Walter Lambert of Cregclare in 1729[112]. The French family of Abbert and Corgary had a large estate by the early 17th century and was founded by a younger son of Peter French Mayor of Galway 1576-77. Abbert was sold to the Blakeneys by 1720 and Corgery to the Joyces in 1806[113]. Rahasane also passed to the Joyces in 1846[114].

Smaller French estates which survived into the 19th century included Vermont, Carrarea, Elmhill and Rocklawn. Vermont was acquired by the Blakes of Kiltolla in the early 19th century. The Frenches of Carrarea, near Monivea, had their cattle and outhouses destroyed by the Terry Alts and they were in debt to

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110. Ibid: M6931 (163); Reg. Deeds: bk835 p 389. French had assumed power to encumber his estate up to £25,000 with the consent of trustees, i.e. £10,000 for his own use and £15,000 for his sisters. The "mortgage and all money due thereon was legally vested in... Lord Clanmorris". Lands were made over to Clanmorris in 1820 subject to redemption on payment of £2000 debt (Reg. Deeds: bk 758 p240).

111. D'Alton, Irish Army list, ii, pp410, 673-4.

112. Fahey, Kilmacduagh p317, M. J. Blake, 'French of Cregclare and Aggard', Tuam Herald 25 August 1928.

113. M. J. Blake, 'Family of French of Abbert and later of Corgery', Tuam Herald 23 June 1928.

114. P.R.O.I: Ballyglunin Papers: M6936/56/34, Thomas A Joyce to Martin Blake, 2 February 1846.

the Dublin money - lender Jasper Villiers Fowler[115]. The Frenches of Rocklawn had property in Jamaica and bought the Rocklawn estate, near Galway, from the Brownes of Newtown in 1787[116]. Members of the French family who acquired lands in the baronies of Kilmaine and Clanmorris in south Mayo included the Frenches of Frenchgrove, Frenchbrook and Ballykinave. The Frenchgrove family claimed to have acquired their estate in 1643 in exchange for their Cork estates which were forfeited by rebellion[117]. The Frenches of Ballykinave were established there in the late 17th century[118]. The French's of Frenchbrook were descended from Sir Oliver French who was mayor of Galway in 1650-51. Sir Oliver was deprived of his property in Galway town by the Cromwellians but was given 1694 acres in the barony of Kilmaine in Mayo. His son Patrick French got a confirmatory grant of these lands in 1677[119].

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115. M. J. Blake, 'Family of French of Carrorea', Tuam Herald 7 July 1928; Connaught Journal 16 January 1832 p3; 16 April 1832 p2. The estate was sold in 1853.

116. Reg. Deeds: bk 388 p419. Hardiman included the Frenches of Beagh among the "respectable" branches of the family. They were a declining branch who were tenants of the Frenches of Tyrone at Beaghmore near Tuam. One of these Frenches died at Paradise Estate, Jamaica (Connaught Journal 10 March 1823 p3; Galway Vindicator 14 August 1847).

117. Walford's county families (ed. 1864); their printed pedigree omitted reference to their origins (Burke's landed gentry, ed. 1858).

118. Galway Arch. and Hist. Soc. Jn., Xl p150. These French families were inter-related, the Frenchgrove family with the Frenches of Rahoon and the Ballykinave family with the Frenches of Cuillane. Edmund Kirwan of Woodfield claimed that Francis French of Cuillane was hanged in 1798 as a commander of rebels (N.L.l: Kirwan MS 9854. p106). According to Hayes this was Francis French of Cottage, "representative of an old Catholic family" (Last invasion of Ireland, p129).

119. 15th report of public records of Ireland p234; J. Blake, 'An old Lynch manuscript', p213.

The name of the property was changed from Cloghanearla to Frenchbrook. The Frenchbrook estate shows how failure of male heirs and subsequent litigation operated against the survival of the estate. Patrick French was succeeded by George French of Frenchbrook who died in 1689 leaving 6 daughters. The 2nd daughter became entitled to the estate by virtue of a limitation in the will and married Dennis Daly of Dunsandle[120]. The legal problems were typical of those which involved many Tribal families in ruinous House of Lords appeals in the 18th century. These problems related to the estimation of encumbrances, the effect of encumbrance on claims of dower, and whether dower could issue from trust lands as well as from the legal estate. The Frenchbrook case was complicated by the fact that only part of the estate was held in fee simple as the remainder had been bought in trust in the names of others.

Most of the Galway Brownes were descended from the seven sons of Dominick Browne, mayor of Galway in 1575, who was descended from Sir David le Brun who got extensive lands in Connaught in the 13th century[121]. These lands were located around Athenry and Oranmore. The main branch of the Brownes had their seat at Castlemacgarrett in Mayo but the bulk of their estate was in Galway. They were raised to the Peerage in 1836 with the title Oranmore and Browne. Other branches who were major landowners from the 17th to the 19th century included the Brownes of Moyne, Tuam, Cooloo, Mount Hazel and Coolarne. Because of the mobility and fluctuating fortunes of the

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120. The case is detailed in J. Brown, Reports of cases in parliament 1701-1779 (London 1779) Vol 1, pp 514-521, 538-544; Reg. Deeds: bk 32 p521.

121. The Brownes of the Neale and the Brownes of Westport were a separate family. They originated with John Browne, an Englishman who settled at the Neale and assisted in the Composition of Mayo in 1585.

Brownes these branches were not all, necessarily, in the same location over these centuries. The Brownes of Castlemacgarrett lost a considerable part of their estates in Cromwellian times but under the acts of settlement got grants of over 8000 acres[122]. Colonel Dominick Browne commanded a Jacobite regiment[123] but got the benefit of the articles of capitulation of Galway. From then on the family prospered. The old castle of the Prendergasts, whose estates they got by marriage, was replaced by Castlemacgarret mansion in 1694. This house, which had the family archives, was destroyed by fire in 1811 and was replaced by another house[124]. Colonel Browne's son Geoffrey was the first who resided permanently at Castlemacgarrett. He planted extensively in the 1690's and died in 1755 leaving an estate of £3000 a year. The family's prosperity was marked by the building of a chateau - style shooting lodge at Ashford in the early 18th century. An estate of over 30,000 acres was built up and marriage connections formed with other families of large estate like the Brownes of Westport and Dillons of Loughglynn. The cost of seven contested elections[125] and the Famine resulted in most of the estate being sold in the Incumbered Estates Court[126].

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122. 15th report of public records of Ireland, pp222, 253.

123. H. Murtagh, 'Galway and the Jacobite War', Irish Sword (xii 1975) pp1-2, 10.

124. Lord Oranmore and Browne 'The Brownes of Castlemacgarrett', Galway Arch. and Hist. Soc. Jn., V (1907-8) pp228-9.

125. One election cost £40,000 "of which £600 was experded in lemons for punch" (ibid, p235). The figure of £40,000 is obviously either a misprint or an exaggeration.

126. The Galway estate (26521 acres) was sold, leaving 6000 acres, mostly in Mayo.

Families of rising fortune often absorbed the estates of less prosperous relations and kindred branches. For example the Brownes of Castlemacgarrett acquired other Browne lands such as the Coolarne and Gloves estates near Athenry. The Brownes of Coolarne were descended from the 2nd of the seven sons of Dominick Browne mayor of Galway in 1575[127]. They lost the Coolarne division of their estate to the Castlemacgarrett Brownes with whom they became intermarried in the early 18th century. Debts and property disputes between the sons resulted in the sale to the Lamberts in 1785 of other parts of their estate, which became the basis of the Lambert of Castle Ellen estate[128]. Other lands had been sold in 1780 to Thomas Mahon ancestor of the Mahons of Belleville which was an adjoining estate[129]. These Brownes became absentee in the 19th century, their residence was demolished, and the head of the family became ranger of the Curragh. The Brownes, like the Lynches, were closely intermarried and it is difficult to disentangle their related branches in the 18th century. Though the seat of a cadet branch of the family, Moyne was the most impressive Browne residence in Galway, and the rise of the Brownes of Moyne illustrates the pattern, seen in Tribal families like the Lynches of Clogher and Hollybrook, of a union between related branches. The widow of John Browne, active on the Royalist side in the 17th century, was granted the Cloonkeely estate, near Tuam, at the Restoration, and her family resided there after the Jacobite war[130]. These Brownes increased their fortunes by marrying, in 1695, their cousins

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127. They obtained regrants of their estate during the reigns of James I and Charles II (Irish Patent Rolls of James I p437; 15th report of public records of Ireland p237).

128. Reg. Deeds: bk 265 p170; bk. 403 p107.

129. Ibid: bk. 333 p485.

130. 15th report of public records of Ireland, p266; pedigree of Browne of Moyne in Burkes landed gentry (ed. 1858).

who had got a much larger Restoration re-grant of 3000 acres, including Newtown and Moyne[131]. Nicholas Browne of Newtown had defeated a claim which Clanricarde had to his lands and got his brother-in-law, James D'Arcy of Kiltullagh, to pass the lands in a patent which he obtained[132]. Brownes resided in all three houses, Cloonkeely, Newtown and Moyne, but Moyne became the chief residence and an impressive new mansion was built there in the early 19th century[133]. The Moyne estate was sold in the Incumbered Estate Court by the heirless Michael Browne, who saved the Blake papers. Newtown had become a separate property under kindred Brownes and was sold by Mark Browne in 1802 to John Kelly of Green Castle, Jamaica[134]. Mark Browne had earlier acquired the Rockfield (or Rockville) estate from Burkes but failed to establish a gentry family due mainly to the estate falling under the Court

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131. 15th report of public records of Ireland, D'Alton, Irish Army list, ii, p671. These Brownes had, like the Castlemacgarrett Brownes, a strong Jacobite tradition.

132. 'Claim of Nicholas Browne of Newtown, Co. Galway' (Galway Arch. and Hist. Soc. Jn., X, p66) James D'Arcy was son of Patrick the lawyer.

133. Leet pp 117, 300; M. Bence - Jones, Burke's guide to country houses - Vol 1: Ireland, p219.

134. Reg. Deeds: bk 549, p 214.

of Chancery[135].

The Brownes of Mount Hazel provide a further illustration of the rise of a Tribal family through grant, purchase and the opportunities offered by the heirless estates and indebtedness of fellow Tribesmen. The Brownes were granted the Moyveela estate, near Oranmore, in 1678. That estate had been the property of a branch of the Frenches since 1619 but they however had failed to produce an heir[136]. The Brownes became creditors in respect of substantial sums of money owed by the Blakes of Kiltolla. The Blakes were sued for the debts and were eventually in 1785 forced to sell to the Brownes the estate of Mount Hazel near Mountbellew, an estate which had come to the Blakes through marriage with the Frenches of Frenchfort[137]. The Brownes then changed their residence from Moyveela to Mount Hazel. In the 18th century Nicholas Browne of Mount Hazel got involved in revolutionary projects with Lord Edward FitzGerald but was never arrested[138]. The Mount Hazel estate passed by marriage to the De Stacpoole family in 1883. The Brownes of Ardskea and Cooloo got a regrant of

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135. Ibid: bk 329, p487; bk 333 p482. Connaught Journal 31 March 1828 p2. Mark Browne married Miss Blake of Oranmore with a portion of £5000 (ibid: bk 609 p79).

136. M. J. Blake, 'Family of French of Moyvilly', Tuam Herald 21 July 1928; Reg. Deeds: bk 610 p367. The last French of Moyveela died without issue around 1642.

137. Reg. Deeds: bk 371 p290; bk 376 p56. The Brownes were also owed substantial sums by the Lynches of Rathglass who sold lands to them in 1789. Ibid, bk 411 p446.

138. E.H. de Stacpoole, The de Stacpoole family (private family history in typescript, 1968), p23. The Brownes had a Jacobite tradition like the families of Newtown and Castlemacgarrett and had fought at Aughrim (Burke's landed gentry, ed. 1875).

their estate in 1677 [139]. The Family fortunes however became adversely affected by all of the factors which plagued the gentry in general and the Tribal landowners in particular. These factors related to contested wills, family disputes and costly litigation. In the case of the Tribes mixed marriage was frequently an additional background factor. The Brownes of Cooloo displayed instability of character and, like the Brownes of Coolarne, had severe family disputes[140]. Other branches of the Brownes failed in earlier centuries through lack of male heirs. The Brownes of Annaghmore, near Mountbellew, became extinct in the late 18th century and the estate passed to the descendents of a daughter and was sold in the 19th century[141]. Most of the Galway landowning Brownes had a common ancestry with the Brownes of Castlemacgarrett and most were interconnected. Like the Lynches they were merchants locally and to a lesser extent overseas[142]. Thomas Browne of Brownsgrove and Martin Browne of Cloonfad were among the wealthiest of the Brownes. Thomas Browne, a younger son of the Brownes of Tuam, was a large

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139. 15th report of public records of Ireland p 237.

140. The Brownes of Ardskea in 1800 owed debts of £4,000 to Robert O'Hara (PRO1 : Repertory to the Decrees of Chancery. Vol 5 (1776-1804) p 467).

141. Reg. Deeds: bk 485 pl 129; 1846/11/179. Dominick Browne of Ballynegittagh (Kilconly) had no male heir and in his will in 1692 left his library including translations of the Latin classics, to his son-in-law Thomas Blake of Cregmore in Mayo. His daughter was wife of Stephen Lynch of Newborough (NL1: Blake Papers: MS 8388 (3)).

142. The will of Valentine Browne merchant of Galway 1735, referred to James Browne of Ardskea and Patrick Browne merchant of Bilbao; and the will of James Browne of Newtown, "merchant", in 1701, referred to his nephew Bartholomew Browne merchant of Athenry and his nephew Thomas Browne of Newtown, "gent" (NL1: Blake Papers: MS 10792).

agent, merchant and landowner[143]. He bought the Joycegrove estate in the Incumbered Estates Court and renamed it Brownsgrove. Martin Browne of Cloonfad in Roscommon provided his daughter with a dowry of £2,500 on her marriage to Thomas Lynch of Loberry in 1782[144].

Kirwan families were concentrated in the Tuam area in the baronies of Clare and Dunmore. They did not have the same widespread network as the Frenches Blakes and Lynches. Six families of Kirwan maintained estates from the 17th to the 19th century. They were the Kirwans of Castle Hacket, Cregg, Blindwell, Gardenfield, Hillsbrook and Dalgan, in Kilmaine barony in Mayo. The Kirwans of Cregg were the parent stock of most of the Kirwan families such as those of Castle Hacket, Dalgan Hillsbrook and Woodfield. Branches which had not originated in the Cregg line were the Kirwans of Blindwell and of Gardenfield. Patrick Kirwan of Cregg was a member of the supreme council of the Catholic Confederation and received from General Ireton special thanks for the protection he had afforded to protestants during the Civil Wars[145]. Kirwan had about 1500 acres at this stage. His son Martin Kirwan got further lands through marriage and at the Restoration regrant the family was allocated 3639 statute acres[146]. A large estate was developed which was however later neglected by Richard Kirwan the scientist[147] His elder brother was killed in 1756 in a duel with the usher of the Irish House of Commons. The following year Richard married a daughter of Sir

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143. The ancestors of the Brownes of Tuam were, like many of the Brownes, involved in the Jacobite cause ('Browne of Greenville and Tuam', Burke's Landed Gentry ed. 1858).

144. Reg. Deeds : bk 360 p 345.

145 Denis A.R. Kirwan and John W. Kirwan, Pedigree of the Kirwan family compiled from originals (1939).

146 15th report of public records of Ireland p246.

147 P.J. McLaughlin, 'Richard Kirwan 1733-1812', Studies (1939) p471.

Thomas Blake of Menlo and was promptly put in goal for her debts[148]. The Cregg estate then passed to the scientist's nephew Patrick Kirwan who sold the house and demesne to a rising branch of the Blakes who were involved in banking[149]. Almost 6,000 acres of the Cregg estate was sold in the Incumbered Estates Court leaving the Kirwans with just over 4,000 acres. They thenceforth resided at a modest new house, Baunmore, adjacent to Cregg. Part of the estate was bought by a cadet branch of the family who were merchants in Liverpool. The Cregg branch was overshadowed in the 18th Century by the Castle Hacket and Dalgan Park branches with the most impressive of the Kirwan houses and estates. The Kirwans of Castle Hacket were established by the merchant Sir John Kirwan who made a fortune in trade with the West Indies[150]. Kirwan bought the forfeited estate of the Burkes of Castle Hacket in the mid 17th century from other Kirwans[151]. The ancestor of the Kirwans of Dalgan in Mayo was known as Edward "of the silver" and the family's wealth was reflected in their regrant of 3266 acres in 1683 and subsequent large acquisitions of land. [152].

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148 D.N.B.

149. Reg. Deeds : bk 562, p 445; Tuam Herald,15 June 1889 (letter from Martin Kirwan). The Blakes of Cregg bought most of their land from the Skerretts.

150. Cal. treas. bks, X, p1328; Cal. S.P. dom. 1692-3, pp48, 134; P.O.R.I.: Rep. D.K. 57, p497. Hardiman stated that Kirwan "amassed a large fortune in the West Indies" (History of Galway,) p16). Kirwan was mayor of Galway in 1686 and his name appeared in gilt letters in some of the official records (Archives of the Town of Galway, H.M.C.: 10th rept. app. V., London 1885, p 507, footnote 2) John Kirwan the eminent London merchant was a connection of the Kirwans of Cregg (Burke's landed gentry, ed. 1853, i, p676).

151. This was the view of the late Percy Paley of Castle Hacket. Kirwan got a regrant of the estate in 1678 (15th report of public records of Ireland, p257).

152. Ibid, p277.

In the 18th century they bought lands from the Binghams, the Martins of Dangan and others and in 1771 they bought the Dalgan estate from the Clanricarde family[153]. The Kirwans also acquired an estate at Ballyturin near Gort in south Galway in the 17th century and Edmond Kirwan of Dalgan resided there in the late 18th century[154]. As the Tribes were building up and consolidating their estates they tended to move around their scattered properties not all of which became part of the final estate[155]. The wealth of the Kirwans of Dalgan Park is illustrated by the fact that when Thomas Martin of Ballinahinch married Julia, daughter of Patrick Kirwan of Dalgan, in 1814, she brought him a fortune of £15,000[156]. The Kirwans eventually ran up encumbrances of almost £140,000 and Dalgan and its 13,000 acre estate was sold in the Incumbered Estates Court and was bought by the Duke of Bedford, head of the Russell family. The estate later passed to Lord de Clifford who was related to the Russells and the house eventually passed to the Chinese mission fathers. Of the other branches, the Blindwell family who, like the Kirwans in general claimed Irish descent, were according to their

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153. Reg. Deeds: bk. 290 p196; bk. 403 p236; bk. 289 p52 (Edmond Kirwan pays £17, 431 to the trustees of the Clanricarde estate for the Dalgan estate).

154. Fahey, Kilmacduagh, pp341-2; Blake - Forster, Irish chieftains, p473.

155. The Kirwans for instance resided at Turin Castle and Brookhill in Mayo before the completion of Dalgan Park, which was built by 1814 (Taylor and Skinner, pp 214, 217; Leet, p147).

156. The lineage compiled, 1884, by Robert John Martin... (in Blake papers) p13. Hereafter cited as Martin lineage. The Kirwans had connections with the West Indies. James French of Frenchgrove married in 1813 a daughter of Thomas Kirwan of Dalgan and Senoria, Jamaica (Walford's county families, ed. 1864) The Kirwans were connected to the Bourkes of Urey in Mayo who also had Jamaican connections (Burke's landed gentry, ed 1886, p186).

pedigree settled on their estate "time immemorial"[157]. Their estate was forfeited and all the family papers destroyed when Tuam was burned during the Civil Wars in the mid - 17th century[158]. The estates were restored by grant of Charles II in 1677[159]. Part of the original estate then passed to a younger son who established the Kirwan of Gardenfield family. The Blindwell estate passed by marriage to the Millers and from the Millers to the Hemphill family. The Kirwans of Glan were listed by Hardiman among the respectable families of that name although they were in a state of decline by the early 19th century[160]. The Kirwans of Hillsbrook were also in decline and, like the Kirwans of Glan, were among the many struggling gentry seeking help from Martin Blake of Ballyglunin. Hillsbrook, like Dalgan, was sold in the Incumbered Estates Court. When the Browne of Moyne estate was sold in this court the buyer was John Statford Kirwan whose family had prospered through legal practice and good marriages[161].

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157. Burke's landed gentry, ed 1853.

158. Pedigree of the Kirwan family compiled from originals.

159. 15th report of the public records of Ireland p238; copy of original grant among Kirwan papers (in the possession of Mr Henry Kirwan of Dublin). The grant comprised 2564 statute acres.

160. Their house and small estate was let under the court of Chancery (Connaught Journal 28 March 1831 p3; Tuam Herald 13 November 1847 p3, 10 February 1849 p3).

161. Tuam Herald 14 February 1857 p3. Kirwan's father, Euseby Stratford Kirwan of Bawn House, Co. Longford, had acquired a portion of the Harman property by marriage (Kirwan late of Moyne, Burke landed gentry, 1875). Kirwan himself had earlier had "a lucrative and important situation in India" (Tuam Herald 29 July 1854 p3).

The three Martin estates of Ross, Ballinahinch and Tulira comprised a total acreage of over 200,000 acres. The senior branches, Ross and Tulira, were established at the end of the 16th century and a junior house, Ballinahinch, was founded by a younger son of the Ross family in the 17th century. The origins of the family property outside the town go back to 1586 when the Martins "made a permanent settlement at Ross" and the lands were acquired by purchase from the O'Flahertys[162]. They lost property to the Eyres in the Cromwellian period but got a regrant in 1677[163]. Richard Martin, 3rd son of Robert Martin of Ross, became one of the principal grantees of the confiscated O'Flaherty lands in Iar-Connaught[164]. Although he fought at Aughrim as a Jacobite he was pardoned and in 1698 his huge estates west of Galway were erected into the manor of Claremount despite the vigorous protests of the Irish House of Commons[165]. Martin's estate stretched into Mayo, Roscommon, Clare and Sligo and he became known as "Nimble Dick" because of his cleverness in acquiring such a vast extent of landed property, some by grants from

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162. James Martin of Ross writing in Tuam Herald 15 August 1914; Callwell, Old Irish life London, 1912 p44; Martin Lineage p10.

163. Hardiman, History of Galway, pp142-3; 15th report of public records of Ireland, p245.

164. O'Flaherty, Iar Connaught, pp417-8; 15th report of public records of Ireland, pp239, 245, 253, 259. Other grantees included Clanricarde and the Provost of Trinity College.

165. Archer E.S. Martin, Genealogy of the family of Martin of Ballinahinch Castle; J.G. Simms, The Williamite confiscation in Ireland 1690-1703 p78. Martin had played an active part in advising Ginkell on how to bring about the surrender of Galway (J.G. Simms, Jacobite Ireland p232).

William III and the remainder by purchase[166]. The Martyns of Tulira were in possession of that estate by 1598, apparently through marriage with the Burkes[167]. In the 17th and 18th centuries the family had extensive property in south Galway centred around Tulira, Coole, Kinvara and Kilconnell, and were involved in politics, law and the municipal affairs of Galway. Richard Martyn was mayor of Galway in 1642 and was then residing at Dunguaire Castle at Kinvara[168]. Richard's son Oliver Martyn of Tulira, was member for the town of Galway in the Jacobite Parliament of 1689. He was attainted but got the benefit of the Articles of Limerick and Galway though his brother Judge Peter Martyn lost his Kilconnell Abbey estate which later went to the Trenches of Woodlawn[169]. Claims later put in by Oliver Martyn and his son Richard included estates and mortgages previously the property of Peter Martin and of the Clanricarde family[170]. The Tulira estate was exempted from the operation of the Penal Laws by a special enactment.

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166. Martin Lineage pll. Archer Martin corresponded with Martin J. Blake about Martin history and said his family tradition was that at Aughrim Richard Martin had saved one or more English persons of high degree from massacre and consequently got a powerful friend at court (N.L.I: Blake Papers: MS 10791(8), Archer Martin to M.J. Blake, 26 June 1906; also ibid to ibid, 12 May 1894 and 30 June 1906. See also Callwell, Old Irish life pp47-48).

167. Fahey, Kilmacduagh, p249.

168. Archives of the town of Galway, p491. In common with many successful Tribal families Richard Martyn represented a junior branch of his family. The senior line was headed by Robert Martyn who died while holding the office of Mayor in 1622 having sons William, Richard, Andrew and Gregory (PROI: R.C.5/29: Deeds and Wills (Chancery) Co. Galway, pp8,10).

169. D'Alton, Irish Army list, ii, p 676; J.G. Simms, Williamite confiscation, p 69; Burke, Connaught circuit, p58; Irish patent rolls of James I, p372.

170. List of claims as entered at Chichester House (Dublin 1701) pp 56, 95, 102, 198.

In this act reference was made to Oliver Martyn as a person who, during the late rebellion "behaved himself with great moderation and was remarkably kind to numbers of Protestants in distress, many of whom he supported in his family, and by his charity and goodness saved their lives"[171]. In 1768 Richard Gregory purchased from Oliver Martyn of Tulira the extensive estates of Coole and Kiltartan. Other portions of the Tulira estate went to the Taylors of Castle Taylor[172]. Smaller Martyn estates which survived from the 17th to the 19th century included Curraghmore in Mayo and Cregans Castle in Clare. The Martyns of Curraghmore, near Ballinrobe, got their estate by grant in 1612[173]. The O'Loghlin estate at Cregans was granted in 1656 to George Martyn of Galway by the Cromwellian Commissioners in lieu of his confiscated property in Galway. In 1677 Martyn got a confirmatory grant under the Act of Settlement[174]. Martin families like most of the Tribes had widespread connections with business and trade as well as land. The Martins of Eagle Hill, Portumna, were founded by Andrew Martin who was a Dublin merchant and partner in a money lending firm with an Ormsby. These Martins were agents to the Aylwards of Ballinagar, were resident in the early 19th

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171. Fahey, Kilmacduagh p322; 8 Queen Anne, cap 3, par 39. Oliver Martyn's grandson, Oliver, conformed in 1739 (Byrne, Convert Rolls p195) but the Catholic tradition of the Martyns remained unbroken (D. Gwynn, Edward Martyn and the Irish Revival p42).

172. Fahey, pp 322, 352; marriage articles, 1670, between Thomas Martyn of "Cule" and John Lynch of Lavally (Galway Arch. and Hist. Soc. Jn., viii, (1913-14), p74).

173. Tuam Herald 26 August 1916 p4; 16 June 1917 p4; abstract of original documents of family of Martyn of Curraghmore (N.L.I: Blake papers: MS 10791(8)).

174. M. J. Blake, Genealogy of the family of Martyn of Cregans county Clare from 1613 to 1927 (Galway 1927) based on surviving family papers and deeds examined by Blake; 15th report of public records of Ireland p277.

century, but were eventually impoverished by litigation[175].

The D'Arcys resembled the Martins in their early accumulation of large estates. The founder of the family fortunes was James Riveagh Dorsey who was vice-president of Connaught in Elizabethan times. Some of his seven sons were merchants and the youngest son was Patrick D'Arcy the lawyer of the Catholic Confederation. Although they suffered confiscation and transplantation in the Cromwellian period, the family's influence and status is seen in the large estates with which they later emerged. The line of the eldest son produced no issue so their "great estate in the counties of Galway, Mayo, Roscommon and Clare" was settled on the line of the youngest son Counsellor Patrick D'Arcy[176]. Patrick D'Arcy's elder brother Martin D'Arcy stood against Wentworth's plantation scheme for Connaught and died in prison in 1636. His son Richard and grandson Martin continued to build up their estate in Mayo[177]. This Martin D'Arcy however was transplanted in 1656 as was James D'Arcy son of Counsellor Patrick D'Arcy whose own extensive estates had been confiscated[178]. Martin D'Arcy was transplanted to New Forest, near Mount Bellew, and

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175. Reg. Deeds: bk 545 p161; bk 584 p35; Leet, p174; papers in the possession of family descendants. Detailed accounts of the family are given in the case of D'Arcy V. Martin in Galway Vindicator 31 July 1850 p2; 3 August p1.

176. Darcy Burke, Genealogy of the Darcies, p28. Some of the Clare lands, had come from the O'Briens.

177. The Strafford inquisition of county Mayo (ed. W. O'Sullivan) passim.

178. Patrick D'Arcy had bought an estate from Gerald Comerford grandson of the attorney - general in Connaught at the time of Bingham (Strafford inquisition of Mayo, p154).

James D'Arcy was transplanted to Kiltullagh, near Athenry[179]. Grants of their estates were confirmed under the Act of Settlement[180]. The D'Arcys appear to have retained some of the ancestral property which was settled on them by the failure of issue in the elder line. The last of that line had been given estates in Clare as a transplanted person and these estates passed to the New Forest family which became the owner of the largest D'Arcy property. The D'Arcys of New Forest, like the Martyns of Tulira, had a Catholic tradition,[181] but appear like the Martyns to have conformed at least temporarily[182]. They consolidated their New Forest estate in 1807 by the purchase of large parts of the adjoining Kelly of Fiddane estate[183]. They acquired the Fisher Hill estate in Mayo from the Blakes of Tower Hill who were their relations[184]. Richard D'Arcy of New Forest married in 1783 the only daughter of John Blake the merchant of Arran Quay and brother of Maurice Blake of Tower Hill. Apart from material benefits from their close connection with the Blakes the

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179. James D'Arcy may have been in France at the time (L. O'Malley, 'Patrick Darcy, Galway lawyer and politican, 1598-1668' in Galway: Town and Gown 1484-1984, p109).

180. 15th report of public records of Ireland, p244.

181. Brendan O'Bric wrote that James Riveagh D'Arcy's estate in Clare represented "a country retreat for a rich merchant family apprehensive of victimisation on the grounds of its religious beliefs" (O'Bric, p411).

182. James D'Arcy of New Forest "renounced the errors of the Church of Rome in the Parish church of St Mary, Dublin" (Dublin Journal 24 November 1768).

183. Reg. Deeds: bk 588 p510. The cost was £30,000.

184. Abstract of title of Richard D'Arcy to a fee-simple estate called the Fisher Hill estate in Galway and Mayo (D'Arcy papers held by the D'Arcy family). The estate was received from Henry Blake of Fisher Hill who was a grandson of John Blake the merchant of Arran Quay.

connection may also have influenced the D'Arcys in their adherence to their Catholic religion. The Blake marriage link brought them into the circle of Catholic families dominated by the Lynches of Clogher, Tuam, Cadiz and Bordeaux and their later marriages were with local Catholic gentry like the Bellews Beytaghs and Chevers family. The D'Arcys of Kiltullagh on the other hand first conformed in 1709 and eventually became evangelical Protestants. They descended from Counsellor Patrick D'Arcy, seventh son of James Riveagh D'Arcy. The third son, of James D'Arcy, another James, who made a fortune in Lisbon, in buying a large estate in Mayo created a cadet D'Arcy house[185]. His descendants, the D'Arcys of Houndswood, sold their estate in the Incumbered Estates Court. Other D'Arcy branches who had sold their estates by the Famine period included the D'Arcys of Longford Castle[186] near Eyrecourt who were descended from the Kiltullagh family and the D'Arcys of Ballinlass who were absentees and sold over 2000 acres in the Incumbered Estates Court. Their tenants included neighbouring gentry who had perpetual leases like the Kellys of Mucklon and Gonville French of the Castleffrench family. The D'Arcys of Woodville became smaller gentry in the early 19th century[187]. They were, like the D'Arcy of Ballinlass, of obscure background and the most prominent was

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185. Darcy Burke, Genealogy of the Darcies, p32; Genealogy of the D'Arcys of Kiltulla House and of Clifden Castle in M.D. Talbot, Eloge de M. Le Comte D'Arcy (London 1846) p50. This genealogy was first printed in volume four of Lodge's peerage of Ireland, first edition, 1754.

186. For Chancery decrees against John D'Arcy of Longford Castle see Connaught Journal 21 January 1828 p3. D'Arcy was in debt to Patrick Martyn (P.R.O.I: Repertory to decrees of Chancery: vol 8 (1827) p33).

187. James D'Arcy of Woodville married Anastatia Kelly of Loughrea who was entitled to £1000 by the will of her father which was part of a judgement debt of £3000 which he had against John D'Arcy of Kiltullagh (Reg. Deeds: bk 830 p346).

Robert D'Arcy who was agent to Clanricarde.

The Bodkins of Annagh and of Kilcloony held estates from the 17th to the 19th century[188]. The Bodkins of Kilcloony held leases from the Lovelock family in the late 17th century and they bought land from the Dalys in 1757[189]. The Bodkins of Castletown illustrate how a family fell foul of the tendency among wealthy gentry to establish sons in their own estates. These Bodkins had lands allotted to them in Moylough parish in the 17th century and appear to have been associated with the Bellew family[190]. In the late 18th century John Bodkin established himself as a very extensive landholder and stock-breeder. In 1776 he leased the Castletown estate, near Tuam, from the Echlin family[191]. In 1789 he leased the Bingarra estate near Athenry from Hyacinth Bodkin[192]. In 1794 he

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188. Books of survey and distribution, iii, Co. Galway. pp 90-1; 286. The Annagh estate was regranted at the Restoration period (15th report of public records of Ireland p247).

189. Lease from Dominick Lovelock to James Bodkin of Kilcloony, 16 April 1685, among Dunsandle Papers; Reg. Deeds; bk 183 p604; PROI: abstract of title of Thomas Bodkin of Kilcloony. The Lovelocks, like the Lallys, were attainted in the 17th century.

190. Books of survey and distribution iii, Co. Galway. p269. They were involved with the Bellews in the linen business (K. J. Harvey, 'The Bellews of Mount Bellew: a Catholic gentry family in the age of the Penal Laws'. PH.D. Pennslvania State University, 1984, pp77-8).

191. Reg. Deeds: bk 310 p550; bk 438 pp226-8. This was part of the Tullinadaly estate of the attainted Lally family and had been acquired by the Echlins from Baldwin Crowe of Kincorr in King's Co in 1728 (ibid, bk 57 p247).

192. This may have been Hyacinth Bodkin of Thomastown cited as a natural son in the will of Edmond Bodkin of Kilcloony, 1768 (Registry of Deeds: abstracts of wills, ii, 1746-85, p201). Other sons included Andrew and James Bodkin of Santa Cruz.

bought estates in Kilconnell barony from Denis Bowes Daly of Dalyston[193]. John Bodkin had much additional property though the claim of Edmund Kirwan that he had 84,000 acres under stock is obviously an exaggeration. Kirwan also claimed that Bodkin was the richest man in Galway[194]. His two sons Dominick and John were given equal shares in his will and after his death in 1803 they erected an impressive tomb to his memory in Moylough churchyard. They severed their joint tenancy in 1804 and bought the fee-simple of some of the estate from Hyacinith Bodkin for £8900. This transaction may have been the undoing of the family fortunes which appear to have been in decline before the death of John Bodkin. One law case was brought by Anthony Clarke a Dublin solicitor and husband of Bodkin's daughter on the grounds of her marriage portion not having been fully paid. One of the sons Dominick Bodkin owed Clarke over £10,000 and eventually sold him part of his estate which enabled him to take his place among the county gentry. Protracted and extremely involved litigation took place over the conflicting claims on the scattered properties and on the question of which lands were liable for the debts. The other son, John Bodkin, was also heavily in debt to Clarke. His son, John Dominick Bodkin of Bingarra, further mortgaged the estate and the creditor filed his petition in the Incumbered Estates Court[195]. A major break occurred in Bodkin history in the 18th century. A family feud between the Bodkins of Carrowbane and Carrowbeg, near Tuam,

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193. Ibid: bk 516 p437.

194. N.L.I.: MS 9856. Kirwan related how Bodkin had colluded in the escape of 28 men from Galway goal in 1798.

195. Details of the history and debts of the estates are in Law recorder: equity reports, ii (1839-40) pp361-375; iii(1840-41) pp390-413; Irish equity reports, xiii, p492; Irish Chancery reports, xii, p61.

resulted in a notorious massacre in 1741[196]. Carrowbeg, which was originally Skerrett property[197], passed by marriage from the Bodkins to the Lynches of Shannonbridge in the early 19th century. Because of the relatively small number of Bodkin estates the families were all related in various ways. Ambrose Bodkin of Kiltroge (Lackagh) by his will in 1792 passed his estate in Galway and Mayo "to his kinsman" James Bodkin of Kilcloony[198]. Other Bodkins who declined in the 18th century included the Bodkins of Anbally who sold their estate in 1732 to a younger son of the Blakes of Corbally[199].

Most of the large successful Tribal estates were rooted in the 17th century or earlier. The Joyce family of Mervue were a noted exception and show that successful estates could be established in the late 18th century and early 19th century. The Joyces were wine merchants in the 18th century and later became involved in banking. Although they were relative latecomers to landed property they were connected by marriage with other Catholic gentry families, mainly Tribal, in the 18th century. Walter Joyce, an "eminent wine merchant", married into the Aylwards of Ballinagar in the early 18th century[200]. Walter's daughter married Mark Lynch of Garracloon in Mayo in 1746. Another daughter married Martin

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196. J.A. Froude, The English in Ireland in the eighteenth century (ed. London 1881) i, pp491-6; Burke, Connaught Circuit pp87-92. The estates were originally combined (Books of survey and distribution, p118; 15th report of public records of Ireland p239).

197. Hardiman, History of Galway p10.

198. Registry of Deeds: abstract of wills, iii (1785-1832), p102. Bodkin referred to his illegitimate sister and daughter.

199. Reg. Deeds: bk 70 p453; Blake family records 1600-1700 p185.

200. J. Walton, 'The Aylwards of Ballynagar', Irish Genealogist, vi,(1973) p590.

Blake of Ballyglunin in 1751[201]. Walter's son Pierce Joyce, also a merchant, married in 1761 into the Kellys of Rockstown Castle, Co Limerick, who were part of a further network of Catholic families with overseas merchant links and including the Kilkellys and Appleyards. Pierce's son, Walter Joyce, retired from merchant life in 1803 to commence the business of a banker with Mark Lynch. Another partnership, known as Joyce and Appleyard, operated during the years 1808-1816. Walter Joyce retired in 1824 having acquired a considerable fortune. His younger brother John Joyce was in a banking partnership with Francis Blake of Cregg Castle who was his nephew. Walter Joyce assigned £2000 to his son Walter to enable him to join George Cuffe in the business of wholesale merchant[202].

Although the Joyces had one of the largest business concerns in 18th century Galway[203] it is not clear when they began to have a significant interest in landed property. Walter Joyce senior appears to have inherited the original Mervue property from his uncle Dr Matthew Joyce who died in 1800 but he was already the owner of property in Mayo as he is on record as selling £4100 worth of land to Isidore Blake of Tower Hill in 1792[204]. The Joyces of Oxford in Mayo were a separate family. The house and lands at Mervue were part of the estates of the

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201. Reg. Deeds: bk 140, p41; 'The Joyces of Mervue C.1650-1985', by M. Keegan and G. St. George Mark (unpublished draft pedigree); P.R.O.I: Ballyglunin papers: M6931, No.74a. Walter Joyce got judgements against the Frenches of Rahasane which he transferred to Edmond Blake (ibid, M6931, No73).

202. Reg. Deeds: bk 550, p353.

203. L. M. Cullen in Galway: Town and Gown, p87.

204. Vicars, Prerogative wills, p257; Taylor and Skinner, p201; Post-chaise companion through Ireland, 3rd edition, p178; NLI: Blake Papers: MS 10789. Major Walter Joyce believes that the founder of the Joyce family of Mervue was Marcus Joyce a rich merchant who bought land in Mayo in the reign of James I.

Erasmus Smith Schools and were held on lease by the Joyces up to the 1840's[205]. Walter Joyce senior bought the French of Corgery estate, near Mountbellew, around 1806 and in 1829 he assigned this property and other lands bought from Lord Clonbrock to his son Walter[206]. Walter Joyce senior married in 1793 the daughter of Peter Daly of Clooncah who was shortly to become bankrupt[207]. He did better in his second marriage in 1806 to the daughter of John Appleyard a Galway corn-merchant and his banking partner[208]. His son Walter, by his first marriage, had inherited the Corgary estate. Mervue passed to Pierce Joyce his eldest son by his second marriage and who had 17 children. Pierce Joyce's younger brother Thomas established himself at Rahasane Park although financial difficulties forced him to sell most of the estate in the Incumbered Estates Court. Rahasane Park was later bought by Walter Bourke, a younger son of the Bourkes of Curraghleagh in Mayo, who had made a fortune as a barrister in India and who

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205. Reg. Deeds: 1847/16/139. Walter Joyce senior, held 29 acres in Ballybane (adjoining Mervue) from 1789 and laid out £2000 in improvements (Ninth report of Board of Education in Ireland, Erasmus Smith schools, H.C. 1810, X, p24; Endowed schools, Ireland, commission, H.C. 1857-8, XXll, pt2, p285).

206. M. J. Blake, 'Family of French of Abbert and later of Corgary', Tuam Herald 23 June 1928; Reg. Deeds: bk 843 p117.

207. Daly sold his estates to Hugh O'Connor, of the Sylane family, in 1814 and in 1823 sold his household furniture and stock for £412 being part of a sum secured to Walter Joyce (Reg. Deeds: bk 681 p513; bk 780, p591).

208. H. Dutton, Survey of Galway (Dublin, 1824), p95 Hereafter cited as Dutton; Tuam Herald 25 May 1929 p4. The Appleyards had been settled at Athlunkard in Co. Clare (H. Weir, Houses of Clare, p71).

was murdered in 1882 for defying the Land League.[209]
The small estate of Joycegrove in Dunmore barony was established in the 17th century[210]. Family disputes and indebtedness resulted in the sale of the estate in the Incumbered Estates Court and its purchase by the Brownes of Tuam who changed the name to Brownsgrove[211]. The Morris family of Ballinaboy acquired part of the Errislannan estate near Clifden through inheritance from a branch of the Frenches. The estate was held in common with Burke, Skerrett and Lambert descendants of the Frenches until it was partitioned in 1843[212]. In the 18th century members of the Morris family were officers in the Navy, Revenue and Coastguards, government posts connected with the campaign

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209. Burke, Connaught circuit, pp330-1; Tuam Herald 14 May 1892, p4. Joyce acquired the Rahasane property by mortgage and he consulted Martin Blake of Ballyglunin on the details of his proposed transaction (P.R.O.I: Ballyglunin papers: M6936/56/34, Thomas Joyce to Martin Blake 2 February 1846). He indicated that his father was still leasing Mervue from the Erasmus Smith foundation (Joyce to Blake 19 February 1846).

210. 15th report of public records of Ireland p239.

211. The dispute seems to have arisen over the non payment of portions to younger sons (PROI: Repertory to Chancery decrees 1804-1816, p490). Edmund Kirwan of Woodfield stated that one of the sons killed his father for ill-treating his wife and younger sons and owing several thousand pounds to a Tuam shopkeeper; that Joycegrove was burned because the eldest son refused portions to younger brothers; and that the Catholic clergy abused the Joyces "for keeping bad women" (N.L.I.: MS 9854, pp118-9, 147-9).

212. E.N. Chapman, Memoirs of my family together with some researches into the early history of the Morris families of Tipperary, Galway and Mayo (London 1928) p44.

against smuggling[213]. The Morris family of Spiddal acquired lands by marriage with the FitzPatricks in 1684[214]. In 1700 they had a good marriage with a Miss Kilkelly who was sole heir to the Manilla fortune of her uncle Redmond Kilkelly[215]. The town and lands of Spiddal were bought by Michael Morris, 1st Baron Killanin, from the Comyn of Woodstock estate in the Incumbered Estates Court. The Athy family acquired the Renville estate in the early 18th century through marriage with the Lynches of Renville who had property in Jamaica. The will of Philip Lynch in 1716 described him as being "of the parish of St Katherine's, Jamaica, but late of St James's Westminster". He devised Renville to his uncle John Ormsby of Dublin to the use of his nephew Philip Athy on condition that Athy assumed the name of Lynch[216]. The Renville demesne was let in the early 19th century when the Athys resided in England. This neglect led to the sale of most of the estate in the Incumbered Estates Court. The Skerretts were removed from Headford Castle to make way for the St. Georges and were transplanted to Mayo. They returned in 1688 and bought the Ballinduff estate from the Burkes[217]. The Skerretts of Drumgriffin, also near Headford, were confirmed in their estates at the Restoration[218]. They fell heavily in debt to the rising Blakes of Cregg Castle in the late 18th century and

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213. Ibid, p43; Burke's Irish family records (1976) p862.

214. Burke's Peerage; Reg. Deeds: bk 730 p224.

215. P. Crosslé, Pedigree of Kilkelly.

216. Remnants of Renville Papers (in my possession); Reg. Deeds: bk 17 p337. Lynch had borrowed money from Ormsby (ib, bk7 p294, bk18 p249).

217. Hardiman, History of Galway, p19.

218. 15th report of public records of Ireland p249.

sold most of their estates to them between 1786 and 1795[219]. Skerretts were also seated at Carnacrow, near Headford, and at Finavarra in Co. Clare[220]. The Deanes were granted the Toghermore and Castlemoyle estates, near Tuam, by Charles II[221]. They sold the Toghermore estate in 1790 to John Henry of Dublin[222]. The wealth of the Deanes was well known[223], but they overcharged their estates and became bankrupt. Ambrose Deane on his marriage to Margaret Kirwan put a charge of £10,000 on his estate to settle her jointure. He borrowed from several creditors and judgements were obtained against him. In order to protect John Henry's purchase of the Toghermore estate Deane had to put his Balrobuck estate in trustee's hands and make other provisions which pushed his debts up to £14,000[224]. Deane died without issue in 1792, the

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219. Reg. Deeds: bk 385 p17, bk 408 p540, bk493 p255. Blake bought some of the lands from Timothy Hanley to whom the Skerretts had become indebted (Reg. Deeds: bk 600 p278; P.R.O.I: Repertory to decrees of Chancery 1804-1816, p392).

220. For disputes between Skerretts and Burkes see PROI: Exchequer decrees 1720-25 p107-8; Exchequer decrees 1726-31 p228.

221. 15th report of public records of Ireland p237. The grant was to Thomas Deane, "merchant, gentleman". Deane bought the tobacco and snuff monopoly from the Cromwellian governor of Galway (Dutton, p290).

222. John Henry was 3rd son of Hugh Henry merchant and banker who died in 1743 (Reg. Deeds: bk 234 p285, bk 420 p52). John Henry is omitted from the Henry pedigree in Burke's landed gentry of Ireland (1912).

223. Ambrose Deane of Balrobuck, believed locally to have vast wealth, was murdered in 1777 near Tuam as he returned to Dublin with his rents (Tuam Herald 21 December 1918 p4, 16 April 1921 p4).

224. Reg. Deeds: bk 415 p369.

Castlemoyle estate was sold in Chancery in 1796[225], and the remaining Deane estates adjacent to Ballyglunin, were purchased by Martin Blake in 1840[226].

The Ballyglunin estate therefore was still being consolidated in the early 19th century at a time when other originally much larger estates were in difficulties. The Lynch-Blosse, Ardfry and Menlo estates in the 17th century comprised 30% of the land owned by townsmen in Galway[227]. But by the Famine period Martin Blake of Ballyglunin was being plagued by numerous declining Tribal landowners, including Sir Thomas Blake of Menlo, who appear to have regarded him as a one-man department of government and expected him to dispense a range of services from patronage to charity. The Ballyglunin estate was relatively small in the 17th century. The families who became involved in politics and public affairs at that time like the Blakes of Ardfry and D'Arcys of Kiltullagh were already substantial landowners and increased their properties through their professional careers and public office. The Blakes of Ballyglunin on the other hand gradually built up a large estate and, like the Tower Hill Blakes, were more oriented towards business and agriculture. They specialised in lending money to less prudent fellow Tribesmen like the Blakes of Menlo and Ardfry. They also bear some comparison with the Smyths of Masonbrook who amassed a comparable estate from declining Tribal landowners and others. The Smyths and the Blakes of Ballyglunin were also among the small number of

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225. Ibid, bk 497 p329 deed between Thomas Kelly attorney in Dublin, the surviving assignee of Lawrence Deane formerly of Castlemoyle, gentleman, an insolvent debtor, and Valentine O'Connor merchant of Dublin, who bought the lands).

226. This estate had been inherited by Deane's sister who married into the Skerretts (PROI: Ballyglunin Papers: M6931, No's 170-171) Brooklodge had also been Deane property originally.

227. O'Bric, p446.

gentry, Tribal or non-Tribal, in Galway whose solvency made it possible for them to make large land purchases in the Famine period.

The full complexity of the Tribes' involvement in land cannot be clearly unravelled, even through the resources of property records in the Registry of Deeds. This is because of the frequently overlapping layers of interrelated families both at gentry or landlord level and below that level. Illegitimacy was also a complicating factor. The structure was particularly illustrated by the numerous Bodkin and related families in the Tuam and Mount Bellew areas and by the way they descended downward to occupiers of substantial farms. Little is known about their lifestyle and mores and it is therefore unwise to dogmatise about their precise social character. Historically the interesting point is that virtually the entire of this social - rural structure disappeared and was identified, from the popular view point, as being part and parcel of the landlord class.

CHAPTER 3

ESTATES AND ESTATE MANAGEMENT

Galway had a wide range of estates and was a county of extremes both in regard to land and landlords. On the one hand there were large well run estates like Garbally and Clonbrock. Even large estates could however suffer the bad effects of litigation and family disputes as in the case of Roxborough and Carrantrila. At the other end of the scale there were many poor small backward estates. Gentry viewed their estates in different ways depending on their education, interests and means. Some regarded them as mere security for incomes, dowries and borrowings. Others were improvers by tradition, like the Frenches of Monivea. The larger proprietors like the Trenches and Dillons of Clonbrock took care to have superbly tended demesnes. But these were also the proprietors who cared more for their tenantry. In considering estates at county level, unlike at national level, a comprehensive rather than selective approach must be taken, for the following reason. The very idea of estate management was complicated by the large numbers of small poor tenantry, and other poor, especially in the pre-Famine period. This prevented those gentry, willing or able to do so, from devoting full attention to estate matters. It also meant that conditions outside the demesne of well-run estates affected life within the demesne. For instance rising poor rates and the influx of impoverished tenantry from neglected neighbouring estates could be - and at times was - a drain on the resources of the more charitable proprietors. The consideration of estate management therefore is broadly connected with the other aspects of county affairs.

A detailed examination of the sources reveals that despite the

general condemnation of some writers and economists the Galway gentry had a respectable record as improvers and estate managers. The sources also show that the rural scene was more complex than a simple division between peasantry and hard-riding country gentlemen. Most of the gentry were resident, although that factor alone did not guarantee the efficient administration of estates. William Stanley, claimed that Dublin, Kildare, and Galway showed that the residence of proprietors failed to make the peasantry comfortable. These counties had a large number of resident proprietors but also had a problem of growing poverty. In Galway, Stanley observed, nearly all the proprietors were resident, "and yet the peasantry endure indescribable misery". In Waterford and Kerry, on the other hand, the main proprietors were absent, and the peasantry on their estates "are in a very improved condition"[1]. Northern Italy was pointed out as having agricultural prosperity even though the landlords lived in towns[2]. Portions of some of the larger estates were located in different areas of the county away from the demesne. Those with estates in England included the Clanricardes, Dalys of Dunsandle, Trenches of Woodlawn, Gregorys of Coole, Stauntons of Clydagh, although all except the Trenches had got rid of their English estates by the late 19th century. A proprietor therefore was of necessity an absentee in relation to parts of his estate. The agent Thomas Bermingham had a simple political view of absenteeism. "I cannot conceive a man being in England being called an absent landlord, I conceive the two countries are one.." But he should, Bermingham believed, leave behind him the means of improving the people that are on his

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1. W., Stanley, Facts on Ireland (2nd ed. Dublin 1832) p13. Stanley should have added that in Galway many of the gentry were also impoverished.

2. Tracts on Irish agricultural interests, London, 1872, p3.

estate[3]. Bermingham also denied the sweeping assertions of some writers that estate improvements took place in the demesnes only and did not better the lot of the tenantry.

Despite the presence of a large gentry there were some parishes in which, as Archbishop Kelly of Tuam told the select committee on the state of Ireland in 1825, there were neither Catholic nor Protestant gentry, a trend which increased as the century progressed.[4] These were either remote parts of large estates or bankrupt properties which had fallen under the indifferent management of the Court of Chancery. Charles Blake of Tuam told the Devon Commission how this had happened in the Tuam area. During the Napoleonic War landowners had set their land high and lived at a rate equal to the income, but were unable or unwilling to adjust their life-style to the subsequent economic slump[5]. "Many, if not most, of the resident landlords in the south and west of Ireland", the English economist Joseph Kay wrote, "are a jovial, careless, hunting set of squires, who think and care ten times more about their sports than about their lands or tenants[6]. Around the time Kay was writing several Galway estates were being sold in the Incumbered Estates Court. Seventeen estates of 1000 acres and over were sold outright. After the sales the county had 108 landowners of 3000 acres and over. The new buyers in the Incumbered Estates Court represented only about 15% of these 108 landowners and this shows that the gentry

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3. Report of the select committee on state of Ireland, H.C., 1831-32, xvi, p465.

4. H.C., 1825, viii, p257.

5. Report from commissioners of inquiry into the state of the law and practice in respect to the occupation of land in Ireland. Part II, H.L., 1845 xxx, p525. Charles Blake was a brewer and landowner.

6. The social condition and education of the people in England and Europe, showing the result of the primary schools, and of the division of landed property in foreign countries (London 1850) i, p311.

continued to be dominated by the families who were in the county since the 17th century and earlier. Expenditure on estate improvement had added to the general financial difficulties which ruined many estates in the Famine period. Even without the Famine the difficult environment of the extreme west provided little hope for worthwhile returns on investment. The fashionable theories of land reclamation and improvement had convinced advocates in people like Thomas Bermingham and Andrew Lynch[7]. The problems of excess population, unemployment and poverty however remained insoluble to both proprietors and governments alike.

There were legal and financial obstacles to estate improvement. "Estates through Ireland generally", James Caird wrote, "are so entailed that the immediate occupier cannot, or will not, expend money in the improvement of the estate"[8]. John Bright told the Commons in 1847 that he was reliably informed that in the province of Connaught there was not 5% of the land free from settlements of one kind or other, and not 1% was free from mortgages[9]. Thomas Bermingham pointed out that the law required proprietors to give security for loans and they were slow to apply for loans connected with their private estates because of the high rate of interest. In addition lands were "locked up" by family settlements which prevented them employing labour to carry out improvements[10].

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7. R.D.C. Black, Economic thought and the Irish Question 1817-1870, pp178-9. In 1834 Lynch had moved a Commons resolution to enlarge the powers of the Board of Works and undertake reclamation of waste land (Connaught Journal 1 May 1834 p3; Mirror of Parliament 1834, iii, p2308).

8. Ireland and the plantation scheme; or, the west of Ireland as a field for investment (London 1850).

9. Hansard, 1847, xcv, col 986.

10. Report of the select committee on state of Ireland, H.C., 1831-32, xvi, pp458-9; J. Pim, Condition and prospects of Ireland (Dublin 1848)

The Hibernian Mining Company was unwilling to work quarries in Connemara because of the difficulty in getting leases of property which did not have a safe title free from encumbrances[11]. Dutton stated that much land in Galway was held by Bishops' leases, "an uncertain kind of tenure, that gives rise to many bickerings between landlord and tenant, and prevents all manner of improvement"[12]. It was certainly true that different interests were entangled in some titles and the superior interest was usually that of Clanricarde. The assistant barrister for Mayo, Michael O'Shaughnessy, said that in the south of Ireland generally "there is scarcely any property so small as to be kept out of settlement, such is the desire to tie up property, which I believe to be one of the evils of the country". The system was practised even by middlemen. In England the commercial and manufacturing classes in their ambition to join the aristocracy could aid encumbered property by marriage alliances[13]. But this did not apply in Ireland, O'Shaughnessy believed. The land system, he thought, was good for the preservation of aristocracy but bad

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p239; J. Kay, Free trade in Land (London 1880) pp 299-300.

11. Reports of the select committee on advances made by the Commissioners of Public Works (Ireland), H.C., 1835, xx, p168.

12. Dutton, p152. Dutton went on to claim that a "very large portion" of the county was let without any lease (p155).

13. In England a series of measures, beginning with Pusey's Drainage Act of 1840, were enacted to enable life tenants to charge improvements costs on their estates (B. English and J. Saville, Strict settlement: a guide for historians. University of Hull occasional papers in economic and social history, No 10 (1983) p51; D. Spring, The English landed estate in the nineteenth century: its administration, Baltimore 1963, pp139- 144; J.V. Beckett, The aristocracy in England 1660-1914, Oxford 1986, pp176-7).

for agriculture[14].

No general statements were made about the wealth or incomes of the county gentry as a whole. But statements were made about their financial problems and encumbered estates. Fr Peter Daly said landlords were "generally encumbered; I could scarcely recollect.... an instance of an exception to their being greatly distressed by reason of their being greatly embarrassed with debts". John Blakeney, crown solicitor for Galway, stated that they would be greatly relieved if they could get rid of some of their property. Blakeney and others believed that encumbrances were long standing and that the present owners were not to blame. Their fathers and grandfathers had entailed their estates and put heavy charges on them, especially mortgage charges and judgement debts[15]. "In very few instances", Blakeney thought, "have Galway gentlemen increased the burdens upon their estates; they have entered upon estates which they found encumbered by settlements and judgements". Even without the potato failure "the embarrassments were so general that the embarrassed gentry could not very long have stood their ground"[16]. Clancarty also agreed that it was fathers and grandfathers who had caused estates to become encumbered rather than the present owners. Debts were incurred in various ways, even by families traditionally prudent like the Mahons of Castlegar. Sir Ross Mahon, 1st Bt. who died in 1835, left a number of debts . His younger son, Rev. Sir William Ross Mahon, 4th Bt. had a difficult time financially. He had a small salary as a

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14. Reports of the select committee on poor laws (Ireland), H.C. 1849, pp 604-5. The existence of an aristocracy however was not dependent on entails, as Hearn explained (W.E. Hearn, Cassell prize essay on the condition of Ireland, London 1851, pp92-3).

15. Ibid, p652.

16. Ibid, pp 669, 671, 680.

clergyman in Yorkshire and had to pay his mother's jointure and educate a large family[17]. Rent failure, increased poor rates and other expenses[18] were serious factors for many proprietors. The Ballyglunin papers contain many indications of rent failure. Martin J. Blake's agent, Dominick Donelan, was complaining in 1846 that he found it "most difficult to collect the rents in all directions, a complete disinclination on the part of the tenantry to pay, dreading a famine..."[19]. Blake however because of his financial resources and efficient demesne farming was able to survive and his correspondence has numerous cases of neighbouring and other gentry attempting to borrow money from him.

James Martin of Ross said in 1849 that in his part of the county not more than 20% of rents were paid during the previous two years, and in reply to the question whether the landlords as well as the farmers were "entirely paralysed", he replied - "Yes, the whole of those who are altogether dependent upon incomes derived from land"[20]. Martin ruined himself trying to keep his tenants alive during the Famine and was obliged to work as a journalist in London to make money to pay his debts[21]. He had however no business capacity,

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17. E.A. Mahon, The Mahons of Castlegar (unpublished history based on family papers; typescript 1954). pp 35,39. Hereafter cited as Mahons of Castlegar.

18. Sir Percy Nugent calculated that a landlord with a gross income of £4000 paid more than £800 a year local and imperial taxation (Report of the select committee on taxation in Ireland, H.C., 1864, xv, p296).

19. P.R.O.I.: Ballyglunin papers: M6936/56/No.71.

20. Reports of the select committe on poor laws (Ireland), H.C., 1849, xvi, p483. Most rents were not paid despite liberal abatements (Western Star, 13 February 1847, p2).

21. M. Collis, Somerville and Ross: a biography (London 1968) p18; Somerville and Ross, Irish Memories, p9.

according to his daughter Violet Martin. She claimed there was no debt on the Ross estate when her grandfather gave up his management of the estate. Philip Reade of Woodpark (Scariff) stated that he had spent a very large sum on improvements, but was not in debt as yet. If however he had half the money back again he would emigrate. The gentry were preparing to leave Ireland, he claimed, and were actually going[22]. Other neighbouring counties appear to have been in a worse state than Galway. Most of the Roscommon gentry were in a state of insolvency[23]. The assistant barrister for Mayo referred to the impoverished state of the Mayo gentry[24]. Although the Famine accelerated the ruin of many families other causes weakened estates both before and after that watershed. Some were impoverished by law-suits, like the Handcocks and Blakes of Menlo[25]. The Blakes had litigation with the corporation, with family relations and even between father and son. Sir Thomas Blake was an insolvent and was gaoled for debts[26]. His son, Sir Valentine Blake, left a mere £3000 at his death in 1912[27]. A few cases of bankruptcy occurred in the 1880's such as the Lamberts of Castle Lambert and the Blakes of Cregg Castle[28]. Caroline Blake of Renvyle told the Parnell commission of her troubles during the 'No

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22. Reports of the select committee on poor laws (Ireland), H.C., 1849, xvii, ppl6, 21.

23. Ibid, pl50.

24. Ibid, xvi, pp 604-5: Sir Robert Peel, in a Commons speech of 5 March 1849, referred to Mayo proprietors making reductions in their domestic establishment.

25. William Handcock was in London in 1843 under fear of arrest for debt (Handcock v. Delacour, p20).

26. Galway Vindicator 23 March 1850 p2; Western Star 3 August 1850 p4.

27. Tuam Herald 23 November 1912, p4.

28. Galway Vindicator, 30 May 1883, p4.

Rent Manifesto' which forced her to take in paying guests in 1883. A 'Blake Fund' committee was set up with the support of Balfour[29]. The Blakes of Ardfry were a more high living branch of the Blake family network. Joseph Blake, 3rd Lord Wallscourt, squandered most of his fortune in the days of the Regency[30]. The 4th Lord Wallscourt, who succeeded in 1849, sold at Christies for £25,000 paintings by Sir Thomas Lawrence of his mother Elizabeth Lock and her brother William Lock of Norbury Park Surrey[31]. Lawrence was often a guest at Ardfry, but the day came when money was more vital than family possessions "so the lovely singing lady and the 'Boy and Dog' crossed the Atlantic and the halls of old Ardfry knew them no more"[32].

Although no general estimate was made of the incomes of the county gentry as a whole, details of individual incomes can be gleaned from the sources and these show a very large gulf between those at the top of the scale and the majority further down. The Dunsandle estate at the end of the 18th century was reckoned to be worth £16,000 a year although it was heavily

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29. Special Commission Act 1888: speeches proceedings and evidence, i, pp 605-8; Somerville and Ross, Through Connemara in a governess cart (1893) p136; J. Harris Stone, Connemara and the neighbouring spots of beauty and interest (1906) p80; J.A. Lidwill, A seagrey house: the history of Renvyle house (Galway, n.d.) p47.

30. The Duchess of Sermoneta, The Locks of Norbury: the story of a remarkable family in the 18th and 19th centuries (London 1940) p319.

31. The Duchess di san Teodoro, Memoirs (London 1929) pp 66, 97. She was daughter of William Lock, who illustrated Byron's works, and whose sister was wife of the 3rd Lord Wallscourt.

32. The Duchess of Sermoneta, Things Past (London 1929) p17. She was granddaughter of the Duchess di san Teodoro.

encumbered[33]. The average income of a great land-owner in England at that time was about £10,000 per annum[34]. The great boost to the Dunsandle fortunes had come in 1780 on the marriage of Denis Daly to the heiress Henrietta Maxwell who brought him large estates in England[35]. Wakefield, writing in 1812, claimed that "Clanricarde, Clancarty, Mr Eyre and Ross Mahon have all estates of about £10,000 per annum. Mr Prendergast Smith [of Lough Cutra] has one more considerable, and there are many, the yearly incomes of which amount to five, six and even seven thousand pounds"[36]. Luke Dillon, 2nd Lord Clonbrock, came of age in 1801. "In one estimate of income, which in those days came almost entirely from rents, Luke appears to have had a little over £10,000 a year"[37]. The Bodkins of Kilcloony,[38] Blakes of Gortnamona[39] and Joyces of Mervue[40] were described as having large and unencumbered fortunes. The Joyces made their money through trade and banking. Daniel O'Connell referred to the Bellews as having

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33. H. Macdougal, Sketches of Irish political characters of the present day (London 1799) p299.

34. J.V. Beckett, The aristocracy in England 1660-1914 (Oxford 1986) p289; G.E. Mingay, English landed society in the 18th century (London 1963) p21.

35. In accordance with the terms of the marriage settlement Daly had to settle part of his estate "at the present yearly value of £7000 sterling and upwards..." (N.L.I.: Dunsandle papers).

36. Account of Ireland statistical and political, i, p260.

37. E.A. Mahon, The Dillons of Clonbrock (private family history based on Clonbrock papers 1964) p29. Hereafter cited as Dillons of Clonbrock.

38. They possessed "an unencumbered and independent fortune" (Connaught Journal, 2 May 1831 p2).

39. Tuam Herald 7 February 1863 p1.

40. Dutton, p419; Galway county election petition: minutes of evidence, H.C., 1872, XlViii, p23.

an estate worth £8000 a year[41]. The St Georges of Tyrone had at least a nominal rental of £13,000 although the estate was heavily encumbered[42]. St. George of Headford owned property worth £4000 - £5000 a year. In a letter to the Times about Peel's Irish Plan he said his estate was free from mortgages but, having spent 35 years improving the condition of his tenants his burden of poor rates had increased[43]. Thomas Redington of Ryehill who died in 1828, had "an ample fortune"[44]. Despite the sweeping assertions of general landlord impoverishment made during the Famine the fact was that several in east Galway remained wealthy through the letter half of the century. Theobold Blake of Vermont was described as a man "of very considerable fortune" in 1871[45]. He was worth about £3000 a year and had mortgages on other estates, railway shares and bank stock. Martin J. Blake of Ballyglunin was described as a person "of large fortune"[46]. Blake died, unmarried, in 1861 and his nephew and successor Walter Blake died, unmarried, in 1891 in Switzerland. Walter left personal property worth £200,000 and had an income of £20,000 a year. He had a rental of about £7000 a year and also operated as a financier - as did his uncle - advised by Rothschilds of London[47]. Railway investment helped the Trenches of Woodlawn to maintain house and estate standards

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41. Connaught Journal 12 January 1829, p1.

42. Fahey, Diocese of Kilmacduagh p316.

43. J. Barrow, A Tour round Ireland (London 1836) p251; Western Star 14 April 1849 p1.

44. Connaught Journal 19 June 1828 p3.

45. Tuam Herald 18 March 1871 p2.

46. H.C., 1847-48, LV, p671.

47. Tuam Herald 3 October 1891 p2; October p2; 30 January 1892 p2.

into the 20th century[48]. The rental on the Clanricarde estate in 1880 was said to be £23,500[49]. The last Marquess inherited fortune from his uncle Lord Canning and although his rent-roll became greatly reduced he left £2.5 million at his death in 1916[50]. There is a local tradition that Clanricarde, like the Blakes of Ballyglunin and probably others, made money as a moneylender. He once loaned £500 to the courtesan Catherine Walters on the security of her jewels[51]. James Blake Concanon of Rockfield was an example of wealth being made by a member of a gentry family which had declined as landowners. Concanon made a fortune as a stock jobber and had interests in tramway companies and banking[52].

The majority of the families high on the income scale were unaffected by the Incumbered Estates Court sales. The exceptions were the Eyrecourt, Lough Cutra and St. George of Tyrone estates. The Dalys of Dunsandle however were able to negotiate and survive very heavy borrowing[53]. Gentry borrowed

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48. Western News 21 January 1922.

49. Tuam Herald 25 August 1894, p2.

50. Clanricarde's sister had married the 4th Lord Harewood in 1845. The young Henry Lascelles (later 6th Lord Harewood) had a chance meeting with Clanricarde, his grand-uncle, in 1916 in a London club. As a result of the meeting Clanricarde rewrote his will and left his entire fortune, including the Portumna estate, to Lascelles (C. Kennedy, Harewood: the life and times of an English country house, London 1982; pp126-7).

51. E. Longford, A pilgrimmage of passion: the life of Wilfrid Scawen Blunt (London 1979) p377.

52. Tuam Herald 29 December 1894 p2, 20 December 1913 p4.

53. One transaction was a loan of £128,000 from the Globe Insurance Company (N.L.I. Dunsandle papers. The Representative Body of the Church of Ireland with Lord Dunsandle. Re loan of £100,000, 29 April 1871).

from varied sources. The Eyres borrowed in London and locally[54]. The Kelly of Fiddane estate in north Galway was in debt to a retired Indian nabob and was sold in 1805[55]. Some major proprietors were borrowing from Martin Blake of Ballyglunin such as James Staunton Lambert of Cregclare[56]. Lambert's estate, like the Lough Cutra, Ballinahinch and Clifden estates, was ruined by the Famine. Other factors in the Lough Cutra case were castle building and electioneering all of which amounted to a debt of £60,000[57]. Similar factors ruined the O'Neill of Bunowen estate in Connemara. Most of the large estates in Connemara were sold in the Incumbered Estates Court, including the Ballinahinch, Bunowen and Clifden estates. D'Arcy of Clifden owed £50,000 to English creditors[58]. Martin of Ballinahinch owed £37,475 to Thomas Wentworth Beaumont of Bretton Hall Yorkshire in 1847. He then borrowed from the Law Life Assurance Society of London a sum which eventually mounted to over £200,000[59]. Some were able

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54. I. Gantz, Signpost to Eyrecourt p200. E. Ellis and P.B. Eustace, Registry of Deeds abstract of wills, iii, 1785-1832, p132.

55. Reg. Deeds: bk 566, p266; bk 598 p310. The creditor was William B. Sumner of Hatchlands in Surrey (Burke's history of the commoners, i, p60).

56. P. G. Lane, 'The impact of the Incumbered Estates Court upon the landlords of Galway and Mayo' Galway Arch. and Hist. Soc. Jn., xxxviii (1981-82) pp 47, 49.

57. Fahey, Kilmacduagh p370; R.S. Rait, The Story of an Irish property (O.U.P. 1908) p86. Stock were being seized by the high sheriff at the suit of creditors of Lord Gort in 1849 (Galway Vindicator 5 September 1849 p3).

58. Tuam Herald 27 April 1850 p4. Debts arose from unsuccessful law cases (Galway Vindicator 2 October 1850 p4).

59. For the details of the loan see Archer E.S. Martin, Genealogy of the family of Martin of Ballinahinch Castle (Winnipeg 1890). For the problems of the estate see Galway Vindicator 25

to survive by selling off large outlying portions of their estates. For example Christopher St. George of Tyrone sold his Connemara, east Galway and Queen's county estates totalling over 31,000 acres and remained with over 15,000 acres. Sir William Gregory of Coole sold two-thirds of his estate leaving him almost 5000 acres. Gregory had been involved in heavy gambling with Edmund O'Flaherty, brother of Anthony O'Flaherty of Knockbane, Moycullen, M.P., for Galway. He was also closely involved socially and financially with the wayward Lord Dunkellin, Clanricarde's eldest son. Gregory, like Lord Oranmore and Browne and others, was in the grip of London Jewish moneylenders[60]. Surviving correspondence between himself and Edmund O'Flaherty, his financial agent, reveals the extent of his problems and his reliance on racing wins at Newmarket to pay the interest on his debts. In a letter to O'Flaherty - from Doncaster - he expressed annoyance at his cheques being dishonoured and reflected on his depressed financial and mental state. "I cannot forget the position I have held, and ... mortifications... sink more deeply than in the case of those who have no recollections of more prosperous times and seasons"[61].

Coole was one of the estates in the category of 10,000 acres and over put up for sale. The estates sold outright in this category were those of D'Arcy of Clifden Castle, Kelly of Castle Kelly, Lambert of Cregclare, Martin of Ballinahinch and O'Neill of Bunowen. Estates sold out in the 5,000-10,000 acre category were those of Browne of Moyne, Blake of Merlin Park, Burke of Tyaquin, Burke of Glinsk, Ffrench of Castleffrench

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September 1850 p4.

60. N.L.I.: MS 15982 (Gregory-O'Flaherty correspondence). In a letter to O'Flaherty in January 1853 he referred to payment due to Solomon and Sir Henry Lazarus and said "all Jews are to be feared".

61. Ibid: Gregory to O'Flaherty, 15 September 1853.

and Lord Gort of Lough Cutra. Estates and demesnes sold in the 1,000-5,000 acre category were those of Blakes of Castlgrove, Oranmore and Belmont, Donelan of Ballydonelan, Jenings of Ironpool and Joyce of Rahasane. Other estates in serious trouble though not sold in the Incumbered Estates Court included the Martin of Ross, Blake of Menlo Browne of Cooloo and O'Flaherty of Knockbane estates. The expense of continuous activity in public affairs could also be a serious financial drain, as was the case with Denis Kirwan of Castle Hacket. The Castle Kelly sale appears to have been voluntary. Denis Kelly had no male issue and wished to make financial provision for his daughters[62].

A sense of continunity was maintained by the fact that a considerable amount of the land on offer was bought by the existing county gentry and aristocracy. There were also cases of large sums being paid by cadet branches and younger sons. The Castle Kelly estate for instance was bought by Christopher Neville Bagot, a younger son, for over £100,000 and John D. Mahon, a connection of the Castlegar family, paid £14,000 for the Ballydonelan estate[63]. Isidore Lynch of the Petersburgh family bought £4000 worth of land[64]. Thomas Browne of Brownsgrove, a younger son and prosperous agent, was also a major buyer. The internal buyers included solvent proprietors like Lords Clonbrock,[65] Clancarty and Clanmorris, Pierce Joyce of Mervue, Blakeney of Abbert, Smith of Masonbrook and Lambert of Castle Ellen. Clancarty paid over £11,000 for the Kellysgrove estate, near Ballinasloe, and shipped the

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62. Tuam Herald 5 December 1891 p4.

63. Bagot V. Bagot, p49; Tuam Herald 13 July 1850 p.4.

64. Tuam Herald 8 June 1854.

65. Clonbrock, Sir Thomas Burke, Joseph Kelly of Newtown and Comyn of Woodstock were among buyers of stock and crops at Ardfry in 1849 (Galway Vindicator 27 October 1849 p2).

impoverished tenants off to America. Part of the Kellysgrove lands was bought by George Ramsay Campbell, a Scotsman "to whom the estate was largely indebted"[66]. Clancarty also bought the local Fairfield estate but applied to reverse the sale on finding some of it tenanted under a perpetual lease[67]. Lambert of Castle Ellen bought a large portion of the adjacent Oranmore and Browne estate near Athenry from Sir Moses Montefiore and Baron de Rothschild who were trustees of the Alliance Assurance Company[68]. Other internal buyers included Shawe-Taylor of Castle Taylor, Burke of Marble Hill and Bodkin of Annagh who all bought portions of the Coole estate[69] and Lahiff of Gort who bought parts of the Lough Cutra estate. The numerous outside buyers, both individual and commercial, were dominated by the large new estates of Guinness at Ashford, Pollok at Lismany, Henry at Kylemore and Meldon at Coolarne. In 1871 the Law Life Assurance Company sold 160,000 acres of the Ballinahinch estate for about £200,000 to Richard Berridge of the firm of Meux and Company, brewers, Tottenham Court Road, London.

The sale of estates in the Incumbered Estates Court represented the greatest change in proprietorship since the 17th century. But there had always been a considerable business in land transactions between the Tribal families and others and the Tower Hill and Ballyglunin estates were largely built up through such activity. The impression was given that the new landowners effected a revolution in agricultural progress. The Scots and Ulster element among the newcomers

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66. Tuam Herald 21 December 1850 p1; 19 April 1851 p2.

67. Fairfield, the old estate of O'Brien the "sham squire", became the property of James Thorngate who was an English solicitor and the principal creditor (Western Star 27 July 1850 p3).

68. Tuam Herald 23 February 1861.

69. Tuam Herald 6 December 1856 p3.

was seen as a welcome stimulant which would change the lax ways of Connaught agriculture. The fact was however that many of the older proprietors had an interest in progress and had long been involved in agricultural innovations. The old stereotype of western landowners as a breed of fox-hunting non-improvers was based on an incomplete and prejudiced apprehension of the facts. Even before the Famine period there was much variation between estates and in the performance of gentry. After the Incumbered Estates Court sales much land came under profit-seeking absentee buyers. Large newcomers like Pollok implemented ruthless agricultural policies in the name of what they believed was progress. When faced with Famine conditions proprietors, both new and old, had to reconsider their attitudes to overpopulation and poverty. It was understandable that the acute poverty in many areas should dominate the minds of observers and social commentators. In general however the position was more complicated than assumed and their critical comments raise questions about the wider role of the gentry regarding the general administration of their estates.

Much of the evidence is impressionistic and the comments unbalanced and extreme. Thomas Campbell Foster for instance wrote that "exertion and industry, and a desire to improve" were "virtues unknown in the west of Ireland"[70]. Hely Dutton referred to dirty and ill-built villages in Galway which were the result of landlords' "criminal indifference to the comforts of their tenantry"[71]. Dutton however admitted that the social and agricultural scene was changing and he praised the improvements of the aristocracy and major gentry. Likewise many of the witnesses before the Devon Commission

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70. Letters on the condition of the people of Ireland. Reprinted, with additions, from the "Times" (London 1846) p295.

71. Dutton, p338.

testified to the role being performed by the large proprietors in their local and agricultural environment. The writers of popular fiction however saw to it that the image of the fox-hunting squire and not the improving landlord dominated historical memory. In east Galway a tradition of improvement had been established in the 18th century on the estates of Robert French of Monivea, Robert Gregory of Coole and the Trenches of Woodlawn[72]. The Woodlawn improvements began around 1760 under Frederick Trench and were continued by his son Lord Ashtown. Ashtown's plantations and bog drainage were described by Griffith as "amongst the most perfect" that he had seen[73]. Others noted in the reports on bog drainage including Jenings of Ironpool, Blake of Windfield, Daly of Cloncagh, Mahon of Castlegar, Lord Ffrench, Burke of Glinsk, D'Arcy of New Forest and McDermott of Springfield[74]. McDermott was cited as "one amongst the few landlords who hold out encouragement to their tenants to improve bog and mountain moor; he makes the principal drains at his own expense, and allows the people to improve without charging them any present rent". This is not the only example of evidence of landlords or gentry supporting tenantry in improvements and it qualifies the general idea that this was a purely English custom. Lord Clancarty repaid to tenants two-thirds or more of any sums they spent on building houses and he also built labourers' cottages[75].

Campbell Foster - already contradicting his own sweeping condemnation - praised Lord Wallscourt as a nobleman "who has

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72. Young's tour in Ireland (ed. A.W. Hutton 1892), i, pp261, 284.

73. Fourth report on bogs, 1813-14, VlII, pl13.

74. Third report on bogs, H.C. 1813-14, VlI, pp127, 129. Fourth Report, ibid, VlII, ppl11, 126, 151, 155.

75. Dutton, pp 151-2; H.C. 1849, 15i, p743.

made great sacrifices and exertions to improve his tenants[76]. This was the man referred to earlier as having wasted most of his money during the Regency. Wallscourt had visited the Ralahine co-operative on the Vandeleur estate in Clare and was so impressed that he adopted the scheme on 100 acres of his estate. He wrote later that the system "completely identifies the workmen with the success of the farm, besides giving me full liberty to travel on the continent for a year at a time; and upon my return I have always found that the farm had prospered more than when I was present"[77]. Sir James Caird, who advocated improvement though not aristocracy, described the co-operative experiment at Ardfry under the management of Thomas Skilling, who became the first and only professor of agriculture in Galway. It was, wrote Caird, "a kind of partnership concern, in which landlord and tenant supplied respectively the capital and skill, and mutually shared the profits or loss". Wallscourt's death from Asiatic cholera in Paris in 1849 ended the scheme before it could show results[78]. Wallscourt's imaginative schemes also included marine ventures but were unsucessful. T.P. O'Connor, who met Wallscourt, later wrote - "He was then engaged in a freakish scheme to make a combination between the oyster beds of Ardfry and Arcachon... I do not think the scheme came to anything"[79]. It was a common contemporary view therefore that if estates were properly managed the charge of absenteeism had little validity. This is also seen in the case of the Clydagh estate

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76. Letters on the condition of the people of Ireland, p294.

77. E.T. Craig, An Irish commune: the experiment at Ralahine, County Clare 1831-1833 (Dublin 1983), pp100, 130-1.

78. Caird, Ireland and the plantation scheme; or, the West of Ireland as a field for investment, pp56-7; Galway Vindicator 17 May 1848, p3, 19 September 1849 p2.

79. Memoirs of an old parliamentarian (London 1929), ii, p264.

near Headford. Sir George Staunton's estate at Clydagh was, according to Barrow, "under the excellent management of Mr Lynch who, being a near relative, takes so great an interest in all that concerns it, that Sir George can scarcely be deemed an absentee". A neat house was built by Staunton on each farm[80].

There was general agreement that the gentry devoted considerable care to the improvement of their demesnes and cultivation of plantations. Of particular note were the Clonbrock, Merlin Park, Bellevue, Lough Cutra, Garbally, Woodlawn, Mount Bellew, Monivea and Headford estates. Dutton noted that planting had "long been a favourite pursuit in this county especially since the days of Shanley and Leggett, who certainly gave a considerable impulse to it"[81]. Leggett was the well known landscape gardener who beautified "almost every demesne in the county"[82]. Others included Robert Power and John Sutherland, who planned the Lough Cutra demesne. This was Lord Gort's "magnificent house and picturesque plantations", which, when finished, Dutton thought would be amongst the finest places in Ireland[83]. The plantations of Lawrence of Bellevue extended to 370 acres[84]. Dutton noted other plantations such as Marble Hill[85] and Ballinahinch, but although he admitted that many gentlemen had planted

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80. J. Barrow, A tour round Ireland (London 1836), p253.

81. Dutton p434.

82. Ibid, p321.

83. Ibid p56. For the subject in general see Edward Malins and the Knight of Glin, Lost demesnes: Irish landscape gardening 1660-1845 (London 1976).

84. Dutton, pp435-8.

85. Sir Thomas Burke of Marble Hill who, with his neighbouring proprietors "has been at much pains in planting" had his methods criticised by Hall (Tour through Ireland, London 1813, i, p327).

extensively they still had not planted forests. He criticised them for not planting mountain sides and said that one Scots proprietor would plant more than all Ireland[86]. Although most gentlemen maintained their own nurseries he considered that plantations were mostly neglected except Clonbrock and Mount Bellew. Dutton spent three years at Mount Bellew while engaged in designing an extensive lake, large plantations, and in draining and improving bogs[87]. He also advised neighbouring gentry, like the Brownes of Moyne, on drainage and planting[88]. His services were being sought by Kirwans of Dalgan and of Castle Hacket, by Kellys of Cargins and of Castle Kelly and others. "I hope I need not assure you", he wrote to Christopher Dillon Bellew, "that I should prefer an engagement at Mount Bellew to any other"[89]. Dutton however fell into dispute with Bellew over fees and Bellew appears to have attacked his professional character.

Luke Dillon, 2nd Lord Clonbrock, had a great interest in trees. His peak year of planting was 1807 and in that year 50,850 trees were bought, as well as 16,000 seedlings[90]. The finest oak wood Caesar Otway saw in Connaught was at Clonbrock. Caroline Spencer of Cornbury Oxfordshire, wife of the 3rd Lord Clonbrock, was fond of formal gardens and brought lawn designs from Cornbury to Clonbrock[91]. Sir Ross Mahon almost overspent in laying out and planting the demesne around

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86. Dutton, pp16, 434, 440, 446.

87. N.L.I.: Mount Bellew papers: MS 27195(i), letter of C.D. Bellew, January 1816, with character reference for Dutton.

88. Ibid: MS 27197(2) Dutton to C.D. Bellew, 29 January 1812.

89. Ibid: MS 27195 (2) Dutton to C.D. Bellew 24 March 1819.

90. Dillons of Clonbrock, p31.

91. Ibid, p51.

his new Morrison villa at Castlegar[92]. Caesar Otway praised the judicious planting at Garbally and the "well-ordered pleasure grounds" at Headford[93]. Some years earlier the parliamentary reports on bogs referred to the improvements and planting of old families like Skerrett of Carnacrow, Daly of Clooncah, Mahon of Beech Hill, McDermott of Springfield, Burke of Glinsk, D'Arcy of Clifden and Martin of Ballinahinch[94]. Earlier still Arthur Young had praised the plantations of Robert French of Monivea. He described Woodlawn as "improved entirely in the modern English taste" and Robert Gregory of Coole as having "a very noble nursery from which he is making plantations, which will soon be a great ornament to the country"[95]. The records of the Incumbered Estates Court also refer to plantations on some Blake estates. Castlegrove had both old and young plantations. The old Blake of Dunmacrina demesne had "some remnants of the plantation". There were 43,000 trees in the Merlin Park demesne[96]. The demesne of O'Hara of Lenaboy, although adjacent to Galway, had extensive plantations[97]. The prosperous Martin Blake of Ballyglunin was probably in a minority in having planting carried out during the Famine years. In 1846 and 1847 planting services, including cherry trees, were provided at Ballyglunin by Francis Madden's Ballinasloe nurseries[98]. The adjoining Brooklodge demesne was planted after the building of the

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92. Mahons of Castlegar, p26. The new villa was built around 1810.

93. Tour in Connaught (Dublin 1839) pp130, 161, 193.

94. Third report on bogs, H.C., 1813-14, VlI, pp128-9; Fourth report, H.C., 1813-14, VlII pp151, 209.

95. Young's tour in Ireland, i, pp 272, 278, 284.

96. Incumbered Estates Court estates, under dates 18 November 1851, 12 and 19 November 1852.

97. J.C. Curwen, Observations on the state of Ireland (London 1818) i, p359.

98. P.R.O.I.: Ballyglunin papers: M6936/56/90; M6936/58/34.

mansion house in 1786 by Christopher French, a nephew of Christopher French of Tyrone[99]. The Digbys developed plantations on their estate, near Mount Bellew, before they came to reside on the estate. Detailed directions on how the work should be carried out, and the hiring of a nurseryman from the neighbouring Abbert demesne, were relayed to their agent[100].

Contemporary observers like Dutton and Sir William Wilde claimed that advances in agriculture were mainly confined to the demesnes of the gentry. Wilde said that the hired Scots agriculturists "never effected a single improvement outside their employer's demesne, or bettered the condition of the Irish farmer in any respect"[101]. Such generalisations however were not accurate. Nor were those who claimed that all agricultural and estate progress should be credited to the new buyers in the Incumbered Estates Court. Such a claim was made by the Western Star of Ballinasloe whose editor was a progressive agriculturist. The paper's comment was made in relation to the improvements of Thomas Richardson of Waringstown in Down who had bought part of the old Burke of Tyaquin estate. The paper praised Richardson's improvements and attacked the lax ways of the older gentry and went on- "Green crops are now growing in healthy luxuriance, and cereal fields teem with an abundant harvest where once the ancient proprietor wiled away the hours with dog and gun in search of the partridge or snipe". Richardson had "all the humane characteristics, the prudence and the energy of the Ulster landlord". The reality was however that Lord Clonbrock's

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99. Ibid: M6933 (57C). Brooklodge passed to Ballyglunin by purchase in 1813.

100. N.L.I. O'Hara Papers: MS 20289. Robert Digby to Richard Macale 20 November 1815 and 30 November 1815.

101. Irish popular superstitions (Dublin 1852) p26; Dutton, p70.

agent Thomas Bermingham and many of the gentry were in the forefront of agricultural innovation in the 1830's. These included Denis Kirwan of Castle Hacket, Robert Bodkin of Annagh, Pierce Blake of Corofin, Tully of Rafarn, and many gentry in the Ballinasloe area. Pierce Blake's stock were selected with great skill "from those of the most celebrated English breeders"[102]. Galway had 33 members in the Agricultural Society of Ireland in 1835 which exceeded the figure for any of the other listed counties[103]. Thomas Bermingham had a small estate in Galway for a time and was interested in all the details of farming. He exchanged seed potatoes with fellow gentry and bought in lambs from the stock of Earl Spencer the noted agriculturist and first president of the Royal Agricultural Society of England[104].

Any consideration of pre-Famine gentry attitudes to their estates and rural society must very largely centre on the improving activity, ideas, and copious writings of Thomas Bermingham. He was an energetic member of the group of English and Irish proprietors who met at the Thatched House Tavern in London to discuss schemes for the improvement of agricultural society in general and the economic development of the west of Ireland in particular. He was a liberal in politics and a member of the Reform Club from its foundation in 1836 until 1852[105]. Little is known about Bermingham's early life. He belonged to a Protestant family with Wicklow

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102. Tuam Herald, 11 September 1841 p3.

103. List of local agricultural societies in Ireland (Dublin 1835) pp15-16.

104. Spencer when president of the Smithfield Club "would work all day in his shirt-sleeves getting beasts into their stalls on the day before one of its shows" (D.N.B.). The Spencers were graziers in Warwickshire in the 15th century and rose into the peerage due mainly to the profits of sheepfarming (G.E. Mingay, The gentry, p82).

105. Records of the Reform Club, London.

connections and in his evidence to the select committee on the state of Ireland in 1831 he implied that he was a nephew of Henry Grattan[106]. In this evidence he described how he had managed the Wandesforde colliery at Castlecomer until 1830[107]. Bermingham worked as an agent in Kilkenny, Queen's County, Longford and Monaghan[108] but was best known as agent on the Clonbrock estate in Galway. He was also acquianted with Clanrickarde and presented him with an inscribed volume of his writings[109]. Bermingham's ideas all related to his belief that the landlord was the central pivot of rural society and he looked to major proprietors like Clancarty and Clonbrock to promote social harmony and progress. He believed that social and rural stability would follow the alleviation of poverty and unemployment. He saw the cultivation of waste land and public works in general as the most practical solution. In 1831 Bermingham published a plan for joint stock companies to cultivate waste lands and re-locate the poor. "By this means", he argued, "pauperism would lessen or vanish, our waste lands would change their nature, and a bond of union between the Crown, the nobility, the gentry and the people would be cemented on the surest and the safest principles"[110].

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106. H.C., 1831-32, XVl, p456; H. Grattan, Life and times of Henry Grattan (London 1842), lV, pp382, 411-412.

107. Ibid, p455; W. Nolan, Fassadinin: land, settlement and society in southeast Ireland 1600-1850 (Dublin 1979) p145.

108. Report of the select committee on tithes in Ireland, H.C., 1831-32, XXl, pp98-103.

109. The good of England and Ireland identified (London 1835). I am grateful to Rev. Dr P.K. Egan of Portumna for permission to consult this rare volume.

110. Connaught Journal 2 May 1831. For the general background see J.H. Andrews, 'Limits of agricultural settlement in pre-Famine Ireland', in L.M. Cullen and F. Furet, Ireland and France: 17th

Bermingham had implemented some of his ideas while he was agent on the Clonbrock estate and he accompanied his waste land scheme with a practical illustration from Clonbrock's Roscommon estate. He described how surplus families were removed from a large farm on that estate and relocated on a hilly tract. Houses were built of lime and stone, the landlord supplying timber from the thinning of plantations in the demesne of Clonbrock[111]. Bermingham's allusion to the connection between rural contentment, social cohesion and law and order should be noted. He was also one of the authors of the "Harvest Home" policy which was one of the main devices of social control. Gentry and landlords had been alarmed at the recent Ribbon and Terry Alt disturbances. Bermingham was quite open about his social theory. For example in 1831 at the height of the Terry Alt troubles he, along with Bellew of Mount Bellew, suggested the colonising of Connemara. The pauper population should be removed from the more improved districts and put on mountain tracts. By this plan, Bermingham argued, houses would be given "either to the persons or those recommended by persons who would be active in giving information and stopping the present outrages; thus forming an unpaid police in the country"[112].

The government should pursue with the Shannon, Bermingham argued, the same line that Lord Clonbrock took with his Roscommon estate, where a turbulent disorderly peasantry were converted into useful labourers and were now becoming small

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- 20th centuries: towards a comparative study of rural history (Paris 1980); K.H. Connell, 'The colonisation of waste land in Ireland 1780-1845', Economic History Review (1950) pp44-71.

111. 'Home colonies of Castlesampson and Iskerbane established for .... Lord Clonbrock...' in Bermingham, The good of England and Ireland identified, pp142-4; Connaught Journal 25 May 1834, p4.

112. Connaught Journal 5 May 1831 p4.

and comfortable landholders. He was asked for a report by the committee for the improvement of the Shannon and he corresponded with the Marquess of Downshire the chairman of the committee[113]. Bermingham predicted the social benefits of these works on the disturbed districts of Longford barony in Galway and Garrycastle barony in King's county. "Let this work be undertaken by government - let these very characters.... be set to work.... the best policeman you can have will be the overseer of this work. Employ these men by day, and you need not watch them at night - give them pieces of bargain - work - allow them good fair wages - discourage their drinking whiskey encourage good beer - and ... the men of the barony of Longford and of Garrycastle also will want coercing as little as any other set of men in any other part of the Kingdom"[114]. Many of Bermingham's ideas were incorporated in Andrew H Lynch's pamphlet, Measures for the employment of the labouring classes in Ireland, published in 1839. This pamphlet, according to the Connaught Journal, "should be in the hand of every Irish landlord and ... of every person who wishes to arrive at the knowledge of what will promote the industry and well-being of Ireland[115]. The same paper in an editorial of 25 August 1831 stated that if Bermingham's speculations had been acted upon, the West of Ireland would not deserve to be described as a colony of bankrupts and paupers.

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113. Ibid 25 August 1834.

114. Ibid. The barony of Longford had few resident gentry and much of its rich land was held in large grazing farms. (Western Argus, 17 March 1832 p3). This was largely because parts of the Eyrecourt and Quansbury (Bermingham) estates were being bought or inherited by absentee proprietors. Graziers and congestion continued to cause problems in the area (Royal commission on congestion in Ireland, H.C., 1908, XL11, pp264-273).

115. Connaught Journal 9 April 1835 p4.

Thomas Bermingham was concerned with the welfare of all of rural society including tenantry and labourers. He was particularly concerned about the plight of labourers and at one time was moved by meeting a crowd of Roscommon labourers seeking employment in the vicinity of Birmingham city[116]. The Labourers' Friend Society of London published monthly tracts containing advice for labourers and farmers and Bermingham advised the Galway papers to publish them. The employment of labourers was to be a major function of large new proprietors like Pollok of Lismany. Lord Clancarty considered the formation of a labouring class, distinct from the farming class, "a most essential principle"[117]. Bermingham's interest in the social condition of farmers and labourers led to his active involvement in the development of agriculture and scientific farming which culminated in the establishment of agricultural societies around 1840. In 1827 there had been plans to set up a Western Farming Society of Ireland, headed by a long list of interested gentry[118]. In 1832 Bermingham referred to setting up "an Agricultural association for the Empire". In the same year the Connaught Horticultural Society was set up[119]. In 1840 a "Farming Society" was established by Lord Clancarty at Ballinasloe, which was the venue for the annual October meeting of the Farming Society of Ireland. Similar societies were long established in England and Wales

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116. Ibid 16 August 1832. For the contemporary fashionable concern with labourers' welfare see D. Jones, 'Thomas Campbell Foster and the rural labourer: incendiarism in East Anglia in the 1840's', Social History, i (1976) p6 and passim.

117. Reports from select committee on poor laws (Ireland): H.C., 1849, p743.

118. Connaught Journal, 23 October 1827 p3; Dutton, p421.

119. Ibid, 16 August 1832; Tuam Herald 24 October p1840, p1. This society did much to promote horticulture in Connaught (Western Star 16 October 1847 p3).

and, although heavily aristocratic in their patronage and membership, they were concerned with the spread of information and improvement[120]. Bermingham stated that the Ballinalsoe Agricultural Society was mainly the result of Clancarty's "earnest desire to improve the farming of the small occupiers around, by offering rewards to stimulate industry, and by other arrangements trying to introduce a better description of seed... This latter plan has been pursued with great success upon the Clonbrock estate for some years past; Lord Clonbrock employing a Scotch agriculturist[121] to show his tenants how to use the iron plough, which he obtained for them at a moderate price, as well as good seed - which this Scotchman shows the tenants how and where to sow. I mention this hoping it will stimulate other landlords to do likewise"[122]. James Clapperton, the Scots agriculturist to the Ballinasloe society, told the Devon Commission that he often accompanied Clancarty from house to house and farm to farm on his different estates, "and have found... that such friendly and social intercourse between landlord and tenant is eminently calculated to stimulate and arouse the latent energies of the small farmer"[123]. Charles Filgate, agent on the Mahon of Castlegar estate, told the Devon Commission how Clonbrock

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120. The societies were concerned "to overcome the inbuilt prejudice of farmers against book-learning" (J.V. Beckett, The aristocracy in England 1660-1914, pp166-7). See also D. Spring, The English landed estate in the nineteenth century: its administration, p118; D.W. Howell, Land and people in nineteenth-century Wales (London 1978), pp36-7.

121. In 1855 Clonbrock employed a Scots steward, Robert Hay, under whom farming flourished. Hay's son succeeded him and stayed on at Clonbrock until his death in 1941 (Dillons of Clonbrock, p52).

122. Tuam Herald 17 October 1840 p1.

123. Devon comm. evidence, pt ii, p515. Clapperton was author of Instructions for the small farmers of Ireland on the cropping and culture of their farms (Dublin 1847).

funded his tenants in house-building and had the houses of poorer tenants repaired[124]. Many of the tenants of Clonbrock, Clancarty and Denis Kelly of Castle Kelly attended the Ballinasloe Agricultural Society in 1847[125]. Clancarty got subscriptions from the Irish Peasantry Society in London towards premiums for the improvement of the farming and labouring classes of the Ballinasloe district[126].

The paternalistic management of large well run estates like Garbally, Clonbrock and Woodlawn represented the better part of the overall rural picture. Borrowing for drainage and land reclamation was another factor and one which concerned more estates because of the growing need for employment. The land Improvement Act of 1847 and amending acts provided three millions for improvement loans[127]. Large proprietors tended to borrow large amounts. On the other hand some of the less prosperous gentry in poorer localities were criticised about the use to which they put their loans. Clanricarde and Clancarty each borrowed £6500 for drainage[128]. Christopher St. George of Tyrone borrowed £6000[129]. The inspector of drainage for east Galway, Charles Cooper, stated that the works of most importance were on the estates of Clanricarde,

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124. Ibid, p506.

125. Galway Vindicator 25 September 1847 p1.

126. Western Star 17 February 1849 p3. For the paternal role of agricultural societies in England see N. Goddard, 'Agricultural societies' in The Victorian countryside, ed. G.E. Mingay (London 1981), Vol. 1, pp252-3.

127. Black, Economic thought and the Irish Question, p176.

128. Report of the select committee on taxation of Ireland, H.C., 1865, XII, p43; G. Pellew, In castle and cabin or talks in Ireland in 1887, pp197-8.

129. 'The case of Mr. St George' (Hansard, XCVII, 3rd series, 1847-48, pp 1258-9).

Clonbrock and Bellew. They consisted chiefly of main drainage and gave extensive employment. Cooper, writing in 1851, said that few new loans were being applied for[130]. He pointed out that Philip Reade of Woodpark[131] was the only proprietor who had carried out "the admirable plan" of reclamation through his tenantry. Cooper also stated that in general, few proprietors had availed themselves of loans under the Land Improvement Act[132]. Those who did included Lords Clonbrock and Wallscourt, Christopher St. George, Denis Kirwan of Castle Hacket, Thomas Redington of Kilcornan and others[133]. Wallscourt and Redington each borrowed £1000 and Redington prepared a large map of his own district for the Board of Works but he objected strongly to the increasing expense of drainage[134]. Others listed included Kelly of Castle Kelly, Chevers of Killyan, Lambert of Cregclare, O'Flaherty of Knockbane, Seymour of Ballymore, Persse of Roxbourough and Martin of Ross. Absentee owners also borrowed, such as Lords Leitrim and Charlemont who gave extensive employment on their

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130. Nineteenth report of Commissioners of Public Works, H.C., 1851, XXV, pp31-2.

131. Woodpark, Mountshannon, was then in Galway but is now in Clare.

132. Eighteenth report of Commissioners of Public Works, H.C., 1850 XXV, p534.

133. Sixteenth report of Commissioners of public Works, H.C., 1847-48, XXXVl, pp231-2: Galway Vindicator 14 May 1851 p4. The 16th Report details the various loans applied for by the gentry; also 17th Report, 1849, XXlll, pp454, 632-4.

134. Fourteenth Report of Commissioners of Public Works, H.C., 1847, XVll, p500; Report of the select committee of Lords on operation of the acts relating to the drainage of lands in Ireland, as administered by the Board of Works... with minutes of evidence, H.L., 1852, XXl, pp 136-7, 175; 208-9 for drainage schemes of Athy of Renville. See also, for drainage works, H.C., 1852-53, XLl, pp 530-33, H.C. 1863, XXXVl, p392.

large joint estate around Lough Corrib[135]. A number of gentry were criticised for not employing their loans in a social or productive manner. The Board of Works charged George Burke of Danesfield with not accounting properly for the expenditure of his £1500 loan[136]. A neighbouring proprietor, Francis Comyn of Woodstock, Moycullen, repudiated reflections cast on him in a case dealing with a £500 loan[137]. The critical reflections came from the Galway Vindicator which was less deferential towards the gentry than the Tuam Herald. The same paper also claimed that John O'Neill of Bunowen, Roundstone, never used any of his borrowed £500 to employ his starving tenantry[138].

Bunowen and most other Connemara estates were sold in the Incumbered Estates Court. Although Connemara was the poorest region in the county it had the wealthiest of the new proprietors, in particular Mitchell Henry and Richard Berridge. The post-Famine proprietors were attracted by what they saw as prospects of improvement and were described as mainly speculators[139]. In many cases their wealth derived,

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135. Eighteenth report of Commissioners of Public Works, 1850, XXV, p530. Cork proprietors, like those of Galway, borrowed modest sums in general, although a few at the top of the scale borrowed very large amounts (J.S. Donnelly, The land and the people of nineteenth - century Cork, pp108-9).

136. Report of the committee appointed to inquire into the Board of Works, Ireland, H.C. 1878 XXlll, 191-2. Famine conditions on the Danesfield estate were described later by Burke's daughter Elizabeth (Lady Fingall) (Seventy years young, London, 1937, pp 25, 38).

137. Galway Vindicator 16 June 1849 p3, 30 June p3.

138. Ibid, 1 July 1848 p2. For letters by O'Neill and Lambert of Cregclare about their borrowing see Correspondence under Land Improvement (Ireland) Act, H.C. 1847-48, LVll, pp285-295.

139. Black, Economic thought and the Irish Question, p40. In Europe generally the distinction between old and new land-holders was that between those

not from land, but from the profits of industry, business or law. Many of the major new proprietors however gave an important impetus to improvements and progress in the county which in some cases proved to be controversial and unwelcome. Guinness of Ashford, Pollok of Lismany, Henry of Kylemore and Meldon of Coolarne were the biggest of these new proprietors. Benjamin Lee Guinness bought the Ashford estate of Lord Oranmore and Browne, the Rosshill estate of Lords Leitrim and Charlemont, and the Cong estate of Sir Richard O'Donnell. In 1870 6000 acres were bought from a Mr Finlay, a Belfast newspaper owner who had earlier purchased from the D'Arcys of Clifden. By 1878 the Guinness estate in Galway amounted to almost 20,000 acres[140]. Guinness made roads and bridges, built houses, reclaimed much land, planted extensively and gave considerable employment. The family's attachment to the locality was illustrated by the fact that when Sir Benjamin's son and successor was created Baron Ardilaun in 1880 he took his title from one of the Corrib islands[141]. The Pollok family had traded in timber for fifty years and had come under the influence of agricultural improvers on their estate in Renfrewshire[142]. The entire Pollok estates eventually amounted to almost 40,000 acres and the production and efficiency of the Galway estates (29,366 acres) were regarded

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for whom land was a way of life, and a growing stratum for whom it was a means of profit (T. Judt reviewing J. Blum, The end of the old order in rural europe (1978) in Social History, V (1980) p157).

140. H. Coulter, The West of Ireland, Dublin 1862, pp156-8; A. Innes Shand, Letters from the West of Ireland 1884, London 1885, p139; Hussey de Burgh, Landowners of Ireland (1878).

141. M. Semple, Reflections on Lough Corrib, Galway 1974, p171.

142. P.G. Lane, 'An attempt at commercial farming in Ireland after the Famine', Studies (Spring 1972) p54.

as equal to any in England[143]. Henry Coulter, the western correspondent of Saunder's Newsletter, was an admirer of Pollok's farming and said it was carried on "on a scale of magnitude and with a minute attention to details unknown elsewhere in Ireland"[144]. Pollok's Glinsk estates had no existing leases but some of the large farms around his seat at Lismany were leased at the time of purchase to gentlemen tenants like the Cowans and Gromes of Sycamore Hill. Cottiers and pauper tenants had been cleared from some of these lands before the arrival of Pollok[145]. In addition to the purchase price of £250,000 Pollok spent £350,000 in improvements including some compensations to tenants making a total of £600,000[146]. When Prince Napoleon visited Ballinasloe in 1860 he was impressed by Pollok's gigantic steadings, bone mill and machinery operated by steam power[147]. Pollok's policy of progress and modernisation at all costs aroused controversy and was debated in Parliament on 29 April and 27 May 1856. His critics condemned his consolidation and clearances. But his large scale tillage for the stall-feeding of cattle herds and work-horses provided extensive employment. Pollok was defended by the Galway Express whose editor John MacDougall, was a fellow Scotsman and Presbyterian[148]. "If Connaught is ever to take the same position as Ulster and Leinster", the

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143. 'A Paragon Estate', The Irish Builder 1 May 1870 p107; The Dublin Builder, 1 November 1859 p14.

144. The West of Ireland, p17.

145. Incumbered Estates Court: sale of West estate 1 July 1853.

146. 'A Paragon Estate', p107. For Pollok's drainage see H.C. 1887, XXV, p552.

147. Tuam Herald, 6 October 1860. Pollok was also a large-scale importer of guano (ibid 31 January 1857 p3).

148. MacDougall began his career with the Farmer's Gazette in Dublin and later worked with Saunder's Newsletter (Tuam Herald 17 July 1915 p4).

Galway Express wrote on 31 March 1855, "it will be through the labours of persons like Mr Pollok who have lately invested money in this part of the country, in co-operation with the remnant of that local aristocracy which gambling and riotous living have thought fit to leave us".

James Dillon Meldon exemplified how a wealthy solicitor acquired a large estate and became actively involved in the theory and practice of progress and improvement . Solicitors could amass large fortunes particularly if they were involved in large - scale land agency as was illustrated in the notorious case involving Edmund Kelly of Rookwood[149]. The profession came in for some criticism in the mid - 19th century. The special correspondent of the Daily News made the following comment in 1850. "No body of men of recent years have had so rich a harvest as Irish solictors. The property of the country has been in their hands, and the complex nature of its position has been to them a source of great emolument"[150]. The writer implied that they feared the Incumbered Estates Act would ruin them because it simplified the problem of title. Meldon however had a genuine interest in the wider issues of land policy. He wrote to Lord John Russell in 1849 suggesting that the government should buy encumbered estates as they bought under the railway and other public acts[151]. The land should then be let at a moderate

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149. V. Hughes, The strange story of Sarah Kelly (Moate, 1988) pp xi, 26). Kelly bought the Dalyston estate in 1832 for £65,000 (Connaught Journal, 2 July 1832 p3).

150. quoted in Galway Vindicator 9 October 1850 p2. A Manchester businessman, on the other hand, who investigated land sales in the Incumbered Estates Court, reported that he was received by the solicitors involved "with uniform politeness and attention, and .... without any sinister object, on wish to mislead in any particular" (Ibid, 13 November 1852, p4).

151. Tuam Herald 21 April 1849 p4.

rent to solvent tenants in perpetuity as small farms, each farmer to employ two labourers. Other land should be set up in farms of 100-300 acres and sold in fee with a parliamentary title. Agriculturists should be widely employed to instruct the new class of farmers. "Thus", argued Meldon, "the government would have planted a solvent and respectable proprietary in the place of the present insolvent owners". Meldon bought extensive portions of the Blake of Belmont and Blake of Orancastle estates. He also bought about 3000 acres of Lord Oranmore's estate from the Alliance Insurance Company. These lands, together with other properties bought by Meldon, amounted to almost 6000 acres. Meldon became particularly involved in agricultural innovations and demonstrated the latest reaping machine at his Belmont estate to a group of interested gentry[152]. He was also the most active of those involved in the flax-growing industry[153]. He employed men from Belfast to erect and operate a steam-powered scutch-mill which gave extensive employment. Other mills operated on the Clancarty, Clanricarde and St. George of Headford estates[154]. Such appears to have been Meldon's popularity that when he died in 1883 - in the middle of the land war - 150 of his Galway and Mayo tenants went to Dublin to attend his funeral and his Wexford tenants sent their manager to represent

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152. Ibid, 15 September 1855 p3; 18 October 1856 p3; 1 October 1864 p2; 17 June 1865 p3.

153. Earlier linen works had been established by Lawrence of Lawrencetown and by Denis Daly at Mount Shannon (Dutton, p427).

154. Tuam Herald 10 September 1864, p1; 24 September p1. Flax covered 300 acres in Galway in 1863 and 1147 acres in 1865 (W.N. Hancock, Flax culture in Connaught and Munster, 1865, p5). The industry later declined (A. Corrigan, Flax husbandry, 1870, p3. The gentry were called on to save the industry, p34).

them[155].

Post - 1849 improvements and investment in estates came therefore from a variety of purchasers. The biggest were those outside buyers whose wealth had come mainly or entirely from non-landed sources like business or law. Meldon, Pollok and Sir Arthur Guinness eventually sat on the Galway grand jury. Others developed their estates but remained largely absentees. Such was the case with James Perry who bought large portions of the estate of Lord Oranmore and Browne in the vicinity of Athenry. Perry was a wealthy Quaker who had successfully backed the builders of the Irish railways and invested in coalmines in the Ruhr district of Germany[156]. Perry found his Athenry estate "little better than a wilderness" and he became prominent in railway and other local development[157]. Mining was also an interest of Henry Hodgson who bought the Blake of Merlin Park estate in the Incumbered Estates Court. Hodgson had previously worked the Lough Shinny and Thomastown copper mines between Rush and Skerries and in Galway he leased lead mines on the O'Flahertie of Lemonfield estate[158]. Hodgson also pioneered a peat production plant at Derrylea near Portarlington which was carried on for a time by

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155. Galway Vindicator 25 July 1883 p3. Part of the Meldon property included sloblands in Co. Wexford.

156. M. Goodbody, The Goodbody family of Ireland (Halstead, Essex 1979) pp44-45.

157. J. Mahony, Handbook of Galway, Connemara and the Irish Highlands (London 1854) p47. Perry disinherited his only son for refusing to marry the wife of his choice and left his fortune to his daughter who married into the Goodbody family.

158. Eighth report of Commissioners of Public Works, H.C. 1840, XXVlll, p10; Incumbered Estates Court: sale of O'Flahertie estate 7 November 1854. The Hodgsons were originally a Cumberland family and Henry's father, John Hodgson is thought to have come to Ireland as a banker and lived at Ballyraine, Arklow (Burke's landed gentry, ed. 1952, p1248).

his eldest son Charles Hodgson[159]. The Hodgsons were later involved in asphalt mining in Trinidad. The Waithmans, who succeeded the Hodgsons at Merlin Park, had made money in the cotton printing industry in Lancashire and made large contributions to the Irish Famine funds in 1847[160]. They came to Ireland, bought estates in Roscommon, and in 1867 bought the old Browne of Moyne estate from John Stratford Kirwan[161]. They were progressive agriculturists and helped to introduce the making of silage[162]. Other estates, or portions of estates, were bought by cadet branches of families, proprietors from adjoining counties, and by younger sons. Part of the Kirwan of Cregg estate was bought by members of its cadet Woodfield branch who had made fortunes in Liverpool. Part of the Lambert of Cregclare estate, including the demesne, was bought by the 4th Lord Clanmorris whose family had links with the Lamberts and other Galway families[163]. The Clanmorris estate comprised almost 6000 acres in Galway and over 12,000 acres in Mayo though the family in general were more noted for a high social life than for estate management. Christopher Neville Bagot was a younger son who made a fortune in Australia and bought the Castle Kelly estate in the Incumbered Estates Court. He instructed his agent to give

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159. T. A. Barry, 'Charles Hodgson's briquette factory: Derrylea 1860-'67' (Scéal na Móna, Nov-Dec 1975); M. Semple, Where the river Corrib flows (Galway 1988) p103.

160. Tuam Herald 8 December 1894 p4; information on the cotton industry from Mrs E. Waithman of Merlin Park, Galway.

161. Tuam Herald 30 March 1867 p2.

162. Letter by R.W. Waithman on "Ensilage" (Tuam Herald 25 December 1886 p2).

163. John Bingham 1st Lord Clanmorris had the borough of Tuam before the Union and had "a large fortune" (Cornwallis correspondence, iii, pp255-6). He bought £23,000 worth of land around Galway town in 1803 which the Blakes of Menlo lost in a court case (Reg. Deeds: bk 580 p252).

unlimited employment around his estate in large-scale drainage and in fencing and ditching. "Had this country many proprietors of Mr Bagot's class", the Western Star commented, "it is most likely the youth of the country would be spared the pang of rushing in thousands to get out of the land of their birth to live in the home of the stranger"[164].

Two other wealthy new proprietors bought large estates in the Connemara region. Mitchell Henry had inherited the wealth of the old firm of A. and S. Henry and Co. of Manchester, and Richard Berridge had made a fortune in the brewing firm of Meux and Co. of London. "With the exception of Mr Berridge and Lord Sligo", wrote Becker, "nobody has much money in these parts besides Mr Henry... whose example is followed slowly because proprietors lack the means to undertake anything on a grand scale"[165]. Most of Connemara was sold in the Incumbered Estates Court including the Martin of Ballinahinch, O'Neill of Bunowen, D'Arcy of Clifden, Andrew Lynch and half the Blake of Renvyle estate. The more prominent of the incoming proprietors were Mitchell Henry, Richard Berridge and Lord Campbell. Other buyers included English capitalist farmers and agriculturists. Some philanthopically minded people came as a result of Famine reports. Although the pre-Famine proprietors did not have the financial resources of people like Berridge and Henry they did nevertheless attempt to introduce improvements. Attitudes to the idea of improvement depended to a large extent on the personality and outlook of the proprietor. An Eton and Oxford education had equipped Henry Blake of Renvyle to appreciate the beauties and face the responsibilities of his 8000 acre Connemara estate. These Blakes resided at Lehinch, Hollymount, in the 18th

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164. Tuam Herald 7 May 1864 p2.

165. B.H. Becker, Disturbed Ireland; being the letters written during the winter of 1880-81 (Lodon 1881) p115.

century[166]. They sold their Mayo estate to the Lindsays of Hollymount in 1818[167] and changed their residence to Renvyle. The original owners of the Renvyle estate, the O'Flahertys, had been allowed to remain on as middlemen while the Blakes had resided on their Mayo estate. Henry Blake described how, after a good dinner, he contrived to terminate O'Flaherty's lease of Renvyle[168]. While at Renvyle the O'Flahertys had reclaimed almost 1000 acres of bog[169]. This work of improvement was carried on by Henry Blake[170]. The locality benefitted from his efforts. "Much money has been spent in it; much employment given to the poor: a great deal of unprofitable land has been brought under cultivation, and the best breeds of Durham cows, sheep, and pigs, introduced into this wild province.."[171]. Blake's estate improvements were also praised by William Ashworth one of the new English buyers. Blake, according to Ashworth, "was a great, though too enthusiastic, an improver - introduced a superior stock both of cattle and sheep - led the way in the reclamation of waste lands - showed what science and industry could effect;

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166. Taylor and Skinner, p78; Post-chaise companion through Ireland, 3rd ed., p166.

167. Reg. Deeds: bk 726 p245.

168. Letters from the Irish Highlands of Connemara (London 1825) pp 16,20. The O'Flahertys had bought large tracts of land in Connemara from the Blakes and on vacating Renvyle they moved to Knockbane, Moycullen, where they had bought an estate from the Lynches of Drimcong (Reg. Deeds: bk 465, p164; bk 537 p388). Anthony O'Flaherty of Knockbane was M.P. for Galway in 1847.

169. Fourth report on bogs, H.C., 1813-14, viii, p191.

170. He was described as having "thrown away a fine estate in reclaiming bogs" (Connaught Journal 20 May 1824 p2). His memorial on Killary roads is in ibid 16 July 1829 p1.

171. W. Belton, The angler in Ireland: or an Englishman's ramble through Connaught and Munster during the summer of 1833 (London 1834) i, p182.

and, like a good steward of what God had given him, abode among his own people"[172].

Henry Blake's schemes were thwarted by harsh economic realities long before the Famine of 1847. He referred in his book to the failure of Ffrench's and other banks as the cause of ruin to graziers and middlemen, followed by famine in 1817. He claimed that the alteration in the value of money in 1815-16 was the remote cause of famine in 1822[173]. In a letter to the chief secretary in 1847 Blake admitted that he had spent £30,000 in attempting to improve his estate "in building and in farming, in broken health and with the prospect of utter ruin" before his eyes[174]. In 1850 Maria Edgeworth found the Blakes ruined and wanting to sell out. The Renvyle estate was put up for sale in the Incumbered Estates Court in 1852 and the Blakes abandoned Renvyle[175]. They succeeded however in retaining part of the estate and survived as resident gentry unlike their fellow proprietors at Clifden, Ballinahinch and Bunowen. Richard Geoghegan of Bunowen visited Holland in the 18th century to ascertain the Dutch method of reclaiming land from the sea and was "the first person who devoted himself to the reclamation of the waste lands in the remote districts of Connemara, into which he made the first road, thirty miles in

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172. W. Ashworth, The Saxon in Ireland: or the rambles of an Englishman in search of a settlement in the West of Ireland (London 1851) p39.

173. Letters from the Irish Highlands of Connemara, pp39-40.

174. Portrait of a parish: Ballynakill Connemara (Galway 1985) p21.

175. M. Edgeworth, Tour in Connemara (ed. London 1950) p72; S.C. Hall; The West and Connemara (London 1853) p95.

length"[176]. The Bunowen estate was eventually ruined by the combined effects of electioneering, extravagant building operations and Famine. Dutton said that the road building of D'Arcy of Clifden was "worthy of an old Roman"[177]. D'Arcy himself stated in 1835 that for the previous twenty years- that is since the town was built-he had employed his entire time in the improvement of the waste lands in his locality[178].

The fact of a proprietor being resident on his estate was not the decisive influence on progress or good management. This is illustrated by the contrasting state of the Martin of Ballinahinch and Andrew Lynch estates. Wakefield referred to Martin's lands as being "miserably grazed by half-starved stock and yet this gentleman is a constant resident on his estates". The estate was "uncultivated and nearly in the state of nature" with scarcely any roads through it[179]. Even basic improvements in a large estate could however be costly and when Martin made a road to his marble quarries it was "at a vast expense"[180]. Extensive improvements were being projected on the Ballinahinch estate in 1848 by Colonel Edward Archer who was agent for the Law Life Assurance Company[181]. The motive then however was the wish of the company to improve

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176. M.J. Blake, 'The Castle and Manor of Bunowen', Galway Hist. and Arch. Soc. Jn., ii (1902) p49; Burke's landed gentry (ed. 1953), i, p965.

177. Dutton, p 375; K. Villiers - Tuthill, History of Clifden 1810-1860 (Galway 1981) pp19-20.

178. Reports of the select committee on advances made by the Commissioners of Public Works (Ireland), H.C., 1835, xx, p167.

179. Wakefield, Account of Ireland statistical and political i, pp32, 260.

180. W. Belton, The angler in Ireland, p205.

181. Galway Vindicator 6 September 1848 p3.

the estate for re-sale purposes[182]. Andrew H. Lynch of Lydacan and Lynch's Castle was proprietor of a 10,000 acre estate. Lynch was chairman of the select committee on Public Works in Ireland in 1835 and although not resident locally was actively involved in public affairs and local developement. In Barna he built houses on the quay for the accommodation of the Waterguard station. He spent £1000 on improving the quay and got a further £1000 from the government for its completion. In order to provide employment he spent £2000 on the building of roads through his estates. He also reclaimed 60 acres of bog[183]. Regarding Lynch's property a county newspaper commented that "probably no estate of equal extent in Ireland exhibits so many evidences of improvement resulting from the judicious management of a benevolent and encouraging landlord..." Lynch's Moycullen estate presented the spectacle of an improving tenantry gradually progressing to a condition of prosperity "as great as may be compatible with their condition in life... The neighbouring proprietors seem to be actuated by the same spirit. Great changes for the better have taken place within a short period, and the tasteful improvements of Woodstock and Danesfield reflect great credit upon their owners"[184]. Woodstock and Danesfield were the seats of Comyn and Burke families.

Andrew Lynch was a chancery lawyer and was married to a daughter of the eminent English Catholic lawyer Charles

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182. P. G. Lane, 'The management of estates by financial corporations in Ireland after the Famine', Studia Hibernica, xiv (1974) p77.

183. Connaught Journal 4 June 1840 p2; 31 December1840 p3. For Lynchs's applications for loans see Reports of the select committee on advances made by the Commissioners of Public Works (Ireland) H.C., 1835, xx; Fifth report of Commissioners of Public Works, H.C., 1837 xxx, p253; Seventh report H.C., 1839, xx, p20; Eleventh report, H.C., 1843, xxviii, p6.

184. Tuam Herald 17 September 1842 p2.

Butler[185]. Lynch died a bankrupt and heirless in Tournai in 1847 and his estate was bought by another lawyer in 1852. This was Lord Campbell who was lord chancellor of Ireland in 1841 and later lord chancellor of England and author of the lives of his predecessors in that office. Campbell had advanced money on the Lynch estate and had not originally intended to become the proprietor. He outlined his estate policy to his tenantry assembled in festive gatherings, and his moderate and conciliatory views prompted the London Times to hail him as a "model landlord"[186]. That paper believed however that since Campbell was over 70 years old he would not have sufficient time left "for prosecuting a philanthropic experiment on the mountains and bogs, and mists and rains, and peasants, priests, and politics of the sister island"[187]. Campbell was less controversial than his fellow Scotsman Allan Pollok. He promised fair rents and no compulsory consolidation of farms though he believed well employed labourers were better off than small unproductive tenants. He also declared against proselytism and electoral interference by landlords and condemned the Labour Rate Act and the Poor Law. His official duties prevented Lord Campbell from being a resident proprietor though his grandson was a member of the Galway Grand Jury.

Mitchell Henry first bought a holiday lodge at Kylemore in 1862 and shortly afterwards bought a large estate from the Blakes of Renvyle and the Graham family. The lavish castle built on the site of the holiday lodge was adorned with

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185. Butler was secretary to the committees formed for promoting the repeal of the Penal Laws, 1782-91 (D.N.B.).

186. Lord Campbell explained his views in detail in his address to his Moycullen tenantry (Galway Vindicator 24 August 1853 p2).

187. quoted in Galway Vindicator 31 August 1853 p1.

Italian pleasure gardens and tropical trees[188]. Henry sent a detailed account to the London Times in 1876 describing his bog reclamation. He praised the activity of his steward Archibald Mac Alister from Antrim who visited the Duke of Sutherland's reclamations in Scotland and the Bridgewater Estate at Chat Moss near Manchester[189]. Henry converted 3000 bad acres into either rich grazing or arable land. "Nowhere in Ireland", wrote Shand, "have I seen finer crops of hay and oats, of turnips and mangold"[190]. The Law Life Assurance Company were accused of neglecting the Ballinahinch estate despite the projected plans of the agent Edward Archer[191]. The next proprietor, Richard Berridge, lived in London and left the management of the estate to his agent George Robinson[192]. Berridge was criticised by the local press for leaving by his will £200,000 for sanitary scientific research in England[193]. Robinson, in his evidence before the Bessborough Commission, described his efforts to break the rundale system on the estate and the necessity to serve many ejectments on small tenants who refused to pay their rent beause of the influence of agitators[194].

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188. Historical sketch of Kylemore Abbey (n.d.) p3.

189. Galway Vindicator 1 November 1876 p3. An account of Henry's improvements, taken from the Farmers' Gazette, was printed in Galway Vindicator 8 November 1876 p4.

190. A. Innes Shand, Letters from the West of Ireland 1884, p123.

191. H. Coulter, The West of Ireland (1862) p95.

192. G. Pellew, In castle and cabin or talks in Ireland in 1887, p173.

193. Tuam Herald, 22 October 1887 p2.

194. Report from commissioners of inquiry into the working of the Landlord and Tenant (Ireland) Act, 1870, and the acts amending the same, H.C. 1881, xviii, p864.

In addition to large purchasers like Berridge, Henry and Lord Campbell, many others acquired estates in Connemara in the aftermath of the Famine. Some had not intended becoming Irish proprietors and others who were expected to buy estates did not do so. Lord Campbell told his tenants that it was "with much reluctance" that he had become a proprietor and that his having done so led to "a very heavy pecuniary loss"[195]. Thomas Wentworth Beaumont, M.P. for Northumberland, toured Connemara before the Famine and became a large creditor to the Ballinahinch estate. Beaumont was shocked at the state of Connemara and believed that only the Incumbered Estates Commission could effect a salutary change[196]. It had been hoped that he would purchase the Ballinahinch estate but that possibility was removed by his death in 1848. There had also been expectations that the estate of James Lambert of Cregclare, part of which was in Connemara, would be bought by the wealthy English barrister James Hope-Scott the convert friend of John Henry Newman[197]. Henry William Wilberforce, the convert son of the famous philanthropist, bought the island of Bophin and eight townlands of the Renvyle estate[198]. Other English purchasers were grouped on the shores of Ballynakill Bay and in the Kylemore valley[199]. Peel said in the House of Commons during his speech on the Poor Laws (Ireland) Rate-in-Aid Bill of 1849 that Connemara had valleys as fertile as any other part of Ireland. He praised the

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195. Galway Vindicator, 24 August 1853 p2.

196. Ibid, 19 June 1850 p3, 22 June p3; 29 June p2, 3 July

197. Hope-Scott acquired Sir Walter Scott's Abbottsford estate by marriage and also had an estate in Mayo (D.N.B.).

198. Galway Vindicator, 12 January 1853 p2; Tuam Herald, 22 April 1854 p3.

199. J. Locke, Emigration and valuation and purchase of land in Ireland (London 1853) p10; H. Martineau, Letters from Ireland (London 1852) pp111-2.

agricultural progress of the Eastwood brothers from northern England who had leased part of the Graham estate[200]. When Thomas Eastwood put his 900 acre estate up for sale in the Incumbered Estates Court in 1862 the rental stated that since he arrived in 1847 he had spent about £2500 in building and £4000 in fencing draining planting and reclamation. James Ellis was a member of a Leicesteshire Quaker family who, like the Eastwoods, leased a portion of the Graham estate. Ellis's improvements are described in correspondence in the library of the Society of Friends[201]. Ellis and Eastwood reclaimed large tracts of land in Connemara[202]. Graham described how the Eastwoods, Thomas Prior and Mr Crauford Butler of Carlow had invested money on their farms and gave employment, but were frustrated by the law which made estate improvement subject to increased poor rates[203]. Frederick Twining, who bought an estate at Cleggan, was described as "a near relative of the eminent London banker of that name"[204]. These new agriculturists, capitalists and philanthropists were mostly resident. Although socially they did not belong to the gentry they were regarded by the government in the troubled post-

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200. Hansard, 1849, Vol. Clll, cols 189-190, vol ClV, cols 106, 206; Ashworth, The Saxon in Ireland, p37; S.G. Osborne, Gleanings in the West of Ireland, pp84-6.

201. quoted in Portrait of a parish: Ballynakill Connemara, pp48-51; Galway Vindicator, 7 July 1849 p4. Ellis's brother, John Ellis, was M.P. for Leicester and was prominently involved in agriculture and railways (D.N.B.).

202. J. Forbes, Memorandums made in Ireland in 1852 (London 1853) vol 1, p264; Galway Vindicator 7 October 1850 p1.

203. Galway Vindicator 20 December 1848 p4. For Eastwood's view on what he described as the bad effect of the local clan system see ibid 31 March 1849 p4.

204. Irish tourists' illustrated handbook (London 1852) p124.

Famine years as suitable for the magistracy because of their education and character. Some of the best improvers were absentees like Sir Christopher Leighton who had no residence in the area but who had shown "a laudable desire to introduce better habits amongst the tenantry on his estate"[205]. The improvements on the Graham and Thomson estates were also noted[206]. These were two relatively new gentry families in the area. The Grahams had purchased a large estate from the Lynches of Barna in 1841[207]. The Thomsons of Salruck acquired an estate in 1835 through marriage with the Miller family[208]. General Thomson, a Scotsman and veteran of the Peninsular war, had "reclaimed land, encouraged fishing[209], established schools, having due regard to education, and is in short, the benefactor of a rising colony"[210].

Lack of industrial activity prevented the growth of towns except in the case of Clifden where the personal industry and enthusiasm of John D'Arcy was stimulated by the general poverty of the district[211]. When Richard Martin petitioned King William in 1698 to have his extensive lands erected into a manor he undertook to build a town "and to give all encouragement imaginable to all tradesmen and handycraftsmen

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205. H. Coulter, The West of Ireland p113. Leigton was a trustee of the Irish Church Mission Society (P.R.O.I: D20547).

206. Wilde, Irish popular superstitions p73.

207. Reg. Deeds: 1841/15/64.

208. Connaught Journal 19 January 1832; Reg. Deeds 1835/4/215; Portrait of a parish: Ballynakill Connemara p35.

209. Report of select committee on operation of Irish poor law, H.C. 1849, xvi, p936.

210. S.C. Hall, The West and Connemara pp91-2.

211. K. Villiers - Tuthill, Beyond the Twelve Bens: a history of Clifden and district 1860-1923 (Galway 1986) p11.

to settle and plant there". All that ever emerged however was the village of Oughterard which by the mid 19th century was jointly owned by the St Georges of Tyrone and O'Flaherties of Lemonfield[212]. In east Galway Ballinasloe and Portumna overshadowed smaller towns and estate villages like Laurencetown, Kiltormer (Newtown Eyre) and Eyrecourt. Travellers and writers were unanimous in their praise of Ballinasloe and the Trenches. Caesar Otway described the Trenches as "a race and that a numerous one of improvers"[213]. Inglis said that Ballinasloe was "a remarkably neat, clean looking town... Lord Clancarty is the owner... and every kind of improvement finds encouragement at his hands"[214]. Clancarty spent generously on its improvement and the fair tolls were used by Lady Clancarty for charity. Perpetual leases were granted on condition of good houses being built and a considerable part of the estate was held under middlemen[215]. Dutton said that Ballinasloe stood "preeminent for cleanliness and the regulations for maintaining a rare and effective system of police". The town had been in a filthy state and the "herculean task" was accomplished by Charles le Poer Trench, brother of Clancarty, "in a very few years"[216].

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212. P.R.O.I.: D20512: copy of patent granted to Captain Richard Martin: R. O'Flaherty, West or H-Iar Connaught, p419; S. Lynam, Humanity Dick: a biography of Richard Martin, M.P. 1754-1834, p890. Of the 264 families in Oughterard 46 were engaged in manufacturing and trade (Parliamentary gazetteer of Ireland, iii, p61).

213. Tour in Connaught, p129.

214. H.D. Inglis, A Journey through Ireland during the spring summer and autumn of 1834 (2nd ed. London 1835) ii, p16; Report of the select committee on the stateof Ireland, H.C., 1825, Vlll, p839.

215. Ibid, pp16, 18. Inglis was surprised to hear of middleman being defended in Ballinasloe (p19).

216. Dutton, pp331-2.

Portumna had a special prestige from the active role always taken by the Clanricardes in public affairs. The town in the early 19th century was described as an "assemblage of long lines of cabins", but was greatly improved by the liberality of Clanricarde and the steam navigation from Athlone to Killaloe[217]. Gort benefitted from Lord Gort's residing there until the completion of Lough Cutra castle in the early 19th century. By that time the town had grown from poor beginnings to "considerable commercial importance"[218]. Dutton praised St. George in particular and said that Headford, Mount Bellew, and Ballinasloe were the cleanest towns. "If every landlord possessed half as much energy and taste as Mr St George, the county would assume a very different appearance, and how much more rational, healthful and eventually more pleasing, would their time be occupied than at a gaming table"[219]. Headford and the farms and cottages in its neighbourhood "exhibit a condition much above the average..."[220]. Just as Charles le Poer Trench had reformed Ballinasloe it appears that Mansergh St. George had reformed Headford. The St Georges had bought O'Flaherty lands under a chancery decree of 1731 and brought in Protestant tenants. Taking advantage of their absense the O'Flahertys regained the territory by force[221]. Mansergh St. George wrote an account of the troubled state of Headford when they regained the estate and he detailed his plans for reform and improvement. "I wish to promote industry, civilisation and good order - and the administration of justice", he

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217. Parliamentary gazetteer of Ireland, iii, p89.

218. Fahey, Kilmacduagh pp389-90.

219. Dutton, pp330-1.

220. Parliamentary gazetteer of Ireland, ii, p296.

221. Journals of Irish House of Commons 1758, pp528-531.

wrote[222].

Denis Kelly of Castle Kelly told the Devon Commission how he had set up a local market around which was growing the town of Ballygar. He inspected the houses every month, issued tickets to those who owned the neatest houses, and gave annual prizes to the holders of most tickets. Many of them would, he claimed, "rival in cleanliness the cottages you would meet in England. There are only two thatched houses in the village"[223]. In contrast, Eyrecourt at this time was described as "an irregular and declining assemblage of houses of very various character"[224]. Some towns and villages had new proprietors after the Incumbered Estates Court sales, examples including Ballygar, Clifden, Oughterard and Spiddal. Ballygar passed to Christopher Neville Bagot, Clifden to the absentee Thomas Eyre of Bath, Oughterard to the Guinness family, and Spiddal which was part of the estate of Comyn of Woodstock was bought by Michael Morris[225]. Changes in ownership and absenteeism probably accounted for lack of development in some instances. Dunmore for example was dismissed by the Parliamentary Gazetteer as "nothing more than a village of little note and few attractions". The 11,000 acre Dunmore estate had passed from the Berminghams to the St Georges in Cromwellian times and was inherited by the Gores in

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222. TCD: MS 1749, f8. His father Colonel St George, was murdered by the rebels in 1798 (Froude, English in Ireland, iii, pp336-7).

223. Devon comm. evidence, pt. ii, p342.

224. Parliamentary gazetteer of Ireland, ii, p192. The town had some houses of quality (L.M.Cullen, Irish towns and villages, 1979). The residents included the retired judge, St. George Daly, who had an annuity of £2,600.

225. The Parliamentary gazetteer of Ireland thought it was "likely to grow into a village of some importance. Some of the best Turbot banks in the bay of Galway lie in the immediate vicinity" (iii, p274).

the early 18th century. Ralph Gore, Earl of Ross resided at Dunmore, effected some local development, and knocked down part of an abbey which interfered with the avenue to his mansion[226]. Ross handed over his mansion to the military in 1798 and it served as a barracks until its destruction during the Civil War. He had sold the Dunmore estate in 1791[227] to Sir George Shee who had made a fortune in India with Warren Hastings. The adjacent village of Glenamaddy was described in even gloomier terms[228]. This village was situated on the Mount Kelly estate which was owned by the Kelly Bellews. The estate appears to have declined after the murder of one of the Bellews at Ballinasloe Fair in 1786[229]. It passed to the Bellews of Mount Bellew and then to the Brownes of Westport who sold it to the Lanauze family[230].

Small proprietors, as Dutton noted, were not the best improvers and if in additon the land was of poor quality the locality obviously suffered. An exception however can be seen in the case of William McDermott of Springfield near the northern county boundary. McDermott established the village of Williamstown and named it after himself. He set up a weekly grain market and gave five acres of land to those who built houses in the village[231]. The adjacent village of

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226. J. Greaney, Dunmore (Galway 1984) p68.

227. Reg. Deeds: bk 433 p60.

228. "as gloomy a collection of human habitations as imagination can suppose possible in a civilised country" (Parliamentary gazetteer of Ireland ii, p262).

229. The recollections of Skeffington Gibbon 1796-1829 (Dublin 1829) p9.

230. Reg. Deeds: bk 367 p544; bk498 p458; bk530 p265; bk 817 p359.

231. Tuam Herald 23 September 1837 p2; S.M. Glynn, Williamstown Co. Galway: historical sketch and records (1966) pp6-8; E. Finnegan, A History of the parish of Templetogner and the town of

Ballymoe had a distillery, extensive flour and oatmeal mills, well attended and improving markets, although the residence of the substantial proprietor, Thomas Neville Bagot, was scarcely distinguishable from a farmhouse[232]. Ballymoe however had poor long-term prospects and was overshadowed by the neighbouring town of Castlerea, in Roscommon, which was thriving under the Sandfords. The history of estates and title in this north-eastern Galway barony of Ballymoe is involved, a factor which did not tend to improve estate prosperity. The region had been dominated by the extensive Burke of Glinsk estate, members of whom still had interests in the area"[233]. Transplanted families like the Bellews, D'Arcys and Chevers's had formed marriage links with old families like the Kellys of Mount Kelly and O'Flyns of Turlough. A branch of the ubiquitous Blakes had part of their estate in the area where they resided in the 18th century[234]. They were replaced

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Williamstown (Boyle 1990) pp16-17.

232. Parliamentary gazetteer of Ireland, i, pp185-6; Lewis, Topographical dictionary of Ireland, i, p150; Weld, Statistical survey of Roscommon (Dublin 1832) p494. Bagot's residence adjoined Dundermot the more impressive O'Connor demesne on the Roscommon side of the county boundary.

233. The Glinsk estate for many years was the subject of numerous suits in the Courts of Chancery and Exchequer. These resulted from the inaccurately surveyed lands granted to the transplanted Sir Maurice Hurley and consequent disputes. The legal complications were further compounded when the Burkes in 1813 sold parts of the estate including contested Crown leases. The buyer however had purchased encumbered property which resulted in further litigation and eventually ending in the estate being sold in the Incumbered Estates Court with a parliamentary title to Allan Pollok (P.R.O.I.: Quit Rent Records: C2: cases and opinions, pp160-2, 361, 376; D'Alton, Irish Army list, i, pp324-5).

234. Taylor and Skinner, p80. These Blakes later lived at Moorfield near Eyrecourt and after that at Crumlin Park near Ballyglunin.

by one of the numerous Kelly families whose economic destiny was downwards although their social aspirations tended to be upwards. These Kellys - of Clondowel - typified a certain category of small landowner often in poor peripheral areas where earlier gentry had declined. They might not even be magistrates nor in the regular circuit of county society. But they formed part of the social hierarchy under the aristocracy and gentry and ultimately identified with them rather than with even substantial tenantry.

The role of agents at local level was important, and in some cases decisive, in translating reform and improvement schemes into reality. Galway had a large number of agents of all kinds despite the fact of the gentry being mostly resident. The majority of principal agents were normally of the gentry class and usually younger sons either of the estate or from a neighbouring estate. A sizeable minority of these were agents on their own family estates. The role of agent was therefore dominated by the gentry and was on a higher social scale than in England[235]. One disadvantage of this was that modern professional agents could not make any significant penetration of the occupation. Professional agents like William Blacker however pointed out the importance for large proprietors of selecting good agents[236]. Galway had a large number of estates of all sizes and variety of owners. There was a corresponding variety of agents, ranging downward to local minor gentry, retired officers, outsiders and solicitors. Some estates had both agents and sub-agents. The most distinguished agents were Thomas Bermingham and Thomas Skilling who was the first and only professor of agriculture in Queen's College Galway. Bermingham in particular is difficult to categorise because of the wide range of his

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235. S.M. Hussey, Reminiscences of an Irish land agent (London 1904) p41.

236. W. Blacker, Essay on the management of landed property in Ireland (Dublin 1834) p1.

interests and activities. The proper function of an agent was described by Edmund Lombard Hunt for the Devon Commission. He belonged to the Hunt family of Danesfort, Mallow, and was agent on the Coole, Castle Taylor and several other estates in Galway, Clare, Sligo, Westmeath and Cork. "I consider it my duty", Hunt stated, "whether the landlord resides or not, to be constantly visiting the estate, and recommending everything in my power, and doing it, if he consents to it, for the benefit of the estate... I consider the agents' duties not to be at all that of merely receiving the rent; for his own benefit he should look after the tenants"[237].

The most instructive case of the influence of an agent is seen in the decline of Loughrea under Robert D'Arcy who was agent to Clanricarde from 1828 until 1859[238]. Loughrea was part of the ancestral property of the Clanricarde family and was the centre of county society in the 17th century. When the Baron de Montbret visited Loughrea in 1791 he described it as "a pleasant town where the people engage in a number of manufacturing industries"[239]. The Post-chaise companion referred to the town, in 1803, as "an agreeable and well-built place". Loughrea however declined after the boom of the Napoleonic War years. Dutton in 1824 referred to the mall, "much frequented on Sundays, but in a state of gross

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237. Devon comm. evidence, pt ii, p544. Hely Dutton, who wanted to be an agent, also discussed the role of agents (Survey of Galway, pp341-2).

238. He belonged to the Catholic D'Arcy of Woodville family near Loughrea.

239. F.W. Ryan, 'A French consul in Ireland, 1789-1792: two notebooks of the Baron Coquebert de Montbret', R.S.A.I. Jn., LXl (1931), p21. For the extent of Loughrea at this time see P.K. Egan, 'The town of Loughrea in 1791', Galway Hist. and Arch. Soc. Jn. XXlV (1951) pp95-110.

neglect"[240]. The Tuam Herald of 16 January 1841 referred to the decline of Loughrea and blamed Robert D'Arcy. D'Arcy was mainly accused of introducing a system of large fines for giving leases and a similar charge was made by a witness before the Devon Commission[241]. The contrast between Loughrea and Ballinasloe was noted and one source described the suburbs of Loughrea as "amongst the poorest and dirtiest now to be found in Ireland"[242]. There was also a contrast between Loughrea and Portumna. When Portumna Castle was burned in 1826 Clanricarde and his family occupied a portion of the offices[243]. But although he was not a permanent absentee Clanricarde was a frequenter of London society and was not as attentive to the administration of his vast estate as were Lords Clancarty or Clonbrock[244].

Clanricarde was however aware of the decline of Loughrea and in 1839 a meeting was held in the town at his request, to consider how he could "check the progressive decay of trade and manufacture in Loughrea, as well as to secure for the poor population means of employment". The ills of the town were blamed at the meeting, not on Clanricarde, but on his agent Robert D'Arcy. "Is it not proverbial in this town", stated Rev. John Macklin, "that the Clanricarde family ever manifested a pride and interest in rendering their tenantry

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240. Dutton, p329. "It was laid out and planted by the late Mr Robert Power, a very intelligent and extensive nurseryman" (Ibid).

241. Devon comm. evidence, pt ii, p560.

242. N.P. Willis and J.S. Coyne, The scenery and antiquities of Ireland (London 1842) ii, p114.

243. J. Fraser, Handbook for travellers in Ireland (Dublin 1844) p400.

244. Clanricarde's younger son, the last Lord Clanricarde, took no interest in Portumna as his elder brother Dunkellin pointed out to his father in a letter of 20 March 1854 (Leeds District Archives: Clanricarde papers).

comfortable, happy and independent". Macklin went on to list acts of injustice perpetrated by D'Arcy. He had taken over newly built houses and raised the rent of charitable institutions[245]. Loughrea Temperance Society requested that Clanricarde establish a relief fund and a library. Clanricarde replied that some "evil-minded persons" had tried to destroy the good feelings between him and his Loughrea friends, and he regretted that he could not revive the prosperity of the town immediately[246]. The Tuam Herald called on him to hold an inquiry into the causes of the town's decline. Michael Winter, chairman of the Temperance Society, pointed out that Loughrea was prosperous during the Napoleonic wars and that "peace prices" rather than Clanricarde's bad management was the cause of decline in the town[247]. He pointed out that Clanricarde had met half the expense of flagging Loughrea and had contributed £600 to erect a shambles. Winter also defended D'Arcy and claimed that he had, at a vast expense, almost completed a fair green. The argument continued and a critic replied to Winter that D'Arcy had made £20,000 in over-charging for leases since he became agent. He was reviled as "an old bachelor wallowing in riches"[248]. D'Arcy brought a case against Joseph Ridge, a Loughrea solicitor, to recover a perch of ground in the town which his ancestors had held for generations. It is

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245. Tuam Herald 9 February 1839. It is not clear if D'Arcy was implicated in the charges made against the local loan fund to the effect that it was being managed for private profit (Ibid 21 November 1840 p3). The anti - liberal Galway Weekly Advertiser attempted to move the blame from D'Arcy to Clanricarde (9, 16 February 1839, p2).

246. Ibid, 5 December 1840, p3; Western Argus 8 September 1832 p3.

247. Ibid, 29 January 1842, 5 February 1842. Winter was also principal of Galway Classical Academy and for some years editor and joint proprietor of the Galway Mercury (ibid 29 October 1859).

248. Ibid 12 February 1842.

significant that Ridge, although a person of standing in Loughrea, left the town rather than oppose D'Arcy and Clanricarde in the case[249].

Loughrea was in a grim state during and after the Famine[250]. The celebrations for Lord Dunkellin's coming of age in 1848 were affected by the "destruction of the hovels of several families who have in consequence been cast upon the world" and "much surprise was expressed by many that such a demonstration could be made"[251]. Clanricarde does however appear to have taken an interest in Loughrea and the "soil of his forefathers" in the post - Famine years, as is illustrated by his support of an agricultural school and repair of the Linen Hall[252]. The town prospered rapidly under John Blake who succeeded Robert D'Arcy as agent. Blake was a younger brother of Andrew Blake of Furbough who was private secretary to Clanricarde while post - Master General and Lord Privy Seal[253]. John Blake was chairman of the town commissioners and improvements were believed to have resulted from his implementation of Clanricarde's wishes. By 1875 Loughrea had two hotels and branches of the National and Hibernian

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249. Ibid 5 December 1840 pp2,3; 19 December p3; 16 January 1841 p2; 13 March p2. Ridge was most likely a son or other connection of John Ridge, Edmund Burke's close friend and lawyer. Ridge was agent for the Clanricarde family, resided in Loughrea, and died in 1776 (The correspondence of Edmund Burke, iii, p255, V, p152).

250. S.G. Osborne, Gleanings in the West of Ireland (London 1850) p43.

251. Tuam Herald 22 July 1848 p2.

252. Galway Vindicator 27 November 1852 p2; 23 April 1853 p2; 16 July 1853 p2.

253. Tuam Herald 15 December 1849 p3; 23 January 1858 p3. The Blakes, like the D'Arcys of Woodville, were Catholic gentry and distantly related to Clanricarde through the Dalys of Raford.

Banks[254]. In 1881 Blake told the Bessborough Commission that he had spent over £20,000 in drainage and roadmaking[255]. The 56,826 acre Clanricarde estate was by then however the property of the unpopular last Marquess, and Blake was shot in the vicinity of Loughrea in 1882.

Bad agents could damage estates already in decline or in financial trouble in addition to reflecting badly on the proprietor. The practice of using members of old declining impoverished gentry families as agents was unwise, as Sir William Gregory learned to his cost. Gregory was outwitted by his agent Redmond Burke, although he had raised him "from pauperism into ease"[256]. Some agents, or subagents, on even large estates were neither gentlemen nor professionals. Owen Blake of Frenchfort had to take legal action against his agent Thomas Comins over his refusal to render proper accounts[257]. The Donelans claimed that the Ballydonelan estate was ruined by the dishonesty of the agent who fled to Australia in 1849 with a large sum of money[258]. The Ross estate too had the misfortune of a bad agent. When the Martins left Ross for Dublin in 1872 the estate was entrusted to an agent who later embezzled the rents and fled to Canada with the lessee of Ross, the latter having cut down and sold a quantity of

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254. Galway Vindicator 20 November 1875 p3.

255. H.C., 1881, xviii, p816.

256. N.L.I.: MS 15982: Gregory - O'Flaherty correspondence, No. 6, undated letter from Gregory. Burke had left owing Gregory £450 and was dismissed in 1842 (ib, MS15983, No 15, undated).

257. Galway Vindicator 30 May 1849 p3. John Thunder also became Blake's agent in 1848 and Comins was later appointed a land valuator by the Midland Great Western Railway Company (ibid 5 September 1849 p2, 8 September p2).

258. Tuam Herald 18 October 1890, 22 November 1890.

valuable timber on the estate[259]. Preference was usually given to agents who were relations or family acquaintences in estates both in west Galway and east Galway. Andrew Lynch's improvements at Barna were carried out by his efficient agent William Kelly who was also a distant relation[260]. Charles Filgate's work on the Mahon of Castlegar estate was praised by Thackeray[261]. He noted in his Irish sketch book: "you come to a glimpse of old England in the pretty village of Ahascragh... the houses are as trim and white as eye can desire, and about the Church and town are handsome plantations, forming on the whole such a picture of comfort and plenty as is rarely to be seen in the part of Ireland I have traversed. All these wonders have been wrought by the activity of an excellent resident agent"[262]. Luke Dillon 2nd Lord Clonbrock, who came of age in 1801, employed his cousin Major Otway Toler as his agent. When, however, agrarian unrest became a threat in the 1820's and 1830's the skills of a professional agent like Thomas Bermingham were practiced to good effect on the Clonbrock estate. Bermingham and Thomas Skilling were the two most distinguished agents in Galway although neither had any family connections with the county. Skilling served both old proprietors like Lord Wallscourt and new owners like Lord Campbell. In his litany of the defects of

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259. M. Collis, Somerville and Ross: a biography, pp50-1.

260. Kelly belonged to the greatly reduced Kelly of Woodmount family near Ballinasloe, and was related to Lynch through the Joyces of Caltra Park near Mount Bellew (Tuam Herald 11 August 1866; J. Blake, 'Ancestry of Stanislaus Lynch and his relations', Tuam Herald 1 December 1928; P.K. Egan, The Parish of Ballinasloe, pp132-3).

261. The Filgates, of Arthurstown in Louth, had become friendly with Sir Ross Mahon's brother while at school in Drogheda. His sister married into the Filgates and she was mother of Charles Filgate (Mahons of Castlegar, p7).

262. Irish sketch book (ed. 1843), ii, p113.

Irish agriculture he listed the appointment of incompetent agents to the management of estates "in general more ignorant and self-interested than the owners"[263]. There was no significant change in the type of agent employed by the large buyers in the Incumbered Estates Court. The improvements on the Guinness estate were carried out under the active superintendence of William Burke who was a relation and member of the extended Burke of Ballydugan family. Burke was succeeded as agent by James Jackson whose father had been Dean of Armagh and a member of a Yorkshire gentry family[264]. Burke and Jackson were barristers. It was not unusual for agents on very large estates, like Jackson, to have their own small estates and act as magistrates. It was also customary for agents on the Clanricarde, Clonbrock and Clancarty estates to sit on the grand jury when that role was not filled by the eldest son.

The Incumbered Estates Court sales resulted in considerable change in the overall landlord structure. Nevertheless the great majority of all major county gentry survived and these included those who were the most active in public affairs and local life. Despite the large scale and much publicised agricultural innovations of newcomers like Pollok the traditional leadership of Clancarty and like minded proprietors remained largely unassailed. There had been progressive agricultural practice before the Famine but it was mainly the preserve of the farming gentry and aristocracy and their leading tenants. The custom of enlightened proprietors like Clancarty and Clonbrock of attempting to popularise and diffuse downwards agricultural knowledge became more

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263. The science and practice of agriculture (Dublin 1846).

264. Tuam Herald 7 November 1863. The Jacksons had connections with banking and some were distinguished scholars, one being librarian to the Marquess of Bath (Burke's landed gentry ed. 1853, i, p642; D.N.B. James Jackson married into the Bushe family).

widespread during and after the Famine years. The failure of the potato compelled many proprietors, both old and new, to increase and promote the cultivation of green crops and vegetables and fall into line with the new ideas of wider agricultural instruction which became government policy under Clarendon. Thomas Skilling, in a lecture at a Ballinasloe Agricultural Show dinner, said the failure of the potatoe crop would teach people in future the wisdom of sowing a variety of crops and he lamented the almost total neglect of agricultural science while Greek, Latin, and philosophy were taught in all the leading schools[265]. He wrote that if the people had been used to oatmeal, beans, peas and other vegetable diet, the loss of the potatoe would not have been so disastrous[266]. Skilling practised what he preached and grew several acres of vegetables and fruit at Ardfry[267]. In his opening lecture as professor of agriculture in Galway he attacked the general apathy of Irish landed proprietors and gentry[268]. The mixed

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265. Galway Vindicator, 4 October 1848 p3. The Western Star (18 August 1849 p3) described Skilling as the first man in Ireland to carry out the teachings of Blacker and Cobbett.

266. The science and practice of agriculture (Dublin 1846), p26. Skilling gave a practical lecture on turnip cultivation on the grounds of Queen's College Galway and pledged his reputation "to make the turnips grow in defiance of hot dry weather, fly, or any other retarding cause"(The turnip and its culture, Dublin 1857, p11).

267. Galway Vindicator 28 June 1848, p2, 19 July p2. Skilling described his Ardfry work in a speech to Ballinasloe Show Dinner (Western Star 7 October 1848 p1; for spade cultivation at Ardfry see Report of select committee on operation of Irish poor law, H.C., 1849, xvi, pp1096-97).

268. Galway Vindicator, 15 December 1849 p2. Skilling was Professor of agriculture at Galway from 1849 until his death in 1865 (T.P. Foley, ''A Nest of scholars': biographical material on some early professors at Queen's College Galway', Galway Arch. and Hist. Soc. Jn., XL11, 1989-90, p82). He had earlier been secretary to Bangor agricultural

response to the call for green crops was noted by the agricultural instructor of the Ballinasloe union. Clancarty's tenants were, he noted, sowing parsnips and peas, whereas in the Kiltormer, Killimor, Eyrecourt and Clonfert areas "little or nothing has ever been done in the way of improved husbandry" apart from corn and potatoes[269]. Lord Ashtown gave practical instruction to his tenants and had estate rules to encourage green crops and improve the standard of grain and grasses[270]. On the Kilcornan estate Sir Thomas Redington fostered root crops and spade cultivation on reclaimed land and his agriculturist, Edward Archbold, grew white Belgian carrotts[271]. Thirty acres of turnips were sold at Merlin Park and George Thane was employed as agriculturist and improver at Castle Hacket[272]. Efforts to promote green crops were also made on estates in Connemara. Agricultural instructors found improved farming and varied crops at Furbough and Knockbane and increasing green crops and gentry supplying flax seed in Ross barony[273]. The Clifden instructor noted the improvements of Blake of Renvyle, Thomson of Salruck, O'Flaherty of Knockbane and Christopher St George[274]. The excellent turnips grown on Lord Campbell's Barna estate were also noted[275].

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society and after that was agriculturist to the Board of Education and superintendent of their model farm at Glasnevin.

269. Western Star, 12 May 1849 p4.

270. Ibid, 8 June 1850 p4.

271. Galway Vindicator, 1 December 1849 p3, 5 January 1850 p2.

272. Ibid, 12 January 1848 p3, 9 January 1850 p3.

273. Ibid, 8 March 1851 p2, 9 April 1851 p2. Francis Comyn of Woodstock, Moycullen, employed an agriculturist and distributed large quantities of green crop seed (Western Star 9 March 1850 p3).

274. Western Star, 19 February 1848 p2.

275. Galway Vindicator, 5 November 1853.

Skilling, as a man of scientific and progressive ideas, was critical of the gentry - despite their efforts - and realised that many would opt for the less involved routine of pasture farming. This would inevitably apply to the growing areas under absentee landlords which lacked the overseeing role of resident gentry. "All the judicious proprietors, and others", he claimed, "are getting rid of the population as speedily and quietly as possible, and laying down all the land to sheep and cattle pasture. Cultivation will not pay here"[276]. Clancarty stands out for his activity and interest in the difficult problem of how to employ or accommodate the entire population on estates. He believed there was prejudice against high or intensive farming although it was the only method of providing full employment, though he did accept that tenants generally were not unwilling to adopt improved farming methods[277]. He agreed with government proposals to appoint agricultural instructors but advised that those most in need of education would only be able to assimilate the simplest instructions[278].

The clearance of impoverished tenantry by consolidation and assisted emigration was the other alternative for unprofitable estates. None of the gentry appear however to have favoured enforced consolidation. Although large grazing farms were always let throughout the county, the gentry appear to have

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276. Ibid 25 May 1850 p4.

277. H.C., 1849, xvi, pp745, 750.

278. The precise plan proposed by the lordlieutenant, Clarendon, was that courses of lectures on practical husbandry be given even in remote areas. "It has been found by experience that, notwithstanding every inducement and facility held out to the small farmer to attend such lectures, the auditory is never full, and generally consists for the most part of the upper classes", Clancarty pointed out (Western Star 30 October 1847 p3).

had a preference for small tenants. Clanricarde favoured Blacker's system of smaller farms[279]. Clancarty thought large farms were best avoided unless there was sufficient capital for them[280]. Denis Kelly of Castle Kelly told the Devon Commission that his ideal tenant was one who held twenty acres[281]. There are some cases on record of gentry inducing or assisting tenants to emigrate. Clancarty shipped off the impoverished Kellysgrove tenants to America and let the property to a Scots grazier. Lord Riverston of Pallas let those who wished to emigrate dispose of their farms to the highest bidder. He gave financial help to those emigrating and to the larger purchasing tenants[282]. Thomas Bermingham referred to the efforts of Lady Clanricarde, Lord Clonbrock and Sir John Burke of Marble Hill in assisting emigration to Australia[283]. James Galbraith of Cappard was accused of "doing as much as he can to get rid of all the poor of his estate"[284]. Long before the Famine however John Bodkin of Annagh claimed that the removal of pauper tenants was essential to improved husbandry on estates and admitted that he himself had removed over fifty families[285]. Then the abolition of the 40s freeholders in 1829 induced many

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279. Report of the select committee on taxation of Ireland, H.C., 1865, xii, pp46, 51. He thought spade husbandry produced as much as the new system and was against over consolidation since it was difficult to get good tenants for large grass farms.

280. H.c., 1849, xvi, pp745, 750.

281. Devon comm. evidence, pt ii, p343.

282. Pellew, Castle and cabin, p197; Galway Vindicator 13 March 1847 p2, 19 May 1847 p2.

283. Western Star 20 March 1847 p4.

284. Galway Vindicator 12 February 1848 p2.

285. Report of the select committee on emigration from the United Kingdom, H.C., 1826-27, v, pp274-5.

landlords to get rid of them and consolidate the farms[286]. Clancarty admitted that a great many were evicted in the Ballinasloe Union. However he blamed the £4 clause of the 1846 Labour Rate Act which induced tenants to do nothing to raise the value of their land and so keep the rate under £4 and the responsibility of the landlord, even in situations where he got no rent[287].

The great contrasts in Galway make generalisations about estates extremely difficult. Difference in land quality was further complicated by the historical development and decline of estates. By the 19th century the county landscape was a patchwork where a great variety of resident gentry bordered on other properties owned by a further variety of absentee owners, including solicitors, local merchants and miscellaneous buyers in the Incumbered Estates Court. Pollok's gigantic high farming establishment existed side by side with extreme agricultural backwardness. Well run large estates like Garbally were contrasted with areas without resident gentry as for instance, around Dunmore and Tuam. Referring to the Tuam area during the Famine John Bright noted that evictions were incessant and the houses of the gentry guarded[288]. Many gentry, as during the Ribbon outbreak, abandoned their houses and let or barricaded them[289]. Sources often disagreed about what the gentry did on their estates. The Galway Vindicator claimed that Thomas Martin of

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286. John Blakeney, crown solicitor for Galway, made this point to the select committee on poor laws (H.C., 1849, xvi p679).

287. Ibid, pp716, 731, 743-4.

288. The diaries of John Bright (ed. P. Bright, 1930) p104.

289. Galway Vindicator 30 June 1849 p3. Houses and demesnes let in the Famine period included Mount Bernard (Browne), Ballinderry House (Comyn), Ballydugan (Burke) demesne and part of Castlegar demesne (ibid, 9 February 1850 p3, 2 April 1851 p3; Western Star 17 March 1849 p2, 5 May 1849 p3).

Ballinahinch was no better than the Law Life Assurance Company which took over his estate. The paper fiercely attacked the company's evictions and in a further severe editorial said that Martin had "neglected the ordinary duties of a landlord and did nothing to elevate his numerous tenantry above the level of the beast"[290]. The more favourable report of an agricultural instructor was carried in the Western Star. This described how Martin distributed turnip and parsnip seed to his tenants and experimented with bread manufactured from parsnips and meal[291]. The Ballinasloe based Western Star strongly advocated the development of progressive agriculture and it was a staunch supporter of Clancarty and blamed many of his fellow proprietors for not giving him the support he deserved[292]. Chief among these was Dudley Persse of Roxborough who was attacked by the Western Star over the condition of his Perssepark estate near Ballinasloe. Some of the Perssepark impoverished tenants were employed and cared for by Clancarty. In further contrast, Clancarty subscribed to all the local charities, unlike Persse, who refused to subscribe to the Ballinasloe Dispensary[293]. The case illustrates not only the contrasting attitudes of two large resident proprietors but also how a proprietor's character and personality could affect how he ran his estate and how he was regarded by fellow proprietors. Persse's bailiff lead an armed party to distrain for rent and in an ensuing fracas a neighbouring tenant received a bayonet wound. Disposing of the case at Ballinasloe petty sessions, Clancarty instructed Persse's agent to convey to him his opinion, shared by his fellow magistrates, "that the present state of the country does not warrant the exhibition of an armed party for the

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290. Ibid, 19 April 1851 p2, 27 September 1851 p2.

291. Western Star 23 January 1847 p1.

292. Ibid 11 November 1848 p3.

293. Ibid 27 March 1847 p3, 3 April 1847 p3, 10 April p3.

purpose of enforcing a civil right"[294].

Despite the farming activities of some gentry the fact was that for most of them rent was their only source of income and they regarded their tenants as an integral part of their estates. The character and means of the proprietor determined the relation or balance between paternalism, the fostering of good agricultural practices and due regard for his own interest. Robert French of Monivea (1776-1851) detailed his estate policy in letters to his son and agent in 1847. Blankets and soup shops should be provided for the poor. Tenants should sow Indian corn, mangel and turnip as a substitute for the potatoe. The agent was to get seed for the tenants and "assure the idle or indolent they shall not remain upon the estate . Those who neglect or refuse to till their ground shall be turned out... you will never have a better opportunity to get rid of some of our abundant population"[295]. French had an exact and detailed knowledge of his estate and pointed out to his son that it was best fitted for stock and not for agriculture[296].

Stock farming had accounted for the rising prosperity of many gentry in the 18th century and some carried the practice into the 19th century. It appears to have largely explained the rise of the Burkes of Marble Hill, Frenches of Tyrone, Redingtons of Kilcornan, Smyths of Masonbrook and Blakes of Ballyglunin. Sir Ross Mahon of Castlegar, who died in 1835,

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294. Galway Vindicator, 30 October 1847 p4.

295. N.L.I.: MS 8717 (Letters from Robert French of Monivea to Edward Hyde French his son and agent, 1847), letters dated 4 January, 28 January, 17 March and 17 May 1847. Robert French was residing in Dublin at this time.

296. Ibid, letter dated 7 October 1847.

was "a great farmer"[297]. Luke Dillon, 2nd Lord Clonbrock, who came of age in 1801, farmed as his father had done, kept a steward and employed up to 70 labourers[298]. Richard Kirwan's successor, Patrick Kirwan of Cregg, was "reputed to be one of the greatest graziers in the country; he has frequently had two hundred head of oxen and four hundred sheep at Ballinasloe fair"[299]. This fair in 1851 had large sheep sales by Smyth of Masonbrook, Burke of Marble Hill and Lord Dunsandle. Smyth was described as "one of the largest stock masters in Ireland". These gentry did not confine stock raising to their demesnes or home farms but appear to have taken advantage of land sales, particularly in the Incumbered Estates Court, to increase their stock farms[300]. Ballinasloe had a general fair, known as the "Poor Man's Fair", for small farmers[301]. When Rev. John O'Rorke of Moylough died in 1849 his stock of 900 sheep and 500 cattle were sold[302]. Income from cattle and sheep grazing was subject to less deductions than rent and had a similarity with the considerable income from mineral royalties enjoyed by many of the Welsh gentry who were unimportant as agricultural producers[303].

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297. Mahons of Castlegar, p23.

298. Dillons of Clonbrock, pp26, 30.

299. J.C. Curwen, Observations on the state of Ireland (London 1818, i, p341). "I was sorry", Curwen added, "to pass this gentleman's place, having reason to believe we are both descended from the same ancestry".

300. Galway Vindicator, 8 October 1851 p2; Tuam Herald 13 Jan 1849 p3. In 1849 Smyth had given up several farms and sold 1200 sheep (Western Star 21 April 1849 p2).

301. Ibid, 11 October 1851 p2.

302. Western Star, 28 April 1849 p3.

303. D.W. Howell, Land and people in nineteenth century Wales, p35; W.E. Vaughan, 'An assessment of the economic performance of Irish landlords, 1851-81'

It is evident from the sources and the examples cited that many gentry had substantial income from gazing activity in east Galway and elsewhere in the county. Gentry were normally prominent at stock auctions[304]. Wakefield referred to the second rank of Catholic landowners as Catholic graziers who by commercial pursuits in cities and towns had raised themselves to affluence, although "with these the old catholic families seldom associate.."[305]. This was how the Burkes of Marble Hill rose from obscurity to become one of the leading Catholic families in Galway. John Burke, father of Sir Thomas Burke the first baronet, availed of the economic boom when the American War of Independence raised the price of stock and made Cork a great market[306]. Sir Thomas Burke was also interested in agriculture and received prizes from the Royal Dublin Society as a resident improving landlord[307]. But the Burkes - bearing out Wakefield's comment - had no links with the old Catholic gentry and indeed had only a limited

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in Ireland under the Union (ed. Lyons and Hawkins) p188. The English gentry had been extensive farmers particularly in the early 17th century (G.E. Mingay, English landed society in the eighteenth century, p168; ibid, The gentry, p81).

304. A long list of gentry attended the auction in 1841 of Pierce Blake of Corofin Park, a leading grazier and younger son of the Blakes of Cregg Castle. Blake's cattle had been 'selected with great skill from those of the most celebrated English breeders" (Tuam Herald 11 September 1841, p3, 18 Sept. p3). There was also a large gentry attendance at the stock auction in 1844 of Thomas Joyce of Mervue (Ibid, 4 May 1844 p3).

305. Account of Ireland, statistical and political, ii, p545.

306. W. O'Connor Morris, Memories and thoughts of a life (1895) p20. According to local tradition the Burkes made a fortune as hauliers.

307. T.U. Sadleir, 'The Burkes of Marble Hill', Galway Hist. and Arch. Soc. Jn., viii (1913-14) p4.

connection with other Galway families apart from a socially valuable marriage link with the Clanricarde family in 1799.

Whereas many gentry in east Galway appear to have had non-rent income from grazing activity, Connemara estates had mineral and other industrial resources as possible sources of wealth. The Blakes of Merlin Park exported marble to England and the D'Arcys of Clifden exported the same product "in considerable quantities"[308]. The D'Arcys had green marble quarries let to the Hibernian Mining Company who eventually abandoned them. The O'Flahertie of Lemonfield estate had a linen factory, lead mines, black marble quarries and salmon fisheries. There was, on the demesne of Athy of Renville, "a lead mine of promising appearance, which has never been worked"[309]. The Rosshill estate of Lords Leitrim and Charlemont had iron and lead mines[310]. The mines and minerals on the Graham of Ballinakill estate were considered to be very valuable[311]. Henry Blake of Renvyle covered his house with slates from the Lettergesh slate quarry and he believed that this, together with Martin's and D'Arcy's marble quarries "ought to give employment to half our population"[312]. Outside the Connemara region silver mines were being worked on the Lough Cutra estate and silver, lead and manganese mines on the Coole estate were neglected because

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308. R. Kane, Industrial resources in Ireland (1844) p233; Incumbered Estates Court rental of Blake estate, 19 November 1852.

309. Lewis, Topographical dictionary of Ireland, ii, p451.

310. These mines were reported on by Professor Apjohn of Trinity College Dublin (Incumbered Estates Court rental of Rosshill estate, June 1860).

311. Ibid, 1 July, 1858.

312. Letters from Irish Highlands p267.

of lack of capital[313]. The potentially profitable fishery industry was also neglected by the gentry who most needed the income. The Martins had leased the Ballinahinch salmon fishery to their agent John Robertson. Robertson, a Scotsman, had set up a fish factory where fish were tinned and exported[314]. The Galway salmon fishery was leased by the Eyre family until its sale in 1852 to the Ashworth family of Lancashire[315]. Non-agricultural and industrial resources did not, it appears, provide any significant income for the gentry.

The gentry and aristocracy were, by virtue of their education and wide contacts, the main channel by which the theory and practice of new ideas entered the county. Even less well-off gentry with small estates could play a role in the process. For example one of the most imaginative schemes proposed was that of Dermot O'Conor Donelan of Sylane in his pamphlet Young forests and their industries, published in 1888. Donelan advocated the widespread planting of trees and osiers on waste ground and claimed that the resulting industries would provide increasing employment. He got his ideas from extensive tours in Germany where one-sixth of the population depended on

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313. Incumbered Estates Court rental of Lough Cutra estate, 27 May 1851; Coole estate 13 January 1857. There were lead mines also on the Lambert of Cregclare, Butson and Shawe-Taylor estates (Galway Vindicator 30 March 1850 p4, 10 April p3).

314. Robertson's operation was described as "one of the most extensive fishery stations in Ireland" (Report of the select committee on employment of poor in Ireland, H.C., 1823, vi, p191; S.G. Osborne, Gleanings in the West of Ireland, pp69-71; P.R.O.I.: D20521).

315. A.E.J. Went, 'The Galway Fishery' (R.I.A. Proc. 1942 p249); Shand, Letters from west of Ireland 1884 pp151-2).

forest industries[316]. New ideas also came in through the best agents, like Bermingham and Skilling[317]. It has been shown that the proponents of benevolent landlordism like Bermingham did try to embrace the whole rural population in their economic ideas and check the harsher effects of the laissez-faire dogmatism which gave proprietors a free hand. It was claimed that all permanent improvements were made by the tenants[318]. Mountiford Longfield on the other hand credited landlords entirely with the good effects of agricultural societies[319]. They, however, probably involved or affected a minority not only of gentry but also of tenantry[320]. A society like that at Cummer, adjoining Ballyglunin, showed what could be achieved by good resident gentry like Robert Bodkin of Annagh and Denis Kirwan of Castle Hacket. The Cummer society actually owed its origins largely to the efforts of the curate Rev. Patrick Duggan, later bishop of

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316. Donelan wrote from Strasbourg to the Tuam Herald in 1886, under the heading 'Connemara and South-Western Germany - a contrast - timber industries and forestry'. He asked why Connemara could not become as prosperous as Baden and he pointed to Verdun in France which, as a result of its utilised surrounding marshy lands, had become the centre of a great wicker industry (Tuam Herald 6 November 1886, 13 August 1887).

317. Skilling's learned colleagues at Queen's College Galway were not devoid of social conscience. Professor Thomas Moffet attempted to promote links with Belfast which would aid industrial education in Galway (Galway Vindicator 27 November 1852 p2). Dr John Edgar of Belfast appealed to the Connaught gentry to consider the employment aspect of flax growing (ibid 9 April 1853).

318. Report of the select committee on Tenure and Improvement of Land (Ireland) Act, H.C., 1865, XI, p554.

319. Ibid, p367.

320. O. MacDonagh, 'The economy and society 1830-45' in A New History of Ireland: V, Ireland under the Union, i, 1801-1870, ed. W.E. Vaughan (Oxford 1989) p221.

Clonfert. Its objects were "to introduce the use of a vegetable and garden economy, unknown hitherto, which it was hoped would form a partial substitute for the exclusive culture of the potatoe"[321]. The schemes at Cummer embraced rural society including the cottagers.

Gentry of large estates usually had the means of providing leadership and their estates were mostly well run. There were exceptions like Dunsandle and Roxborough. Lady Gregory described the rows at Roxborough over agents and carousing brothers[322]. Individual character mattered considerably. It was usually gentry active in public affairs who had the most progressive approach towards the running of their estates. As the 19th century progressed central government took over their administrative and local functions. The clergy took over the social leadership role. The gentry held out longest in the social world. But they were slow too in relinquishing their lead in the higher levels of agricultural activity. Their role in the basic development of agriculture was underlined by the old marquis of Clanricarde. "Through whose instrumentality", he asked in Parliament in 1868, "was it that the steam plough, steam thrashing machines, and improved agricultural implements which were now to be seen in Ireland had been introduced? Could anybody deny that it was the doing of the landlords?"[323]. In 1876 plans were being made to hold the cattle show of the Royal Agricultural Society of Ireland in Galway the following year. The Galway Vindicator chided the "peasant farmers" for their deficiency compared with their brethern in other parts of the country in the adaptation of farming machinery. The stock farmers of East Galway could however, the paper claimed, compete successfully with the best

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321. Galway Vindicator, 16 December 1848, 3 November 1849.

322. M.L. Kohfeldt, Lady Gregory, pp43, 91, 93; W.B. Yeats, Autobiographies, p393.

323. Hansard, vol 190 (1867-68), Col 1044.

stock-producing districts in Ireland. The best praise was reserved for the gentry. "Agriculture has now become a science; and many of our leading gentry are engaged in farming; and, in this respect, set an example to those around them of good tillage, and of the proper care and breeding of cattle"[324].

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324. Galway Vindicator 9 December, 1876 p2.

CHAPTER 4

THE SOCIAL LIFE OF THE GENTRY

The gentry were involved in a wide variety of social activities. The presence of resident gentry in most parts of the county meant that they dominated most local activities. All of these activities had a social aspect. In their administrative role as magistrates and jurors they had the Grand Jury Dinner and the Assize Ball. The gentry headed the agricultural societies and these had their annual dinners and functions. The gentry were dispensers of social welfare and even this serious activity had, as an integral element, the regular charity dinner and mendicity ball. Most of the gentry were either Catholic or liberal Protestant in sentiment and political social functions and dinners were extremely frequent in the years leading up to Catholic Emancipation. More select in character were the regular society functions in Dublin and London which were attended by the higher ranks of the gentry and the aristocracy. These functions included Clanricarde's London parties and the Dublin Castle levees which were hosted by the lord lieutenant. Official dinners and functions accompanied the frequent visits to the county of the lord lieutenant and other high dignitaries. The house party, dinner and ball were the local counterparts of these official or state entertainments. These functions were mainly confined to the bigger gentry houses. The most frequent social function was the ball and this could be adapted to a wide variety of occasions. There was the race ball, the assize ball, the grand ball, the charity ball, the dancing-master's ball, the new-year ball, the Easter ball and the monarch's birthday ball. Most important of all was the ball of the County Galway Hunt or Galway Blazers. The foxhound and the horse played the most crucial role in the social life of the gentry.

Social activities can be grouped into four main categories: outdoor sporting life; indoor social gatherings; county and society social functions; and foreign travel. Fox-hunting and horse-racing were the principal outdoor social activities of the gentry. The names of Giles Eyre, Burton Persse, John Dennis, Christopher St. George and the first Marquess of Clanricarde were legendary in this area. Other outdoor activities included game shooting, cricket and cock-fighting. The tradition of fox-hunting went back at least to the 18th century when Giles Eyre of Eyrecourt kept three packs of hounds,[1] the expense of which, along with electioneering, sunk the family estate. The organising work of the aging Giles Eyre was taken over by his son-in-law Burton Persse of Persse Lodge (later known as Moyode) where an earlier pack of hounds had been maintained[2]. The first subscription pack of hounds managed by a committee was organised by Robert Parsons Persse of Castleboy in 1803, and was known as the "Castleboy hunt or blazers"[3]. Robert Parsons Persse died a lunatic in 1829 and the Castleboy Hunt was disbanded. Christopher St George of Tyrone then ran his own pack for some time which were known as the County Galway Hunt. Subscriptions were collected but most of the expense, amounting to £1500 a year, was borne by St George himself[4]. The youthful St George however broke up his hunting pack and transferred his hounds to his relations the Nugents of Pallas and Dalys of Raford[5]. The hunting gentry decided in 1839 to set up a county subscription pack of

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1. Gantz, Signpost to Eyrecourt (Bath , 1975), p191.

2. Galway Vindicator, 27 January 1975, p3.

3. Connaught Journal, 18 December 1823.

4. Ibid, 3 October 1831, p3; Tuam Herald, 30 October 1915. St. George was 19 years old in 1829.

5. Tuam Herald 30 October 1915; E. Mahony, The Galway Blazers: memoirs (Galway 1979), p4.

hounds. A committee was formed which included Clanricarde, Nugent of Pallas, Sir Michael Bellew, Thomas Redington of Kilcornan M.P., Denis Daly of Dunsandle, Christopher St George, Michael Browne of Moyne, John Lambert of Aggard, Robert Bodkin of Annagh, Burton Persse of Moyode and Pierce Joyce of Mervue[6]. The newly formed County Galway Hunt adopted the name Galway Blazers from the old Castleboy Hunt and thenceforth played a central role in the social and sporting life of the gentry. Continuity of tradition was marked by the appointment of Lady Cusack Smith as Joint Master in 1939. Her ancestor John Dennis had been appointed first Master in 1839.

Both before and after the establishment of the Galway Hunt or Blazers many gentry had their own private packs of hounds or harriers. The hounds and kennells of the Blazers were in fact the private property of Burton Persse up to his death in 1885[7]. Private hunting packs were maintained by, among others, the Blakes of Frenchfort, Blakes of Tuam, Bodkins of Kilcloony, Brownes of Mount Bernard and Kirwans of Blindwell. Packs of harriers were maintained by the D'Arcys of Wellfort, by James Blake Concanon of Rockfield and at Mount Bellew and Headford. The Lismany Harriers were owned by Allan Pollok who was given the hunting rights over East Galway by Burton Persse in 1883 when that area was separated from the territory hunted by the Blazers. Apart from the handful of very large new proprietors like Pollok, Meldon and Guinness, the majority who bought estates in the Encumbered Estates Court were socially obscure and did not aspire to enter county society. Pollok however ran into opposition because of a dispute with the Blazers about coverts and he was only induced by the merchants

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6. Mahony, Galway Blazers, p12; B.M. FitzPatrick, Irish sport and sportsmen (Dublin 1878) pp129-130.

7. Mahony, Galway Blazers, p15; Tuam Herald, 20 June 1885.

of Ballinasloe to remain at Lismany[8]. Most of the gentry appear to have supported hunting although the local press reported in 1872 that "a considerable number of gentlemen of wealth and position.... do not subscribe atall"[9]. The Trenches for instance do not seem to have figured in the hunting field. They may have regarded the accompanying extravagant social life as distasteful or at odds with their strict religious views. The Castleboy Hunt announced a week's run in 1828 during which they dined every day in Loughrea "where every delicacy is in preparation"[10]. A typical ball and supper in Loughrea was attended by "300 of the rank and beauty" of the county[11]. Possession of foxhounds appears to have been confined to those of gentry status. There were odd exceptions such as Michael Roache a freehold owner of 800 acres near Tuam who hunted with a pack of harriers[12]. In 1885 the Tuam Herald called for a widening of the social composition of the subscribers to the Hunt: "We would suggest taking any annual subscription, even the small farmers' half-sovereign and the large farmers' pound, and having none of those stupid old class distinctions. This would liberalise and popularise the Hunt, and another good step would be the publication of the names and sums subscribed - thus making it known how far and how generous is the support of those conceited coxcombs who ride to hounds for fashion's sake". The high cost of hunting confined the sport to the gentry. As in England farmers "were welcome to trail along on their nags,

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8. Tuam Herald 28 March 1855 pl. Shortly afterwards Pollok left for Scotland.

9. Ibid, 9 November 1872, pl.

10. Connaught Journal, 7 February 1828, p3.

11. Ibid, 18 December 1823.

12. Tuam Herald, 28 January 1860 p3. Roache held an auction of extensive flocks and herds at which there was a large attendance of the "local gentry and farmers" (Ibid, 24 April 1858, p3).

but serious hunting was a different matter"[13].

English marriage connections meant that some gentry had a cross-channel dimension to their sporting life. These included the Mahons of Castlegar, Dillons of Clonbrock, Blakes of Ardfry, the Marquess of Clanricarde and Sir William Gregory. George Charles Mahon, who compiled a history of his family, described how his uncle Sir Ross Mahon "distinguished himself in a run with the King's staghounds near London by leaping a six foot stone and mortar park wall to the astonishment of the whole field..."[14] George Mahon also claimed that William Hamilton Maxwell got many of his anecdotes for Wild Sports of the West from his father (Rev) Henry Mahon, a younger brother of Sir Ross Mahon. Maxwell and Mahon were much in each other's company at Westport House, the Mahons being intermarried with the Brownes, and Maxwell being a friend of the family[15]. In the case of the Mahons and Dillons it is evident that in the late 18th century hunting was regarded as a social activity with one's family or relations. The tradition at Cloonyquin was that all 24 children and stepchildren of the Frenches used to go out hunting with their parents. Hunting was also considered to have a therapeutic value. In 1761 his agent, Mr Stanley, wrote to Luke Dillon of Clonbrock, who was ill: "I daresay 5 or 6 couple of small beagles and hunting them every second day will be better for you than all the physick in the Kingdom"[16]. Robert Dillon, first Lord Clonbrock, each winter took his hounds for eight week's hunting around Lettyville in

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13. Ibid, 13 June 1885, p2; L. and J.C.E. Stone, An open elite? England 1540-1880, Oxford 1984, p313. Hereafter cited as Stone, An open elite.

14. Family history of Mahon of Castlegar, part 2, p167. Sir Ross succeeded his father at Castlegar in 1788.

15. Ibid, p 73.

16. Dillons of Clonbrock, p6.

Tipperary, a house he acquired with his wife[17]. His son Luke Dillon was invited in 1798 to hunt at Blenheim by his Oxford friend Lord Francis Spencer who promised him "fox and hare hunting, good claret and dancing"[18]. In winter 1800 Dillon, went to Leicestershire to hunt. His son Robert Dillon's marriage to Caroline Spencer in 1830 brought him a lot to Oxfordshire among her people. He was master of the Heythrop Hounds during which time he occupied the Ranger's lodge near Cornbury, the Spencer home. "He was a very good all round sportsman, fond, as his father and grandfather had been, of hunting, fond of yachting, and a very good shot and fisherman"[19].

The Dillons had estates in Galway, Roscommon, Longford, Westmeath, Tipperary and Limerick, capably administered by their agent and relation Major Otway Toler, brother of Lord Norbury. They could therefore afford a lavish social and sporting life. Their movements were governed by the social calendar. In 1844 and 1845 they spent ten weeks in England chiefly yachting at Cowes, but returning in time for the Ballinasloe Fair. In 1845 and 1846 they attended "a levee and drawing room" in Dublin and visited the Marlboroughs and attended the Duchess of Grafton's party in London. Clonbrock sold his horses and hounds in 1846 but in the winter had a combined Christmas and shooting party. During the Land League the rent, practically the sole source of income, was badly paid and reductions in the scale of living had to be made. It

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17. Ibid, p9. She was a Greene of Old Abbey, Shanagolden, Co. Limerick. On one ocasion they took 11 servants and 16 horses.

18. Ibid, p26.

19. Ibid, p48. Luke Gerald Dillon, later 4th Lord Clonbrock, brought Sir Horace Rumbold to Cornbury in 1860 where he had his "first and perhaps most delightful experience of English country life" (Recollections of a diplomatist, London 1902, ii, p61).

was agreed to dispense with the housekeeper and stillroom maid, the nursery maid, second footman and valet and to have a "working" butler[20]. The Clanricardes like the Clonbrocks, were wealthy. The first Marquess (1802-1874) was a leading figure in Paris and London and hunted regularly in Yorkshire, after his daughter's marriage to the future 4th Earl of Harewood in 1845. He was said to have a "fondness for low company", was a lover of card games and theatre and was an old friend of Frederick Yates the actor, who was the son of a tobacco manufacturer[21]. Marriage also linked the Clanmorris and Dunsandle families to the Brasseys of Heythrop in Oxfordshire and the mastership of the Heythrop Hunt. Aristocratic connection however was no proof of prosperity. Wyndham Blake of Ardfry hunted in England in the 1890's with his uncle Lord Harrington although his family were in serious decline[22].

Racing had, like hunting, a national and cross-channel dimension. There was considerable movement of hounds horses and jockeys between Ireland and England. Galway's most prominent sporting ambassador was the first Marquess of Clanricarde who was regarded as one of the best steeplechase riders and huntsman[23]. Allen McDonagh of Wellmount, Portumna,

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20. Ibid, pp49, 50, 91.

21. "He willingly allowed any young man who came to London from County Galway the use of a horse to ride in the Park" (Duke de Stacpoole, Irish and other memories, London 1922, p4); Complete Peerage, iii, 238, Edmund Yates: his recollections and experiences (London 1885) p55.

22. The Duchess di san Teodoro, Memoirs, (London, 1929), p66.

23. Clanricarde first appeared as a gentleman rider at the Curragh in 1822 at the age of twenty. He also raced and hunted in England (S.J. Watson, Between the Flags: a history of Irish steeplechasing, Dublin 1969, pp43, 50; J.M. Richardson and Finch Mason, Gentlemen riders past and present, London

was considered one of the greatest horsemen of his time[24]. Dennis Bowes Daly of Dalyston, the doyen of Irish racing, conversed with George lV when he visited the Turf Club at the Curragh in 1821[25]. Martin J. Blake of Ballyglunin was one of the founding fathers of steeplechasing[26]. These Galway gentlemen, along with others like Christopher St George and the third Lord Clanmorris, were at the head of Irish steeplechasing until the advent of Lord Waterford in the 1840's. Sir William Gregory of Coole bought his first race-horse and attended his first Derby when he was 22 years old and "was at once admitted to the best society in the United Kingdom, and soon became a prominent pillar of the English turf"[27]. The top sporting aristocracy and gentry were closely intermarried. Lords Sligo and Howth were brothers-in-law to Clanricarde. Sport was one of the factors which influenced marriage links outside the county and in England. For example the Persses, Binghams, Polloks, McCalmonts and Brasseys of Heythrop were closely connected. Racing, hunting and gambling adversely affected gentry like the Eyres and Gregorys of Coole. Robert Dillon of Clonbrock played a lot at cards in

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1909, pl).

24. T.H. Bird, A hundred grand nationals (London 1937), p22.

25. The Sporting Magazine, September 1821, p277; S. Burke, Ireland sixty years ago being an account of a visit to Ireland by H.M. King George lV in 1821 (London 1885) pp6, 22. Captain Robert Browne of Kilskeagh, the Ranger of the Curragh, was also present (P. FitzGerald, Life of George lV, London 1881, ii, 287).

26. J. Welcome, Irish horse-racing: an illustrated history (Dublin 1982) p20. The Kirwans of Castle Hacket also bred race-horses (Earl of Suffolk and A. Coventry, Racing and steeplechasing, London 1900, p38).

27. R. Sargent, Thoughts upon sport (London 1895) p130; F. Lawley (ed.) Racing life of Lord George Cavendish Bentinck, M.P. (London 1892) p366.

the 1790's and lost a lot[28]. Martin J. Blake on the other hand remained wealthy despite his racing interests. The third Lord Clanmorris, who died in 1847, had the best stud of hunters and steeplechasers in Ireland some of which won for him large sums of money[29]. The fifth Lord Clanmorris sailed around the world, hunted in Australia and New Zealand; went racing in Gibralter and pig-sticking in Morrocco[30]. While in Paris with the Duke de Stacpoole, "he discovered that owing to an unlucky speculation he had lost his last available two thousand". He still however maintained an air of affluence by receiving woodcook from his Galway demesne every day at the Hotel Meurice[31]. Lord Dunkellin's extravagant social life in Ireland England and Europe dragged him into serious debt and forced his father to resettle the family estate and borrow £10,000 as a second mortgage. His social circuit in England took in stately houses like Euston and Longleat and the top racing venues of Newmarket, Doncaster and Goodwood. He boasted to Sir William Gregory about staying cost-free with the Granvilles and Spencers. Further scope for social life was offered by the marriages of his three sisters into wealthy estates in Yorkshire, those of the Lascelles family of Harewood House, the Beaumonts of Bretton Park and the Vernon-Wentworths of Wentworth Castle[32].

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28. Dillons of Clonbrock, p12.

29. E. McCalmont, Memoirs of the Binghams (London 1915) p151.

30. Tuam Herald 13 August 1892 p4. Sir William Mahon of Castlegar visited India for big game shooting in 1880's (Mahons of Castlegar, p46).

31. Duke de Stacpoole, Irish and other memories, p19. Clanmorris had married the heiress of the Wards of Bangor Castle, Co. Down and on the death of his father-in-law in 1904 he once more became well off.

32. Leeds District Archives: Clanricarde Papers. Dunkellin described his social life in letters, mostly undated, to Sir William Gregory in No's 108 (95) and 109 (96). Details of his debts,

Lords Clanmorris and Dunkellin represented the more flamboyant side of upper class social life. But as seen in the case of the Dillons of Clonbrock, the aristocracy and gentry were careful not to neglect the sporting and social activities of county society. The presence of resident gentry in most areas of Galway resulted in gentry - dominated sports and social activities. Racing was the main social activity of all classes and the aristocracy and gentry, as owners of the soil, dominated racing as a sporting and social institution. In addition to county races such as the Galway Races and Galway Hunt Races other meetings were held at about twenty venues in the early 19th century. Almost all of these events were under the direct control of local gentry who brought social prestige to what would otherwise have been obscure hamlets. The gentry, unlike non-gentry landlords, brought people of their own class to the locality, often from outside the county. This generated considerable industry in catering and popular entertainments as well as benefitting farmers and traders[33].

A significant event took place in 1828 when races were established on the Kiltolla course four miles from Galway. The main county races up to that time were held on the Knockbarron course near Loughrea. In 1824 the races there went on for four days, "composed of the wealth, rank and fashion of this county"[34]. Further prestige was added by the presence of Clanricarde who was a regular rider at these events. Loughrea however was in decline after the boom of the

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amounting to over £9000, are in 116 (23)).

33. H. R. Sargent, in Thoughts upon Sport calculated that the bare cost of maintaining the Hunts of the United Kingdom was over four millions and a quarter per annuam, most of which found its way "directly or indirectly, into the pockets of the farming class" (pp 80, 82).

34. Connaught Journal 9 August 1824 p3.

Napolonic era and the opening of the Kiltolla course in 1828 indicated the rising dominance of Galway in the social life of the county. The decline of Loughrea was partly blamed on Clanricarde's agent John D'Arcy who was appointed in 1828. Another setback to Clanricarde's social role locally came in 1826 with the burning of Portumna Castle. The imminent change in the centre of county society was clearly indicated by the Connaught Journal's comment on the Loughrea Races in 1828: "The Races were badly attended and all intentions of future Races at Loughrea are completely abandoned. The people of Galway have now only to come forward, and subscribe liberally for the Plates, and the Races for the County will be transferred to Galway"[35].

The transfer of the county races to a venue close to Galway in 1828 was however a renewal of an earlier social tradition in the county. In 1743 Galway Races were held "on the new course near Galway", accompanied by regattas and theatrical entertainment. "It was observed", wrote Pue's Occurrences, "that there never was in this Kingdom, so much company at a horse race, and yet every place was easy without a crowd; the entertainments in Town were agreeably conducted, with the greatest harmony and satisfaction imaginable"[36]. The complete dominance of the aristocracy and gentry over racing and their independence of the ideas of local rivalries or town versus county is seen in the fact that the move to change the races to Galway was led by Clanricarde, Martin J. Blake and other sporting gentry. Their establishment, according to the Connaught Journal, would "materially benefit the Town, enliven its inhabitants, and enable them to indulge in these pleasing

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35. Ibid, 17 July 1828 p3.

36. Pue's Occurrences 13-17 September, 11-15 October 1743; W. S. Clark, The Irish stage in the country towns (Oxford 1965) p10.

recreations"[37]. The violence of the 1826 general election in Galway delayed the opening of the Kiltolla course until 1828[38]. The Connaught Journal continually stressed the economic benefits. "Every shopkeeper and man of business in Galway has an interest in supporting such a race, and we trust they will"[39]. These races attracted crowds of up to 20,000 consisting of "all ranks and classes, not alone of our dense population in Galway, but of persons from Dublin and the most distant parts of Ireland[40]. The town, Salthill, and the village of Renville, become thronged with "respectable visitors". The regattas and theatricals which accompanied the races would "attract the gentry of the county and induce them to prefer Galway to other watering places"[41]. The subscriptions for the plates showed the co-operation between town and county. The four distilleries and the mayor subscribed for plates. Martin J. Blake gave a £50 plate and Andrew H. Lynch a £20 subscription. Another gentry family's generosity became commemorated by the Blake-Forster plate[42]. Programmes included races for horses owned by gentlemen residing in the town and county of the town, to be ridden by gentlemen. Kiltolla was part of the estate of the Blakes of Frenchfort. The Lynches of Renmore provided the Ballybrit

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37. Connaught Journal 9 August 1824 p3.

38. Ibid 10 September 1827 p3.

39. Ibid 24 April 1828 p3.

40. Ibid 8 September 1828 p2; 10 September 1829 p2. Many new lodges were under construction to the west of the town (Ibid, 18 December 1828).

41. Tuam Herald 6 June 1840 p2; Galway Vindicator 17 July 1850 p2 'Referred to a "great influx of strangers to Salt Hill". While at Galway many of the gentry and aristocracy stayed at an establishmen known as Madame De Ruyter's (Galway Vindicator 15 March 1851 p2, 30 July p2, 3 September p2, 5 November p3).

42. Connaught Journal, 2 June 1828 p3.

course later and the Galway Races were inaugurated at Ballybrit in 1869 by Lord St. Lawrence who was M.P. for Galway and a nephew of the first Marquess of Clanricarde.[43]

The aristocracy and gentry, as Lords of the soil, could open racing tracks at will. In 1828, in addition to the establishment of the Kiltolla course, James Staunton Lambert of Cregclare opened a new steeplechase course at Rahasane. The stewards and subscribers were all gentry, headed by Lords Clanmorris and Clanricarde[44]. Large bets were placed at these races which were held on several occasions in 1828. The prizes were for sums up to 500 sovereigns[45]. Excessive addiction to racing was obviously a factor in the ruination of Lambert and his estate was sold in the Incumbered Estates Court and later bought by Lord Clanmorris. Sir Thomas Burke of Marble Hill and Sir William Gregory of Coole were said to have won £50,000 at the Derby in 1853[46]. Yet Gregory had to sell two-thirds of his estate mainly because of racing bets[47]. In addition to the Knockbarron course at Loughrea Clanricarde also attended local races such as the Roxborough Steeplechase and Brooklodge races. At Brooklodge, the "hospitable mansion of Mr Blake" contained "several noblemen and gentlemen of the first distinction". Martin J. Blake however sold his entire racing stud at Brooklodge in 1828[48]. Clanricarde was attacked by the Tuam Herald in 1841 for neglecting his sporting duties and refusing to answer Thomas Redington's letter about the

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43. Galway Vindicator, 18 August 1869.

44. Connaught Journal, 24 January 1828, p3.

45. Ibid, 15 September 1828, p3, 3 November, 1828, p3.

46. Tuam Herald 4 June 1853 p3.

47. Sir W. Gregory; An autobiography (ed. Lady Gregory, London 1894) p148; Tuam Herald 8 April 1916.

48. Connaught Journal 23 October 1823, 21 April 1828, p3; Callwell, Old Irish life, p370.

management of Galway Races. The paper referred to the "squalid wretchedness" of the town of Loughrea and claimed that "the Marquess and his underlings neglect the interests of Loughrea and insult the feelings of the gentry and people of the neighbourhood"[49]. Clanricarde's partisans insinuated that Redington was supporting the races in order to raise his own political popularity. Loughrea, as well as Galway, continued to be the venue for the Galway Hunt Races. The stewards wore "the handsome and showy costume of the County Galway Hunt Club" at the Hunt Races in Loughrea in 1854[50]. Lords Clanricarde, Drogheda and St Lawrence attended the Hunt races at Knockbarron in 1864. Clanricarde's sporting influence is seen in the fact that racing declined at Loughrea in the years preceding his death in 1874. In 1875 an attempt was made to revive the custom and the press expressed the hope "that the present Marquess of Clanricarde will follow in the footsteps of his late respected father, and associate himself with the gentry in sustaining the prestige of old Knockbarron"[51]. There could however be no greater contrast than that between the last Clanricarde and his father. The last marquess never followed a hunt in his life, "and in this and other respects is a degenerate son of his illustrious and popular father - in his day the most popular man in his native county of Galway"[52]. The only sport in which the last Clanricarde was known to indulge was ice-skating[53].

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49. Tuam Herald 17 April 1841, editorial.

50. Ibid, 13 May 1854, p3.

51. Ibid, 6 February 1875, p1 (quoting Loughrea Journal).

52. Ibid, 23 August 1913, p4; Stacpoole, Irish and other memories, p4.

53. R. Nevill, The life and letters of Lady Dorothy Nevill (London 1919) pp 188-9; Clanricarde, at the Lancashire resort in Southport, "dressed in a dark ill-fitting tweed suit, and minus his hat, was indulging in week-kneed attempts at fancy skating" (Tuam Herald 25 May 1889, p4). Clancarty skated at

The gentry brought social activity to remote localities. At Kilconnell steeplechase in 1827 "vast numbers of gentlemen attended from several counties, even from the remotest parts of the country"[54]. Races were held at Dunmacreena, on the Galway - Mayo border, in 1884. They were organised by Joseph Bourke of Oldtown, the local squire, who had a regimental band brought from Athlone by special train. Bourke provided "a sumptuous champagne luncheon" for his guests in the enclosure. A "vast mass of country people" attended. Carriages came from Galway, Mayo and Roscommon[55]. This event took place within a few miles of the village of Irishtown where the Land League had been founded five years previously. The initial meeting had been held to protest at the evictions ordered by Joseph Bourke's brother, Canon Geoffrey Bourke[56]. The event is particularly significant of the local social power of the gentry even during the Land League period. Joseph Bourke was an Army surgeon and absentee landlord with no great record of cordial tenant relations. The Bourkes of Oldtown were a branch of the Bourkes of Curraghleigh in Mayo one of whom had been murdered in Galway in 1882. The most notorious attack made by the Land League against gentry sport was that made against Lord Waterford and the Curraghmore Hunt. Waterford's response was to make arangements to hunt in England[57]. In Galway the only serious incident was that staged against Burton Persse and the Galway Hunt in 1881.

Tuam was the main sporting centre in the northern part of the

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Ballinasloe during Winter (Western Star 19 Jan 1850 p3).

54. Connaught Journal, 12 April 1827, p3.

55. Tuam Herald, 27 September 1884, p2.

56. T.W. Moody, Davitt and Irish Revolution 1846-82 (Oxford 1982), pp 293, 295.

57. Sargent, Thoughts upon sport, p49.

county and had two race tracks. Like Galway it had a racing tradition from the 18th century at least. When the town of Galway was stricken with typhus fever in 1741 the Galway Races were held at Tuam[58]. In 1841 the Tuam Races were enjoyed by gentry and people with the band of the Tuam Teetotallers in daily attendance. The next year preparations "on a thorough Irish scale" were in progress at the hotels and houses of the gentry[59]. There was however a noticeable reduction in support and the Mitre Hotel Ball was "very thinly attended" despite the arrangements made by the caterer "who secured the attendance of a first-rate quadrille and waltz band"[60]. The Tuam Races were revived in 1849, although "nothing could more painfully indicate the ravages made by death and poverty, than the thin attendance both of the peasantry and higher classes". Even by 1851 "the attendance of the aristocracy was not as numerous as upon former occasions"[61]. The Tuam Races recovered their prestigious position under the stewardship of the local gentry like the Blakes, Bodkins, Berminghams, O'Kellys and Bellews. Not all stewards were local gentry. Tuam stewards included Lords Dunkellin and Clanmorris, Denis Daly of Dunsandle and Sir Thomas Burke of Marble Hill. Tuam's two existing courses at Gurranes and Lissaleen had the addition in the 1870's of the Thomastown course at Claretuam. There was an attendance of 7000 people at these races in 1869, with 60 tents, a dozen marquees, roulette tables, harlequins and dancing girls[62]. Racing was interrupted during the worst years of the Famine. Notices of hunting appointments

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58. Burke, Connaught circuit, p87.

59. Tuam Herald, 21 August 1841, p3, 6 August 1842.

60. Ibid 13 August 1842, p2. Maxwell described a boisterous ball at the Mitre Inn (Wild sports of the West, London 1838, pp16-17).

61. Tuam Herald, 15 September 1849, p2; Galway Vindicator 20 August 1851 p2.

62. Ibid 3 July 1869, p2.

continued to appear regularly in the local papers and by 1850 the social life of the gentry seems to have revived. The Galway Races were revived in 1849 and in 1850 efforts were being made to revive "once more" these races on the Kiltolla course[63]. The attendance at the Lismore races, near Eyrecourt, was "numerous and fashionable" and the Doon races near Ahascragh convinced one newspaper that "the working classes require some regalement"[64]. The same paper described a "picnic party of all the elite of the neighbourhood" at Currendoo, adjacent to Monivea, entertained by musicians from Boyle[65]. A bachelors' picnic, ball and supper at Castlegar in 1850 was "well attended by the gentry in the neighbourhood"[66].

The frequency of races near a town like Tuam allowed a relatively wide variety of people to enjoy the kind of social activity taken for granted by the gentry. At Tuam Hunt Races in 1871 the winner, Mr John Golding, "entertained a large number of gentlemen to a champagne luncheon at the residence of the efficent hon.. sec. of the hunt, Mr Denis Shine". Neither of these belonged to the gentry. The others present included minor gentry, lawyers, the more substantial townspeople, and the resident magistrate and sub-inspector of constabulary[67]. Stewards were almost always selected from the gentry and aristocracy. But Tuam stewards sometimes included Martin McDonnell, a large non-gentry proprietor and the Clorans who were merchants in Tuam. The Tuam area had a large

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63. Galway Vindicator 4 August 1849 p2, 10 July 1850 p2. Some gentry however were selling horses at Ballinasloe Fair in 1849 (Galway Vindicator 10 October 1849, p2).

64. Western Star 13 April 1850 p3, 25 May p3.

65. Ibid, 22 June 1850 p3.

66. Ibid, 27 July 1850 p3.

67. Ibid 15 April 1871 p2. The Goldings were millers in Shrule and had 300 acres near Headford under lease from the Kirwans of Dalgan Park.

number of smaller gentry such as Brownes, Blakes and Kirwans. Although some of these sold out in the Incumbered Estates Court many survived. They had large families and dominated the more respectable professions and official posts. In some cases they rented houses and demesnes. For example when Prince Puckler Muskau toured Galway in 1828 he stayed with Captain Netterville Blake at Bermingham House close to Tuam. Blake was not well off and had twelve sons and seven daughters. "The greater part of the family is now here, which makes the abode rather a noisy one", wrote Puckler Muskau,"... The men generally talk about horses and dogs...."[68]. Apart from a large number of neighbouring gentry, Tuam had a number of merchants and manufactures, some Protestant, including the Blakes of Tuam who were both brewers and landowners. These factors help to explain why Tuam maintained three race courses. Although social distinctions were strictly maintained at indoor events such as Race and Hunt Balls, outdoor activities appear to have been more tolerant towards the mingling of people and gentry albeit on a superficial level. For example a popular event like Tuam foot-races had "the rank, beauty and fashion of the town and surrounding county scattered about in groups"[69].

The presence of a large resident gentry in Galway guaranteed the dominant position of racing and fox-hunting despite the gradual emergence of popular sports. The Tuam Herald in a feature on "National Games" in 1860 praised hurling and called on the youth of Tuam to take it up. Athenry was praised for reviving handball[70]. There were ball-courts in most western

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68. Tour in England, Ireland, and France, in the years 1828 and 1829.. by a German Prince (London 1832) i, 222-3. Blake had a lease of Bermingham from the Trotter family.

69. Tuam Herald 31 August 1861, p2.

70. Ibid, 23 June 1860, p3.

towns by 1878[71]. The Morris family of Spiddal built a court within the demesne. But many of the so-called gentry sports had a wide appeal. In racing local people had what were known as flapper meetings. The practice of cock-fighting before races became popular with wider audiences. "We understand it is intended by the gentlemen of Tuam and Athenry to have a grand main of cock-fighting early in the ensuing month", observed the Connaught Journal in 1824. It was a favourite pastime with the gentry around Tuam and became popular with the townspeople. Around 1840 a cock-fight took place between Tuam and Dunmore which developed into a faction fight. This was the last public cock fight in the area[72]. Races were held at the Rahasane course near Craughwell in 1866 "for farmer's horses" and which were managed by non-gentry stewards. The attendance however was made up "of both the fashionables and the peasantry... and the gentry of the surrounding neighbourhood". The attending crowds were entertained with games of "Aunt Sally", "Wheel of Fortune", "Trick O' the Loop", and card games[73]. In 1886 races were held at Craughwell "in connection with the Gaelic Athletic Association"[74]. There were no gentry present but a large force of constabulary stood by. The Craughwell area later developed a tradition of anti-landlord sentiment and nationalism. Horses were never attacked and, apart from the Land League period, attacks on hounds were isolated. When hounds belonging to the Galway Blazers were poisoned in 1911

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71. Ibid, 25 May 1878, p1.

72. Ibid, 10 August 1895 p2. A cock-fight between Cork city and Waterford county occurred in 1845 under Lord Waterford's patronage. Thousands assembled and "numbers of tents, well stored with drink and provisions, were erected, and the place presented all the appearance of a crowded race-course" (Ibid 10 May 1845 p4).

73. Ibid, 4 August 1866, p1.

74. Ibid, 28 August 1886, p2.

in the Athenry area James Blake Concanon decided to leave his seat at Rockfield. A public meeting in Athenry appealed to him to stay: "the people of the entire hunting district will do everything in their power to preserve the ancient sport of the County Galway, which may be considered as a national asset by reason of the large sums of money annually expended amongst the farmers and traders in the promotion of this sport"[75]. Racing and hunting had two main supports as a social activity, firstly the widespread support of gentry and farmers within the county, and secondly the patronage and promotion by public figures and prestigious sportsmen like Clanricarde, Christopher St. George, Martin J. Blake, and the 3rd and 5th Lords Clanmorris[76].

Gentry families in Connemara, like the Martins of Ross, were prevented from becoming followers of the Galway Hunt by the river Corrib, except when invited to a meet or a hunt breakfast. They had to be content with angling and snipe-shooting although the O'Flaherties kept a small pack of hounds at Lemonfield[77]. There is no evidence of hostility between

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75. Ibid, 18 November 1911, p2, 25 November, editorial, 2 December, p2. A well-kept hunting establishment was calculated to result in the expenditure of £20,000 a year "in the Craughwell district".

76. Clanmorris revived the Galway Hunt Races in 1879 after a lapse of twenty years (Tuam Herald 13 August 1892 p4). Foreign visitors were struck by the popularity of racing with all classes in Galway. "Il ne faudrait pas que l'aspect profondément misérable de l'Irlande fit croire á un dénuement général; la crasse et les guenilles vont souvent de pair avec une certaine aisance, et de plus, il faut que Paddy soit réduit á une extréme détresse pour n'avoir pas d'argent á mettré á ses plaisirs" (Marie A. De Bovet, Trois mois en Irlande, Paris 1891, p312).

77. Callwell, Old Irish life, pp220, 358-9; Martin Lineage, p8. The Blakes of Furbough were fond of angling (Galway Vindicator 22 July 1848 p2). The

game preservers and the fox-hunting gentry as in England[78]. Shooting parties were especially popular in the 1850's and 1860's. These took place on the greater estates such as Clonbrock, Castle Hacket, Marble Hill, Dunsandle, Lough Cutra, Monivea and Roxborough. Lord Ardilaun at Ashford had the best woodcock shoot in Ireland through careful preservation and judicious thinning and planting. He held a select shooting party at the end of January[79]. There was a marked difference in the social and sporting life of different levels of gentry. The Dillons of Clonbrock illustrate how the top ranks lived. They appear to have had an endless round of hunting shooting and yachting in both Ireland and England. Their marriage connection with the Spencer family brought them to England to hunt and it brought the Spencers and their friends to shooting parties in Galway. Each year Clonbrock took a shooting party to Dalyston woods which he had bought for game preservation after the death of Denis Bowes Daly in 1821. Winter shoots were also popular at Coole, Roxborough and Cappard[80]. Sir Robert Peel came to shoot at Clonbrock in 1863. In 1849 Sir Thomas Burke of Marble Hill, Lord Howth and the Dalys of Dunsandle spent the shooting season at Westport with Lord

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Corrib Fisheries Association was formed by gentry in 1898 (Semple, Reflections on Lough Corrib p125).

78. P.B. Munsche, Gentlemen and poachers: the English game laws 1671-1831 (Cambridge 1980) p47.

79. Dillons of Clonbrock, p60. At Oakley Park in Meath ladies and gentlemen took part in an archery competition enlivened with a brass band, dinner and ball (Galway Vindicator, 28 May, 1847 p2; also at the Coddington seat at Oldbridge in Co. Meath, Western Star 21 July 1849 p4).

80. Ibid, p73; Lady Gregory, Seventy years: being the autobiography of Lady Gregory (ed. C. Smythe, New York, 1974), pp8,27; Hereafter cited as Lady Gregory, Seventy years). Galway Vindicator, 10 September 1851 p2.

Sligo[81]. During a cock shoot at Marble Hill in 1862 the guests included Clanricarde, Clonbrock and Dunsandle, various Bellews, Nugents and Blakes[82]. Clanricarde also enjoyed stag-hunting and deer were cultivated by gentry both in Connemara and other parts of Galway. D'Arcy's deer-park at Kiltullagh was said to produce the best and earliest venison in the country[83]. Caesar Otway saw deer in the demesne of the Blakeneys of Abbert[84]. Martins of Ballinahinch had a deer-park on an island in Roundstone bay and around 1840 their castle was converted into a sporting lodge to accommodate their guests during the shooting season[85]. The gentry and people around Galway and Connemara had the Galway bay, Clifden bay and Corrib regattas as well as the popular May sports at Menlo. In 1834 the Irish division of the Royal Western Yacht Club held its regatta in Galway bay. Yachts attended from Cork and Limerick and the gentry had competitions with each other. Ladies Dunlo and Wallscourt subscribed to a Ladies'

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81. Tuam Herald 1 September 1849 p3.

82. Ibid, 1 February 1862; Dillons of Clonbrock, p52. Lord Talbot came to shoot at Marble Hill and one Galway magistrate was removed from the bench because he was using an illicit still, "though it went to Lord Manners's heart to punish a man who had such good cock-shooting" (Mr Gregory's letter-Box 1813-1830. Edited by Lady Gregory, London 1898, p132; R.B. McDowell, Public opinion and government policy in Ireland 1800-46, London 1952, p80).

83. Dutton, p116.

84. A tour in Connaught (Dublin 1839) p166.

85. W. Belton, The angler in Ireland or an Englishman's rambles through Connaught and Munster during the summer of 1833 (London 1834), i, 225; N.P. Willis and J.S. Coyne, The scenery and antiquities of Ireland illustrated from drawings by W.A. Bartlett (London 1842), ii, 109. Fallow deer were kept by the Lynches of Petersburgh and Dalys of Raford (G. K. Whitehead, The deer of Great Britain and Ireland: an account of their history, status and distribution (London 1964) p362.

Cup. Although the committee consisted of gentry, with James Martin of Ross as chairman, all types of boats competed including fishermens' hookers[86]. Prominent yachting gentry included Lord Clonbrock and Patrick French of Monivea. French attended Cork and Killarney regattas on his yacht and Clonbrock sailed to Italy and Greece[87].

Social life and sport therefore reflected the structure of society. The aristocracy and gentry were simply at the top of a fairly complex social structure which had both local roots and cosmopolitan aspects. Because the mass of the population had little opportunity of travel they had to be entertained within the county and could not be excluded from social and sporting activities of which the numerous resident gentry were the natural leaders. Some sports, like cricket for example, had a certain popular or democratic aspect in that they were based on skill rather than class. Cricket was also free from the vice of betting and gambling. The game was widely played in the county especially in the 1870's and later with the number of clubs or teams reaching up to fifteen in number. The social structure of teams ranged from aristocracy and gentry to the professional class, those in official positions, and the better off townspeople. Cricket appears to have had a wide following in some areas. Lord Ashtown was captain of his own cricket team at Woodlawn. He was described in 1892 as "the very soul of cricket in the West, lending to its progress towards success, time energy and money"[88].

Cricket was probably brought to Galway by the Trenches of Garbally who seem to have had a distaste for racing and hunting. Ballinasloe and Limerick had their clubs even before

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86. Connaught Journal 11 July 1833, p3, 21 July 1834, p2, 24 July 1834, p4, 28 July 1834, p3, 30 July 1835, p2.

87. Ibid 29 August 1831 p2, 3 November 1828, p2.

88. Tuam Herald 13 August 1892 p4; Western News 27 April 1918.

the Dublin Phoenix club was formed[89]. The Kilkenny club played at Garbally in 1830 and in 1835 "a grand return match between the Ballinasloe and Queen's County Cricket Clubs came off... at the cricket grounds at Garbally.... at which all the rank and fashion of the surrounding country were present"[90]. This was the original club in the town and Clancarty was a patron and active member. The Ballinasloe club later declined but was revived in 1866 and the same Lord Clancarty gave permission for practice in the race park of Garbally[91]. A cricket club was set up in Loughrea in 1870 with Clanricarde as president. The committee hoped "to see the Loughrea Cricket Club turn out an Eleven which will be able to compete with any of the clubs in the surrounding towns"[92]. Cricket was played regularly in Tuam in the 1870's by the local gentry and townspeople. Games were held between Tuam club and the local match factory. Players included Kirwans, Blakes, and Concanons[93]. The president of the Tuam club was Captain Percy Bernard son of Bishop Bernard of Tuam. Tuam club held games against Galway Grammar school club, against Ballinasloe and against regimental clubs[94]. Cricket matches between the military, Tuam town, and the diocesan school were regular events "in which every section of the community took a keen interest". In the 1890's Galway county cricket club had many prominent gentry on its team, including Lord Ashtown, Sir

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89. A. Samuels, Early cricket in Ireland (Dublin 1888) p7.

90. Connaught Journal 3 September 1835 p3; W.P. Hone, Cricket in Ireland (Tralee 1955) p6; the townsmen v. Garbally Club (Western Star 31 July 1847 p3); Ballinasloe and Athlone clubs (ibid 14 July 1849 p3); Clonbrock v. Ahascragh (ibid, 11 August 1849 p3).

91. Tuam Herald 28 April 1866 p2.

92. Galway Vindicator 4 May 1870 p3.

93. Tuam Herald, 2 August 1873 p2.

94. Ibid 19 May 1888, p3.

Henry Grattan-Bellew, Acheson French of Monivea and members of the Meldon, Kilkelly, Holmes and Shawe-Taylor families. When the club held their opening matches in 1869 there were scarcely any gentry on the team[95]. Cricket, and gentry interest in cricket, experienced a revival towards the end of the 19th century. "Every country gentleman who can muster up an eleven is doing his utmost to train up his satellites in all the intricacies of the noble game", the Tuam Herald commented in 1890[96]. Other local clubs were prominent during this revival. Headford cricket club numbered Carters, Meldons, Shawe-Taylors and Goldings among its players[97]. Kiltartan club included Dalys, Persses and Gregorys[98]. Mount Bellew club had been formed in the 1870's with Joseph Kelly of Newtown as president[99]. In 1901 Galway county cricket, lawn tennis and croquet club opened their grounds at Athenry with a ladies v. gentlemen Match[100]. Cricket was not confined exclusively to the gentry and upper class. In Clonbur 38 matches were played in one season, including one against 30 players from the countryside[101]. The sport had been founded in the county by the Trenches of Garbally and kept going to the end by the Trenches of Woodlawn who sponsored the Ashtown Challenge Cup[102]. The Meldons of Coolarne were particularly

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95. Galway Vindicator 23 June 1869, p2.

96. Tuam Herald, 26 July 1890, p2.

97. Ibid, 17 November 1894, p4, 25 May 1895, p2

98. Ibid, 12 September 1891, p4; C. Smythe (ed) Robert Gregory 1881-1918 (Gerrard's Cross 1981) p12.

99. Tuam Herald, 17 July 1875, p1.

100. Ibid, 25 May 1901, p4. Clonbrock had two croquet grounds (Dillons of Clonbrock, p51).

101. Hone, Cricket in Ireland, p38.

102. Lord Ashtown's younger brother, John Trench, practised skating on Woodlawn artificial lake. When he moved to St Catherine's park, Leixlip, the

prominent in the sport, seven brothers being cricketters.

Gentry participation in county and society functions can be divided into three areas: London social life, Dublin social life, and county and local functions. London social life must be distinguished from the continental aspect of upper class travel. For instance the Catholic aristocracy of various countries met in Rome[103]. Galway Catholic gentry who were part of this circuit included the Kellys of Newtown, Redingtons of Kilcornan, Joyces of Mervue and the De Stacpoole family. The exclusivity of London society is described in the writings of those who were part of it. It was, according to Lady Nevill, "more like a large family than anything else. Everyone knew exactly who everybody else was, and it was extremely difficult... almost impossible - for a stranger to obtain a place until credentials had been carefully examined and discussed. Mere wealth was no passport"[104]. The inner circle of this society, according to Lord Lamington, never exceeded 600. "Once established in town, families remained there; the same society met on every public occasion, and each individual was thoroughly known to all the others"[105]. The leading Galway representative of London society, the 1st Marquis of

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place to skate was at Carton, seat of the Duke of Leinster (C.E.F. Trench, Trench Memoir, unpublished family history, p 152).

103. Stacpoole, Irish and other memories, p 47.

104. R. Nevill (ed.) The reminiscences of Lady Dorothy Nevill (London 1906) pp103-4.

105. Lord Lamington, In the days of the dandies (London 1906), p46; Thompson, English landed society in the nineteenth century, p107. Beatice Webb described London society in the 1880's as "a body that could be defined, not by its circumference which could not be traced, but by its centre or centres of social circles representing or epitomising certain dominant forces within the British governing class" (L. Davidoff, The best circles: society etiquette and the season, London 1973 p63).

Clanricarde, held regular dinner parties at his house in St. James's Square. These were attended by Lord Sligo, and Galway families like the Burkes of Marble Hill, Blakes and Lamberts[106]. In 1844 Lady Clanricarde opened her salons with a ball at the family mansion in Carlton House Terrace "at which above four hundred of the elite of fashionable society attended"[107]. "Clanricarde attended the Levée", Lady Dufferin wrote in 1856, "the Queen received him much as usual". The Clanricardes entertained English and continental aristocracy in London up to the 1860's[108]. Robert Percy French of Monvivea, "that Irish cosmopolite.. speaking all languages with equal volubility", was among the frequent visitors of Lady Holland at Holland House in Kensington and was also a close friend of the Duchesse de Mouchy (neé Princess Anna Murat)[109]. Lady Gregory also became a great favourite in London society where she presided over a little salon[110].

Dublin social life revolved around the official functions in

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106. Connaught Journal 29 March 1827 p2.

107. Tuam Herald 27 July 1844, p2.

108. A. Lyall, The life of the Marquess of Dufferin and Ava (London 1905) i, p87. Clanricarde's prominence in the racing world meant that he was appointed steward at English race functions (Herbert Maxwell, The Creevey papers, London 1904, ii, 188-9). The society lady Harriette Wilson claimed that Clanricarde was to appear in further instalments of her 'Memoirs', "at his own earnest, urgent and special desire..." (Harriette Wilson's memoirs of herself and others, ed. London, 1929, p627).

109. Sir H. Rumbold, Further recollections of a diplomatist, London 1903, p107; Final Recollections of a diplomatist, London 1905, p112.

110. F. Lawley, ed. Racing life of Lord George Cavendish Bentinck, M.P., London 1892, p423.

Dublin Castle during what was known as the Dublin season[111]. There were also frequent public dinners for Repeal political figures both in Dublin and locally in Galway. There were tensions between Conservative and Liberal social politics. This was evident when Conservative lords Lieutenant gave their leveés. For example Lord Grey's Castle Levée in 1841 was attended by Trenches, Sir Valentine Blake, James Daly of Dunsandle, St George of Headford and a group of Protestant clergymen. The pro-Liberal Tuam Herald commented on the event as follows: "Several conservative Peers were present - an immense shoal of hungry Parsons - a large number of country gentlemen, and several Judges and expectant judges of the right sort". The paper accused Sir Valentine Blake of attending and - as a Liberal Member - paying homage to a Tory lord lieutenant[112]. Later when the Liberals were attempting to bring in Home Rule none of the opponents of Home Rule attended a Liberal lord lieutenant's state functions at Dublin Castle. But when the Conservative Lord Cadogan was in Dublin "the principal people from every county in Ireland flocked to the Levées and Drawingrooms...."[113]. Repeal politics provided frequent social events in honour of the Liberal and Repeal politicans. These were held at McDermotts of Springfield and Bodkins of Kilcloony, the seat of John J. Bodkin who was elected for Galway in 1831. The Connaught Journal described an O'Connell dinner at Kilcloony in 1829 attended by 80 ladies and gentlemen. It referred to "the rank and talent, and all the young beauty of the neighbourhood, Catholic and

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111. Graphic first hand accounts of these events are given in Fingall, Seventy years young, pp56-66; Dillons of Clonbrock, pp99-100.

112. Tuam Herald 20 Nobember 1841, p3, 4 December 1841.

113. Dillons of Clonbrock p99. Home Rule also bitterly divided London society (N.W. Ellenberger, 'The Souls and London Society at the end of the nineteenth century', Victorian Studies, 1981-82, pp158-9). The 'Souls' were a set of society intellectuals.

Protestant, drawn together in the bond of good feeling and social sympathies..."[114]. The idea of Repeal had considerable support from the numerous Catholic gentry in north Galway who patronised social functions which were largely popular in nature.

The more permanent forms of gentry social life in the county were those regular functions which were part of sporting life or associated with agricultural societies and the spring and summer assizes. Other less regular although frequent functions were those in support of fund-raising and charity work or in honour of visiting lords lieutenant. The assizes ball, hunt ball and County Club ball were the backbone of the social calendar in the county. In the 1820's and 1830's especially balls were extremely frequent and several were held during the assizes. For example in August 1827 four balls were announced for the grand jury, two at the Assembly Rooms in Middle Street and two at Kilroy's New Assembly Rooms in Eyre Square[115]. The assize ball in 1841 had an attendance of 200 from Galway and neighbouring counties and the hunt ball in 1842 had an attendance of over 350[116]. Tuam held an annual race ball with an attendance of about 150. The more prestigious county hunt ball had Kelly's quadrille band from Dublin whereas Tuam had to be content with Monahan's orchestra from Loughrea. A dancing master named Du Val held a ball in Galway in 1828 where "the newest and most fashionable dances and quadrilles were introduced". Many gentry attended this ball. Du Val appears to have regarded the Tuam gentry as a little backward as he announced to them that he would "give instruction in the present fashionable mode of dancing in a

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114. Connaught Journal, 18 June 1829, p3.

115. Ibid, 6 August 1827.

116. Tuam Herald 14 August 1841, p3, 15 January 1842 p3.

superior style of grace and elegance"[117]. Another dance master named McDermott informed the nobility and gentry of Galway that he had instructed the most respectable families and "will instruct in all the most fashionable modes of dancing now practiced in Dublin"[118]. A charity ball was held for McDermott at the request of "several ladies and gentlemen". He was described as "one of the first and most justly celebrated performer in these kingdoms on the Irish pipes"[119].

The gentry had an important administrative and benevolent role in society and some social activities had a primarily fund-raising objective. Annual bazaars were held and annual charity balls took place in Galway, Loughrea and Oughterard. There was an annual ball for the Widow and Orphan Asylum and for the poor of Galway. A ball was held in 1833 for the family of a poor fisherman who had died of cholera[120]. Gentry were involved in amateur theatricals for the relief of poverty[121]. A public dinner was held in Oranmore in 1833 to raise funds for the parish church. The event had a large gentry attendance[122]. In 1853 a "grand public banquet" was held in Galway as an inauguration of the opening of a flax market in the town and to honour a deputation from Belfast connected with the Royal Irish Flax Society[123]. This banquet was attended by "upwards of one hundred and fifty gentlemen

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117. Connaught Journal, 21 August 1828, p3, 8 September 1828, p3.

118. Ibid, 18 December 1828 p3.

119. Ibid, 12 November 1829, pp2-3.

120. Ibid, 14 October 1833, p3.

121. Tuam Herald 7 February 1863, p2.

122. Connaught Journal, 22 August 1833, 2 September 1833, p3.

123. Tuam Herald, 12 February 1853, p3.

from the town and county of Galway and other parts of the county". Even unglamourous events like stock auctions became, in a gentry dominated society, sumptuous occasions. They also reveal the gentry's interest in farming. A stock sale was held on Polloks Glinsk property in 1862. Gentry attended from surrounding districts and some eminent buyers arrived from Dublin by special train. "On the lawn in front of Skahard House was erected a monster tent, over which waved the National flag, and in which accommodation was provided for over 300 gentlemen. The luncheon, to which about 700 were invited, was of a most substantial and sumptuous character, and besides roast beef, pastry, etc. included sherry champagne, cold punch, porter, ale etc."[124]. The gentry were headed by Lords Clonbrock, Crofton and Clanmorris. These auctions were conducted by Messrs Ganly and Parker of Dublin who also provided the catering. They conducted an auction at Lowville, near Ballinasloe, which had "a large attendance of the leading gentry and stockmasters, including a large number of the Leinster buyers"[125]. Business began "after a splendid dejeuner... consisting of all the delicacies of the season..." The firm of Messrs Strahan conducted an auction at Moyne, the residence of John Stratford Kirwan, which had "a very numerous and fashionable attendance of ladies and gentlemen"[126]. Stock auctions, agricultural society meetings, race meetings and poor law guardian boardrooms were among the limited areas of contact between gentry and large farmers. One such farmer, Michael Roache a free-holder with 800 acres, had his herds and flocks auctioned by Ganley and Co. There was a large attendance of local gentry and farmers for whom a "sumptuous and substantial lucheon" was provided by Roache[127].

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124. Ibid, 10 May 1862, p2.

125. Ibid, 2 December 1865, p3.

126. Ibid, 2 September 1865, p2.

127. Tuam Herald 24 April 1858.

Social life and society functions were an obvious drain on the pockets of the gentry and aristocracy. One such expense was that resulting from their social obligation to receive and entertain visiting dignitaries like the lord lieutenant of the day. The social highlight of the Ballinasloe Fair was the arrival of the lord lieutenant at Garbally Park to be met by the assembled gentry[128]. When Lord Anglesea toured in 1831 he dined at Lough Cutra the seat of Lord Gort and was met at Oranmore "by a numerous cavalcade of gentlemen containing all the rank, influence and respectability of town and county, and a vast multitude of the people". He was entertained by the Lynches of Renmore, Martins of Ross and Martins of Ballinahinch, D'Arcys of Clifden and Bellews of Mount Bellew[129]. When Lord Mulgrave toured in 1835 he was entertained by the Burkes of Marble Hill, Dalys of Mount Pleasant, St Georges of Tyrone, Blakes of Menlo and of Renvyle, D'Arcys of Clifden, Burkes of Tuam and Handcocks of Carantrila[130]. In 1838 the Marquis of Normanby paid "his second visit" to Carantrila. During the Queen's visit in 1849 the Clonbrocks entertained their county and other friends in Dublin[131]. In 1875 a ball was given to the officers of the first reserve squadron of the channel fleet when it called at Galway[132]. The Duke of Connaught, third son of Queen Victoria, toured in 1878. The province of Connaught had been assigned to him in a special way and "all the notable people in county Galway acted in concert to celebrate the royal visit". The Duke arrived at Ballyglunin station, hunted with

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128. Galway Vindicator 6 October 1847 p2.

129. Connaught Journal 7 April 1831, p2; Callwell, Old Irish life, p277.

130. Ibid, 27 August 1835, p1, 3 September p3.

131. 'Diary of Miss Handcock', appended to Handcock v. Delacour, pp41-42. Western Star 18 August 1849 p3.

132. Tuam Herald, 14 August 1875 p2.

the Galway Blazers, and dined at Bodkins of Annagh[133]. Both the Duke of Connaught and his brother the Duke of Edinburgh were guests at Persses of Moyode while hunting with the Blazers. When chief secretary Balfour toured in 1890 he was entertained by Mitchell Henry at Kylemore Castle and visited Lord Morris at his Spiddal residence[134].

Indoor social functions were more select and exclusive than outdoor gentry sports. There were no rules or social barriers against particular persons coming out to hunt provided they paid their annual subscriptions, although it was said that, in the 18th century, George 'Fighting' FitzGerald "would flog anyone from the field who joined the hounds without being of the proper caste"[135]. But hunting was an expensive sport and only the gentry in the main could afford it. The hunt ball and assize ball were socially strictly select. In the case of the latter "the line of social demarcation was so clearly defined... that though entry was open to all who paid their guinea, no one not undoubtedly belonging to the county set ever ventured to present himself within the sacred precincts of Macklin's Hotel, where these festivities were held"[136]. Two other important features of gentry social life were strictly exclusive. These were the house parties and dinners and the clubs. The Connaught Club was founded in Dublin in

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133. Memoirs of Countess Turquet de la Boisserie (née Matilda Kelly of Newtown) 1865-1956. Extracts dealing with Ireland, by her grandson, Jacques Dumont de Montroy. Translated from the French. p20. (Hereafter cited as Memoirs of Matilda Kelly of Newtown).

134. Balfour's tours in Connemara and Donegal. By the special commissioner of the Daily Express (Dublin 1890) pp40, 43.

135. W.H. Maxwell, Wild Sports of the West p318.

136. Callwell, Old Irish life, p260.

1825 and the Galway County Club in 1836[137]. The origin of the Connaught Club was explained by John Donnellan of Ballydonnellan to the Members at a dinner in Hayes's Hotel, Dawson Street, in 1827[138]. He said the idea had originated with William McDermott of Springfield and a few gentlemen of Connaught some of whom lived in Dublin and others going there for business or professional reasons. The club represented "much of the landed property of the west, much of its commercial enterprise, and much of its professional and general talent". Party politics were excluded from the club. "Gentlemen met there", explained Donnellan, "who were opposed even in county politics, but when they entered into that room they met as Connaughtmen - as men bound together by the principle of promoting the general prosperity of the province to which they belonged". The promotion of mutual benevolence, local improvement and social intercourse were further objectives of the Connaught Club.

The officers and committee of the Connaught Club in 1830 were as follows: John Donnellan of Ballydonnellan was president in succession to O'Conor Don; Alexander Clendinning of Ballinrobe, vice-president; Charles Blake of Tuam, treasurer; James Comyn of Ballinderry, secretary. The committee consisted of Andrew and Bernard Browne of Mount Hazel, Edward O'Connor, James Dillon, G.E. Strickland, Major Burke of Tuam, Robert Power, Sir Francis McDonnell, Edmond Concanon, James Joyce, Pierce Blake, Patrick Taaffe, Nicholas Comyn, John Burke and John O'Shaughnessy[139]. The club appears to have been opened

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137. Robert Dillon of Clonbrock belonged to three Dublin clubs, Anthings, Dalys and the Kildare Street Club. Daly's had started as Daly's Coffee House and was made into a club in 1791. It became very fashionable and much frequented by members of parliament (Dillons of Clonbrock, p10).

138. Connaught Journal 5 July 1827, p2.

139. Ibid, 15 October 1829, p3.

later to men from all parts of Ireland although chiefly landed proprietors and those connected with agriculture and stock breeding[140]. The members of the Connaught Club dined at McLoughlin's (or Gill's) Hotel in Ballinalsoe each day during the October fair. Their premises there became known as Connaught Club House and it was the venue in 1835 for a discussion of Irish - American communication attended by Galway, Mayo and Roscommon gentry chaired by Martin J. Blake, M.P.[141].

The County Club was expected to "bring the nobility and gentry more closely together and ... produce a social intercourse between them". The Connaught Journal believed there was no danger the club would become a party one and referred to the "utter impossibility of its becoming so in the county where property is so well and equally divided"[142]. The County Club was formed by July 1836. John Kirwan of Castle Hacket was the first chairman. It was, according to the Connaught Journal, "comprised of the rank, wealth and respectability of this great and extensive county, and amongst its members are included the names of almost all the nobility, and a great majority of the gentry, without any distinction of sect or party, and from the good feeling that always exists in this county between the Catholics and liberal Protestants, we have every reason to hope that the greatest cordiality will prevail between the members of the Club"[143]. The Club had 181 members in 1881, 176 members in 1889, and 132 members in 1906[144]. In

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140. Tuam Herald 1 June 1918, p4, 20 October 1838, p1.

141. Connaught Journal, 15 October 1835, p2.

142. Ibid 2 June 1836, pp1,3.

143. Ibid 21 July 1836, p2.

144. Rules of County Galway Club (Galway 1881); Rules of County Galway Club (Galway 1889); Rules, regulations and Bye-laws of the County Galway Club (Galway 1906).

1881 about 85% of the members were gentry and the others consisted mainly of constabulary officers, doctors, resident magistrates, army or naval officers and large land agents. By 1906 the number of non-gentry members had risen to about 18%. New members were admitted by a ballot of at least 21 members, one black bean in seven being sufficient to exclude a candidate. A Club House was set up in Dominick Street and the Club's first dinner was held in 1840 at Nolan's Hotel in Eyre Square with Thomas Redington of Kilcornan as chairman and Robert Bodkin of Annagh as vice-president[145]. This event was for the members only. The annual County Club ball however was one of the principal social events of the year. The invitations given by the Club members in 1861 "were not confined to the nobility and gentry of this or the neighbouring counties, for we perceived present some parties from Dublin, and the officers of the Birr, Mullingar, and Athlone garrisons. Yesterday the town was quite full of gentry"[146].

Socialising and the tradition of hospitality in gentry houses was already well established in the 18th century. Mrs Delaney visited the Mahons of Castlegar in 1732 and spent some time fishing and picnicing. "I think", she wrote, "I have not met with anything since my being in Ireland that I have liked so well"[147]. When John Wesley was a guest at Roxborough in 1785 he found the house "full of genteel company" and no room to

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145. Connaught Journal 19 March 1840 p3.

146. Tuam Herald, 24 August 1861. Ladies were admitted to some London clubs from the 1880's (Stacpoole, Irish and other memories pp86-87).

147. The autobiography, and correspondence of Mrs Delaney (ed. London 1861), i, 350-1. Mrs Delaney thought the Irish made up for lack of furniture by eating and drinking.

talk about God[148]. Richard Cumberland in his Memoirs described Lord Eyre of Eyrecourt, the uncle of Giles Eyre. Lord Eyre lived "according to the style of the country, with more hospitality than elegance, for while his table groaned with abundance, the order and good taste of his arrangements were little thought of; the slaughtered ox was hung up whole, and the hungry servitor supplied himself with his dole of flesh sliced off the carcase"[149]. The manners and general mode of living of the gentry were, however, improving. Richard Edgeworth noted the ending of long formal dinners "where the company had more than they could eat; and twenty times more than they should drink; where the gentlemen could talk only of claret, horses and dogs; and the ladies only of dress or scandal"[150]. James Daly of Dunsandle told the select committee on illicit distillation in 1816 that illicit spirits "form the whole of the consumption of the lower ranks" and was also used a good deal among the gentry. Dutton stated that although vast quantities of whiskey were consumed in Connemara, yet drunkenness "amongst the higher ranks of society is now very rare"[151]. The artist Gabriel Beranger visited Mount Talbot and Castle Kelly and was "elegantly entertained at dinner, being thirty in number", and had a concert before supper. Regarding Connaught in general he wrote: "I think it my duty to do justice to its inhabitants, on whom a late tour writer bestowed the name of savages.. and that in all the course of my life I never found more politeness and hospitality than we experienced from the

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148. The journal of John Wesley (ed. N. Curnock, London 1909-16), vii, 79. Wesley also visited Castlegar (ibid, iii, 406).

149. Memoirs of Richard Cumberland (London 1807) i, 278-9.

150. R.L. Edgeworth, Memoirs (London 1820) ii, 375.

151. Parl. papers, H.C., 1816, lX, p29; Dutton, p368.

inhabitants, both high and low"[152]. John Bernard Trotter was received "with politeness and hospitality" by the Blakes of Menlo and was invited to breakfast at another Blake house near Tuam where he found "urbanity and pleasing conversation". Having spent two pleasing days at Burkes of Marble Hill he thought it impossible "to do full justice to the hospitality and polished manners of the gentlemen of Connaught and their families"[153].

The 25,000 acre Marble Hill estate could bear the expense of lavish hospitality. A chance visitor there in 1802 found the house full of company. For breakfast there was served "fish and flesh, tea, coffee, marmalade, honey, usquebaugh, and mead, bread of all sorts, white and brown, a large dish of stir-about on the sideboard and beside it flourished another of mealy potatoes (with their jackets on)"[154]. The party then went to Dalyston for grouse-shooting. The visitor returned three years later and was then told by Denis Bowes Daly of Dalyston that electioneering rather than hospitality or horses had reduced his fortunes. Daly obviously indulged in all three activities which usually went hand in hand as in the case of Giles Eyre who had thirty or forty horses in his stables and spent heavily on electioneering. Eyre, like Bowes Daly, almost exhausted his large fortune. Burkes of Marble Hill on the other hand, apart from having a large estate, had made a commercial fortune. The case of Bowes Daly is interesting because he was earlier regarded as one of the richest commoners in Ireland. He had succeeded on the death of his uncle Thomas Coghlan, M.P. for Banagher, to an estate

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152. Sir W. Wilde, Memoir of Gabriel Beranger 1760-1780 (Dublin 1880) pp83, 87.

153. J. B. Trotter, Walks through Ireland in 1812, 1814 and 1817 (London 1819), pp409, 534, 560.

154. Galway Vindicator 17 July 1850, p4.

worth £5000 a year in addition to his former fortune[155]. Daly may also have foolishly tried to implement the social beliefs of Thomas Coghlan who was hospitable in the extreme and of expensive habits[156]. The Eyrecourt estate had to be put up for sale in 1854, with incumbrances of over £40,000. Some of the lots sold were bought in for the family thus enabling them to continue at Eyrecourt[157]. The tradition of hospitality was maintained and a ball "on a grand scale" was held in 1869[158]. Some of the gentry did their main socialising away from their houses. There were cases where heads of families had careers, either in Ireland or overseas. For instance Sir William Gregory of Coole during his early years was in Parliament, abroad, and later governor of Ceylon. So the house was closed for long periods during which the Gregorys were part of London society[159].

Lavish house parties in the early 19th century indicate a style of extravagance which, combined with other factors, brought difficulties or ruin to some large estates. Merlin Park, Castlegrove and Carantrila are good examples. In 1812 Blakes of Merlin Park sent invitations "to several hundred persons of rank and consequence in this county to attend one of the greatest fetes ever given in the province. It will continue three days and all the delicacies of the season have

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155. Public Record Office of Northern Ireland: draft biographies of members of the Irish Parliament.

156. J. N. Brewer, The Beauties of Ireland: being original delineations, topographical, historical, and biographical, of each county (London 1826) ii, 142-3. "In disdain of modern opinions, he adhered to the national customs of Ireland, and the modes of living practiced by his ancestors. His house was ever open to strangers".

157. Tuam Herald, 8 July 1854, p4.

158. Galway Express, 13 February 1869, p4.

159. Lady Gregory, Coole, ed. C. Smythe, 1971, p89. Castlegar was let for periods.

for some time been preparing... among the accommodations nearly 100 beds have been fitted in that hospitable mansion for the reception of the guests"[160]. The Blakes had recently built an imposing house at Merlin Park probably with the help of money which came from a marriage to a daughter and co-heir of Brownes of the Neale. These Blakes had previously resided at Moyne Hill, Headford, which was an older house on their estate. A ball at Blakes of Castlegrove in 1836 had 200 guests and comprised "most of the rank and fashion of Galway and Mayo, and several persons from Dublin and the north of Ireland.. nothing of the kind has ever exceeded it in this part of Ireland, whether we consider the brillant display of plate, the costliness of the wines, the hospitable urbanity of the hosts"[161]. The Blakes of Castlegrove were also celebrating the recent erection of a mansion which was obviously out of proportion with their 2311 acre estate. Castlegrove and Merlin Park were both sold in the Encumbered Estates Court[162]. A three day riotous house party was held at Carantrila around 1836 during which the ladies "were mostly dancing in a large new ballroom erected for the occasion, and the gentlemen were, many of them, more drunk than sober"[163]. Clanricarde headed the impressive guest list and the exact degree of intimacy between him and Mrs Handcock became the subject of a famous law case. Some years later Clanricarde visited William Handcock in London who was under fear of arrest for debt[164].

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160. The Correspondent, 23-28 September 1812; Callwell, Old Irish life, p323.

161. Connaught Journal, 27 October 1836 p3.

162. Charles Blake, at the suggestion of Thomas Bermingham, had earlier offered Merlin Park to the government for purchase as a military barracks (Tuam Herald 16 December 1848 p 4).

163. Sir W. Gregory, An Autobiography p 41.

164. Handcock V. Delacour, p20.

The principal houses on record as social venues in the 19th century included Marble Hill, Castle Hacket, Monivea, Annagh, St Clerans, Garbally, Mervue, Brownsgrove and Menlo. The Dillons of Clonbrock had well stocked wine cellars and Dutton claimed that Anthony Lynch's port was "much superior to the generality of that to be had in Dublin, and much lower in price. It is so well known in the counties of Galway and Mayo, that several gentlemen buy from no other merchant"[165]. There was however a great difference in the economic means of families even though they had the same social rank. In 1878 the Dillons of Clonbrock had an estate of 28,246 acres and the Blakes of Ardfry an estate of 2827 acres. The Blakes could not therefore afford the high social life of the Dillons although they might aspire to do so. When Dorothea Herbert visited Ardfry in 1787 Mrs. Blake told the company they "seldom or ever sat down to a meal with less than a hundred in family"[166]. In the following century the sporting Persses of Moyode, who had a much larger estate, had a mere 20 for dinner every day[167]. The 3rd Lord Wallscourt of Ardfry squandered most of his fortune during the Regency. When Ardfry was refurbished in 1826 he could scarcely afford to furnish it. "He has lately bought at a sale a beautiful china dinner set which we really wanted", wrote his wife, Elizabeth Lock. "He got it very cheap and it is very pretty indeed"[168]. A house however could, in difficult times, be almost self-sufficient by living off the produce of the estate. The Blakes managed to give a ball for the tenantry and servants to celebrate

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165. Dillons of Clonbrock, p13; Dutton, Survey of Galway, p197.

166. Retrospections of Dorothea Herbert 1770-1789 (Dublin 1988) p161.

167. Western Star 1 September 1849 p3.

168. The Duchess of Sermoneta, The Locks of Norbury: the story of a remarkable family in the 18th and 19th centuries (London 1940) p319, 322-3.

their return to Ardfry. "They had enormous suppers of a whole sheep and two or three rounds of beef and all went home mad drunk with drinking Henry's health in 'the cratur', as they call whisky. Some fell into the sea on the way back"[169]. The Martins of Ballinahinch likewise, despite the advent of hard times, kept up the tradition of hospitality. Maria Edgeworth enjoyed a fine dinner there, in spite of curtainless windows and rattling shutters[170]. While serving a prison sentence, Thomas Martin of Ballinahinch gave nightly dinner parties to all the neighbouring gentry in the governor's residence "and was wont to declare afterwards that he had never enjoyed himself more than within jail walls"[171].

The shabby condition of Ballinahinch and Eyrecourt Castle gave currency to the mistaken view that this was the general state of the houses of all gentry in Galway. When Prince Puckler-Muskau toured Connaught he stayed for some time at Bermingham House which was then rented by Captain Netterville Blake. Blake was not well off and had twelve sons and seven daughters to provide for. The house was in poor condition, the furniture tottering, and the guests, in the absense of napkins, had to use their handkerchiefs or the corners of the table-cloth[172]. Puckler – Muskau was amused to see a local squire searching for America in a map of Europe. Lord Eyre of

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169. Ibid, p323. MacEvilly reported the controversial Fr Daly to Archbishop Cullen in 1863 for attending an Ardfry Ball. "He went there fully dressed in his Roman costume and continued enjoying the dancing until two o'clock in the morning" (L. Bane, 'John MacEvilly 1816-1902'. M.A. Thesis, U.C.G., 1979. p.286. Hereafter cited as Bane).

170. Tour in Connemara, pp41-42.

171. Callwell, Old Irish life, pp378-9. Ballinahinch was fitted up as a hotel in 1849 (Galway Vindicator 11 August 1849 p3).

172. Tour in England, Ireland and France in the years 1828 and 1829. i, pp 221, 222, 224.

Eyrecourt had no books and spent his time sipping claret and watching cockfights[173]. His nephew and successor Giles Eyre could barely write. "Hunting, fishing, shooting, drinking were his accomplishments"[174]. These cases however are far better known than the numbers of gentry who had well furnished houses and good libraries. Wakefield claimed, from an apparently inadequate investigation, that libraries were not common in Ireland[175]. Dutton however indicated that many gentry in Galway had good libraries. In the 18th century the best known library was that of Denis Daly of Dunsandle (1747-1791) who "not only collected the best editions of the great authors of antiquity, but read books with the ardour of a real lover of literature. His library was uncommonly valuable...". His son Robert Daly, bishop of Cashel and Waterford and younger brother of the first Lord Dunsandle, had another valuable library[176]. Sources give some idea of up to thirty known libraries in the county in the 19th century. Lord Clonbrock's uncle described a recent visit to Clonbrock in 1816. The house was "so improved and possessing an establishment in which every luxury and comfort that can be desired is attained". Edward Martyn's visiting Oxford friend described Tulira as having "every luxury of civilisation"[177]. When Luke Dillon 2nd Lord Clonbrock (1780-1826) left Oxford and returned to his estate he set himself to improve the place and buy books, pictures, and furniture for the house. One lot of 14 pictures cost him 1000 guineas. In 1800 he began the

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173. Memoirs of Richard Cumberland, i, 279.

174. Recollections of Ireland, by a late professional gentleman (Windsor 1865) p58-9.

175. Account of Ireland statistical and political (London 1812) ii, 803.

176. Dutton, p vi; Hardy, Life of Charlemont (London 1812) i, p287; A. Hamilton Madden, Memoir of Robert Daly (London 1875) pp374-5; D.N.B.

177. Dillons of Clonbrock, p44; D. Gwynn, Edward Martyn and the Irish Revival, pp 59-60.

library and spent £738 on books from then to 1806. Some were bought in Dublin and others in London. He bought furniture from the firm of Gillow[178]. Dutton referred to Christopher Dillon Bellew's "extensive and choice library"[179]. The Bellew library had the ancient classics in the original and in translation, including rare continental editions; works of the European and English Renaissance and of the Enlightenment and Romantic age; and reference works including Irish dictionaries and grammars[180]. When Puckler-Muskau visited Mount Bellew he was impressed by the art collection. "The lord of the demesne, who is rich, possesses a numerous collection of pictures, some of which are excellent. There is a winter landscape of Ruysdaal's, the only one of its kind which I remember to have seen by that master". The collection also included works by Rubens and Rembrandt[181].

Libraries and lavish furnishings could only be afforded by gentry with larges estate although the subscribers' lists in works like O'Flaherty's Ogygia vindicated (1775) and Lewis's Topographical dictionary of Ireland (1837) show that a wide range of Galway gentlemen had an interest in books. Garbally, Woodlawn and Coole had libraries although not so well known as

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178. Ibid, pp29-30.

179. Dutton, p.vii.

180. K. J. Harvey, 'The Bellews of Mount Bellew: a Catholic gentry family in the age of the penal laws' (Ph.D. Pennsylvania State University 1984) pp100-102; Michael Sadleir, XlX Century fiction: a bibliographical record based on his own collection (London 1951) i, xx-xxi; Otway, A tour in Connaught (Dublin 1839).

181. Tour in England, Ireland and France in the years 1828 and 1829, pp258-9. Galway Vindicator 20 July 1850 p2,3, informed its readers that Mr J.E. Bosanquet, portrait painter to the Emperor of Russia, was about to arrive and had been "extensively patronised by the nobility and gentry of this country".

the Dunsandle library. The library at Coole was begun by Robert Gregory (1727-1810) "the Nabob", who amassed a large fortune in India, and was continued by his son Richard. Robert collected rare Oriental works and Richard added more books as well as Italian art treasures[182]. John Bernard Trotter described the interior of Portumna Castle. "The great hall, stair-case, and the state drawing room, are very handsome; and a long room, in the highest story, is calculated for a fine library. It is in an unfinished state. There are several family pictures, and a great deal of ancient furniture, which give a venerable air to many of the rooms"[183]. Lady Clanricarde was a widow since 1808 and her son, the future 1st Marquess, still a minor. Portumna Castle was gutted by fire in 1826 and was not rebuilt. The 2nd and last Marquess was a wide reader and fine authority on art[184]. The library at Lisreaghan was a highly ornamented room 80 feet in length and the house, like Coole and Kilcornan, was enriched with objects of Italian art[185]. The Blakes of Ardfry, like the Lawrences of Lisreaghan, fell on hard times

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182. W.B. Yeats, Autobiographies, pp389-91; Lady Gregory, Coole, ed. C. Smythe 1971, pp17-28; B. Jenkins, Sir William Gregory of Coole: a biography, p85 . Richard Gregory also left many valuable books to the school library at Harrow- his old school - and founded the Gregory Scholarship there (V.R.T. Gregory, The House of Gregory, pp54-6).

183. Walks through Ireland in 1812, 1814 and 1817, pp561-2; M. Craig, Portumna Castle, p7.

184. Lady Gregory, Coole p88. He was a regular frequenter at Christies (Nevill, The life and letters of Lady Dorothy Nevill. p185). "His squalid and dirty chambers were filled with most precious pictures; one of the best of them, I was told, was nailed against the back of one of the doors in his flat" (T.P. O'Connor, Memoirs of an old parliamentarian, 1929, ii, 124).

185. 'Photographs of the Frescoes etc taken at Lisreaghan, Lawrencetown, Co. Galway', album in Galway County Library.

and eventually had to sell some of their pictures[186]. The sporting gentry too had libraries, though they may have been fairly modest. Martin J. Blake had 1000 volumes and Lamberts of Cregclare a mere 700 volumes[187]. Tyrone House had a library of 2000 volumes as recorded at an 1839 auction[188]. Moyode Castle, seat of Burton Persse, appears not to have had a library, although the house was "magnificently furnished and decorated, reminding one of the ancestral halls of some Italian prince, with the heavy marble mantles, the splendidly carved mahogany and rosewood furniture... the huge covered tables, all odorous with spice and wine, the tapestried halls, and the magnificent pictures, all tending to remind one of Oriental grandeur"[189].

Some libraries reflected the scholarly interests of the owners. Denis Kelly of Castle Kelly, Irish scholar and collector, had a fine library of about 15,000 Irish books and MSS which was sold in Dublin in 1875[190]. Whereas Denis Kelly

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186. The painter Sir Thomas Lawrence was a close friend of the Locks of Norbury Park in Surrey, one of whom became Lady Wallscourt of Ardfry. His portrait of Lady Wallscourt was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1826 (D.E. Williams, Life and correspondence of Sir Thomas Lawrence, London 1831, i, 259, 297-9, ii, 429).

187. Catalogue of books forming a portion of the property of the late Martin Joseph Blake, Esq., M.P. (Dublin 1862); Tuam Herald 10 May 1856, p3.

188. Tuam Herald, 9 November 1839, p3, 21 December 1839, p2.

189. Galway Express, 17 November 1877, p3.

190. D.J. O'Donoghue, The poets of Ireland, p225. Part of the Castle Kelly library was bought by Lord Crawford whose own magnificent library of over 50,000 books and MSS was described as "quite unrivalled among private collections" (Annual register 1880, p223). Crawford's Kelly material is now in the John Rylands Library in Manchester. Kelly corresponded with Irish scholars like Sir

was a Tory and Orangeman Edward Martyn of Tulira became a Nationalist and had Irish bookplates in his select library. His collection of pictures was said to be one of the finest in Ireland[191]. The library at Renvyle was obviously collected by Henry Blake (1789-1856) who was educated at Eton and Oxford. Maria Edgeworth described it as "a most confortable turkey-carpeted, well-furnished library, all panelled with oak and filled with books delightfully, looking as if it had been lived in constantly and happily, two book-rooms opening into one another; and an excellent sitting room beyond..."[192]. The same writer referred to the "total lack of book-cases" at Ballinahinch. Pictures and plate were destroyed by fire in the original house at Ross in the 18th century[193]. Charles Blake-Forster, like Edward Martyn of Tulira, was a Nationalist and he was expelled from the County clubs of Galway and Ennis and the Dublin clubs because of the Jacobite and Nationalist opinions expressed in his Irish chieftains and because the binding bore the uncrowned harp[194]. The Blake-Forster seat at

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John Gilbert about his translations (M. Gilbert, Life of Sir John Gilbert, London 1905, p. 196. This work has reference to Lord Gort's "manuscript stores". pp229, 233).

191. Tuam Herald 22 June 1901 p4. The library is described in D. Gwynn, Edward Martyn and the Irish Revival pp 65-66; M.T. Courtney, Edward Martyn and the Irish Theatre p41.

192. Tour in Connemara (London 1950) p73. Oliver St. John Gogarty found a first edition of More's Utopia in the Renvyle library and presented it to Trinity College Dublin (It isn't this time of year at all: an unpremeditated autobiography, London 1954, p146).

193. Somerville and Ross, Irish memories (London 1917) p7. Ballinahinch did have a library (Galway Vindicator 25 October 1848 p3).

194. 'Blake-Forster: some notes and queries', The Irish Book Lover (1921) p 75.

Ashfield, near Gort, had a library and paintings[195]. Nicholas Browne of Mount Hazel was a delicate man and fond of his books like Blake-Forster. He collected "a considerable library"[196]. Lord Westmeath, "a man of high literary attainments and much ability", had a special wing built onto Pallas to house his library[197]. The society journalist Anne Power O'Donoghue while a guest at Castlegrove sent a detailed account of the house and library to the Ladies' Pictorial in London. The house had been built by the Blakes and the extravagance which ruined them was illustrated by their costly ornamentation of even the basement rooms in Castlegrove. It was then owned by the Lewin family who had a fine library there, a library "where one may revel in every species of literature, frivolous and solid, grave and gay, all the rarest works of theological and scientific writers, new and old books of travel and research; a vast array of fiction from Fielding, Scott and others of older date, down to Haggard, Lyall, Kipling, and all the good and healthy writers of a popular and modern school"[198]. Other references to libraries include those at Merlin Park, Spiddal, Knockbane, Castle Taylor, Ramore, Carantrila, Ower, Kilcloony and Tyaquin[199].

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195. Galway Vindicator 18 September 1869, p3. Some of the Blake-Forster library was later held by Sir Henry Blackall, a relation of the family. He cites Blake-Forster MSS in 'The Butlers of County Clare', North Munster Antiq. Jn, Vl, (1952) pp118, 120.

196. E. H. de Stacpoole, An account of the de Stacpoole Family (unpublished typescript 1968) p23. Browne got involved in revolutionary projects with Lord Edward FitzGerald, but was never arrested (ibid).

197. Galway Vindicator, 10 May 1871.

198. Tuam Herald 1 September 1894 p2, 8 September p2. Anne Power O'Donoghue was a Lambert of Castle Ellen and cousin of Sir Edward Carson.

199. Merlin Park had a "large and valuable" library of over 3000 volumes (Galway Vindicator, 8 January 1853 p3). The first Lord Killanin (1826-1901)

There was also a long established tradition of foreign travel among many of the better off gentry, especially the Tribal families and those who had overseas property connections like the Kellys of Newtown and Dalys of Dalysgrove. Travel was undertaken for various reasons. Enjoyment, education, health and retirement were the main reasons. Careers in the army or diplomatic service brought younger sons overseas and occasionally even heads of families. At least twenty gentry families are on record as frequenters of Continental pleasure routes even before the event of the railway age. Wakefield pointed out that there was a very perceptible difference in the habits, manners and language of Irish gentry who had

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"lived entirely among his books" and Spiddal House was, unfortunately, burned down in 1923 "thereby losing a valuable library" (Gwynn, Edward Martyn, p35; Semple, By the Coribside, 2nd ed. 1984, p174). For Knockbane library see Parl. papers, H.C. 1878, xxiii, p227. Lady Gregory found Ruskin's works in Castle Taylor library (Seventy years p27). The library at Ramore is referred to in A Glance into the Past. Nina MacDermott's memories of life in Ramore. Unpublished, 1981 p3. Carantrila had a ballroom and library (Greaney, Dunmore p59). "Mouldering calf-bound volumes with great Edmund Burke's name on their fly-leaves crowned the bookshelves" at Ower, according to Sheila Wingfield (Real People, London 1952, p2. Sheila Wingfield (Lady Powerscourt) was daughter of Colonel Claude Beddington, a London tobacco merchant, who bought the adjacent Ballycurrin demesne). The library at Kilcloony had 800 volumes (auction in Tuam Herald 12 May 1868). An auction at Tyaquin in 1847 included "a valuable assortment of the best standard works on divinity, history, fiction and general literature" (Galway Vindicator 7 April 1847 p3). An auction at Maryville, Kinvara, in 1851, included a library and paintings by Vandyke, Watteau, Rembrandt, Murillo, Raphael, etc. (Galway Vindicator 1 January 1851 p3, 4 January p2. Maryville was the residence of the late John Geoghegan of Bunowen Castle in Connemara, who had been accountant-general of the Court of Exchequer). The advertisement of a Galway bookbinder read- "libraries repaired on the most moderate terms" (Galway Vindicator 20 March 1847 p2).

travelled and those who had never visited England or any part of the Continent[200]. Wakefield also claimed that gentry who went no further than Ballinasloe or Dublin had no knowledge of the rest of Ireland even though they might be knowledgeable of public affairs[201]. Caesar Otway also referred to this particular class when he said that at the beginning of the 19th century "the Connaught secondary gentry, who seldom thought of going to Dublin, used, besides rigging themselves out at Ballinasloe Fair, to have their common and occasional wants in the way of raiment, jewellery, and spicery supplied by pedlars who went about the country with large and strong chests stowed on carts and which contained often valuable assortments of goods of all kinds. These persons were of such respectability that some of them dined at the tables of the gentry"[202]. Dublin merchants also came down with selections of English and French silk and satin luxury fabrics and rented local shops to sell their wares during the Ballinasloe Fair[203]. In addition to the attendance of the secondary gentry, Lords Clancarty and Clanricarde usually held fashionable parties after the Ballinasloe Fair. The Ballinasloe Agricultural Society had an annual dinner and ball. Ballinasloe was the meeting place for the Protestant gentry and parties at Garbally had guests such as the Plunkets, Polloks and Denis Kelly of Castle Kelly[204]. It was observed earlier that

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200. Account of Ireland statistical and political (1812) ii, 753.

201. Ibid, 803.

202. A tour in Connaught p255. Otway claimed that many Western proprietors promoted the coastal smuggling trade (Ibid).

203. Galway Vindicator 31 July 1847 p3; Western Star 8 May 1847 p2, 19 October 1850, p2. Galway Vindicator 26 July 1845 announced that Limerick lace would be sold to "the Ladies of Galway and its vicinity".

204. Tuam Herald, 17 April 1858, p3.

families like the Dillons of Clonbrock who travelled overseas were usually anxious not to miss the Ballinasloe Fair. Social centres like Ballinasloe and Galway were especially welcome in the Famine period when there was an almost total stop to pleasure traffic in Ireland in general and in the West in particular[205].

The gentry conspicuous for foreign travel were the Dillons of Clonbrock, Kellys of Newtown, Joyces of Mervue, Blakes of Furbough and of Ardfry, Brownes of Mount Hazel, Trenches of Garbally, Redingtons of Kilcornan, Redington-Roches of Rye Hill, St Georges of Headford, Blakeneys of Abbert, Dalys of Dalysgrove, Chevers of Killyan, Handcocks of Carantrila and Frenches of Monivea. These were practically all proprietors of at least several thousand acres. The secondary gentry described by Otway had largely sold out before or during the Incumbered Estates Court sales. They included offshoots of Tribal families and of older families of Burkes and Kellys. They were frequently touchy about their social status like the Mrs Kelly who made her servants jostle the Herbert's carriage at Loughrea races[206]. Their mental horizons were more limited than those of families who could avail of the social and cultural delights of Italy and France. For instance Luke Dillon 2nd Lord Clonbrock had a good knowledge of paintings and was fond of music, tastes which he indulged during a three months continental tour with his daughters in 1824. In Milan he attended the opera and visited the Ambrosian Library where he saw some "curious manuscripts and a collection of pictures, but not many good ones"[207]. The Dillons were probably the

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205. Tourists' illustrated handbook for Ireland (London 1859) p 92.

206. Retrospections of Dorothea Herbert 1770-1789, p163.

207. Dillons of Clonbrock, pp 39-41. This was where Byron perused the amatory correspondence of Lucretia Borgia and Cardinal Bembo, "the prettiest love-letters in the world" (Byron's life and

leading family in Galway in terms of life-style and social activity. In the 18th century Robert Dillon of Clonbrock, known as "Beau Dillon", spent much time abroad and was very extravagant[208]. Succeeding Dillons had virtually unending sequences of travel between Galway and Europe, including London and Bath. They spent four months in Dublin each year at their house in Harcourt Street. Later members of the family suffered ill health and in 1874 health problems brought them to Arcachon. Wyndham Blake of Ardfry, who was a consumptive, stayed in Italy with the Duchessa di Teodoro[209].

The artistic riches of Italy made it an essential part of the grand tour in the 18th century[210]. Mary and Anne Bermingham (later to become Lady Leitrim and Lady Charlemont), heiresses to their father's large property at Ross Hill near Cong, were taken to Italy to complete their education and remove the danger of abduction. Their artistic temperaments and beauty, which charmed Byron and Moore, opened the doors to intellectual and aristocratic society in Rome and Florence and close friendship with the Comtesse d'Albanie widow of the 'Young Pretender', and a leader of society. Mary Bermingham's letters from Germany, where they went on leaving Italy in 1796, describe vividly the social life at the Court of Carlsbad. "I should almost prefer to die than to be always in society", she wrote, although only nineteen years old at the time, "there is nothing which so tires the heart the spirit and the soul". The Berminghams returned to Ireland in 1797 and were the belles of the Dublin season in 1799. They had

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works, ed. T. Moore, London 1832, iii, pp 300, 305).

208. He had his horse shod with silver in Paris (Dillons of Clonbrock, p 5).

209. The Duchess di San Teodoro, Memoirs, p68.

210. G.E. Mingay, English landed society in the eighteenth century (London 1963) pp138-9.

escaped seduction but their remote ancestral home at Ross Hill was destroyed in the turmoils of 1798[211]. One of the attractions of Italy was that Rome was the centre of aristocratic Catholic society. Although Protestant families like the Dillons enjoyed the artistic splendours of the Italian cities, Catholic families like the Joyces were well known in Rome. The daughter of Thomas Joyce of Rahasane who died at Rome was "much admired in the highest circles of society in which she moved.. the greatest part of the Catholic society of Rome assembled at her obsequies - the families of Borghini, Doria, Lancilotte, Porsena, Bedinfeld etc."[212]. The Blakes of Ardfry had connections in Italy through the Locks of Norbury Park. The Frenches of Monivea toured England, France and Italy in 1802[213]. A branch of the family lived in Italy and got the title Marquess of Castel Thomond from Pope Leo X111[214]. Henry French 1st Marquess of Castel Thomond lived at Bolsena in Italy above his means and entertained lavishly. "The visitor's book in our house was filled with signatures of famous Roman names, princes of the Church and members of foreign nobility"[215]. Many of the Tribal families, and others

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211. F. A. Gerard, Some fair Hibernians, London 1897, pp67-78. Byron said that in return for Lady Charlemont's love he would "build and burn another Troy" and he described her as "that blue-winged Kashmirian butterfly of book-learning.... it is a pleasure to look upon that most beautiful of faces". Thomas Moore was told the Italians "were ready to fall down and worship her" (The works of Lord Byron: letters and journals, ii (ed. R.E. Prothero, London 1898) pp 333, 358; T. Moore, Journals, iii, p78).

212. Tuam Herald 28 April 1866. Sir John Burke of Glinsk went there to meet the Pope (Barrington, Personal sketches ii, p247).

213. Account of tour in French of Monivea papers (NLI).

214. J.H. Douglas, The principal noble families of Rome (Rome 1905), p39.

215. O'Brien - Ffrench, **Delicate mission**, p9.

also, had a long established connection with overseas commerce. Some of the Kirwans of Blindwell had careers in India and Spain and owned large property in Porto Rico. At a public banquet in 1849 to welcome Archbishop MacHale back from Rome, MacHale referred to the chairman, Martin Kirwan of Blindwell, as "a gentleman who had travelled much to improve his taste and judgement", not as an absentee, but to bring back "a wiser benevolence and a cultivated taste for the benefit of those around him"[216]. Christopher Neville Bagot, a younger son of the Bagots of Ballymoe, toured Italy with his three sisters in 1860. Bagot had made a fortune as a gold digger in Australia and was known in London society as Bagot "the Nugget". In 1868 he had "splendid apartments" in London where he was well known "by all the gay, fashionable, and wild people of London"[217]. Bagot was involved in a law case which revealed the more extravagant side of upper class social life. The defence lawyer referred to Bagot's "dinners a la Russe of 22 courses, with as many wines to finish... not very much calculated to improve a man's health"[218].

France was perhaps more popular because of its climate and the family connections which some Galway families had there. Examples are the Kellys of Newtown, Basterots of Duras, De Stacpooles of Mount Hazel and FitzGerald-Kenneys of Kilclogher. In the south Pau was a popular resort famous

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216. Galway Vindicator 3 February 1849 p3. Kirwan's obituary described him as "intimately acquainted with ancient and modern literature and possessed of a profound knowledge of the world gathered during his extensive travels through foreign countries" (Tuam Herald 18 May 1861).

217. Bagot v. Bagot, p3,5.

218. Ibid, p 5.

because of its therapeutic climate[219]. Matilda Kelly of Newtown described Anglo-Irish society at Pau. "I recall a million and one occupations and diversions, in a rather cosmopolitan atmosphere, with a leaven of fine old French aristocracy... Soon I became the spoiled and pampered child of these soirees, where one played whist, listened to fine music, or conversed in the manner of a bygone era!"[220]. The Kellys of Newtown were residing on the Continent in 1825 and James Kelly returned in 1832 "after a tour of several years on the Continent of Europe". His son John returned in 1842 after an absense of several years in the West Indies[221]. Pierce Joyce of Mervue returned from the Continent in 1858 and the wife of Walter Joyce of Corgary died at Bordeaux in 1859[222]. The Blakes of Furbo returned in 1852 having spent 3 years on the Continent. The Brownes of Mount Hazel toured Europe with the Bishop of Tuam in 1842[223]. Lord Dunlo lectured on his oriental travels in 1858[224]. John Blakeney of Abbert died at

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219. A. Taylor, The curative influence of the climate of Pau (London 1842).

220. Memoirs of Matilda Kelly of Newtown, p28. For an analysis of aristocratic society at Pau see P. Tucoo-Chala, Pau: ville Anglaise (Pau 1979).

221. Connaught Journal, 19 May 1825 p2; 4 October 1832, p3; Tuam Herald, 27 August 1842, p3. James Kelly was guardian to Winefred O'Connor whose family became closely connected with the French aristocracy. She married (2ndly) the Comte d'Agoult and her sister married the Marquis de Bouillé. Winefred O'Connor was a cousin of Valentine O'Brien O'Connor a director of the Royal Bank of Ireland (Burke's landed gentry of Ireland, ed. 1912, p308).

222. Tuam Herald, 17 July 1858 p 3, 15 January 1859, p2.

223. Ibid, 6 November 1852, p 3, 18 June 1842, p3. Olivia Blake of Ballyglunin (later Olivia Taaffe of Smarmore) was strongly influenced by French Catholicism (A Fruitful Life: Olivia Mary Taaffe 1832-1918, Dublin 1918, p9).

224. Ibid, 27 February 1858, p3.

Boulogne in 1858 and Charlotte Donelan of Ballydonelan died there in 1872[225]. Thomas Carter of Annakeen Castle, Headford, was residing at Pau in 1861[226]. This continental dimension of gentry social life also brought European aristocracy to Galway. When the Duchess Teodoro rented Ardfry for three years her friend Baronne di Laumont came to stay with her and went fishing in Galway bay and visited Kilcornan and Lough Cutra.[227]

The social life of the gentry therefore reflected the wide variety of activities generated by the value system of a society where the great landowners were the ultimate social reference group. On the one hand there was a marked difference in the life style of different levels of gentry. But on the other hand the pressures dictated by the social aspiration to emulate the wealthy led to bankruptcy among the financially unsound. The basic divisions of social life were the formalised gatherings and the less formal house functions, with hunting and racing providing the main outdoor activities. Although there were divisions and differences of various kinds such divisions were not normally apparent in the top levels of social activity. During the Repeal and Catholic Emancipation periods there was tension between the Tory and Liberal groups and the popular press castigated supposedly liberal gentry for attending Tory social functions. The press failed to record how people regarded each other and what social manoeverings or cliques existed within the gentry. Such observations were recorded in private correspondence as for example in the case

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225. Ibid, 27 November 1858 p2, 17 February 1872, p2.

226. Ibid, 7 September 1861, p2.

227. Teodoro, Memoirs, pp 95, 98. In the 1880's Lord and Lady Gough entertained a good deal at Lough Cutra (Stacpoole, Irish and other memories p5).

of the hunt ball given for the Duke of Connaught in 1878[228]. Although the gentry as a whole were equally divided between Catholic and Protestant and denomination did not appear to impinge on social life[229] the fact was that the leading families socially were Protestant - the Clanricardes, Trenches, Dillons of Clonbrock, Dalys of Dunsandle, Frenches of Monivea, Mahons of Castlegar, Kirwans of Castle Hacket and Gregorys of Coole. Apart from formal gatherings the basic elements of social life were the extended family and the individual. The most socially talented individual was probably Sir William Gregory who moved in the highest European social and political circles, a world to which Lady Gregory was swept into in 1880 from her quiet Roxborough childhood. "The hours pass quickly in Gregory's company", Sir Horace Rumbold wrote, and Gladstone thought him the most agreeable man he had ever met[230]. Gregory's grandfather, under-secretary William Gregory and his wife Lady Anne Trench, enjoyed the social life surrounding the under-secretary's Lodge in Dublin. This life was shared by his son Robert Gregory and his wife Elizabeth O'Hara who spent her winters in the south of France. High living, followed by the distinction of her son Sir William Gregory, resulted in her giving herself airs. According to Lady Gregory "she openly said there were very few neighbours she could associate with". Exceptions

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228. A. MacLochlainn, 'Documents on social life: four letters from the Wilson-Lynch papers' (Galway Arch. and Hist. Soc. Jn., XLii 1989-90, pp133-6).

229. An insignificant exception may be the case of the Persses who apparently did not visit the Burkes of Danesfield because they were Catholic (M. L. Kohfeldt, Lady Gregory, p46). Blunt said that Lady Gregory's mother "never had a Papist under her roof" (W.S. Blunt, The land war in Ireland, pp443-4).

230. Rumbold, Recollections of a diplomatist, ii, p100; A. Saddlemeyer and C. Smythe, ed., Lady Gregory: fifty years after, p78. Gregory was a very active trustee of the National Gallery.

included the Persses, Shawe-Taylors and Goughs of Lough Cutra[231].

Sir William Gregory, Robert Percy French of Monivea and the first Marquess of Clanricarde typified the extent to which the aristocratic individual could generate large social circles. On another level the extended family had its own social dynamism. It tied in with the extensive practice of social visiting between houses. Visits could be made to a wide circle of relations, often stretching across Ireland and England in the case of families like the Mahons and Trenches. The numerous Mahon daughters spent the summer at Castlegar and migrated to their mother's Dublin house every winter[232]. When the Trenches of Woodlawn wanted to go to Dublin they could stay at a different Trench, or Trench related house, at each stage of the journey[233].

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231. Lady Gregory, Seventy years, p25.

232. Their heavy luggage went by canal boat, including their feather beds packed in barrels (Mahons of Castlegar, p35).

233. These houses included Cangort Park, Moore Abbey and St Catherine's Park, Leixlip.

CHAPTER 5

MARRIAGE FAMILY AND CAREERS

Galway was noted for its numerous resident gentry many of whom were descended from old Catholic stock. An equally striking feature was the prevalence of large families among both greater and smaller gentry. Even large families sometimes barely succeeded in providing a male heir. Neither was a housefull of sons always an unmixed blessing. Augusta Persse of Roxborough (Lady Gregory) was the 12th child in a family of 16. The unruly behaviour of some of her seven brothers was described by W.B. Yeats in his Autobiographies. The Persses were one of the wealthy extended families, a group which included Blakes, Lynches, Dalys, Trenches and Redingtons. The Tribal families were particularly characterised by an enormous amount of litigation. This was often the result of complications caused by the effects of the Penal Laws on title, descent of property and marriage. Despite increasing conformity throughout the 18th century there were two distinct marriage groups in the gentry. The larger group consisted of the older or pre-17th century families, some Catholic and others who had conformed permanently or otherwise, and including Burkes, Dalys, Donelans, Lamberts, McDermotts and the Tribal families. These families formed a densely connected network covering Galway and extending into Clare, Roscommon and Mayo. The other marriage group was made up of those who had acquired large estates in Galway after the 17th century confiscations. These Protestant families consisted mainly of Persses, Trenches, Eyres, Taylors, Wades and Seymours. Each group was largely inter-married, but the Protestant gentry were distinctively and extensively connected with the wider network of Protestant landed society in Ireland and England. The older families were numerically far larger within the county and tended to intermarry with each other.

The pressing employment needs of large families embraced a social and economic orbit ranging from estate agency at home to careers in the outer limits of the British Empire. Church, law, land-agency and government were not as important as the Army for career outlets. Apart from younger sons a considerable number of gentry had careers or official positions while their estates were managed by agents, usually family members or relations. Such careers were made from choice or necessity depending on the fortunes of the particular family. Because of the well-established spread of Galway families overseas the career pattern of younger sons must be seen as part of this wider picture.

An examination of the marriage pattern of eldest sons in the top one hundred gentry families shows that almost one half married wives from within the county. One third married wives from outside the county but within the country. About one fifth married English wives. There were 14 families of five children, 27 families of six children, 19 families of seven children, and 11 families of nine children. There were cases of very large families on both extensive and smaller estates. The Persses of Roxborough had 16 children and Lord Dunsandle had at least as many. In the case of the Brownes of Claran, near Headford, a very old but impoverished family, there is a reference to a 13th daughter marrying a Lynch who was a 16th son[1]. Captain Netterville Blake, who entertained Prince Puckler - Muskau in Bermingham House, was struggling to maintain a huge family[2]. Large families meant that houses

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1. Tuam Herald 4 December 1841, p3. One of the Brownes married the only daughter of Baron de Bourdeon of Manheim. The family declined however and some of them died in poverty (Ibid, 6 December 1862 p3; 15 November 1919, p2; 22 November p4).

2. Puckler - Muskau stated that Blake had twelve sons and seven daughters and M. J. Blake gave the number as nine sons and five daughters. According to tradition 22 of these Blakes came to church in

were often overcrowded and sometimes had to be extended or rebuilt. Large numbers of St. Georges lived in Tyrone House towards the late 19th century[3]. J. M. Callwell who was a Martin of Ross wrote that it was "a matter of course that the eldest son when he married should bring his wife to the family home and that his children should grow up under its roof-tree". Unmarried daughters too, unless well portioned, remained in the family home even when it had passed to a brother or even to a younger generation. Widowed aunts and cousins left with families and reduced means "looked to the old ancestral home to provide them with at least a temporary asylum and its shelter was seldom or never denied to them"[4]. Five unmarried aunts lived with the Dillons of Clonbrock until the death of their father in 1893 when they went to live in Leamington. The French of Cloonyquin household in Roscommon was greatly increased by the presence of children of deceased marriage partners.

Many marriages brought wealth, landed or commercial, but it was usually to families who were already well off like the Clanricardes, Dalys, Bellews and Frenches of Tyrone. In 1825 Lord Clanricarde married Harriet Canning, sister and heiress of Earl Canning governor - general of India. Canning left all his property to their younger son who became the last Clanricarde[5]. In 1916 Clanricarde left all his property to the

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Tuam (Tour in England, Ireland and France in the years 1828 and 1829. By a German Prince. i, p222; Blake family records 1600 to 1700 pp 204-5; Tuam Herald 11 September 1915, p2).

3. G. St. George Mark, Tyrone House (Irish Georgian Society quarterly bulletin, July - December 1976) p 59.

4. Old Irish life, p223.

5. M. Maclagan, Clemency Canning: Charles John, 1st Earl Canning governor - general and viceroy of India 1856-1862 (London 1962) p309. The contents of the will offended members of the Canning family.

6th Earl of Harewood who was his grand-nephew, being the grandson of his sister Elizabeth de Burgh. Denis Daly's marriage in 1780 to Henrietta Maxwell, only daughter and heiress of Lord Farnham, brought estates in Kent and Lincolnshire and a town house in Henrietta Street Dublin[6]. Denis Daly's cousin, Hyacinth Daly of Dalyston, also acquired a large fortune by his marriage in 1740 to the sister and heiress of Thomas Coghlan chief of the ancient sept of Mac Coghlan, Dynasts of Lower Delvin. The fortune however was squandered away by his son Denis Bowes Daly of Dalyston. The 3rd Lord Wallscourt also squandered his fortune and because of this was regarded as a bad match by the family of his wife, Elizabeth Lock of Norbury Park in Surrey[7]. Thomas Bellew married in 1858 the daughter and co-heiress of Henry Grattan, M.P., son of the statesman. She was heir to most of the Grattan property including Tinnehinch and over 10,000 acres in Leix[8]. The Frenches of Tyrone got large additions to their estate by connection with the Binghams and Berminghams. Christopher French married in 1778 the eldest daughter of Henry Bingham of Newbrook in Mayo. His son Arthur French St. George married in 1801 the heiress Lady Harriet St. Lawrence eldest daughter of Lord Howth and granddaughter and heiress of Lord Athenry. John Martyn of Tulira's marriage into the wealthy though socially obscure Smiths of Masonbrook secured a

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6. Marriage settlement, among Dunsandle papers. But the Dunsandle estate was "immensely incumbered" and later became heavily mortgaged" (Sketches of Irish political characters of the present day, London 1799, p142).

7. O'Hart, Irish pedigrees, i, p140; Brewer, Beauties of Ireland, ii, 142-3; The Duchess of Sermoneta, The Locks of Norbury, p319.

8. She survived her husband and held the Leix estate (Landowners of Ireland 1878). Bellew was actually a younger son and his elder brother, the head of the family, was a Jesuit.

dowry of £10,000[9]. The first marriage of Sir William Gregory of Coole freed him from financial embarrassment[10]. Cornelius O'Kelly of Tycooly had an advance in fortune by his marriage in 1831 to a daughter of Walter Joyce of Mervue. Her brothers Walter and Pierce Joyce, trustees of the marriage settlement, bought an estate near Tuam from Lord Clonbrock and made it over to O'Kelly who appeared to have had difficulties in Tycooly as tenant to Clonbrock[11]. O'Kelly then built a residence on his new estate and named it Gallagh which was the name of the earlier O'Kelly castle at Gallagh or Castleblakeney.

Examples of commercial wealth coming to families by marriage occur in the Burkes of St. Clerans, D'Arcys of New Forest and the Blake-Forster family. Many of the Catholic gentry, even apart from the Tribal families, had links with the world of commerce and this factor makes it difficult to assess how income from this source related to purely rental income. In 1836, for example, John Nolan of Ballinderry married Mary Nolan of the Logboy family in Mayo, both families originally descending from the Nolans of Ballinrobe. Miss Nolan was described as "very wealthy"[12]. Some of her family were merchants in Dublin and Lisbon in the 18th century[13]. The

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9. D. Gwynn, Edward Martyn and the Irish Revival, p43.

10. A. Saddlemyer and C. Smythe (ed) Lady Gregory: fifty years after (1987) p71.

11. Reg. Deeds: 1836/22/1.

12. Tuam Herald 14 July 1900 p2.

13. Articles of agreement 6 September 1727 between Patrick Nolan of Lisboa, merchant, and John Nolan of Dublin; conveys to John the "fee simple absolute" of certain lands in Mayo and Galway; Patrick to lodge a conveyance of the title in custody of Rev Fr Lynch rector of Corpus Sanctus College in Lisboa; £2000 to be paid by John to Patrick; witnesses include Thomas Nolan of Logboy (Reg. Deeds: bk 55 p460).

Hardimans were merchants and landowners in Loughrea and John Hardiman Burke of St. Clerans inherited the Hardiman property and estates of his maternal uncle in 1800. The D'Arcys of New Forest got a fortune from marriage to a Yorkshire banking family named Brown in 1878. In 1846 Francis Blake-Forster married the co-heiress of Henry Comerford of Ballykeal in Clare. The Blake-Forsters were in financial decline and the marriage was a case of a bargain between money and class. The most conspicuous case of fortune acquired by marriage was that of Robert Percy French of Monivea who married in 1863 the heiress of Alexander de Kindiakoff, a Russian aristocrat. Robert's only child, Kathleen French, was left seven estates on the Volga, five of which had large mansions. Allowing for her reputation for some exaggeration she claimed to have had her jewels and silver valued at 15,000,000 roubles and accused the Bolsheviks, who robbed and abused her, of taking precious stones worth over £50,000[14].

The gentry had a common approach, to a large extent, in the areas of politics, social life and matters of class. But their diverse historical, religious and genealogical background gave families an individual character. This as a rule influenced people to marry into families of broadly similar background. As in other classes like tended to marry like. The two basic marriage groups were the Protestant gentry of 17th century origin and the great mass of older families. Catholic gentry who had suffered in the 17th century turmoils tended to intermarry, examples being the families of Bellew, Chevers, Nugent, Ffrench and Lynch. Catholic gentry and Tribal families usually married within the county because of their great concentration there. Some of these marriage links had continental aspects in the case of families who were, or had been overseas, like the Kellys,

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14. Letters from Kathleen French to the Duchess de Stacpoole: Moscow 27 January 1917 and February 1919 (copies in my possession).

McDermotts and Garveys. Pedigrees of Protestant gentry on the other hand often stretched across Ireland and England. But where Catholic gentry through talent and wealth attained high social status they too usually married into similar families outside the county and in England. The main examples of this comes from the Burkes of Marble Hill and to a lesser extent the Redingtons of Kilcornan. Sir Thomas Redington married one of the co-heirs of John Talbot of Castle Talbot in Wexford and acquired an estate by the marriage. But the marriage links of other major Catholic gentry, like the Bellews and Nugents of Pallas confirm the main trend which was a close association with Galway families. The Dalys of Dunsandle, Mahons of Castlegar and Kellys of Castlekelly were Irish families who were part of the group of staunchly Protestant gentry who were closely connected. This group was linked to the English gentry by the marriage connections of the Mahons, Kellys and Blakeneys with the Cators of Woodbastwick in Norfolk[15].

The Mahons were prudent in their family and marriage connections. Ross Mahon married Anne Browne in 1762. She was the daughter of Lord Altamont of Westport and thenceforth close friendship was maintained between the two families. Three of their children married their Browne first cousins. The problem of ensuring the succession of a male heir is illustrated by the next generation when Sir Ross Mahon had, from three marriages, eleven daughters and five sons, four of whom died unmarried. Two of these succeeded as the 2nd and 3rd baronets and the next brother, Rev Sir William Ross Mahon, 4th baronet, was rector of Rawmarsh in Yorkshire until his death in 1893. Castlegar consequently had ceased to be occupied as the family seat from the early 1860's until Sir William Mahon, 5th baronet, succeeded in 1893. Coole Park was

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15. The inter-relations, personal and estate affairs of the group are intimately mirrored in the surviving remnants of Blakeney papers (N.L.I. MS10426).

also closed for periods during the colonial career of Sir William Gregory. Whereas marriage connections with the Brownes of Westport brought the Mahons a high social status alliance with the Spencer family was an important connection for the Dillons of Clonbrock. Luke Dillon, later 2nd baron Clonbrock, made friends at Oxford with Lord Francis Spencer son of the Duke of Marlborough. Friendship increased between the two families and Luke's eldest son Robert Dillon met Spencer's daughter Caroline at their home at Cornbury near Blenheim and married her in 1830. Robert's close friend Lord Crofton of Mote Park in Roscommmon also married an English wife, Lord Anglesea's daughter, in 1833 and this brought the two houses even closer socially[16]. It was not surprising therefore that Gerald Dillon 4th baron Clonbrock should marry a Crofton of Mote Park in 1866.

It was the exception rather than the rule for the Dillons and Croftons to marry English wives. In the case of the Dillons the trend continued somewhat when Gerald Dillon's sister Elizabeth married Sir Hugh Ellis-Nanney who had a large estate in Caernarvon and who was defeated by Lloyd George in an election which began his political career. Another brother Robert Dillon, an army officer, married a daughter of Adam Gladstone, an East India merchant and relation of Gladstone the statesman[17]. Gentlemen met their future spouses in a variety of ways. The Dillon-Spencer alliance sprung from an Oxford friendship. A mutual interest in photography brought Gerald Dillon into the acquaintance of Augusta Crofton of Mote Park. Elizabeth Dillon met her husband at a Castle Hacket party. The Dublin season and the numerous county and cosmopolitan social events provided ample opportunity for the pursuit of the heiress. Robert Dillon, lst baron Clonbrock, met his wife in romantic circumstances while hunting in

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16. Dillons of Clonbrock, pp 47-8.

17. Ibid, p71.

Limerick. Hunting was forbidden to girls at Roxborough and Augusta Persse first saw Sir William Gregory at a cricket match there[18]. Ladies did however take part in fox-hunting and the gentry in Connemara always welcomed an invitation to a meet or a hunt-breakfast east of the Corrib. J.M. Callwell recalled how her aunt had returned "in deep disgust" from such a meeting. "The men" she declared, "were hunting the fox, but the women were hunting James Daly"[19]. Daughters certainly appear in many cases to have minds of their own in matters of marriage. A proposal from one of the Perrses was declined by a lady of the Dillons who thereupon abandoned him in the middle of a wood. One of Sir Ross Mahon's eleven daughters only married after rejecting seventeen proposals from different suitors[20].

The great majority of the gentry married within their own numerous class. The small number of heads of families who did not are of interest because of their status. It is also noteworthy that a more severe attitude was taken to younger sons and daughters who married down the social scale than to erring heads of families. The general question of immorality is difficult to assess. On the one hand observers like Dutton and Henry Blake of Renvyle testified to the modesty of the female peasantry[21]. On the other hand there are random and perhaps unreliable statements and folklore about individual cases. T.P. O'Connor asserted that many claimed the old Marquess of Clanricarde as a parent including "a great social

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18. Lady Gregory, Seventy years, pp17, 23.

19. Old Irish life, pp 358-9.

20. Dillons of Clonbrock, p64, Mahons of Castlegar, p31.

21. Dutton, p519; Blake, Letters from Irish Highlands, p80.

figure in London"[22]. Yeats wrote that Edward Martyn's father had been "extravagantly amorous" and that he himself had collected folklore from one of his peasant mistressess[23]. Yeats also claimed that the Comte de Basterot had been crippled by the sins of his youth and the count referred in his memoirs to his passion for a certain Biddy Killeen[24]. The main cases of alliances with local or "country women" were those of Christopher St. George of Tyrone and the 2nd Lord Dunsandle. A later case was that of Robert Blake who succeeded to the Ballyglunin estate in 1891 and was a nephew of Martin J. Blake, M.P. Christopher St. George had twelve children but most of the estate was inherited by the two youngest who were born after his Protestant marriage in 1852[25]. Although the daughters married into the gentry the sons were badly educated and the eldest married another "country woman". The sequence of events which resulted in the extinction of the Dunsandle title were straightforward. Lord Dunsandle became attached to a tenant's daughter, Mary Broderick, and built a separate residence for her at Attymon, six miles from Dunsandle. They had at least 18 children before being legally married in 1864. They had three further

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22. Memoirs of an old parliamentarian (London 1929) ii, p122. The last Clanricarde and Scawen Blunt in Paris frequently visited the courtesan Catharine Walters though Clanricarde failed to win her favours unlike Blunt (E. Finch, Wilfrid Scawen Blunt 1840-1922, p224; E. Longford, A pilgrimmage of passion: the life of Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, p228; H. Blyth, Skittles: the last Victorian courtesan: the life and times of Catherine Walters, pp138-9).

23. Autobiographies, p386.

24. Ibid, p397; Basterot, Souvenirs d'enfance & de jeunesse: notes biographiques et ethnographiques (Paris 1896) p.196.

25. G. St. George Mark, Tyrone House, p 64. A Catholic marriage had been performed earlier (p 58).

DUNSANDLE SUCCESSION

James Daly 1st Lord Dunsandle
(d. 1847)

Denis St George Daly
2nd Lord Dunsandle (d. 1893)
m. (1864) Mary Broderick

Skeffington James Daly
3rd Lord Dunsandle (d.unm 1894)

James Frederick Daly
4th Lord Dunsandle (d.unm. 1911)

(jointly succeeded to estates in 1893)

William Daly of Dunsandle
m. Miss Burke of Marble Hill

Denis Daly of Russborough
(d.1954).

Denis St. George Daly
m. Miss Brassey

Denis Bowes Daly
(late of Dunsandle)
(d.1984)

children including a son who died while still a child. When Dunsandle died in 1893 he had no lawful male heir and was therefore succeeded as 3rd Lord Dunsandle by his younger brother, and on his death without issue in 1894 the title passed to his nephew who died unmarried in 1911 whereupon the title became extinct. Dunsandle's sons by Mary Broderick were well educated, unlike those of Christopher St. George. They were brought up as Protestants, went mostly to Eton and entered military service. The daughters were educated as Catholics. Dunsandle however put a clause into a deed of 1882 which barred a Catholic from inheriting the estate[26]. When therefore his eldest surviving (natural) son, William Daly, became a Catholic on his marriage in 1893 to the elder daughter of Sir Thomas Burke of Marble Hill he became automatically disinherited. William was allowed to remain in Dunsandle until his death and the estate then went to his younger Protestant brother Denis, father of the late Major Bowes Daly of Dunsandle[27].

The case of the huge Dunsandle family is of considerable historical interest. Dunsandle's apparent hostility to Catholicism and relations with the Catholic clergy; domestic life in Attymon and Dunsandle where Lady Dunsandle was taken after her marriage; her efforts to rear all her children as Catholics; her non-acceptance socially by county society and the compensatory annual family trips to Boulogne: these are some of the aspects which invite investigation. There were three cases of marriage with actresses, a practice which became fashionable with the English aristocracy in the late

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26. N.L.I. Dunsandle papers: epitome of the various deeds executed by Lord Dunsandle.

27. William Daly's eldest son Captain Denis Daly bought the Russborough estate in 1931.

19th century[28]. In 1825 Andrew Browne of Mount Hazel made a runaway match at Gretna Green with the actress Millicent Dillon-Harvey[29]. Richard St. George of Headford married an actress in 1860. He had no family and she married again and sold the estate in 1895. When Lord Clancarty's son and heir married the actress Isabel Bilton in 1889 his father tried to have the marriage dissolved. He failed in this but was so angered at the alliance that he disposed of much of the family wealth. When the son inherited the estate his reduced income forced him to mortgage the property and he became bankrupt[30]. A younger son of the Galbraiths of Cappard was disinherited by his father because of a mesalliance with a tenant's daughter[31]. Another younger son, Henry Blake, a nephew of Martin J. Blake, also married a tenant's daughter and had to flee to Australia where he set up a large sheep station[32]. 'Humanity' Dick Martin prevented his son and heir Thomas from marrying a wealthy chandler's daughter even though her father promised to pay off the huge Ballinahinch debts[33]. Thomas later married the youngest daughter of the Kirwans of Dalgan Park, an estate which was destined, like Ballinahinch, to come under the hammer in the Incumbered Estates Court. When one of Sir Ross Mahon's daughters married the son of the steward at

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28. F.M.L. Thompson, English landed society in the nineteenth century (London 1963) p 301.

29. Stacpoole, The de Stacpoole family, pp 23-4.

30. P.K. Egan, The parish of Ballinasloe pp286-7.

31. H. Blackall, 'The Galbraiths of Cappard', Irish Genealogist, IV (1968) p28.

32. This became known as the Ballyglunin Galloway Cattle Stud. Young Blake in Australia attended Monivea School, set up by one of the Frenches who went to Australia some time previously (Tuam Herald 7 March 1914 p2).

33. A. Innes Shand, Letters from the West of Ireland, 1884 (London 1885) pp 127-8; S. Lynam, Humanity Dick, pp 159-160.

Castlegar, although he was a clergyman her mother was so angry that she never saw her again[34]. Three of her sisters also married clergymen and others married into Irish and English gentry families. When Augusta Persse's sister Adelaide married John Lane from a Cork professional family there was disapproval in the Persse family[35].

The difficulty of always guaranteeing the sucession of a male heir was seen in the case of Sir Ross Mahon of Castlegar who had only one married son from a family of sixteen children. When there was no male heir the estate usually went to nephews, cousins, daughters or kinsmen. When the last Clanricarde died unmarried in 1916 the Marquessate became extinct, the Earldom went to his cousin Lord Sligo and the estate went to his grandnephew Lord Harewood. When the last Lord Clonbrock died unmarried in 1926 the title became extinct and the estate passed to his three sisters. Failure of male heirs had its worst effect when estates were divided among daughters. If the property was large it could mean that mere landlordism replaced the overseeing role of resident gentry and that income which could be invested in estate improvement was wasted instead on unproductive legal conflicts. This is shown by the history of the large Bermingham estates. Thomas Bermingham, Lord Athenry, married in 1750 the heiress of Peter Daly a younger son of the Dunsandle family who had a wealthy legal practice and the Quansbury estate in east Galway[36]. When Athenry died in 1799 without a male heir the combined Bermingham and Quansbury estates passed to his three surviving daughters. Substantial portions later went to the three daughters of Lady Howth, one of these daughters. Prolonged

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34. Mahons of Castlegar, p30.

35. Lady Gregory, Sir Hugh Lane: his life and legacy (C. Smythe 1973) pp 26-7.

36. Lodge's peerage of Ireland (ed Archdall), iii, pp 50, 396.

and costly litigation arose over legal doubts about the exact divisions and partitions effected by the various deeds and settlements[37]. The large estates of the Berminghams of Ross Hill around Lough Corrib passed to the joint heiresses Mary and Anne Bermingham who were society beauties in the late 18th century. Mary married the eldest son of Lord Leitrim in 1800 and Anne married the 2nd Earl of Charlemont in 1802[38]. A further branch of the Berminghams was represented by John Bermingham of Dalgin who unsuccessfully claimed the dormant Athenry title in 1800. He married two ladies from the West Indies and at his death in 1802 had "a considerable real estate ... and a considerable personal fortune". He had however no legitimate issue and divided the estate between three illegitimate sons[39].

The Netterville estate passed to Marcella Netterville who married into the Gerrards of Gibbstown in Meath. She was the author of the notorious Gerrard evictions in Galway in 1846 and when she died intestate and without issue in 1865 her estate was divided among three claimants two of whom became absentee landlords. The Aylwards of Ballinagar, like the Nettervilles, were despatched westward in Cromwellian times. The Aylwards, like the Eyres, were brought to near ruin in two generations, not by economic factors but by the domestic effect of failed marriages and weak character. Captain John Aylward's debts forced him into law suits and land sales and brought the estate into Chancery. He invited Richard Morrison in 1813 to reconstruct the family mansion and brought an

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37. Irish Chancery cases (ed Drury and Warren), lV, (1843), pp 1-38, 190-204; Irish Law reports, V, p 190.

38. Burke's dormant abeyant forfeited and extinct peerages, p 48; F. A. Gerard, Some fair Hibernians (London 1897) pp77-8.

39. His nephew was his heir-at-law (Petition of Edward Bermingham of Dalgin claiming to be Lord Athenry, H.L. 1836, XXlX, p58).

unsuccessful action against him on a charge of having an affair with his wife, from whom he separated after the birth of their 3rd child. The next Aylward made a further bad marriage with the daughter of one of his father's creditors and they too became separated and had no issue. When Aylward died intestate, in 1867 the family became extinct in the male line and the estate passed by his sister's marriage to the Lewis family of Cork, who had already acquired an estate by an earlier marriage[40].

Other cases of estates passing to female lines occurred in the families of French of Duras, Redington - Roche of Rye Hill, Shawe - Taylor of Castle Taylor and Browne of Mount Hazel. The Duras estate passed by marriage in 1770 to the de Basterot family of Bordeaux and was greatly impoverished by litigation in later years. The adjoining Cloghballymore estate was originally, with Duras, part of the French estate and it passed by marriage to the Lynches of Barna and afterwards to the Blakes of Ballinafad. The Redington of Rye Hill heiress married in 1832 into the Roches of Granagh Castle in Kilkenny thereby adding a Kilkenny estate to the Rye Hill estate. The Castle Taylor heiress married an Englishman named Shawe in 1825 and he assumed the additional surname of Taylor on his succession to the estate. The Browne of Mount Hazel estate passed to an only daughter who married into the McEvoys of Tobertynan in Meath in 1850. In 1883 the McEvoy heiress married the Duke de Stacpoole thereby joining the Tobertynan and Mount Hazel estates. Name changing was quite common in England and husbands were required to adopt the name and arms of an heiress if they were unendowed younger sons[41]. In the

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40. J.C. Walton, 'The Aylwards of Ballynagar', Irish Genealogist, Vl, (1973) pp 594-6; The Freeman's Journal, September 1813).

41. Stone, An open elite?: p120; J.Goody, J. Thirsk and E.P. Thompson (eds.) Family and inheritance: rural society in western Europe 1200-1800

Redington - Roche case however the Redington seat became the home of the family although Stephen Roche was the eldest son in his family and had residences and estates in Kilkenny and Limerick although the combined acreage was somewhat less than his wife's estate. The marriage also shows how Catholic gentry were connected across the country. The Roches had been prominent in the Confederation of Kilkenny, had lost estates under William III, and were linked with the Dublin merchant tradition[42]. The Roches, Segraves, Byrnes, Nugents of Pallas and Lynches of Barna were all interconnected. The Segraves, like the Chevers family, were attainted several times because of their faith and Stuart stance[43]. Marriages in the Protestant gentry also followed patterns as when Francis Manley Shawe married the Castle Taylor heiress and his younger sister had earlier married Mansergh St George of Headford Castle[44].

There were several instances of failure of male heirs despite the frequency of large families. Lord Ashtown of Woodlawn died without an heir in 1840, as did St. George of Headford in 1857 and Jenings of Ironpool in 1883. In these cases the estate passed to nephews in the male line. Hyacinth Daly of Raford died in 1836 without surviving issue having left the estate to his grand-nephew. When Rev. Sir Christopher Bellew died in 1867 he was succeeded by his nephew Sir Henry Grattan Bellew. Denis Kelly of Castle Kelly, a neighbouring

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(Cambridge 1976) p303.

42. Burke's landed gentry of Ireland (ed. 1912) p600.

43. Marcus Blake Lynch of Barna claimed his wife and her sisters were left "substantial legacies" in a will made by their father John Segrave" (C. W. Segrave, The Segrave family 1066-1935; London 1936, pp 176, 197).

44. Shawe was a younger son of a family who began as Liverpool merchants and were involved in politics and banking (Burke's landed gentry, ed. 1853, ii, p1224; Stone An open elite?, pp 159-60).

proprietor, had no male heir and, wishing to provide for his five daughters from two English wives, sold his estate in the Incumbered Estate Court[45]. Martin J. Blake of Ballyglunin died unmarried in 1861 and was succeeded by his nephew who died unmarried in 1891 and was succeeded by his brother. When Sir George Staunton of Clydagh died unmarried in 1859 he was succeeded in his Irish and English estates, separately, by two younger sons of the Lynch of Renmore family who were his cousins and who assumed the additional name and arms of Staunton[46]. Sir John Burke of Glinsk, who died unmarried in 1814, had been declared imbecile whereupon his estates were settled by act of parliament on the next male heir who was his cousin. Another case of succession being upset by lunacy resulting in lengthy and complicated litigation occurred in the Persse family and will be discussed in detail later. Cases of estates going to kinsmen occurred in the families of Blake of Menlo and O'Flahertie of Lemonfield[47]. A case of an estate going to a younger son occurred in the Gregory family when William Gregory's eldest brother was disinherited by his father for a ruinous addiction to cock-fighting[48].

Although such cases involved a very small percentage of the major gentry they provide detailed and fascinating insights into land law and the social and private lives of the families involved. Failure of male heirs, disputed succession and contested wills usually resulted in costly litigation. Other

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45. Tuam Herald 5 December 1891 p4. There is no evidence that Kelly was other than solvent.

46. Burke's landed gentry of Ireland (ed 1912) p658.

47. In the O'Flahertie case the kinsman was a second cousin (Burke's landed gentry, ed. 1882).

48. V.R.T. Gregory, The House of Gregory (Dublin 1943) pp39-41. William Gregory was under secretary, 1812-1831, and was grandfather of Sir William Gregory of Coole.

causes of litigation included refusal to pay dowries and breach of promise of marriage. Lengthy litigation devoured a family's substance and fostered enmity between the contesting parties. Just as it normally took more than one generation to ruin an estate it usually took more than a single factor. Social and economic factors almost always interacted with human factors. Legal wrangling and general incompetence might be accompanied by marital problems, alcoholism and even insanity. In such cases the final beneficiaries were the lawyers and receivers and the estate and tenantry usually suffered as a result. Families severely affected by litigation included the Blakes of Menlo, Handcocks of Carrantrila, Brownes of Cooloo, Basterots of Duras, and Persses of Roxborough. The Tribal families were involved in an enormous number of appeal cases to the House of Lords. Mixed marriages and the effects of the Penal Laws were at least partly to blame for the legal disputes of the Blakes and Brownes but not for the Handcocks and Persses, who were stout Protestants. The Peerage families and the majority of the greater gentry were not affected by litigation of this kind. Family disputes and marriage problems appear in many cases to have been features of backward badly managed and declining estates. This was true in the case of the Blakes of Dartfield and Windfield, Brownes of Cooloo and Kilskeagh, Burkes of Glinsk and Aylwards of Ballinagar. The strict settlement, if properly drawn up, was designed to remove the chance of dispute and litigation[49]. But such devices appear not to have been sufficient to withstand the human factors at work as for instance in the Persse case where it was claimed that a vital deed of settlement was fraudulently suppressed.

Many families,Tribal and others, had mixed Catholic and Protestant strands. Such was the case with the Blakes of Merlin Park who married mostly within the county. Martin

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49. Stone, An open elite, pp74-5.

Blake, their ancestor, conformed with his wife in 1709 in order to save his estate. Both he and his father had fought at the Boyne on the side of James II[50]. Daughters in the family were brought up as Catholics, such as Frances Blake who married Rev. John D'Arcy, rector of Galway, in 1782. The daughters were brought up in their mother's religion and the sons became Protestant like their father[51]. Sometimes a bride adopted the religion of her spouse. Thus when Henry Blake of Ballyglunin married Adelaide French of Monivea in 1827 she abandoned the "errors of the Established Church"[52]. The Ballyglunin Blakes normally married into Catholic families or families who had not conformed. They had a Catholic influence in that Walter Blake married in 1789 a sister of Rev. Nicholas Archdeckin, Catholic bishop of Kilmacduagh. Other Blake families tended to be Protestant if their founder had married a Protestant, as in the Blakes of Belmont who had married into the Cuff family. Charles Blake of Tuam and three of his sisters married Protestants although his family were Catholic. These marriages were usually performed in both Catholic and Protestant churches. They gave rise to the anecdote of a Blake admitting to St. Peter that he could never make up his mind whether he was a Catholic or a Protestant[53]. The Martins of Ross conformed in 1768 on marrying into the Protestant O'Haras of Lenaboy and brought up their family as Protestants. The next head of the family married a Catholic but the family were brought up as Protestants[54]. Mixed marriages occurred in the aristocracy as when Clanricarde married the daughter of Sir Thomas Burke of Marble Hill in 1799 and in the lesser

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50. Charles O. Blake de Burgh writing in Tuam Herald 8 May 1897 p4.

51. Galway Vindicator 4 September 1875 p3; Blake family records 1600-1700 p193.

52. Connaught Journal 19 November 1827, p3.

53. Callwell, Old Irish life p258.

54. Somerville and Ross, Irish memories, pp7-8.

gentry as seen in the marriage at Portpatrick in 1833 of William Kelly of Ashbrook and Miss Browne of Rockfield[55]. But the Protestant gentry were more hostile to Catholic ladies who married into their ranks. When William Kelly's niece married William Handcock or Carrantrila whose family were "stout Protestants" they objected to the marriage, though it may have been resentment at her lack of fortune[56]. When William Daly married into the Catholic Burkes of Marble Hill he was disinherited by his father Lord Dunsandle. Christopher Neville Bagot was a younger son who made a fortune in Australia and ordered that beneficiaries under his will must be Protestant. One of his sisters was a devout Catholic and in the trial of Bagot v. Bagot he admitted to becoming annoyed with her while travelling in Italy. "She was a devoted Catholic, and when they visited the beautiful Cathedrals to which they came in the course of their travels, when he would inspect the buildings she would remain somewhat longer inside to pray; and, he being strong in his views the opposite way, that circumstance used to annoy him"[57].

The Redingtons had an obscure 17th century origin in the county and uniquely illustrate how Galway society affected incoming families. They established estates and seats at Ryehill and Kilcornan and although originally Protestant were Catholic by the 19th century, Sir Thomas Redington of Kilcornan being the first Catholic under secretary. Their estates however prospered and survived from an 18th century background of litigation and family disputes. The Redington fortunes were founded by Thomas Redington, of Protestant parentage, who married in 1729 the Catholic daughter of a Lynch who had fought for James II. Redington made a large fortune from agriculture and expended about £30,000 in

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55. Connaught Journal 28 January 1833, p3.

56. Handcock V. Delacour, p27.

57. Bagot V. Bagot, p29.

REDINGTON FAMILY

Thomas Redington

Married Margaret Lynch; died 1780

Nicholas Redington
of Mirehill, Headford
Died without issue 1806

Michael Redington
Died intestate in
East Indies 1775

Thomas Redington
of Ryehill

Eleanor Redington
M. Stephen Roche

Thomas Redington
M. Miss Burke of
Kilcornan

Christopher Redington
M (1812) heiress of Henry Dowell of Cadiz

Sir Thomas Redington Under Secretary 1846
M. Miss Talbot of Wexford

Christopher Talbot Redington
of Kilcornan

purchasing estates for his three sons. Contrary to the usual pattern the sons were educated as Catholics, although the eldest two became Protestants. The youngest son Thomas, ancestor of the Kilcornan family, did not conform. The eldest son Nicholas of Mirehill, Headford, died without issue leaving a fortune of £80,000 to his younger brother Thomas, of Kilcornan. The 2nd brother, Michael, was an unsuccessful merchant in Cork and died intestate in the East Indies. One dispute arose when his son, Thomas of Ryehill, claimed the Mirehill fortune. He also had to undertake lengthy litigation against his uncle Thomas of Kilcornan who was the heir-at-law to his father[58]. The Ryehill branch married into other Catholic gentry like the Dolphins and Roches and the Kilcornan branch married into the Catholic Burkes of Kilcornan and Dowells of Cadiz who were wealthy merchants.

The Redington conflicts were caused by the eldest son dying without issue and leaving a large fortune and the next son dying intestate while his son was still a minor. The acquisitive instinct of the younger son, Thomas of Kilcornan, was helped by the fact that he resided with his father, managed the estates, and appears to have been the favourite son. The Kilcornan estate in Galway was three times larger than the Ryehill estate. The Brownes of Cooloo, who were much less prosperous than the Redingtons, became involved in a misfortunate law case when the childless owner willed the estate to a favourite nephew. The case featured complications arising from mixed marriage, contested wills and family disputes. The Redingtons survived similar problems because of their much greater accumulation of wealth and contrasting ambition. The Brownes owned the Ardskea estate near Ballyglunin and the Cooloo estate adjacent to Mount Bellew. Edward Browne conformed in 1777 but later changed back again.

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58. N.L.I.: House of Lords appeals 1729-1816, Pt2: Redington and Redington 1816; ib Pt 5 Redington and Redington 1810 and 1814, 1817.

His son James Browne was educated a Protestant but then became and remained a Catholic[59]. The result of his marital efforts was that his only legitimate offspring was the youngest son. This son Edward Browne, despite two marriages, died without issue in 1871 having willed his estate to a favourite nephew. The case arose when his will was contested by another nephew who claimed the estates by virtue of an earlier will and alleged that the later will was made while Browne was in a state of unsound mind. The jury decided in favour of the later will and the estates went to the favourite nephew.

The Brownes had engaged John Philpot Curran in the 18th century to advise them on questions of inheritance resulting from mixed marriages. Isaac Butt was counsel for the defendant against his heirless uncle and his statements give insights into the range of problems which could reduce or ruin an estate. These problems became compounded over the generations. Edward Browne's second marriage at the age of sixty to Miss Creagh, aged 19, ended, after costly litigation, in separation, whereupon Browne became a heavy drinker[60]. But the problems, as Butt explained them, originated when Edward's father, James Browne, had married Miss Blake of Menlo. The Brownes were a Catholic family. "There was a tradition", according to Butt, "that one of the family formally conformed to the then Established Church (while remaining practically a Catholic) to keep the family property in the family". Regarding Browne's marriage to Miss Blake of Menlo "the tradition of the family was that he had in some way or other, though a Roman Catholic in reality, become legally a

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59. N.L.I. Bellew papers: MS 27183(5). Letter to Christopher Dillon Bellew from his law agent James Smyth.

60. Tuam Herald 6 July 1872, p2. Miss Creagh later married Sir Richard Sankey chairman of the Board of Works and later still she married John Delacour the allegedly natural son of Lord Clanricarde and Mrs Handcock (ibid, 12 February 1921, p2).

BROWNE OF ARDSKEA & COOLOO

Edward Browne

Conformed 1777; relapsed 1791

James Browne

Married Miss Milligan(?)

Married Miss Blake of Menlo

James Browne

of Carnacregg

Born before Protestant

marriage ceremony

Edward Browne

Married 1st Miss Kirwan

Married 2nd Miss Creagh

Died without issue in 1871

Catherine m. Anthony O'Kelly

Edward Browne of

Carnacregg. Disputed

will of his uncle Edward Browne

Michael O'Kelly

Inherited estate on death of

his uncle Edward Browne in 1871

Protestant and that a Roman Catholic marriage by him was thus rendered then legally invalid. A Protestant marriage was afterwards solemmised"[61]. Butt's reference here to "a Roman Catholic marriage" is confusing and it may be that there were errors in the press reports of the case. The Blakes of Menlo were Protestant although they had changed back and forth. However James Smyth in his letter to Bellew stated that Browne married a Miss Milligan who was a Catholic and that Edward was the only son born after that marriage. Whether there had been two marriages or not the conflict was between Edward and his elder brother James who was born before the second or Protestant marriage, as the reports put it. There was, according to the various witnesses, extremely bad feeling in the family amounting at times to violence. The elder brother, James Browne of Carnacregg, was elbowed out and survived by acting as agent to the Bellews and other gentry. His son, also a land agent, was the unsuccessful defendant in the law case.

The legal costs in the Browne case were very large, so much so that Edward Browne's widow applied to Chancery to have them paid out of the estate rather than from her deceased husband's personal assets[62]. The inheriting O'Kelly nephew appears to have been visited with the ill fortune of the Brownes. After succeeding to the 3000 acre estate he became paralysed as a result of having accidentally consumed poison. O'Kelly had willed the estate to his younger brother and further litigation ensued when the will was contested by his father[63]. Accumulated debts eventually put the estate into receiver's hands and it was bought by a younger brother of the Browne defendant in the original case. According to the accounts of

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61. Ibid 13 July 1872, p2, 20 July, p1.

62. Ibid 16 May 1874, p1. She claimed entitlement to one half of those assets.

63. Ibid 30 January 1886, p1; 27 February p1.

the Browne case it appears that Edward Browne actually believed that his elder brother James was the rightful heir to the estate. The primary cause of trouble therefore was the confused and disputed legal status of his father's marriage or marriages. The Blakes of Menlo, with whom he was connected, had an even greater share of litigation resulting from mixed marriage and disputed succession. When Sir Ulick Blake of Menlo died without male issue in 1766 he was succeeded by his kinsman who returned from Bordeaux to claim the estate[64]. His claim was based on his being named as a remainderman in the will of Sir Ulick's father in the eventuality of failure of male heir. His claim was resisted by Sir Ulick's widow and her daughter who had married into the Forster family. The remainderman, Thomas Blake, claimed both the Menlo and Forster estates and a compromise was reached whereby he agreed to pay £8000 for the Menlo estate[65]. He succeeded as 9th baronet and pursued his claim to the Forster estate as did his brother and nephew who succeeded as 10th and 11th baronets. The Irish Lord Chancellor decreed in favour of the claim in 1818 but the Blake-Forsters appealed to the House of Lords and the Lord Chancellor's decree was reversed in 1825[66]. Blake-Forster was then put back into possession of his estates and he obtained "the first opinions in England and Ireland" that he was entitled to recover from the tenants the value of the lands from the time he was dispossessed, and he commenced fresh

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64. He was Thomas Blake of Brendrum or Blakehill near Cong who was a grand-nephew of Sir Thomas Blake 4th baronet.

65. C. Blake-Forster, 'Genealogical sketch of the Blake-Forster sept', Galway Vindicator 20 October 1866.

66. Journals of the House of Lords, LV, 1822-23, p627, LVll, 1825, p962-3; Connaught Journal 22 December 1823, p3, 9 December 1824 , p3, 24 January 1825, p3, 6 June 1825 p3.

BLAKE OF MENLO

Sir Thomas Blake 7th Bt; conformed 1716; died 1749

Sir Ulick Blake 8th Bt; brought up Catholic;
conformed 1748; died 1766

Austace m. Francis Forster of Ashfield

Sir Thomas Blake 9th Bt
Previously of Bo rdeaux
Died 1787 without male issue

Sir Walter Blake 10th Bt; died 1802

Sir John Blake 11th Bt; died 1834

Sir Valentine Blake 12th Bt; died 1847
M. 1st (1803) Miss Donelan of Killagh
M. 2nd (1843) Miss Mac Donnell

Valentine Charles Blake

Sir Thomas Blake 13th Bt
Died 1875

Sir Valentine Blake 14th Bt

litigation for that purpose[67].

When Sir Thomas Blake, 13th baronet, was interred in 1875 a violent riot occurred over the denominational rite of the obsequies. The tenantry believed or assumed that he had died a Catholic and that Protestant clergy should not officiate at the burial[68]. Confusion about Blake's religion was quite understandable in view of the history of mixed marriage among his ancestors. Sir Ulick Blake's father, Sir Thomas Blake 7th baronet, conformed in 1716. Sir Ulick was educated a Catholic despite the apparent conformity of his father. Considering that conformity to be defective he himself conformed in 1748, during his father's life "in order to entitle himself to take a reversion in fee in the lands of his father expectant on his death..."[69]. When Sir Ulick died in 1766 his only child and heiress entered into possession of the estate which went however to a distant relation, Sir Thomas Blake 9th baronet, previously of Bordeaux. Sir Thomas married a Lynch, as did his daughter, and his brother Sir Walter Blake, 10th baronet, married into the Catholic Burkes of Ower. The next Blake married a Lynch cousin. Litigation occurred in the following generation when Sir Valentine Blake 12th baronet married a Catholic wife in 1803 and a Protestant wife in 1843. The funeral of his son Sir Thomas Blake became, as already stated, the subject of litigation. Sir Thomas was succeeded by Sir Valentine Blake 14th baronet. A Chancery bill was then filed against him by the son of Sir Valentine and his Protestant

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67. Connaught Journal 22 December 1823 p3.

68. Galway Vindicator 6 January 1875 p3, 9 January p3, 13 January p3, 20 January p3, 3 February p3, 20 March p3, 17 July p3.

69. N.L.I.: House of Lords appeals 1729-1816, Ptl: Loveland and Lynch, 1814.

wife[70]. Sir Valentine, as the bill alleged, was married by "a popish priest" to Miss Donelan who was a Catholic, and the question was raised was he then a Protestant or a Catholic. The claimant alleged that he was a Protestant and that consequently the marriage with Miss Donelan was null and void. His bill was dismissed however and the Galway Express approved the outcome of "this most vexatious and useless of legal contentions. No person... anticipated any other issue. It seemed on a broad view of the circumstances a matter of mere impossibility that Miss Donelan of Killagh, connected with the highest Catholic families in the county would have been so carelessly dealt with as to be permitted to form a connection by marriage with Sir Valentine that was not in every respect legal and binding"[71]. The outcome of the case was celebrated locally and the festivities included bonfires and pipers at the entrance to Menlo Castle.

Confusion about people's religion was a hangover from the imperfect operation of the Penal Laws. Many of the Tribes and other old families conformed temporarily to hold their estates. Protestant marriage connections sometimes induced them to remain in that religion. Whereas in the Menlo case the confusion was displayed by the tenantry, the Burkes of Glinsk illustrate how a family could become uncertain about their own religious position. When one of the Burkes was interred in 1838 in Tuam the crowd resented the presence of a Protestant clergyman, believing that Burke had died a Catholic. Burke's father, Major William Burke, believed that his son was a Protestant. But the local Catholic gentry at the funeral claimed the contrary and insisted on Catholic prayers being recited in spite of Burke's opposition. When he called a Protestant clergyman to officiate a riot developed

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70. She was a niece of Rev. Richard Mac Donnell Provost of Trinity College.

71. Galway Express 6 July 1878 p3.

and in the ensuing tumult Major Burke was pushed into his son's open grave. At the trial which followed Burke stated that the Glinsk family were Catholic although Sir Henry Burke his grand-uncle who died in 1748 was a Protestant. That Burke had married into the Nettervilles, a transplanted family which had conformed. Major Burke admitted that he had been brought up a Catholic but became a Protestant on his marriage to Lady Matilda St Lawrence, Lord Howth's daughter. He remained convinced that his son was a Protestant and blamed the riotous behaviour on the claim put out that he had died a Catholic. He pointed out that another son had died two years previously who was also Protestant, but there had been no trouble about it as the fact was not in dispute[72]. Another of Major Burke's seven children married John Kirwan of Hillsbrook and became a Catholic in 1839[73]. Thomas Henry Burke the under secretary, who was a grand-nephew of Major Burke, belonged to a Catholic branch of the family connected to Cardinal Wiseman. Apart from his difference with the Catholic gentry over the funeral rites Major Burke appears also to have been in conflict with his son-in-law John Kirwan of Hillsbrook. Both wanted the same post as resident magistrate although Kirwan had the advantage of close friendship with the influential Martin Blake of Ballyglunin. In one of his many letters to Blake he made the following comment on Major Burke. "There never lived a greater hypocrite, and few fathers care less for their children"[74].

The Burke, Browne and Blake cases show that, unlike the tenant

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72. The report of the trial extended over the front page of two issues of the Tuam Herald 26 May, 2 June 1838; also ibid 19 May p2, 25 August p3. The Protestant view of the case was given in the Galway Weekly Advertiser 26 May 1838 p2.

73. Ibid 11 May 1839 p2.

74. P.R.O.I.: Ballyglunin papers: M6936/58, No 250, Kirwan to Blake 9 July 1847 and No 330, Kirwan to Blake 20 August 1847.

class, these particular families were largely indifferent to church or clergy. It should also be remembered that even with Catholic gentry their religion was very much a private and family matter as shown by the number of private chapels in their houses. The cases also show how attitudes had changed since the 18th century. Squabbles over a deceased person's religion seem a long way removed from the close-knit world of Burkes, Chevers's, O'Reillys, Nugents and O'Kellys who had suffered for their Stuart allegiance and which extended from Connaught to Europe and the West Indies[75]. Major Burke belonged to a cadet branch of the Glinsk family and both his own estate and the Glinsk estate were sold in the Incumbered Estates Court. The Blakes managed to keep their estate although Sir Thomas Blake was gaoled for debt[76]. The reality was that the most able families prospered. These included families like the Frenches of Monivea who had permanently conformed, the Blakes of Tower Hill who conformed temporarily, and the Bellews who did not conform. The priority or sequence of failings which affected other families is a matter for debate. The cases discussed show however the legacy of the Penal Laws at local and family level. They show the link between marriage and succession disputes leading to litigation and eventual economic decline.

The most notorious cases of disputed wills and succession were those affecting the much larger Handcock, Bagot and Persse

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75. This world is revealed in family correspondence printed in A. Cogan, The diocese of Meath ancient and modern, ii, pp166-171.

76. Blake was R.M. in Glenties and the under secretary Sir Thomas Redington referred to his plight in a letter to Martin Blake - "he could not have expected any other result when he accepted the office or rather repaired to his station without having made arrangements with his creditors. I fear we can do nothing for him "(P.R.O.I.: Ballyglunin papers: MS 6936/58, No 386, 6 October 1847).

estates. The Handcocks illustrate how a family rose and declined through litigation. They acquired the Carrantrila estate by a successful appeal to the House of Lords against an eccentric will which obliged the Henry heiress of Carrantrila to marry a spouse of equal fortune[77]. William Handcock became separated from his Catholic wife who had borne him three daughters. The last of these co-heiresses died intestate in 1853 without revoking a previous will which had settled the estate on her mother. Her mother however had predeceased her, having willed the entire estate to John Delacour, who was alleged to be her natural son by Lord Clanricarde. The estate remained with the Handcocks but was saddled with a crippling mortgage to pay heavy compensation to the defendant Delacour. The mortgagees eventually foreclosed and the estate was sold in 1897 to the Dick Hume family of Humewood, the chief mortgagee[78].

The Bagot case, although dealing with a younger son, gives graphic glimpses of society life. It also provides valuable details about the Bagot family and property. Christopher Neville Bagot was the fourth son of the Bagots of Ballymoe in north-east Galway. While a student at Trinity College he was advised to go overseas in order to improve his health. He amassed a large fortune in Australia through farming and ventures in the gold industry. His wealth and family connections admitted him to London society where he became known as Bagot "the Nugget"[79]. He expended over £100,000 on a

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77. Journals of the House of Lords, xlix, 1812, pp 23-4.

78. Tuam Herald 5 October 1895, p4; 23 November p4; 7 December p4; 14 December p4; 25 January 1896, p2; J. Greaney, Dunmore, p58.

79. Bagot V. Bagot, p4; Bagot Estate Act 1881 (44 & 45 Vict. cap 4). Upper class society was at the time being changed by the new commercial aristocracy (R. Nevill, ed. The reminiscences of Lady Dorothy Nevill, pp121-9).

Galway estate which was almost twice as large as the family estate. In 1875 Bagot married the eldest daughter of Sir William Verner M.P. for Co. Armagh. She was 22 years old and he was 50. Bagot was in a state of poor health and had concussion of the spine as a result of a hunting accident. His wife produced a child ten weeks after their marriage and he gradually became convinced that he was not the father of the child. He then changed his will and left his immense fortune to his relatives. The will was disputed by his wife on the grounds that Bagot was not of sound mind and that the will was obtained by the undue influence and fraud of his relatives. The jury upheld that view and the young son became the heir to the estate and fortune. The trial took place a year after Bagot's death, and Mrs Bagot remarried the following year but was divorced sixteen years later.

The main public interest of the case was that Mrs Bagot's opponents brought all kinds of scandalous charges against her, supported by a large body of medical evidence which was assembled at a cost of several thousand pounds. These charges included neglect, extravagance and adultery. Medical evidence differed as to whether Bagot could or could not have been the father of the child. The details of the case, in the opinion of the Annual Register, were "entirely unfit for publication in any decent work"[80]. The personal characteristics and private lives of the Bagots were revealed in the published full report of the case. Although in material terms Bagot was one of the most successful younger sons of the gentry, his character appears to have been his undoing. Witnesses referred to his having led a very wild life. His elder brother John Lloyd Bagot, who had the family estate, said his brother was "a very wicked man... and brought a great number

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80. Annual register 1878, p189. An enterprising London publisher however printed a verbatim report of the entire twenty-two days hearing.

of girls to misfortune"[81]. The solicitor general in opening the case for the plaintiff, Mrs Bagot, said that Bagot had "told doctor after doctor in London that there was no man living who had indulged his sensual passion to a greater extent. He admitted that he had brought girl after girl to disgrace and dishonour, and he did not believe there was a man in the world who had gone so far as he had in his dealings with the other sex"[82].

Lady Gregory in her autobiography made a brief reference to the Castleboy estate having been won through long lawsuits[83]. Castleboy had originally been bought for a younger son of the Persses and was set up as a separate estate. The last Persse of Castleboy died in 1829 without lawful issue and the subject of a lunacy commission. The estate then passed to the heir-at-law, Robert Persse of Roxborough, who headed the senior line of the Persses. Robert Persse died in 1850 leaving the Roxborough estate to his eldest son Dudley Persse (Lady Gregory's father) and the Castleboy estate to a younger son, Robert Henry Persse. Dudley Persse however began lengthy litigation to join Castleboy to the Roxborough estate. He successfully appealed his case to the House of Lords in 1840 and his younger brother Robert Henry and his family were put out of Castleboy in 1852. The conflicts in the Persse family probably accounts for the non survival of family papers, a trend not confined to the Persses. The detailed legal history of the conflict however was given in two privately published pamphlets by Captain Robert Persse the son of Robert Henry Persse[84]. Captain Persse claimed there had been a fraudulent

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81. Bagot V. Bagot, p68.

82. Ibid, p97.

83. Seventy years, p11.

84. Castleboy: a deed of settlement suppressed in a court of justice (Dublin 1894); Castleboy: an appeal to Parliament: Persse V. Persse: statement

suppression of a deed of settlement of 1807 by which the Castleboy estate should have gone to his father. He alleged that there had been deadly enmity between the Roxborough Persses and both the Castleboy and Moyode Persses who were the junior line of the family. He claimed for instance that the Roxborough Persses sought to deprive Robert Parsons Persse of his Castleboy property by imputing misconduct to his mother. They also had to fight off the attempt of Burton Persse of Moyode to claim the Castleboy estate. Burton Persse had gained control of the extensive investments of Robert Parsons Persse at the time of his death and his stock had to be driven by force from the Castleboy demesne[85]. Captain Persse also claimed that Dudley Persse of Roxborough enjoyed the close friendship of Francis Blackburne and that when Blackburne became lord chancellor in 1852 Persse put his case forward for trial. Captain Persse insisted that Blackburne "must have been fully informed and aware of the suppression of the true deed of settlement of the Castleboy estates"[86]. The Roxborough and Castleboy estates comprised over 12,000 acres and the indications were that the protracted litigation and family conflicts adversely affected the running of the estate. When the Lords ruled in favour of Dudley Persse in 1840 they "granted an injunction to prevent waste of the Castleboy estate and an order to ascertain the extent of the damage done"[87].

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of claim and history and a demand for justice (Dublin 1899).

85. Robert Perse V. Burton Persse (Connaught Journal 3 April 1834 p2). The claims of Burton Persse were explained in Burton Persse V. Dudley Persse (Tuam Herald 1 August 1857 p3). Persse of Castleboy had investments of £13000 which fell under the control of Burton Persse of Moyode (Connaught Journal 26 May 1828 p2).

86. Castleboy: an appeal to Parliament, p67.

87. Connaught Journal 21 May 1840 p3.

PERSSE FAMILY

Robert Persse of Roxborough (d. 1781)

Purchased Castleboy estate

m. Elizabeth Parsons

William of Roxborough (d. 1802)

Robert of Roxborough & Castleboy (d. 1850)

Dudley of Roxborough (d. 1878)

Isabella (Lady Gregory)

Robert Henry of Castleboy

6th son

Parsons Persse of Castleboy (d. 1812)

Robert Parsons Persse (dsp legit. 1829)

Burton Persse of Moyode (d. 1831)

Burton Persse of Moyode (d. 1859)

Burton Persse of Moyode (d. 1885)

Dudley Persse's greed in fighting for the Castleboy estate cost him large legal expenses. Timber from the estate had to be cut down and sold to supplement his income[88]. The details which emerged in the Persse case illustrated the complexity of Irish land law as well as the less pleasant side of Persse's character. There was illegitimacy among the Castleboy Persses in addition to the failure of lawful male issue. Moral irregularity did not however ruin estates unless it resulted in litigation. For instance the most notorious case of seduction was that involving Rev. John O'Rorke who was the aggressive founder of a successful estate. O'Rorke, who married three times and had a large family, seduced a tenant's daughter within the precincts of his own church. O'Rorke was prosecuted at the instigation of a neighbouring Catholic magistrate who had already successfully prosecuted O'Rorke seven times[89]. The family fortune was reduced not by O'Rorke's behaviour but by the extravagent house building of his son at the insistence of his Trench wife. Cases of divorce appear to have been infrequent. In 1823 Henry Blake of Windfield, at the time residing in Edinburgh, brought an action for divorce against his wife on the grounds of adultery[90]. Disputes over dowries, were also infrequent. One such case involved the Blakes of Dartfield who had a bad record as landlords. The case was taken by Henry Blake of Dartfield who had proposed marriage to a Miss Staunton daughter of Myles Staunton of Mountjoy Square Dublin who was

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88. M. L. Kohfeldt, Lady Gregory (London 1984) p12.

89. Tocqueville, Journeys to England and Ireland (ed. J.P. Mayer) pp 183-5; Connaught Journal, 6 August 1835, pp 2-3. O'Rorke was found guilty by a special jury.

90. Connaught Journal 1 December 1823 p3. Blake then married a French of Monivea (ibid 1 June 1824).

in trade in the West Indies[91]. Blake had an estate of £2000 a year and the bride's father agreed that her fortune would be £5000. Staunton however stated that he could not conveniently take £4000 (the amount to be settled on younger children) out of trade at present, that he would give his daughter £2000 in hand, £2000 more when convenient, and £1000 at his death. He refused to pay interest on the deferred £2000 and when Blake refused to fight a threatened duel with him, Staunton placarded him in Ballinasloe and Loughrea calling him a coward and poltroon. It was insinuated during the trial that Miss Staunton was a cousin of one of the four wives of Blake's father. The case went against the defendant, Miss Staunton's brother, who was fined £100 and imprisoned for six months[92].

Breach of promise cases, although belonging to legal history, provide interesting insights on the personal circumstances, wealth and social lives of the gentry. The following four cases show that the courts were inclined to make far higher awards to ladies of gentle birth. In 1843 a breach of promise case was brought by a niece of Major Thomas Mahon of Belleville against Henry Flanagan of Woburn who was on the fringes of the gentry class. Flanagan had £300 a year and £800 in bonds and securities left him by his father. He kept "a bachelor's house (Woburn) in the neighbourhood of Eyrecourt"[93]. Flanagan used a neighbouring lady as a go-between who introduced the couple in her own house. Miss Mahon accepted his proposal and it was agreed that her fortune should be £1000, chargeable on her uncle's property. Flanagan then proposed that he would retain a maidservant in his house

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91. Ibid 12 November 1827 p2; 29 November p1; 10 December p1.

92. Another dowry case involved the Lynches of Barna. Lynch V. Wilkins (1830) (Hayes, Exchequer cases, p98).

93. Tuam Herald 12 August 1843 p1. The Flanagan estate consisted of about 500 acres but the family were neither magistrates nor grand jurors.

on whom "a breath of scandal" rested. Miss Mahon's lawyer James Henry Monahan - later Judge Monahan - "alluded to the terms of intimacy that existed between Mr Flanagan and the servant...; his being in the habit of breakfasting and dining in a bedroom, she in bed in it at the time..." Miss Mahon refused to agree to such a proposal and the court awarded her damages of £2,500[94]. In 1863 a case was brought against Valentine Blake of Gortnamona, Eyrecourt, who had an estate of over 17,000 acres. The yearly value of his property was £2800, although subject to charges the interest on which amounted to about £1600 a year[95]. The plaintiff was a servant in the house of the local rector and was "a young woman of humble station, but of most prepossessing appearance and manners, and of considerable educational acquirements..." Blake was smitten by her charms "and paid her marked attentions. He sought her society and tried to seduce her, but failed in his purpose". He then declared that his attentions were strictly honourable and that he would marry her at once but for a provision in his father's will by which he was barred from marrying within five years of his death. Blake promised marriage when this period had expired and the lady consented to live with him. They lived together "at various respectable houses in the city of Dublin and elsewhere, she passing under the name 'Mrs Blake', and being introduced to society by him as his wife". Blake however was eventually influenced by friends to change his mind. The jury in this case awarded the plaintiff a mere £300 damages.

Law cases were sometimes brought not for financial gain but in order to clear the family's name from any possible social

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94. Miss Mahon later married her first cousin, a Mahon-Smith of Caherfinsker, Athenry (ibid, 29 July 1854 p2). The Mahon - Smiths had married into the gentry since the 17th century though they never became large landowners.

95. Ibid 7 February 1863 p1.

slur. In 1868 a case occurred between an army officer named Brady and the daughter of Thomas Moore Persse a merchant in Galway and a member of the Persse of Moyode family[96]. Brady's breach of promise was the subject of indignant discussion in the County Club. It was argued against Miss Persse by Brady's counsel that she used her family's influence to canvass the jurors. Miss Persse's counsel pointed out that money was not the object, "but in order to set herself and her family perfectly right in the eyes of the public who, hearing that a matter of this sort was unaccountably broken off, might be inclined to draw some unfavourable inferences...."[97]. Theobald Blake of Vermont broke his honour to a lady of the Joyces after four years of devoted ccurtship during which he followed her and her family around Europe several times. Miss Joyce had "considerable personal attractions" and Blake was "a man of very considerable fortune"[98]. His 5000 acre estate was worth about £3000 a year and he had mortgages on other estates and railway shares and bank stock. Some years earlier when Miss Joyce was only 13 years old she and her family met Blake in Rome. They went to Lucca, Florence and back to Rome and Blake followed, "and, when late in the season the Joyces, owing to domestic calamity, returned to Paris, Mr Blake went with them, paying all this time the most conspicuous attentions to Miss Joyce". The next summer the Joyces went to Boulogne and later returned to Galway, followed by Blake. They went to London and Paris again and again and Blake still followed. Miss Joyce accepted his proposal in 1869 and a settlement was prepared giving her a separate income of £450 a year. Blake then made excuses about financial problems, difference in age and tastes, and a coolness developed between the two families. The marriage was eventually cancelled and in the ensuing court case Miss Joyce was awarded £5000.

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96. Galway Express 30 May 1868 p3.

97. Ibid, 11 July 1868 p3.

98. Tuam Herald 18 March 1871 p2.

Theobald Blake's fortune had obviously survived the ravages of the Famine which ruined many of the smaller gentry. The Tribal families in particular were considerably reduced by the Incumbered Estates Court. The dispersal of so many smaller and declining gentry forms part of the wider picture of emigration and of the career patterns within Ireland and the wider Empire. Apart from the career aspect of younger sons a considerable number of heads of families held civil and military posts which often took them away from their estates which were then managed by agents and usually by other family members. Some of the prominent names who served the Empire were from the poorer and more remote estates. Examples are the Kellys of Mucklon and Dalys of Dalysgrove. The ancestors of General Sir Henry Daly had been transplanted to the marginal lands of Dalysgrove in the 17th century. Sir Henry belonged to the senior line of this transplanted family. The senior line opted for military life having disposed of the estate to a younger brother who made a fortune in Jamaica. The estate of the Dalys of Benmore was sold in 1814 and the family then went into careers overseas. Malachy Daly was a banker in Paris and his brother Sir Dominick Daly was governor of South Australia. Military careers in particular were crucial for the survival of declining gentry. It also guaranteed the social security of membership of the officer class. The best example of this trend is provided by the related Kelly families of Carraroe (Loughrea), Clooncannon and Liskelly who declined as landowners. These Kellys had at least ten officers in the army and navy many of them in senior ranks. They had marriage connections in England with Peerage families like the Parkers of Saltram in Devon. They were also intermarried with Irish gentry like the Binghams of Newbrook and Drews of Drewscourt[99].

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99. The officer class more than doubled in the period 1780-1830 with a five - fold increase in gentry intake (P. Razzell, 'Social origins of officers in Indian and

The consideration of careers ranges from the top diplomatic and colonial posts held by affluent gentry families to the desperation of landless or Famine stricken individuals seeking clerical posts in the Board of Works. Martin Blake of Ballyglunin received pleading letters from Joseph Netterville Blake who was in London "reduced to the extremes of destitution". He wanted Blake to ask Clanricarde to get him a Post Office appointment[100]. Netterville Blake was one of the very large family of Captain Netterville Blake of Bermingham House and in his letter to Martin Blake described himself as "a young gentleman of respectability, character and energy"[101]. The Netterville Blakes were a junior branch of the Blakes of Castlegrove, Tuam, the latter family appearing also to have been in equally desperate circumstances. Lord Netterville of Dowth had married one of the Castlegrove Blakes and had willed his Meath and Dublin estates to Andrew Blake of Castlegrove who was his nephew[102]. Netterville died unmarried in 1826 and the question of his successor had to be considered by the House of Lords. Although he appeared to have revoked the clause in his will in favour of the Blakes they continued to claim his eatate. Dowth Hall was forcibly occupied by John Netterville Blake of Castlegrove. "He maintained himself there for many years by selling the valuables from the house, and defended himself with a musket from an upper window, against bailiffs, process servers, sheriff's officers, debt collectors, etc. The damage he did before he could be evicted

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British Home Army 1758-1962', British Journal of Sociology, XlV, 1963, p253).

100. Clanricarde was Post Master General.

101. P.R.O.l.: Ballyglunin papers: M6936/56/479, Netterville Blake to Martin Blake, letters of 10 December 1846 and 19 February 1847.

102. Netterville peerage case, H.L. 1830, CCLXXlX, p137; Irish Law recorder, i, 1827-28 (Dublin 1828) pp 226-7; Connaught Journal 11 August 1828 p4.

by legal action was immense"[103].

Blake was the eldest son of the Castlegrove family and his desperate behaviour may have been due to the realisation that his own family estate was in financial trouble and was in fact sold in the Incumbered Estates Court. Impoverished or "reduced" gentlemen had always been a feature of the social landscape and were sometimes given hospitality by their more prosperous neighbours. The Kirwans of Woodfield and Brownes of Moyne offered such a service although they themselves in due course had to join the ranks of "reduced gentlemen"[104]. A large number of Martin J. Blake's correspondents sought his patronage in securing employment ranging from the humblest local posts to commissions in the Household Cavalry. Sir Thomas Blake of Menlo pestered him in an attempt to change his remote Donegal posting as resident magistrate. A similar post was sought by John Kirwan of Hillsbrook and his younger brother sought a clerkship in a local relief committee[105]. Another Kirwan told Blake that his estate was paying off encumbrances, he was getting no rents, and pleaded for "any appointment or situation in any office or locality"[106]. A number of people were also in debt to Blake, who was operating as a private financier. Pierce Blake of Corofin owed him a

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103. P. N. Netterville Synnott, The Netterville monument and family formerly of Dowth Co. Meath (privately printed) p12.

104. N.L.I.: Kirwan papers: MS9854, pp 31, 97. The social and economic plight of "poor gentlemen" was described in the Western Star 3 April 1847 pp2-3.

105. P.R.O.I.: Ballyglunin papers: M6936/58, No 330, John Kirwan to Martin Blake 20 August 1847; No 141, ibid to ibid 22 March 1847, Henry Kirwan to Martin Blake No 284, 24 July 1847.

106. Ibid, No 357, John Kirwan of Glan to Martin Blake, 15 September 1847.

"considerable debt"[107]. Many of the numerous smaller Tribal families who were ruined in the Famine period were cadet branches of larger families. Like younger sons, they tried to maintain gentry status against difficult odds and often, as with the Netterville Blakes, with large families. Whereas Captain Netterville Blake had served with the British Army in America the first Kirwan of Woodfield was an officer in Dillon's regiment at Fontenoy. The Woodfield estate was ruined through family involvement in Lord Ffrench's Bank. The last Kirwan of Woodfield, Edmund, eldest son in a family of nine, was badly educated. He went into the coast-guard service and later joined the constabulary, gaining distinction by his defence of the Butlers of Bunnahow against a Ribbon attack in 1831[108]. Kirwan's eldest son served with France during the Franco-German war of 1870[109].

Catholic gentry like the Kirwans[110] and Kellys went into the French and Austrian military service in the 18th century[111].

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107. Ibid, No 415, Pierce Blake to Martin Blake. Martin Blake was told by his agent Dominick Donelan that Pierce Blake owed £16,000 of which £14,000 were judgement debts (ibid No 485).

108. Dublin Evening Packet 20 June 1831.

109. He published La campaigne Irlandaise (Dublin 1873). Sir Jonah Barrington mentioned only four of his ten brothers. "The rest dwindled into obscurity by the decay of his house" (Personal sketches, i, pxxx.)

110. The Kirwans of Woodfield were Catholic though their parent branch, the Kirwans of Cregg, were Protestant. The Kirwans in general were noted for marrying into the aristocracy and for changing their religion. For litigation following mixed marriage in the Kirwans of Dalgan Park see E. Batty (ed) Cases in the King's Bench 1825-26 (Dublin 1828) pp 712-29.

111. For the background, see L.M. Cullen 'Catholics under the Penal Laws', in Eighteenth-century Ireland (ed. A. Carpenter, Dublin 1986) pp28-9.

But with the decline of the Penal Laws mentality and the gradual re-acquisition of estates by Catholic families, careers in the English army became acceptable even by those whose forebears had suffered in the 17th century confiscations. Three of the best known Galway soldiers in the British Army, Generals Sir Henry Daly Sir Richard Kelly and Sir Bryan Mahon, were members of old Irish families. The Dalys had been transplanted in the Cromwellian period, the Kellys were forfeiting Jacobites, and the Mahons only survived through the patronage of the Clanricardes. Where actual heads of families were soldiers there was usually a history of military tradition in the family. Seven brothers of the Mahons of Belleville fought at Waterloo and the tradition was continued by General Sir Bryan Mahon the reliever of Mafeking. The heads of three generations of the Kellys of Mucklon were soldiers. Although they had their estates restored after the Jacobite period, and had conformed, they held their estate by perpetual lease from a branch of the D'Arcys. While the head of the family was away on service another member of the family resided on the estate. The same situation applied to the Henrys of Tohermore. Colonel Richard Kelly of Mucklon served under Wellington and his son General Richard Kelly had a prominent career in India. Although he was born in Colombo he spent his retirement in genealogical research in an effort to prove his claim to the title of the O'Kelly[112]. All the successive heads in the Hall of Knockbrack family were soldiers. They were a cadet branch of the Halls of Narrow Water in Co. Down and purchased an estate in Galway after the Famine. Successive heads in the Thomsons of Salruck in Connemara also had military careers. Several of the Kilkellys of Drimcong, including the head of the family, had careers in the Indian and Army Medical Service. Considerable fortunes could be made in these careers. A younger son in a Kirwan

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112. P. Melvin, 'General Sir R.D. Kelly', Irish Sword (X11, 1976) p252; Burke's landed gentry of Ireland (ed 1912) p362.

family served for 32 years as an army surgeon and at his death left £50,000[113]. One of the Forster family was also an army surgeon and "left a large sum of money to be divided amongst the widows of his parish". His brother had an estate in the West Indies and left a similar sum for the poor[114].

Diplomatic careers, as with military careers, took heads of families away from their estates. The first Marquess of Clanricarde had served at the court of St Petersburgh and was later Post-Master General and Lord Privy Seal[115]. Clanricarde's eldest son Lord Dunkellin was military secretary to his uncle Earl Canning in India and served with the Coldstream Guards in the Crimea[116]. Robert Percy French of Monivea was in the diplomatic service 1852-78, while owner of his estate, and served in Vienna, Madrid and St. Petersburgh[117]. Another family head, George Staunton of

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113. Connaught Journal 29 December 1831 p3; inscription at Cortoon (Tuam) Church where Kirwan was buried. This church benefitted from his will, as did his brother, sisters and 28 nephews and nieces.

114. 'Genealogical sketch of the Blake-Forster sept', Galway Vindicator, 20 October 1866.

115. Clanricarde's moral reputaion had suffered from his implication in the case of Handcock V. Delacour and this reflected on the Palmerstons who had supported his appointments. A hostile editorial in the Times attributed Palmerston's overthrow to this cause (M. Maclagan, Clemency Canning p170).

116. Dunkellin described Calcutta life in letters to his parents, but was relieved of his post for issuing "to three females of abandoned character tickets of admittance to a public festivity" of which he was a manager (Maclagan, pp56-9, 133).

117. He seldom stayed at Monivea for more than a few days at a time, according to the Duke de Stacpoole. "He was far more at home in London, Paris and Madrid, where few men were better known. Indeed, I found his name a kind of passport when I travelled on the Continent" (Irish and other

Clydagh, was a diplomat in India and China. The Gregorys of Coole had a tradition of government service. William Gregory was under secretary 1812-1831 and his grandson Sir William Gregory was governor of Ceylon 1871-1877 and an active trustee of the National Gallery in London. Sir Thomas Redington of Kilcornan also served as under secretary. Lord Dunsandle was assistant private secretary to Disraeli for six years from 1874 and was later private secretary to Lord Iddesleigh and Lord Salisbury. John Stratford Kirwan of Moyne was appointed in 1854 to a "lucrative and important situation in India"[118]. Other heads of families were clergymen and lawyers. Those who were Protestant clergymen included Rev. John O'Rorke of Moylough, Rev Michael Burke of Ballydugan, Rev. Sir Ross Mahon of Castlegar, Rev John Jameson of Windfield and the Butsons who were archdeacons of Clonfert. Rev. Sir Christopher Bellew was a Jesuit. Andrew H. Lynch was a master in Chancery though he was also active locally[119]. His estate had the benefit of a good agent as had the estate of the Lynch Stauntons of Clydagh who had diplomatic and legal careers. In the Leonard of Queensfort family one head was a solicitor and his successor a County Court Judge in England. Charles Kelly of Newtown was County Court Judge in Clare. The Beytaghs of Cappagh and Higgins's of Carrowpaden, like the Leonards, were transplanted families who opted for legal careers instead of the life of resident gentry[120]. Other posts which

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memories, p6; further mention of French's social popularity occurs in the works of Sir Horace Rumbold the diplomat).

118. Tuam Herald 30 December 1905, p2, 29 July 1854, p3.

119. Lynch married the daughter of his legal mentor Charles Butler, the first Catholic barrister in England since 1688 and nephew of the author of Lives of the Saints (D.N.B.).

120. Edward Ffrench Beytagh, Q.C. was engaged in the Fenian trials of 1860-9 for the Crown and was a member of the Royal Commission appointed to investigate the Lurgan riots (Freeman's Journal 28

necessitated absence from estates included resident magistracies and assistant barristers. Gentry who were resident magistrates - and probably needed the salary- included Sir Thomas Blake of Menlo, John Kirwan of Hillsbrook, William Burke of Quansborough and Michael Bermingham of Dalgin. William McDermott of Springfield was an assistant barrister. John O'Neill of Bunowen was accountant general of the Exchequer Court. Blake, Bermingham and McDermott were among the poorer end of the gentry. Connemara proprietors however experienced the starkest decline in fortune. When Hyacinth D'Arcy sold his Clifden estate he entered the Church and was glad to accept a £100 a year post as schools inspector under the Protestant Society[121]. The Martins of Ross had to take up journalism in London to pay their debts[122].

The career aspect of heads of families illustrates therefore the wide divergence in fortune from families like the Redingtons and Dalys of Dunsandle on the one hand to the impoverished Blakes of Menlo and Martins of Ross on the other hand. Just as wealthier gentry could augment their fortunes by good marriages, they were also usually able to secure offices or posts which could provide welcome non-rent income. Although only a minority of heads of families, about 25 in number, had professions, careers or official posts, it is a factor which must qualify the simplistic popular notion of absenteeism. The position of younger sons was roughly comparable to that in England where they "were left to trickle downwards through the social system with only some education, some money, and influential patronage to give them a head

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November 1888).

121. Galway Vindicator 2 October 1850, p4; Burke's vicissitudes of families (London 1883), i, pp17-18.

122. M. Collis, Somerville and Ross: a biography, p 189; Somerville and Ross, Irish memories, p9.

start in life"[123]. Careers ranged from the diplomatic service, the Church, law, land agency, medicine and the constabulary to military and civil posts throughout the Empire. The army was by far the greatest source of careers for younger sons. Eldest sons too frequently went into the army or legal practice until they succeeded to their estates. In the Burkes of Marble Hill the 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th baronets all had early military service. Robert French of Monivea in the late 18th century entered the Life Guards after Oxford and three of his sons, including the eldest, also had army careers. There was a high degree of military tradition and service even in the normally resident gentry. This, as has been seen, also applied to leading Catholic gentry like the Burkes of Marble Hill. Over forty gentry families had one or more younger sons in the army in the 19th century. The Blakeneys of Abbert had a 2nd, 3rd and 5th, in addition to the eldest son, in the army and the Burkes of St Clerans had their three sons there, the 2nd being Robert O'Hara Burke who was in the Austrian service and later led an expedition across Australia. If a young gentleman could not afford a commission he could enlist as a volunteer and hope for advancement through merit and patronage[124]. The scramble for position both at home and overseas was usually assisted by influential

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123. Stone, An open elite, pp5-6.

124. See for example the case of a younger son in a Protestant family of modest means in P. Melvin, 'Colonel Maurice Griffin Dennis 1805-1863', Irish Sword (X111,1977). Dennis was uncle of Charles Dennis O'Rorke of Clonbern Park. A cousin of Colonel Dennis, John Bloomfield Dennis, was nominated a cadet for the Bombay Cavalry by Sir Robert Campbell, a director of the East India Company, on the recommendation of Lord Bloomfield who was his cousin (ibid, p56). The Dennis O'Rorke family was connected to a wide-ranging network of Protestant families. See Alfred M.B. Irwin, 'Irwin of Camlin, Co. Roscommon' (Miscellanea genealogica et heraldica, 1916-19, pp27-35); J.B. Irving, Book of the Irvings (Aberdeen 1907).

friends or relations[125].

Diplomatic posts were usually reserved for sons of Peerage families. The last Lord Clanricarde was in the diplomatic service in 1852-63. On leaving Oxford Gerald Dillon, later 4th Lord Clonbrock, also served as a diplomat for some years. Lord Clancarty's father, the 2nd Earl of Clancarty was a distinguished diplomat, and his 4th son had diplomatic service in Berlin, Mexico and Japan[126]. Careers in the church were popular with the sons of the Protestant gentry. Of particular prominence were Power Trench, 3rd son of the 1st Earl of Clancarty, who was the last Archbishop of Tuam, and Robert Daly younger brother of the 1st Lord Dunsandle, who became bishop of Cashel and Waterford. The 1st Lord Ashtown had a brother a clergyman and also nephews, including Richard Chenevix Trench, Archbishop of Dublin. There were at least twelve clergymen in the Ashtown pedigree. In the Kirwans of Cregg the 2nd, 3rd and 4th sons were clergymen. The 2nd and

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125. Lord Clanmorris is said to have built the barracks at Foxford "on the understanding that he was to have the nomination of the barrack-master, and he asked that his brother-in-law, Captain Raymond Kelly [of Carraroe] might be appointed" (R.E. McCalmont, Memoirs of the Binghams, p147). "James Daly called upon me to apply for the Barrack Master's place at Portumna", William Gregory wrote to Peel in 1815, "... and did not seem well pleased when I informed him that the Lord Lieutenant had appointed to it" (Mr. Gregory's letter-box 1813-1830, p273).

126. Skeffington Gibbon (O'Kelly), no lover of the Tory aristocracy, criticised the career ambitions of the Trenches and said the Custom House was "commonly called the house of Trench, as it is a kind of a town residence for the whole family...." (Recollections of Skeffington Gibbon, pp140-141). The Custom House also provided employment for Robert Browne of Kilskeagh and when he became ranger of the Curragh later there were complaints that his lack of means rendered him unsuitable for the post (F.A. D'Arcy, Horses, lords and racing men: the Turf Club 1790-1990, pp128-9).

4th sons of the Burkes of Ballydugan were clergymen. The 3rd son was a medical doctor and registrar - general for Ireland and the 5th son was a barrister. There were other examples of medical careers in the families of Blake of Renvyle, Burke of Ower, Chevers of Killyan, Donelan of Sylane, Lambert of Aggard and Seymour of Ballymore. A large number of Galway families, especially Blakes and Burkes, had sons in the legal profession since the 17th century. The D'Arcys and Dalys too had a strong legal tradition. St. George Daly, younger brother of the Rt. Hon. Denis Daly, was appointed prime sergeant just before the Union and for his support of that measure he was made a judge[127]. Legal careers were pursued by younger sons in the families of Trench of Woodlawn, Bagot of Ballymoe, Bodkin of Annagh, Burkes of Ballydugan, Danesfield, Ower and Marble Hill, Chevers of Killyan, Comyn of Woodstock, Galbraith of Cappard, Kirwan of Hillsbrook, Lynch - Staunton of Clydagh and Nolan of Ballinderry. The profession of attorney or solicitor rose in status in the 18th and 19th centuries and despite its low image in literature was regarded as a suitable vocation at least for younger sons of smaller gentry and whose influx contributed to its social elevation[128]. Solicitors could make large fortunes as shown by the examples of Edmond Kelly of Rookwood and James Dillon Meldon who acted for petitioners in the Incumbered Estates Court and bought an estate in Galway. Many of the numerous Lynch and Blake families became solicitors though the profession was not pursued by the greater gentry, apart from occasional cases such as Sir Ross Mahon's youngest son Henry who worked for a time as partner in the firm of Mac Dougall and Mahon in

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127. Burke, Connaught circuit, pp178-9.

128. M. Miles, ''A haven for the privileged': recruitment into the profession of attorney in England 1709-1792', Social History (xi, 1986) pp198, 201; B. English and J. Saville, Strict settlement: a guide for historians (University of Hull occasional papers in Economic and Social History No. 10, 1983) pp44-45.

Harcourt Street Dublin[129].

There were several instances of younger sons, or rather younger brothers, acting as agents for the head of the family often in cases where the head was overseas in military or other service. Most agents on both large and small estates were drawn from the gentry class. The minority of professional agents were usually members of outside gentry families (eg. the Filgates and Hunts), though sometimes related to the gentry family who employed them as in the case of the Filgates and Mahons of Castlegar. The tradition of the special role of the family agent in Galway went back to the "servant of trust" function of Bryan Mahon of Castlegar in the affairs of the Clanricarde family. The 8th earl entrusted the entire control of his estate to Mahon for over 20 years having almost ruined his fortunes by marrying the daughter of one of James II's pages. Important agents were usually either family members or related through marriage. For example the agent on the Ashford estate of the Guinness family, William Burke, was a younger son of a younger son of the Burkes of Ballydugan. Burke was a barrister and his father was a clergyman who had married a Guinness. Good agencies were obviously much sought after and when Burke resigned from the Guinness agency Lord Ardilaun's house in London was "besieged with applicants asking the post and putting forward every qualification under the sun to recommend them to his approval"[130]. Edward Howe Burke was agent to his brother Sir Thomas Burke of Marble Hill. Joseph Burke was agent for his brother Sir John Burke of Glinsk. William Daly was agent to his father Lord Dunsandle. Edward Hyde French was agent at Monivea during the famine while his father resided in Dublin and in the following

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129. Mahons of Castlegar, p37. John Kirwan of the declining Kirwan of Glan family was an eccentric attorney known as "Cracked John Kirwan" (Burke, Connaught circuit, p186).

130. Tuam Herald 20 December 1884 p2.

generation Acheson French was agent to his elder brother Robert Percy French who was away on his diplomatic career. The Hon. William le Poer Trench, a younger son, was agent on the Garbally estate and John Trench at Woodlawn was agent for his brother Lord Ashtown who always lived at Bath. In some cases agents had other business interests. For example John Ross Mahon, 4th son of Sir Ross Mahon of Castlegar, became agent on the Castlegar and Clonbrock estates in 1879 and on several other estates including Pallas and Strokestown and also co-founded the firm of Guinness and Mahon[131]. James D'Arcy was agent to his brother Rev Hyacinth D'Arcy at Clifden Castle and also exported grain from Clifden. Other younger sons who were prominent agents and who acquired estates included George Morris of Spiddal, Thomas Browne of Brownsgrove, John Browne of Mount Kelly and John Lambert of Redmount Hill. The Blakes of Holly Park, Bodkins of Kilcloony, Joyces of Mervue and Persses of Roxborough all had younger sons engaged in land agency.

The constabulary had an officer class because of its semi-military character and this offered another acceptable though much smaller career outlet for younger sons. The officers included sons of the gentry, clergy, and sons of army and constabulary officers and made up a total of about 250 sub-inspectors and 35 county inspectors. Some of the best known Galway officers came from families who had declined as landowners, such as the Burkes of Tyaquin and of Spring Garden and the Blakes of Corbally. Captain John Burke of the Tyaquin family was chief constable of Wexford and his son became assistant inspector general. The Burkes of Spring Garden developed a strong army and police tradition. Dominick Burke,

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131. Mahons of Castlegar p36. John Ross Mahon was sitting beside Major Mahon of Strokestown when the latter was shot in 1847. He left a considerable fortune (over £220,000) to his nephew John FitzGerald Mahon who was also an agent and his assistant (Mahon, Mahon History, Part 2, pp 181-3).

of this family, led the constabulary against the Fenians in Tallaght in 1867 after which the prefix 'Royal' was awarded to the force. When the Blakes of Corbally sold their estate to the Dalys they also went into the constabulary. Peter Blake was a county inspector and his son Henry also served in the force and later became governor of Ceylon. Henry Blake and some of his fellow officers explained to one of the constabulary commissions the beneficial effects of an officer class strongly connected to the gentry. He condemned the trend of promoting officers from the ranks and said that he had found from his own experience that "the moral power of a gentlemen sub-inspector in times of trouble is worth fifty men"[132]. Careers in the constabulary, as in the army, were sought not only by declined gentry like some of the Burkes and Blakes but also by younger sons in general. These included Isidore Blake a 6th son of the Blakes of Tower Hill, John Blake a 3rd son of the Blakes of Brooklawn, Tuam, and Stephen Burke a younger son of a younger son of the Burkes of Ower. The constabulary however was not a major source of careers for younger sons and was often taken up after earlier military service[133]. Some officers later succeeded to family estates and Major George Warburton of Aughrim Co. Galway had estates in Galway, Kildare, Dublin and Wexford. Warburton was inspector-general of constabulary for Connaught and was descended from an ancient Cheshire gentry family[134]. More difficult to identify as regards precise family background is Henry Persse Kirwan who was a county inspector of constabulary. Kirwan's daughter became the wife of Sir Edward

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132. Civil Service Enquiry Commission report on Royal Irish Constabulary, H.C. 1873, XXll, p97).

133. Vere Trench Gregory, chief inspector, RlC, author of The House of Gregory, belonged to a branch of the Gregory family devoted to military life.

134. Burke's dictionary of the landed gentry (ed. 1853), ll, p1508. Warburton was a frequent witness before Parliamentary commissions of enquiry on the state of Ireland.

Carson whose mother was a Lambert of Galway[135]. Constabulary officers were acceptable socially to the gentry since in most cases they were connected with the class or were actual members of it[136]. About one quarter of the officers were of English gentry background. In one instance three English officers married three sisters in the Lopdell of Raheen family.

Money made in overseas careers or business or merchant activity could be used to support home estates though it is difficult to assess this with any exactness. Younger sons involved in commercial activity were usually left out of pedigrees, as in the case of Thomas Moore Persse a 3rd son in the Persse of Moyode family. Violet Martin's brother James (2nd son) was a tea planter in Ceylon whose contributions were expected to supplement the meagre rent of Land League days[137]. Enterprising younger sons could become wealthy. Thomas Browne of Brownsgrove became a wealthy land agent and Captain Nolan said he sent "almost more stock than anyone else to Ballinasloe"[138]. Nolan's own younger brother, Sebastian, was a wealthy merchant[139]. Henry Lynch, a younger son of the Clogher family, was a merchant at Cadiz and died in 1820[140]. The Lynch's were partners and intermarried with a branch of

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135. H. Montgomery Hyde, Carson (London,1953), pp27-8.

136. They were sometimes referred to as "officer gentry" (Constabulary commission: report and minutes of evidence, Dublin 1866, p138).

137. Collis, Somerville and Ross, p51.

138. Galway county election petition: minutes of evidence, H.C., 1872, XLVlll, p737.

139. Tuam Herald 6 April 1907, p2; 4 December 1909, p4; 7 January 1911, p4; 21 December 1912, p4.

140. M. J. Blake, 'Family of Lynch of Clogher, Co. Mayo' (Tuam Herald December 1928).

the Bellews who were omitted from the published pedigrees[141]. Christopher Neville Bagot was probably the wealthiest younger son in the county. He purchased the Castle Kelly estate for £105,000 and also bought the Ballyforan and Rookwood estates. He allocated a sum of up to £20,000 to erect a new family mansion at Ballymoe which however was never built. It was evident that Bagot wished "to create a large estate, which would raise the Bagots to a high position in the West of Ireland"[142]. George O'Rorke, a younger son of Rev. John O'Rorke of Moylough, was, like Bagot, lured overseas by the dream of Australian gold. He progressed through gold-digging and sheep - farming to become a distinguished statesman in New Zealand[143]. O'Rorke however was not prepared to recommend the colonial life to his younger brothers who opted instead for clerical, military and naval careers[144].

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141. Bartholomew Costello writing to Michael Bellew from Cadiz on 28 August 1789 stated that it would be more in Christopher's (Bellew) interest "to take his capital from this country and buy land there, under your care, than have anything at all to do with trade... " (N.L.I. MS 27140: Bellew of Mount Bellew papers).

142. Bagot v. Bagot, pp4, 20. He bought furniture for Castle Kelly to the value of £13,000 and had it brought from England by special train and steamer. The gross rental of his estate was about £6,200 in addition to dividends from the Melbourne Railway worth £2500 a year (ibid, p71).

143. Dictionary of New Zealand Biography; R.P. Davis, Irish issues in New Zealand politics 1868-1922 (Dunedin 1974), passim.

144. In one of his many letters to his family in Galway O'Rorke stated that he was "very much disappointed at first, on entering an emigrant's life, and.... hardly ever met a person... that did not heartily wish himself at home once more: wealth they do no doubt have, but that does not constitute happiness..." (George O'Rorke to his brother Henry, 6 June 1855, among O'Rorke Papers in the possession of Margaret McDonnell of Shrewsbury in Dorset). O'Rorke's comment was particularly relevant to the case of Christopher Neville Bagot.

In some cases younger sons retired from military life and bought or rented small estates. Examples include the Lynches of Oatfield and Kellys of Longford Lodge. In other cases younger sons bought or married into estates. Bowes Daly, 4th son of Lord Dunsandle, owned the Killough Castle estate in Tipperary[145]. Estates established by younger sons included that of Blakes of Annaghdown, Brownes of Mount Kelly, Brownes of Mount Bernard, D'Arcys of Wellfort, Dolphins of Danesfort, Ffrenchs of Ballinamore Park and Claremount, Joyces of Rahasane and O'Haras of Raheen. Younger sons occasionally acquired estates in England, as in the case of one of the Castle Lambert family who began as a surgeon in the Royal Artillery and married the heiress of the accountant general of the Court of Chancery[146]. Many of the gentry were originally cadet branches of both county and outside families and there was a tendency in wealthy families to establish sons in their own estates. This is seen in the way the Blakes and other Tribal families established many cadet branches, founded by sons[147]. A prominent case is that of the Trenches of Woodlawn who acquired extensive estates by marriage[148]. Frederick Trench married the Sadleir heiress of the Sopwell estate in Tipperary in 1754 and further property was acquired particularly through the 2nd marriage of the 2nd Lord Ashtown

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145. Daly left £96,000 personal estate in Ireland and England (Tuam Herald 11 August 1888 p2).

146. Lambert was described as "a large landed proprietor in England and .... owns considerable property in this country..." (Galway Vindicator 13 December 1876).

147. The Blakes, according to Caroline Blake of Renvyle, seem often to have divided and left by will their estates (Tuam Herald 26 May 1894, p2).

148. The Woodlawn estate comprised 43,643 acres spread over eight counties, and including a large estate in Yorkshire, worth in all about £34,700 (Bateman's great landowners of Great Britain and Ireland, p16; Complete peerage, i, p282).

in 1852 to Elizabeth, co-heiress of Richard Oliver-Gascoigne of Parlington Yorkshire and Castle Oliver in Limerick. Frederick Trench had twenty children, twelve of whom survived, and two of his sons set up as gentry at Sopwell Hall in Tipperary and Cangort Park in Offaly. Elizabeth Gascoigne's elder sister and co-heiress married a cousin of Ashtown and brought him a large estate in Limerick. The careers of younger sons therefore, depending on their ability opportunity and means, might range from the conventional or even humbler ones to the prospect of setting up their own estate.

The basic division in the marriage sphere was that between the protestant gentry established in the county during or since the 17th century and headed by the Trenches, and the older gentry, who survived the 17th century upheavals. Within these general groupings other factors influenced alliances. Politics played a part, as it did in social life. Catholic gentry who followed the Repeal cause and were intermarried included the Ffrenches of Castle Ffrench, Brownes of Moyne, and Blakes of Tower Hill. The Ffrenches were also connected with Catholic gentry in England such as the Riddells and Bromheads. Racing and hunting, which had a cross channel dimension, linked up families like the Dalys, Brasseys, Polloks, Persses and Binghams. The complex network of Tribal families in west and north Galway, also intermarried, were involved in commercial activity in local towns although such activity was also pursued by other families, Catholic and Protestant, like the Nolans, Lamberts and Persses. Protestant gentry tended to be educated outside the county at places like Belmont House Boarding School in Dublin[149]. There was on the other hand a strong presence of Catholic gentry at the opening of Esker College, Athenry, in 1847[150]. Top Catholic gentry

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149. Galway Vindicator 19 July 1848 p3.

150. Ibid, 28 July 1847, p3; 7 August p3; P. O'Donnell, The Story of Esker p21.

like the Burkes and Redingtons tended also to be educated outside the county or in England. Sir John Burke of Marble Hill went to Austin's School in Dublin and Trinity College Cambridge and Sir Thomas Redington of Kilcornan went to Oscott College and Christ's College Cambridge[151]. The Dillons of Clonbrock went to Eton and Oxford and members of both Protestant and Catholic gentry went to Trinity College Dublin. Military life rather than scholastic pursuits was however the most popular career with younger sons. A distinctive feature of Catholic families was the number of daughters who entered religious life. Daughters entered the Poor Clares from the Blakes of Kiltolla and Furbo, D'Arcys of Kiltullagh and Martins of Ross[152]. When the daughter of Thomas Redington of Rye Hill entered Mount Carmel, Loughrea, in 1828 she had a fortune of £10,000 and an estate of £1000 a year[153]. Daughters in Protestant families had to be provided for through suitable marriages. Sir Ross Mahon had eleven daughters, from two marriages. Four married clergymen and others married into Irish and English gentry families. The importance of education is seen in the struggle of poorer gentry to provide it. Elizabeth Burke (Lady Fingall) of Danesfield described her childhood travels in France struggling with her grammar and bad tempered father[154]. The Martin ladies at Ross were educated in French, drawing and music by a system of travelling teachers who were sometimes paid with livestock[155].

These however were simply the traditional feminine

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151. T.U. Sadleir, 'The Burkes of Marble Hill' (Galway Arch. and Hist. Soc. Jn. Vlll, 1913-14, p6; D.N.B.).

152. Hughes, 'Galway Town 1692-1750', p170.

153. Connaught Journal 8 May 1828 p3.

154. Fingall, Seventy years young, pp40-42.

155. Callwell, Old Irish life, pp294-6.

accomplishments needed to catch a husband and John Stuart Mill attacked the female education system which equipped ladies for little else other than matrimony[156]. The number of spinsters show that ladies in both Catholic and Protestant families preferred to remain single rather than enter into unsuitable marriages. Of the eight daughters of Robert Dillon, 3rd Lord Clonbrock, five died unmarried[157]. Of the twelve Miss Kellys, of different generations, who at one time lived at Newtown, only the four daughters of Charles Kelly married, two of them into the French nobility. The Kellys were closely connected with Continental Catholic society and were educated in France, including training by their deportment teachers at the Sacre Coeur Convent in Rue de Varenne in Paris[158]. The eldest daughter, Matilda Kelly, sensing that her life would not be spent in Ireland, avoided proposals of marriage there. One of her suitors at Newtown serenaded her with a rendering of Mendelsohn's 'Wedding March'. He was Baron Pierre de Coubertin, founder of the modern Olympic Games. Although Coubertin was a distant relation of the family Matilda Kelly believed that he did not have much religion. She did not like his philosophy either and although she approved of sport she was against worship of sport[159].

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156. L. Stone, The family, sex and marriage in England 1500-1800 (Peregrine Books 1979) p245.

157. One very nearly married Lord Ardilaun. He later married Lady Olivia White, having met her at a Garbally Ballinasloe Fair Party (Dillons of Clonbrock, p69).

158. Memoirs of the Countess Turquet de la Boisserie (nee Matilda O'Kelly of Newtown) 1865-1956: extracts dealing with Ireland, by her grandson, Jacques Dumont de Montroy: translated from the French. p44.

159. Ibid, p48; information from Matilda Kelly's grandson, Jacques de Montroy of Paris.

CHAPTER 6

IDEAS OF CLASS AND HISTORICAL IDENTITY

"That unfortunate pride, the besetting sin of the Irish gentry is, we believe, fast passing away", the political economist W.E. Hearn wrote in 1851[1]. It is particularly significant that Hearn made this observation in 1851 when the sale of estates in the Incumbered Estates Court was in full progress. These sales swept away many of the smaller gentry who were responsible for the tradition of duelling and violence which characterised Galway in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century. Although large proprietors like the Martins of Ballinahinch were well known as duellists the practice was more prevalent among the lesser gentry of ancient lineage but reduced circumstances. Dorothea Herbert described how a Kelly lady made her servants jostle the Herbert's carriage at the Loughrea races in 1787[2]. As the nineteenth century progressed the growing economic difficulties of many of the older gentry like the Kellys as well as smaller Tribal families aggravated their sense of class insecurity. Hostilities were usually sparked off by private matters rather than by public issues. Family feuds, politics and sporting quarrels were among the more usual causes of physical and verbal assaults. A few disputes occurred over magisterial precedence. Disputes over matters of class or family pride usually ended in litigation. The gentry were responsible for an enormous amount of litigation. This was especially true of the Tribal families and was often the result of property disputes arising from the complicated network of their intermarriages.

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1. The Cassell prize essay on the condition of Ireland (London 1851) p115.

2. Retrospections of Dorothea Herbert 1770-1806 (ed Dublin 1988) p163.

The eccentricity of a small number of gentry, aided by fictional caricatures, led to the popular belief that this represented the norm. The Eyres and Martins produced some colourful and arrogant figures. The second and last Marquess of Clanricarde (1832-1916) was described as "one of the most peculiar, eccentric, and almost incredible figures in Irish history"[3]. His father, the first Marquess, who died in 1874, was a man of a totally different stamp. The first Marquess moved in the highest political, social and sporting circles though he was said to have a "fondness for low company"[4]. He always referred to himself as a Galwayman, whereas the last Marquess identified himself as an English gentleman. When the first Marquess was Postmaster General he favoured Galway applicants for posts in his department. His controversial friendship with Catherine Kelly illustrates his unfettered social and personal life. She belonged to one of the many Kelly families in decline. Although in terms of social or economic history her family were in the category of lesser gentry Clanricarde referred to her as being "connected with respectable families in the county of Galway... but chiefly resided in Dublin, where she went into good society..."[5]. Clanricarde was always kind and of great use to many of the gentry of small fortune in Galway and he promoted the marriage of Miss Kelly to the large estate of the Handcocks of Carrantrila[6]. His friendship with a relatively minor family like the Kellys shows his special relation with Galway and to the many old families whose ancestors and his own shared a common cause in the 17th century. Clanricarde nevertheless

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3. T.P. O'Connor, Memoirs of an old parliamentarian (London 1929), ii, p122.

4. Complete Peerage, iii, p238.

5. Handcock V. Delacour, p 62.

6. Leeds District Archives: Clanricarde papers, 129 (70), Thomas Bermingham to Clanricarde, 23 February 1855.

was always aware of his high social status. Edmund Yates described him as "a tall, thin, aristocratic man... wearing.... tight pantaloons, striped silk socks and pumps"[7]. Sir William Gregory first met Clanricarde at a house party at Carrantrila in 1836. He never forgot the impression Clanricarde made on him "by the manner in which he preserved his self-respect even in the midst of this riotous licence. Although full of the wildest fun, he never allowed the slightest liberty to be taken with him, or rather, never put himself in the position of having familiarities reciprocated". Sir Robert Lynch-Blosse was described by his grandson as "a complete autocrat, cold, aloof and unsmiling. His household, like his estates, was run with the discipline of a Prussia Guards regiment"[8]. The character and manners of some families were influenced by continental links. Charles Kelly of Newtown had French connections and had been brought up abroad. He "had mannerisms which savoured of the French. He had also a certain superiority of manner, probably due to his high social antecedents and independent means, for he had great estates in Ireland and Jamaica"[9]. Sir Jonah Barrington said

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7. Edmund Yates: his recollections and experiences (London 1885) pp 55-6. Yates got a Post Office appointment from Clanricarde, who had been a friend of his actor father.

8. Sir W. Gregory, An autobiography, p 42; The last of the Irish R.M.'s (London, 1951), p25.

9. J.G. Swift Mac Neill, What I have seen and heard (London 1925) pp 166-7; The Last Serjeant: The memoirs of Serjeant A.M. Sullivan, Q.C. (London 1952), p40. The spendthrift 3rd Earl of Wallscourt of Ardfry had, we are told, a temper to match that of Count de Viry. A man of great strength and fond of boxing, "he would get half-crazed at times and very violent. He liked walking about the house with no clothes on, and, at his wife's suggestion, carried a cow bell in his hand when in this state of nudity, so that the maid servants had warning of his approach and could scamper away" (The Duchess of Sermoneta, The Locks of Norbury, p319).

that his great-grandfather Patrick French had an extremely irritable temperament, was an excellent swordsman and was, "like all Galway gentlemen, proud to excess"[10]. Lord Chesterfield was an admirer of the refinement of French manners and did not think much of the rude country sports of the average English squire. Exceptional skill in the saddle however could admit poorer squires to gentry sporting society, as in the case of John Dennis the first master of the County Galway Hunt. Dennis was succeeded by John Mahon of Ballydonnellan who was a great eccentric. Mahon's social behaviour would certainly have been condemned by Chesterfield expecially the incident in Covent Garden where he was said to have shouted in defiance at the Royal box on being reprimanded for being noisy with his lively Galway friends[11].

The aristocracy and gentry, as individuals, saw themselves as being above social rules and their behaviour at times amounted to what would ordinarily be regarded as downright rudeness. Their independent means and mobility gave them the social freedom denied to the classes below them. One of the few generalisations which can be made is that incidents of class arrogance usually occurred among members of the older gentry families, that is among those established in the county before the 16th and 17th centuries and including the Tribal families. Family pride was usually given as the excuse for the display of hauteur or violent actions, and gentry with no pedigrees or obscure background had no such grounds for action. These families however were a small minority. Galway had an above

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10. Personal sketches, i, p26.

11. Mahon shouted out angrily across the theatre: "If you want to know who I am, I am John D. Mahon of Ballydonnellan Castle, County Galway, and I'll be glad to meet you outside and give you something you will remember!" The fame of Mahon's character was such that he was invited to join the Royal party (The Duke de Stacpoole, Irish and other memories, pp 18-19).

average interest in family history although by the 19th century most families had no desire to publicise their activities during the 17th century turmoils regardless of their position or fortune following those events. In considering the question of the display of violence or arrogant behaviour it must be borne in mind that many of the gentry had seen military service overseas. The Kirwans for instance were noted both as soldiers and duellists. Violence was most prevalent among poorer gentry especially where they had some experience of military rank. Such behaviour was rarely seen in the wealthier families with large estates. In the case of these families their manners and attitude to their own family history could be influenced by their marriage alliances. When for example the Mahons of Castlegar became closely related to the Brownes of Westport they preferred to put their rebellious O'Brien history out of mind. Attitudes to historical identity changed as time passed and circumstances altered. The gentry were very much individuals both in their class behaviour and attitude to historical identity. This was because of their diverse historical background and individual characteristics.

About thirty cases or incidents of confrontations between members of the gentry were reported in the Galway newspapers from the early 1820's to the 1870's. Duelling or other such behaviour was especially prominent in the first half of the century and was more frequent among the smaller gentry and Tribal families who were numerous in north and west Galway. These cases included duels and threats of duels, assaults with sticks or fists, and verbal assaults or attacks made through the local press. Physical violence, by means of pistols, whips or sticks occurred in almost one half of these cases. Over one third involved duels, either fought or threatened. The majority of disputes related to personal matters between members of the gentry, including some participation by attorneys and other professions. Protagonists were rarely

fined or gaoled for such misconduct. One reason for this was the vagueness of the law relating to the practice of duelling. The entire code of so-called "gentlemanly behaviour", was the object of amusement in contemporary journals. As the Comic Almamack pointed out, a gentleman could go through the insolvent debtors' court but could not appear in the streets without his gloves. He could kill an opponent in a duel, but he could not eat his peas with a knife.[12]

Fatal disputes between gentlemen had frequently extremely trivial origins. A prominent case was that of Standish Stamer O'Grady of Carnelly, Co. Clare, who was killed in a duel with an army officer. The dispute arose when O'Grady, a barrister and commissioner of bankrupts, was jostled in the street by the officer's carriage and was assaulted when he attempted to remonstrate[13]. O'Grady's death roused public opinion against such behaviour. Meetings of gentry and nobility were held at Morrison's Hotel in Nassau Street "to consider the most reasonable mode of preventing the breach of courtesy or waste of life in duelling". Meetings of the Anti-Duelling Society took place at the Dublin Institution in Upper Sackville street[14]. The law remained unchanged however and in 1842 the Tuam Herald in a feature on 'Affairs of Honour in Ireland' commented: "The law, as it is administered against duellists, is as strange as anything else belonging to the subject. Thus it is much safer to kill your adversary than to thrash

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12. quoted in Tuam Herald 1 January 1848 p4.

13. Connaught Journal, 22 March 1830, p4.

14. Ibid, 26 April 1830, p1; 14 June p1. In England the movement against duelling was supported by evangelical religion, the growth of commerce and industry and middle class values, and the Victorian idea of progress. The last publicly recorded duel in England was in 1852 (D.T. Andrew, 'The code of honour and its critics; the opposition to duelling in England 1700-1850', Social History, V (1980) p431.

him - and attended with less cost and bother to blow his brains out, than to write a letter, upon which a criminal information may be grounded.. the law (as far as its practice goes) punishes the threats or provocation to fight a duel more sorely and more severely than the actual commission of murder in that form..."[15].

Hostile encounters between gentlemen were caused by a variety of pretexts. Family feuds, political antagonism, and sporting quarrels were perhaps the more respectable factors. The Blakes of Ballyglunin and Bodkins of Annagh, whose demesnes bordered each other, went to litigation over the location of a gate-lodge[16]. Even neighbouring gentry could attack each other viciously. The learned Denis Kelly of Castle Kelly prosecuted Nicholas D'Arcy of Ballyforan for having struck him "three or four times with a smart cutting whip" at Mount Bellew while Kelly attended the special sessions[17]. Other old Kelly families residing near the borders of Galway and Roscommon were involved in disputes, some fatal, with neighbouring Lynches. When William Kelly of Castle Park accosted a Lynch for riding through his demesne during a fox-hunt Lynch retorted that he was a ruffian and a scoundrel and were it not for the respectability of his connections he would have flogged him "from head to toe"[18]. Kelly's ancestral seat at Turrock (in Roscommon) had been burned maliciously some years previously and he was connected to the Kellys of Cargins and through them to the Frenches of French Park[19]. When a Kelly of Woodmount was killed in a duel by a Lynch of Rathpeak

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15. Tuam Herald 13 August 1842 p 4.

16. Galway Vindicator 8 March 1848 p1. Galway Quarter Sessions supported Bodkin and condemned Blake (Tuam Herald 15 April 1848 p2).

17. Connaught Journal 30 April 1827 p2.

18. Ibid, 21 April 1836, p2.

19. Tuam Herald 21 November 1891 p4.

in 1841 Lynch's second was charged with murder but was acquitted for want of a witness[20]. Rathpeak, near Ballinasloe, seems to have been the house referred to by Caesar Otway in his defence of middlemen -" a thin tall canister of a house with its multitude of little windows, and its great gaunt gables... a true specimen of a broken down middleman's hall..."[21]. Otway most likely had these squabbling Lynches and Kellys in mind when he excluded from the ranks of useful middlemen the "hunting, racing, duelling, punch-drinking, carousing, squireen middleman...." These Lynches however were not middlemen but were fee-simple owners of their small properties. They were part of an intricate network of Lynch families in Galway and Roscommon who never succeeded in establishing themselves as significant landowners and who were not accorded the status even of magistrates. They moved in and out of trade and had links with Dublin and the West Indies[22].

The Incumbered Estates Court put an end to the duelling and punch-drinking of a large number of the smaller Tribal landowners. Their belligerent behaviour was caused in some cases by property disputes but also by an increasingly desperate desire to exhibit what they apparently believed to be the recognisable social traits of gentry. Disputes and hostile encounters served to illustrate the intricate nature of marriage connections in Galway especially in relation to the large mass of smaller gentry. As the occasion required these links were used to support claims to gentry or quasi-

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20. Ibid 12 June 1841, p3, 7 August p3, 9 July 1842 p3, 30 July.

21. Tour in Connaught (Dublin 1839), pp 127-9.

22. For example Eyre Lynch was "manager and joint attorney of plantations" in Demerara and died in Barbadoes (Galway Vindicator 1 March 1851). He had earlier been seated at Cartron, Loughrea (Leet, p96).

gentry social status. Many smaller gentry were offshoots of larger families, perhaps in some cases illegitimate branches, but they often had marriage links which connected them to the highest families socially. When disputes arose their hidden social assumptions and prejudices were revealed. A dispute occurred in 1831 between the O'Connors of Newgarden and Kirwans of Carnane both of whom owned very small estates, of recent acquisition, near Tuam. The Kirwans were related to other Kirwans who had an extensive tannery business. During the dispute O'Connor claimed that Kirwan "lacked the character of a gentleman", and referred to himself as "a man of honour, and a gentleman". O'Connor was related to the Brownes of Mount Hazel and through that link was connected with a range of families up to Clanricarde. These O'Connors were also connected with the O'Conor Don family[23]. Long correspondence on the dispute appeared in the Connaught Journal[24]. It was not unusual for reports of such cases to occupy entire pages of the local papers[25].

Close kinship did not necessarily guarantee good relations between families. A good example is provided by the Blake-Forsters who were the most hot-headed of all the gentry in the county. They had political differences with their relations the Blakes of Menlo and occasionally came to blows with them. Blake-Forster described himself as "a plain country gentleman" but the family were well aware of their ancient and distinguished ancestry in Northumberland[26]. In 1852 Blake-Forster was fined £3 for horse-whipping a soldier for grinning

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23. Burke's landed gentry of Ireland (ed. 1912) p525.

24. 17 February 1831.

25. A reported dispute between a Blake and a Kilkelly in 1843 occupied the front page of the Tuam Herald (25 March 1843).

26. Connaught Journal 18 February 1828 p1; 14 August 1828 p3.

at his wife[27]. The family were responsible for prolonging the practice of duelling, often for very trivial pretexts. In 1854 a duel was planned between Captain Blake-Forster and John Stratford Kirwan of Moyne. Both were arrested and held on bail. The press in reporting the case condemned duelling and referred to the vagueness of the law on the matter[28]. The youthful writer Charles Blake-Forster in a discussion on duelling as late as 1870 wrote: "No young Blood was considered to have properly completed his education unless he had exchanged shots with a fellow student before leaving college"[29]. Those who tried to defend or romanticise the practice of duelling appear however to have been members of declining gentry families like the Blake-Forsters and Kirwans. Edmund Kirwan of Woodfield left some disjointed but valuable notes in which he lamented the loss of the family estate and the drastic effect of the Incumbered Estates Court on many of the Tribal families. He indulged in boastful, and perhaps fanciful, reminiscences about the duelling exploits of the Tribes and clearly held the view that a fearless and warlike disposition was the essential mark of a gentleman. He claimed that the Tribes never paid any debts and defied all persons by duelling and keeping their houses guarded by tenants[30]. He claimed to have dressed up his father's tenants as soldiers and also led them "to all footballs and hurling"[31]. He also claimed that the aggressive character of many of the Tribal

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27. Tuam Herald 21 February 1852 p3.

28. Galway Express 12 August 1854 p2. In 1869 Blake Forster and Martin O'Flaherty the Young Irelander were bound to the peace for twelve months for planning a duel. The row was caused by one of them treading on the other's foot (Ibid, 6 March 1869 p3).

29. Galway Vindicator 1 January 1870 p4; Barrington, Personal sketches, ii, p273.

30. N.L.I. MS 9854 (Kirwan MS Vol 1) p98.

31. N.L.I. MS 9856 (Kirwan MS Vol 3) undated letter.

families led them to be feared outside the county and gave colourful accounts of the fights between the "Galway bucks" and the Wicklow, Kildare, and Carlow gentry[32].

Several of the Woodfield Kirwans were killed in duels and others had distinguished military careers overseas. The wealthier Kirwans of Castle Hacket were noted for the more peaceable pursuit of horse breeding and racing and the Kirwans of Dalgan Park in Mayo were noted for electioneering. A number of cases are on record of disputes regarding the rank of gentry in their role as magistrates. At the Galway assizes of 1823 Valentine Blake of Menlo claimed that as the eldest son of a baronet he was entitled to a high place on the county panel. His name was acccordingly placed second on the panel of 23 grand jurors[33]. In 1846 John Bodkin of Kilcloony refused to accept second place on the grand jury panel from Christopher St. George the high sheriff[34]. In 1851 Captain Blake-Forster attacked the high sheriff of Galway for omitting his name from the town panel and told his fellow magistrates that his family had sat on grand juries for 500 years and that he was better entitled to the honour than the high sheriff was to his own office[35]. An extreme example of behaviour from poorer gentry with military service comes from the following case. In 1851 the high sheriff of Mayo, David Ruttledge of Barbersfort who had estates in Mayo and Galway, was publicly assaulted and horsewhipped by Captain FitzMaurice of Lagaturn,

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32. ibid; see also Callwell, Old Irish life, pp 255-6.

33. Connaught Journal 31 July 1823.

34. Tuam Herald 1 August 1846 editorial.

35. Galway Vindicator 12 March 1851 p2.

near Balla in Mayo[36]. FitzMaurice, a retired "military gentleman" asked Ruttledge "why he had presumed to omit his name from the grand jury panel, and, without waiting for any reply, immediately struck the sheriff several smart blows with his whip accompanying the blows by several opprobious and insulting epithets"[37]. Heavy penalties were usually imposed for such offences. In 1833 William Handcock of Carantrila prosecuted Thomas Ffrench, brother of Lord Ffrench, "for having used language towards Mr Handcock, whilst High Sheriff of Galway, calculated to lead to a breach of the peace, and to provoke a duel..." The dispute was caused by Handcock omitting Ffrench's name from the grand jury on the grounds that his brother, Gonville Ffrench, was on it. Thomas Ffrench was imprisoned for six months and fined £100. The lord lieutenant was however petitioned about the sentence and Ffrench was later released[38]. There was a noticeable lack of consistency in how gentlemen were punished for offences. When magistrates fired into a crowd at the 1826 election, killing one person, they were acquitted[39].

Apart from the landed gentry as such, barristers, Protestant clergymen, military and naval officers and many land agents also ranked as gentlemen. This was because they were mostly the younger sons of the gentry. Officers in the constabulary were also classed as gentlemen. During a trial involving a constabulary officer named Coffey, Major Warburton the inspector - general of police for Connaught stated that he had

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36. This FitzMaurice family were long settled on their small estate but did not survive beyond the mid-19th century (Burke's landed gentry, 7th ed. 1886, p 186; Leet, p 258).

37. Tuam Herald 26 July 1851 p2.

38. Connaught Journal, 1 August 1833 p2, 23 January 1834 p3, 20 March 1834 p2.

39. Ibid, 31 July 1826, editorial.

met Coffey "in the first society in this county"[40]. Because many of the peerage and gentry families were large there was a descending scale of occupation and many younger sons of poorer gentry found themselves in desperate circumstances during the Famine. Clergymen, barristers and the officer class appear to have been especially sensitive about questions of gentility. This may have been because they had less means of supporting their social status and resented the greater prosperity of the commercial classes who were their social inferiors. For example John Galbraith, Vicar of Tuam and a member of a gentry family of the county, referred to a meeting in Tuam of merchants and shopkeepers - "men for whom I have a high respect while they remain in their places.... and should not... be mistaken at a distance for the landed proprietors of the county"[41]. William Gannon, town commissioner and poor law guardian replied to Galbraith - "His Reverence, when sneering at traders, should not have forgotten that it is to his connection with a trader of (if report speaks true) rather questionable integrity[42], that he owes a great portion of that superabundant wealth, which has enabled him to be so good a steward to his own family". Gannon further pointed out that since Galbraith became a landlord "he may be led to suppose that no meeting can be called respectable unless principally composed of that class"[43]. Martin McDonnell was both a large landlord and large shopkeeper with aspirations towards social standing. He had a sharp dispute with William Downes Griffith

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40. Tuam Herald 7 May 1842 p2. "An Officer of Constabulary is received amongst the gentry of the county where he is stationed as a gentleman" (Constabulary commission report and evidence, Dublin 1866, p230).

41. Tuam Herald 2 January 1847 p3.

42. Such a connection is not evident from the family pedigree (H. Blackall, 'The Galbraiths of Cappard', Irish Genealogist, lV, 1968-73, p25).

43. Tuam Herald, 9 January 1847, p3.

who was a barrister and agent to Sir George Shee. The dispute was caused by Griffith's objecting to McDonnel's use of the title "Esquire". Griffith was a half brother of Sir Richard Griffith by their father's second wife[44]. His father was an M.P., landowner and "leading ascendancy figure" although his grandfather had to supplement his farming by writing novels[45].

The greater gentry in general did not indulge in physical or verbal violence over matters of class and were content to let their lawyers settle their disputes. The gentry as a class indulged in an enormous amount of litigation often to their high cost. Law cases covered such subjects as libel, disputed wills, breach of promise, and property and personal disputes of all kinds. The Tribal families were particularly litigious and in particular the Blakes of Menlo. They claimed the family estate of their relations the Blake-Forsters, and the Lord Chancellor of Ireland pronounced in favour of the claim in 1818. The House of Lords reversed the Chancellor's decree in 1823 but the Blakes filed a supplemental bill in aid of a rehearing of the cause. The Lord Chancellor commented that this application "was a precious specimen of the litigious disposition of the province of Connaught"[46]. Appeals to the House of Lords were particularly frequent in the 18th century due to the uncertainty of many titles and complications

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44. Ibid, 9 April 1892 p2 (obituary); King's Inns admission papers, p203. His father had probably known Shee in India, where they both made fortunes.

45. G.L. Herries Davies and R.C. Mollan (eds.) Richard Griffith 1784-1878 (Dublin 1980) p1. Some of Griffith's novels are said to be of "loose morality", and Griffith "is said to have taken to immoral courses in later life" (D.N.B.).

46. Connaught Journal 22 December 1823 p3.

arising from evasion of the Penal Code[47].

Hunting and racing and the social events which accompanied these sporting activities provided a fruitful opportunity for the display of class arrogance. Such behaviour appears however to have become less frequent by the mid - 19th century. In 1846 John Dennis struck and knocked off his horse another huntsman for interfering with the hounds. The event was described as "one of these fashionable incidents.... which are becoming less prevalent even among the blood of the west"[48]. Captain Blake - Forster and John Stratford Kirwan were both imprisoned for planning a duel over a racing dispute in 1854[49]. Sir William Gregory of Coole knocked down a gentleman at the Turf Club in Arlington Street London in 1851[50]. With the exception of the widely travelled and highly cultured Gregory most of the others were local squires. Hostilities could also arise over incidents of trespassing and poaching. Pierce Joyce of Mervue engaged in some sharp correspondence with an army officer who trespassed and shot game on his estate[51]. Racing and hunting provided a common bond between all levels of gentry and expert horsemanship enabled smaller gentry like John Dennis and the Macdonaghs of Wilmount to achieve high sporting distinction during the heroic times of the Irish turf[52]. The Macdonaghs were well-known steeplechase riders. One of them - described by Sir William Gregory as "a kind of squireen" - killed his opponent

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47. L. McRedmond 'Irish appeals to the House of Lords in the eighteenth century', Analecta Hibernica (1966) p248.

48. Tuam Herald 4 April 1846.

49. Galway Express 12 August 1854 p2.

50. Tuam Herald 7 June 1851 p4.

51. Galway Vindicator 19 October 1850 p2, 26 October p3.

52. M. G. Moore, An Irish gentleman: George Henry Moore, p89.

and a spectator in a duel in Tipperary which was witnessed by Clanricarde, and then crossed the Shannon on horseback to escape the Tipperary mob[53]. Equestrian skill had an obvious affinity with military prowess and the two ideas came into conflict in a celebrated case of disputed gentility in 1845. This case involved another squireen named Michael Kelly who had a small estate at Mirehill near Headford. When Kelly claimed a trophy after a race for gentlemen riders he was turned down by the stewards in favour of an army lieutenant[54] who came second in the race. Kelly's counsel argued in the ensuing trial that he was a gentleman within the meaning of the word as defined by Blackstone in his commentaries on the laws of England, which was that any man who could "live idly and without manual labour, and will bear the port, charge, and countenance of a gentleman, shall be called 'master', and accounted for a gentleman..."[55]. The jury returned a verdict in favour of Kelly. The case would seem to show that in the sporting area a liberal interpretation was put on the definition of a gentlemen. Kelly was of abscure ancestry and was landlord of a mere few hundred acres. He was neither a magistrate nor a grand juror.

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53. Connaught Journal 16 February 1829 p3; Sir W. Gregory, An autobiography, pp14-15. Macdonagh later shot himself in a London pistol gallery, which was frequented by Gregory and Lord Dunkellin.

54. A case occurred in 1854 where a candidate for a lieutenancy in the revenue police was disqualified on the grounds that his position in society was not that of a gentleman since he had been trained as an architect (Tuam Herald 22 April 1854 p4).

55. Burke, Connaught circuit, p262. Kelly had been horsewhipped on the race-course by George Moore for contesting his decision as a steward (Tuam Herald 2 September 1843 p3). Kelly appears to have been what Lever described as a gentleman "by the courtesy of the turf" (Jack Hinton the guardsman p126).

Sir Jonah Barrington talked about the importance of the horse to the "half-mounted" gentry. The difference in Galway however was that this class were mostly members of old Irish or old English families and not Elizabethan or Cromwellian as were the group described by Barrington[56]. A further and unique difference was that the smaller gentry in Galway, Burkes and Kellys in particular, had survived due in no small measure to the patronage and protection of the Clanricarde family and the first Marquess moved among them as freely as he did among his top aristocratic friends in London or Yorkshire. This unique relationship was the result of three factors: shared historical experience; close kinship ties; and a shared interest in hunting and racing. Most Burkes claimed, as Lever put it, to be fourth cousins to Clanricarde "from this to the day of judgement"[57]. There was no significant division in Galway therefore between different levels of gentry at least in the social and sporting sphere though perhaps latent divisions existed in their political sensibilites. The top sporting gentry were lauded as popular heroes[58].

Races were ocasions for the display of fashion and the social events surrounding races were the preserve of the gentry. The key dividing line in this context was that between those who

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56. Barrington, Personal sketches, i, pp79-80.

57. C. Lever, Charles O'Malley (London 1872) p27. Lever's brother John was curate in Portumna and both brothers were favoured guests at Portumna Castle where the widowed Lady Clanricarde was "famed for her hospitality" and where they heard stories of "hunting, steeplechasing and duelling" (E. Downey, Charles Lever: his life in his letters, London 1906, i, p14; W.J. FitzPatrick Life of Charles Lever, London 1879, i, p34).

58. An elegy on the death of John Burke of Carantrila in 1746 had the lines -
Who, now, will to the race the courser train?
Who gain, for Connaught, the disputed prize? (D. O'Sullivan, Essai sur la litterature Irlandaise, Paris 1853, pp555-56).

were gentry, whether in economic decline or otherwise, and those who were not gentry in any sense despite any social pretense they might have[59]. For example at a steward's picnic in 1836 objections were raised against the attendance of a family named Commons[60]. The ensuing case involved Henry Concanon, a barrister and member of one of the oldest gentry families in the county, who had however declined as landowners. Concanon stated that he had heard several persons complain "that the party was not sufficiently select, and the family alluded to was mentioned as having obtruded themselves upon the individuals who joined in the said amusement. Deponent (Concanon) had never met the Commons previous to this, and had no knowledge of them whatsoever, and never had any communication with any member of the family"[61]. Commons appears to have considered himself a gentleman and displayed his resentment by horsewhipping Concanon and challenging him to a duel. The case illustrates the social assumptions still held by old families like the Concanons. One can only speculate as to whether fringe gentry like Kelly of Mirehill or the Macdonaghs of Wilmount would have been admitted to the steward's picnic.

The special role of the Clanricarde family in Galway was rooted in the shared historical experience and kinship ties which their ancestors had undergone and developed in the 17th century. The fourth and fifth earls had made a determined

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59. These did not matter socially since fashions were determined by those at the upper end of the social scale.

60. They leased lands at Rosshill, near Galway, from the governors of Erasmus Smith's schools and were also engaged in milling (Judgement given on the petition of Elizabeth Comins against John Samuel Barrett, Boston 1868, p2; Tuam Herald 18 March 1843 p3); one of the family became a barrister (King's Inns admission papers, p94).

61. Connaught Journal 5 May 1836 p2.

stand against Wentworth's scheme to plant Connaught[62]. The fifth earl put up a stubborn resistance to the Parliamentary forces but had to endure the successful besieging of Portumna Castle in 1651 and the subsequent confiscation of his Galway estate. He was nevertheless "the first man of quality of that county, and the most considerable gentlemen of it were his tenants, and had a dependance on him by their tenures"[63]. The estate was restored but was again confiscated after the Jacobite war when the 9th earl was attainted. When stability came in the 18th century it brought a preference to put the past out of mind and the history of the Clanricarde family was, at the eleventh earl's desire, omitted from Lodge's Peerage in 1754[64]. That history remained however in the popular memory. When, for instance, Lord Dunkellin, Clanricarde's eldest son, returned from military service in 1854 the inhabitants of Loughrea presented an address to him. The address stated that "memorable reminiscences of former times considerably contribute to excite and awaken our sense of gratitude to your family, whose illustrious ancestors, in times of persecution and public calamity threw the shield of their powerful protection over the people of this county"[65]. Two of Clanricarde's daughters married into branches of the Wentworth family which had represented such a threat to his ancestors in the 17th century[66]. Lord Dunkellin's untimely death in 1867 at the age of 40 left the way open for his younger brother to eventually succeed as the notorious last

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62. A. Clarke, The old English in Ireland 1625-42, passim; H.F. Kearney, Strafford in Ireland 1633-41, chapter 9.

63. Lodge's peerage of Ireland (ed. Archdall) i, p135.

64. Complete Peerage, iii, p236.

65. Tuam Herald 23 Decmeber 1854 p2.

66. One daughter married Wentworth Beaumont of Bretton Park, Yorkshire and another married Thomas Vernon-Wentworth of Wentworth Castle, Yorkshire.

Marquess of Clanricarde.

The gentry do not appear to have been anxious to have their names associated with the Jacobite cause which had affected their fortunes in various ways. When John D'Alton brought out the first edition of Illustrations historical and genealogical of King James's Irish Army List in 1856 he pointed out that his researches had been unaided by private family documents, with a few exceptions[67]. While the book was being prepared he had directed circulars to the heads of titled families, including those of Bellew, Browne, Burke, Daly and Dillon, all of which names were distinguished in the Jacobite war. He received no replies to his enquiry[68]. When he was preparing a revised edition of the work the Galway Mercury wrote as follows: "We have twice brought under the notice of our readers Mr D'Alton's claim upon the aristocracy of Connaught to aid him in his contemplated second edition of his Army List..."[69]. He had to record however in the preface to the new edition that an unaccountable apathy had 'tabooed' all family documents from his inspection[70]. The Martins however made no secret of their Jacobite past. Several had been outlawed and during the Penal era Robert Martin of Ballinahinch was educated on the continent and was an ardent

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67. Galway Mercury 27 September 1856.

68. Ibid 1 July 1854. Dutton records a similar indolent response to his agricultural enquiries (Survey of Galway ppVlll-lX). Sir William Wilde praised the co-operation of the gentry around Loch Corrib in replying to his queries about that locality and he contrasted this with Dutton's complaints (Loch Corrib, Dublin 1936, p264).

69. Ibid 27 September 1856 p2. Some years earlier the Galway Vindicator called on the gentry and nobility to support his proposed history of Galway (7 July, 21 August 1847).

70. D'Alton, Irish Army list (ed. 1860) i, pXVl.

supporter of the Stuarts[71]. Although he conformed he was "the active head of the Roman Catholic party in West Connaught for many years, and a strong Jacobite"[72]. The county families of Galway, according to Callwell, had been Jacobites to a man although they took no active part in the'45[73]. The nature of their support however was typified by John Kelly of Fidane who drank toasts to the "Pretender" in the early hours of the morning[74]. Edmund Kirwan of Woodfield claimed that many of the smaller Tribal gentry were rebel leaders in 1798 and Ribbon leaders in 1820, and the extreme Tory press went so far as to accuse some of the Catholic magistrates of being "Ribbonmen themselves"[75].

Sir Jonah Barrington stated that at the time of his youth the gentry in general "took the greatest care to trace, and to preserve by tradition, the pedigrees of their families and the exploits of their ancestors"[76]. Although few of the Galway gentry went to the extremes of Barrington who went to Normandy to investigate his ancestry the county had an above average interest in ancestral history. About twenty families, or members of families, had an active interest in the subject. In such a large and varied county it was inevitable that conflicting views and argument would arise over the political, geographical, genealogical, and even racial origins of

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71. Ibid, ii, p676; Callwell, Old Irish life, pp54, 60-1; S. Lynam, Humanity Dick, pXVl.

72. A.S. Martin, Genealogy of the family of Martin of Birch Hall later of Dangan and lastly of Ballinahinch Castle. Stratford Eyre called Robert Martin "a dangerous murdering Jacobite" (Callwell, p75; Burke Connaught circuit, p99).

73. Callwell, p261.

74. Ibid, pp58-9.

75. N.L.l. MS 9854 (Kirwan MS Vol. l) ppl06, 170-1, 190; Galway Advertiser, 9 June 1838 p3.

76. Personal sketches, ii, p168.

families. The maintenance and survival of family archives and papers reflected the success and continuity of families or, more often, their fragmentation, dispersal or decline. Orderly records were kept by large landowners like the Dillons of Clonbrock who were prudent and successful in their general estate affairs and also noticeably by families with a sense of tradition and conservation aided by a business mentality as with the Blakes of Ballyglunin and Tower Hill and the Bellews of Mount Bellew. Some family papers were destroyed deliberately, and accidentally in other cases. The O'Rorkes of Clonbern, a Protestant family, destroyed papers relating to their ancestor Rev. John O'Rorke who was the son of a Catholic priest who conformed[77]. Family disputes and conflicts over property may account for the disappearance of Persse[78], Handcock and Lambert papers. The lack of interest and absenteeism of the last Clanricarde meant that no care was taken to preserve the Portumna archives[79]. Family archives were very likely destroyed by fires, accidental and otherwise, at Garbally in 1810, Mount Hazel in 1865, Menlo Castle in 1910, Marble Hill in 1921 and Castle Hacket in 1923[80]. The sale of estates and houses particularly in the Incumbered Estates Court accounted for the loss or dispersal of further

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77. Dublin Journal 6 November 1770; information from Lady Cusack-Smith great grand daughter of Rev. John O'Rorke. The O'Rorkes however did have some interest in their family history, eg. letter of Charles Dennis O'Rorke, 7 September 1903 (O'Rorke papers in Bermingham House).

78. Persse V. Persse: statement of claim and history and a demand for justice (Dublin 1899) pp63-4.

79. Clanricarde's sister became Lady Harewood and the Harewood archives preserved some Clanricarde (old Marquess) correspondence. Lady Gregory found "a great mass" of Dunkellin's letters at Coole (Coole, ed C. Smythe, 1971, p85).

80. Edward Martyn's papers were destroyed by bombing in wartime London. Lynch-Blosse documents were destroyed in a fire at Athavallie in 1808 (Nicholls, Lynch Blosse papers, p200).

family archives such as those of Lough Cutra, Clifden Castle, Merlin Park, Castle Kelly and Moyne. Moyne had, according to Hardiman[81], "several ancient documents" and Michael Browne of Moyne was responsible for preserving valuable Blake documents. Papers of the Martin family were collected and preserved by the Canadian branch of the family[82].

The original family records of the Blakes had been handed down in the senior line of the family, that of Mullaghmore and Windfield and the cadet branch of Renvyle. These records almost became the victim of the domestic troubles at Windfield. The estate had to be sold because of a Chancery case[83] and Henry Blake of Windfield, then residing in Edinburgh, was involved in divorce litigation against his wife for adultery[84]. Blake apparently put little value on his family records and in 1835 disposed of the entire collection to his friend and neighbour Michael Browne of Moyne "who took an intelligent and appreciative interest in genealogical and historical documents concerning his native county"[85]. Browne preserved the Blake papers despite the sale in 1855 of his own estate and residence and in 1870 he presented the collection to his relation Maurice Blake of Tower Hill in Mayo. The

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81. O'Flaherty, Iar Connaught, pix. Lynch of Lavally papers were dispersed by the sale of the estate in the late 19th century (Galway Arch. and Hist. Soc. Jn. Vlll, 1913-14, p70).

82. Archer Martin corresponded with the genealogist Martin J. Blake (of Tower Hill) about his own "large collection of family documents" and other Martin papers left to him by Robert John Martin of Bushy Park and other relatives (N.L.I. MS 10791 (8): Blake papers: Martin to Blake 12 May 1894, 26 June 1906 and 30 June 1906).

83. Connaught Journal 6 November 1823, p3.

84. Ibid 1 December 1823, p3. The following year Blake married, at Greenwich, a daughter of Robert French of Monivea (Ibid 10 June 1824).

85. Blake family records 1600-1700, p1.

documents were subsequently calendered and published by Maurice Blake's brother Martin J. Blake who was a barrister and genealogist. The Tower Hill Blakes were a cadet branch of the Menlo Blakes who shared a common ancestor with the Blakes of Windfield. The Tower Hill Blakes had a separate and important collection of family papers. The original Blake records however dealt with Blake history back to their first land grant in Galway in 1278. The Blakes were proud of the role played by their ancestors in the 17th century and on the Jacobite side. Their successful preservation of family records over six centuries was, in Martin Blake's opinion, "quite a unique incident amongst families in Ireland, and extremely rare even in England"[86]. Writing in the Tuam Herald on 26 March 1898 Martin J. Blake pointed out how the preservation of the family records proved of great service when Wentworth was proposing his scheme of plantation for Connaught. In 1640 John Blake, ancestor of the Windfield Blakes, presented a petition to the Commissioners for Plantation together with his pedigree which proved that he was the direct descendant of the first Blake and that he owned a considerable portion of the lands originally granted to his ancestor and "there continued without change of language manners or habit and without once matching with any Irish family, since the ninth year of King Edward the Second"[87]. The Commissioners had to report that the estate held by Blake "was in his said ancestors whose heir male he is, before his Majestie's title accrued unto the said County of Galway"[88].

The Blakes of Merlin Park and Blakes of Ballinafad in Mayo also preserved collections of family papers. Detailed correspondence took place between Martin J. Blake and Charles

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86. Ibid, pp iii-iv.

87. Ibid pp 50-51.

88. Ibid p58.

Blake of Merlin Park on Blake history[89] and between Charles Blake and his relation Charles Lawrence of Lawrencetown. Valuable books and manuscripts were believed to have been lost at Ardfry going back to the time of Sir Richard Blake, speaker of the assembly of the Catholic Confederation at Kilkenny and who was noted for his piety[90]. Caroline Blake of Renvyle admitted that she had "a great interest in family history"[91]. She was a Burke of Ballydugan and Burkes and Blakes had a long involvement with each other in Galway. The Burkes of Ower, like the senior line of the Blakes, were in possession of their estate for 600 years[92]. These Burkes also preserved their archives with great care. The house was however burned down in 1920. William Burke of Ower, who died in 1895, concluded a family memoir by observing that his "House [had] weathered the storms of nearly twelve centuries"[93]. The institution of Burke's Peerage was founded by Burkes who were descended from Galway Burkes who had declined in the 17th century[94]. The Burkes of Cloghcroke also declined in the 17th century and one of this family was the distinguished historian of the Dominican order, Thomas Burke, who published Hibernia

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89. Tuam Herald 5 May 1894, p4; 26 May p4; 2 June p2; 23 June p4; 7 July p 4.

90. N.L.1. MS 9945 (papers on Lawrence family): correspondence of Charles Blake and Charles Lawrence, 20th and 5th January 1885. The Lawrences also corresponded in detail with each other over genealogy (letters of 22 November and 6 December 1862 and 8, 12 February 1863); M.J. Blake writing in Tuam Herald 23 July 1923.

91. Tuam Herald 26 May 1894 p2.

92. O. J. Burke (of Ower), The Abbey of Ross (Dublin 1868) p66.

93. N.L.1. MS 20750 (Teeling papers): history of the Burkes of Ower from original documents (typescript) p58.

94. Burke's family records (London 1897) p122.

Dominicana in 1762[95]. The work contained an account of the sufferings of Irish Catholics under penal legislation[96]. Many of the O'Kellys, like the Burkes, lost their estates in the 17th century confiscations. Charles O'Kelly of Castle Kelly belonged to a prominent Irish family who still retained some of their ancestral lands in east Galway at the time of the Jacobite War. He wrote an important account of the War, from the Jacobite point of view entitled Macariae Excidium or the destruction of Cyprus in 1692[97]. O'Kelly was also the author of O'Kelly memoirs which was lost during the French Revolution[98]. When another O'Kelly aspired to explain the decline of the O'Kellys he disguised, not the title of his book, but his own name[99]. He adopted the pen-name of Skeffington Gibbon[100] and his Recollections, published in

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95. Fahey, Kilmacduagh, p245.

96. In 1775 a formal declaration in relation to the book and its supplement was signed by the Catholic archbishop of Cashel and six bishops where they stated "that the publications had occasioned general uneasiness and alarm in Ireland and that they disapproved of sentiments contained in them which tended to weaken allegiance to George III and to disturb the public peace and tranquillity" (D.N.B.).

97. ed. J.C. O'Callaghan, Dublin 1850. For O'Kelly see J. O'Donovan, The tribes and customs of Hy-Many commonly called O'Kelly's country (Cork 1976) p115-116, and D.N.B.

98. Macariae Excidium, (ed. O'Callaghan) pp XVl-XVll.

99. O'Kelly appears to have been either James or Augustus O'Kelly, a brother of Patrick O'Kelly author of the Doneraile litany and The Eudoxologist - a poem in which he sung the praises of the gentry of Galway, Mayo and Roscommon (The Irish Book Lover, March-April 1935, p43; Galway Arch. and Hist. Soc. Jn., V (1907-8), p32.

100. Skeffington was an anglicisation of Ó Sceinín a family of Brehon lawyers who were ancestors of O'Kelly (T. Cronin, 'The English administration in

1829, although written in a gossiping style, displayed an intimate knowledge of the gentry of Roscommon and north Galway[101]. Most of these Kellys however were in decline and their ancestral archives, where they existed, seem to have disappeared with them. Ancestral pictures of Kellys, Bellews and Clanricardes, preserved for generations by the Kellys of Turrock, became scattered, as well as a pedigree of the Kellys of Cargins written on Irish silver and dating from the Armada[102]. O'Kelly history was always favourably treated in the Tuam Herald which was founded and edited by successive generations of a Kelly family who claimed kinship with the Kellys of Turrock[103]. This paper was popular with the gentry because of its attention to their family history[104]. It was founded in 1837 and by 1841 had the 3rd largest circulation of the eleven journals published in Connaught[105]. The Tuam Herald and Connaught Journal supported the popular cause and

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Connacht under Elizabeth'. Ph.D thesis. U.C.G., 1981, ppXlV, 115; H.T. Crofton, Crofton memoirs, York 1911, p91).

101. Sir William Wilde claimed that the author was originally a "shop-boy" in Castlerea "and afterwards traversed the country and levied black mail on all the nobility and gentry around; threatening to expose to light the skeleton in each family who did not contribute to his support" (Irish popular superstitions, ed Dublin 1979, p101, footnote).

102. Tuam Herald 21 November 1891 p4.

103. Ibid 31 December 1887 p4. Turrock is in Roscommon but adjacent to Castle Kelly.

104. As late as 1930 one of the Handcock family, then residing in Wyoming, renewed his subscription to what he described as "the most unique paper in Ireland" (Tuam Herald 1 November 1930).

105. The circulation figure for the Tuam Herald was 13,500; for the Connaught Journal 10,500, and for the Galway Advertiser 9000 (Tuam Herald 13 March 1841, editorial). The total population for Galway county and town in 1841 was about 455,500.

had the support both of the liberal gentry and the people.

The effect of the 17th century turmoils on the fortunes of families resulted in some cases in doubts and uncertainty about their origins. The Warburton family provide an example of mistaken political origins. This family got estates in Galway in the 17th century. Their pedigree in early editions of Burke's landed gentry claimed they were royalists and had advanced money to Charles I. A family memoir however appeared in 1848 which had stated that they came to Ireland under the patronage of Henry Ireton[106]. The D'Arcy family had a disputed racial origin. The D'Arcys first put forward their claim to Norman descent in the 18th century. Duald McFirbis however, who was living in Galway in 1643, stated in his Tribes and Genealogies of Hy-Fiachrach that the Galway D'Arcys were descended from the Irish tribe of O'Dorsey, one of whom was chieftain of Partry in Mayo. John O'Donovan edited McFirbis's work and he commented severely on what he termed "the deliberately fabricated Anglo-Norman pedigree of the Darcy family of Galway"[107]. Their Norman ancestry was also questioned by Martin J. Blake[108]. The Newforest and Rockvale branch of the family petitioned unsuccessfully for the Holderness peerage title in 1800[109]. Doubts about the

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106. Warburton memoir (1848) p3. One of them got a lease of the manor of Aughrim from Ormonde in 1691.

107. Blake family records 1600-1700, p235. "It was a poor shift", added O'Donovan, "to erect a respectability for a family that were already respectable enough by allowing them their true descent".

108. Ibid; Galway Arch. and Hist. Soc. Jn. x, (1917-18) p58.

109. Dominick D'Arcy of Rockvale, in his petition to the King, stated that he had sufficient property to maintain a peerage. Portland's letter, dated at Whitehall on 20 December 1800, stated that the

accepted genealogical origin of a family occurred with respect to the Trenches. Professor William F. Trench came to believe that his ancestors were descended, not from French Huguenots as stated in the pedigrees, but from Scottish Trenches. Their adoption of the Clancarty title in 1803 indicated that they were glad to connect themselves with ancient Irish history. To emphasise that historical contact further, Power, in its more Norman and superior-sounding form of le Poer came to be adopted by the whole of that branch of the family[110].

A debate concerning geographical origins took place with regard to the Mahons of Castlegar. The question was whether they were descended from the McMahons of Monaghan or O'Briens of Clare. Sir Ross Mahon believed the family were descended from the McMahons and he adopted the arms of that family[111]. Sir Ross's nephew, George Mahon, did not agree with this view and went to enormous trouble to prove their descent from the O'Briens of Clare. He did so to his own satisfaction and an interesting by-product of his researches was a MS three-volume family history based on original sources[112]. George Mahon believed that it was the influence of the Brownes of Westport which accounted for the Mahons' wish to suppress any ancestral link with the O'Briens. He also blamed the Westport influence for changing the colours of the family livery from green and white to blue and gold. The old colours were more

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Law officers had refused the claim (D'Arcy papers examined by me at the request of a member of the D'Arcy family).

110. Information on Trench history from Professor Trench's son, Mr C.E.F. Trench.

111. Mahons of Castlegar, pp 8, 23.

112. G. C. Mahon, Family history of Mahon of Castlegar (Detroit, Michigan 1890). Hereafter cited as Mahon, Mahon history.

national[113]. George Mahon also believed that the Christian name Ross was taken probably to mislead by serving as a "blind" to "sever all traces of our descent from so notorious a rebel as Mahon O'Brien of 1586"[114]. Ross Mahon of Castlegar became Sir Ross Mahon in 1819. His mother and his first wife were Brownes of Westport. His third wife was daughter of the Right Hon. James FitzGerald of Inchicronan in Clare, prime sergeant at - law in Ireland. FitzGerald persuaded Sir Ross to investigate a possible Clare origin for the Mahons. Sir Ross employed Sir William Betham whose researches however proved useless as, according to George Mahon, he knew little of the old Irish customs of changes of family name[115]. The Mahons of Strokestown in Roscommon also believed themselves to be of O'Brien origin although Sir Ross Mahon of Castlegar "was ignorant of any connection between his own family and that of Strokestown"[116]. The problem of Mahon history assumes further interest because it involved other branches who had landed estates. Nor were the Castlegar Mahons alone in their reticence about the family's origins. George Mahon records that James Mahon of Corbally in Clare did not know who his father was. Although he was "excessively haughty and fierce when his pedigree was touched on, that even his own son dared never to allude to the subject, [he] would never say who he was, thus following the same reticent policy as our own ancestors....."[117].

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113. Ibid, i, p165.

114. Ibid, ii, p279. Bryan Mahon of Castlegar married in 1693 the daughter of Ross Gaynor of Black Castle in Westmeath, hence the name Ross. Gaynor was a merchant in Dublin.

115. Ibid. ii, p179.

116. Ibid, iii, p 9.

117. Ibid, ii, pp 272, 274. For the Mahons of Corbally see Burke's landed gentry of Ireland (ed. 1912).

George Mahon, in his researches on Mahon history, was particularly anxious to examine the exact nature of the relationship between his ancestors and the Clanricarde family. The 8th earl, who succeeded in 1687, had used the words "domestic servant" to explain Bryan Mahon's role. George Mahon however claimed that this phrase really meant agent or "servant of trust"[118]. In the same pleading Clanricarde referred to Mahon as the sole manager of all his concerns[119]. The 8th earl had in fact confided the entire control of his property to Mahon for over twenty years[120]. A dispute however took place over the Castlegar estate. When Bryan Mahon bought out O'Shaughnessy of Castlegar, O'Shaughnessy tried to relegate him to the position of a mere trustee rather than an outright purchaser. Clanricarde sided with O'Shaughnessy, who was his tenant. Litigation followed and at least six Chancery suits took place between Mahon and Clanricarde, during one of which Clanricarde referred to him as his "servant of trust"[121]. The 9th earl of Clanricarde had his estate forfeited after the Jacobite war though his outlawry was later reversed by a private statute which put the estate in the hands of trustees for his children, who were to be brought up as Protestants[122]. The family finances were in disarray as a result of the war and the situation was made worse by a fine

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118. Mahon, Mahon history, iii, pp 33, 49; appendix Xl for 'servants of trust'.

119. The 8th earl of Clanricarde was one of the Jacobite leaders who surrendered Galway to the Williamites (H. Murtagh, 'Galway and the Jacobite war', Irish Sword, Xll, 1975, pll).

120. Mahon, Mahon history, ii, p23, 27.

121. Ibid, iii, p 51.

122. Lodge's peerage of Ireland (ed. Archdall) i, p 140.

of £25,000 imposed by the statute to reverse the outlawry[123]. The 9th earl took Mahon fully into his confidence and it was through Mahon that the £25,000 fine was paid[124]. Bryan Mahon of Castlegar conformed to the Established Church in 1705 and was serving as a grand juror by 1711. He apparently took his conformity very seriously and he arranged that his funeral sermon should have a full account of the "measures carefully and publicly taken ... to satisfy himself as to theological truth before conforming"[125]. George Mahon, the family historian, had no great regard for the role of the Catholic Church in Irish history, and in his own day Landleague activities gave him a distrust and dislike for "Romanists"[126]. He was proud of the success of his ancestors in repairing their fortunes in the 17th century and of their close links with the Clanricarde family. The Mahons held Castlegar on lease from the Clanricardes until 1788[127].

The Mahons were originally O'Briens who lost their estates in Clare and were driven into Galway in the 16th century. They took the name Mahon from the head of the family, Mahon O'Brien. They succeeded both in prospering and continuing, or re-emerging, as gentry through the patronage of the

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123. This fine was paid by the beginning of the 19th century (Leeds District Archives: Clanricarde papers, No. 72).

124. Mahon, Mahon history, ii, p 29. The Bankers Dillon and Ferrall dealt with the financial affairs of both Clanricarde and Mahon (ibid, pp 35, 53).

125. Ibid, ii, p 37.

126. Ibid, ii, p 163. An attempt was made in 1882 to blow up Weston the residence, adjacent to Castlegar, of John Ross Mahon, land agent to the Castlegar, Clonbrock, Strokestown and several other estates.

127. Abstract of title to Castlegar (from papers held by the late Hon. Mrs. Crofton, nee Mahon).

Clanricardes. Through their role as agents they were able to turn their patron's temporary misfortunes to their own advantage. It appears most likely therefore that Sir Ross Mahon had no great desire to have attention drawn to this historical background and deliberately adopted the northern McMahon version of the argument to suit his purpose. An interesting insight into his attitude to titles and Irish roots is contained in a letter which he wrote to William FitzGerald in 1814, five years before he became a baronet. "I have ever considered the seeking of this trifling distinction unattended with any solid advantages, as a mark of silly vanity in the person seeking it, though perhaps of some advantage merely as a passport in the world to those who receive it by descent..." He went on to point out that he had seen Irish baronetcies "bestowed generally upon persons amongst whom my Irish pride would not incline me to rank myself, and have generally felt my own opinion of the person accepting the distinction lowered, rather than raised, but I know not whether it may not be increased when extending to the Empire at large. This would in a great degree depend upon the estimation in which it is held in England, and if the first class of private gentlemen of landed property there consider it as an honourable object rather than a degradation I think we should be wrong in undervaluing it because the Government of Ireland had before the Union let it down by the description of persons on whom they had bestowed the favour"[128].

Arthur French St George of Tyrone was the most persistent seeker after titles. His grandfather, Arthur French, had married the heiress of Lord St. George of Headford who passed estates to the Frenches on the condition that they henceforth adopt the surname St. George. The Frenches were proud of

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128. Mahons of Castlegar. In the reign of George III "every possible means was taken to degrade the peerage of Ireland" (D.O. Madden, Revelations of Ireland, p287).

their connection with this ancient family which had come from France to England at the time of Henry II. The St. Georges had been seated at Hatley St. George in Cambridge, were great landowners there, and produced several distinguished heralds and kings-of-arms[129]. When Lord St. George was raised to the peerage in 1715 he named his title after the ancient ancestral seat in England to show that he was descended from no mere Cromwellian planters. He was named in his patent as Baron St. George of Hatley St. George of Co. Roscommon and Co. Leitrim where he had extensive estates. Arthur French St. George aspired however to the title of Lord Athenry which he hoped to get through his wife, Lady Harriet St Lawrence, whose mother was daughter and co-heiress of Thomas Bermingham the last Lord Athenry who died without male heirs in 1799. The law officers in Ireland had stated that the barony of Athenry was a barony in fee and was in abeyance between the co-heiresses. There were several claimants, although Arthur French St. George was the only one to whom the King granted supporters to his arms. At Tyrone he hung portraits of Lord Athenry, the Earl of Louth, Lady St. George and Lady Mary Bermingham over the sideboard in the dining room. The family were in a position to support a title, having acquired extensive St. George, Bermingham and Bingham lands by marriage. Arthur French St. George displayed contempt for the claims to the Athenry title of the Berminghams of Dalgin. They were a cadet branch of the family, seated near Tuam, and their estate had been divided when the head of the family married in succession daughters of West India planters and left his property to three

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129. D.N.B. The estate of the St. Georges in England became heavily encumbered as a result of their Royalist activities and in 1658 was sold to Sir Thomas Cotton son of Sir Robert Cotton founder of the Cottonian Library (Victoria history of the county of Cambridge and Isle of Ely Vol. 5 (Oxford 1973) pp 107-9).

illegitimate sons[130]. A nephew, Edward Bermingham, then claimed the title and was commonly known as Lord Athenry[131]. Arthur French St. George, in a letter to Sir William Betham about the progress of his own claim, referred to Edward Bermingham: "I think it but right to mention that he has no more right to the honours he has petitioned for than you have, and that through life he had ever displayed unsteadiness, in early life a dissipated man... and now a petioner for the honours of the oldest and most respectable family in his Majesty's dominions"[132].

"Family Pride in Ireland rose high in the big country houses", Lennox Robinson reflected while viewing the history of the Coopers of Markree in Sligo, "and rose higher as family fortunes declined...."[133]. Sufficient evidence has survived to show that this was true of Galway families. Distinctions must be made however between the ways in which such pride was manifested. The wealthiest families displayed their pride through their houses, demesnes, lavish entertaining and opulent life-style. The more violent displays of ancestral pride or class arrogance were usually exhibited by declining gentry, who were far more numerous than those entering the gentry. The two main divisions of gentry, represented roughly

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130. Athenry claim of Peerage: H.L. 1831-32, CCX, 667; 1836, XXVl, 347, 357, XXlX, 1.

131. Tuam Herald 7 March 1840. When Edward Bermingham died the title was claimed by Bermingham of Kilfilan in King's County.

132. Letter, from Tyrone papers, in possession of Gordon St. George Mark of Chicago. Original in Genealogical Office. Other claims to titles included that of the Comyns of Woodstock to the Buchan peerage (Walford's county families, ed. 1864) and that of the Alexanders of Maryville, Kinvara, to the dormant earldom of Stirling (ibid, ed. 1887; Burke's dormant, abeyant, forfeited and extinct peerages, ed. 1883, p4).

133. Bryan Cooper (London 1931) p29.

by the Clancarty and Clanricarde families, had for the most part put the 17th century background behind them. Nevertheless they remained largely two separate marriage groups. Regarding ancestral matters however the gentry liked to dwell on the individual character of their history. The Persses liked to claim descent from the ducal house of Northumberland and called their properties Border names like Newcastle, Roxborough, and Chevy Chase[134]. Lord Gort (Prendergast Vereker) wrote about the origins of the Vereker family who had been lesser gentry in Brabant and rose to the higher nobility through the law and public service[135]. The Duke de Stacpoole had in his study in Mount Hazel a set of old prints which showed his descent from Sir Richard de Stacpoole of Stacpoole Court in Pembrokeshire who came over with William the Conqueror. The FitzGerald - Kenneys produced an elaborate pedigree showing their origins in mediaeval Somerset and the Blake-Forsters traced their roots to Flanders[136]. The Kilkellys had an elaborate pedigree prepared by Philip Crosslé in 1921. Research and writing was usually done by family members other than by heads of families. Among the most noted were George Charles Mahon, Charles Blake-Forster and Martin J. Blake of the Tower Hill family. Blake-Forster belonged to a declining family and Mahon and Blake to prosperous families. Sir William Gregory said family history was a subject in which he "never took the smallest interest"[137]. Destruction of family archives by fire did not prevent the Brownes of Castle-

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134. Walford's county families (ed 1864) p791; Lady Gregory, Seventy years p7.

135. Tuam Herald 14 January 1899 p4.

136. Genealogical sketch of the Blake-Forster sept (Galway Vindicator 20 October 1866).

137. Autobiography p1.

macgarrett from being interested in their history[138]. A fire also affected the records of the Morris family of Ballinaboy, Clifden. When James Hardiman was writing his History of Galway he approached Captain Anthony Morris. Morris refused to co-operate and claimed that his family's history was already well known. Hardiman reacted by deliberately saying as little as possible about the Morris family in his book[139].

Interest in ancestral history and the preservation of records depended largely on the enthusiasm of individuals. "It is strange", commented Dutton, "the little interest many gentlemen taken in the records of antiquity, as to permit them to be mutilated, or perhaps entirely demolished"[140]. Dutton blamed the Blake-Forsters for allowing Abbeyknockmoy to fall into ruin[141]. The Blakes of Ballyglunin later owned that estate and they were also blamed for neglecting the rare frescoes in the abbey[142]. They did however preserve their family papers. Edmund Kirwan of Woodfield claimed that poverty forced him to sell his family manuscripts. The Kirwan estate was lost in the 1820's though Edmund and his brother later made a fortune in Liverpool and bought part of the Kirwan of Cregg estates in the Incumbered Estates Court. Although Edmund's education was neglected because of the family's disruption he retained a strong interest in ancestral history. He wrote to the Sir William Brown Library in

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138. Letters from Lord Oranmore and Browne, dated from Nice 4 and 10 April 1905, to Hyacinth D'Arcy of New Forest (copies in my possession).

139. E.N. Chapman, Memoirs of my family together with some researches into the early history of the Morris families of Tipperary, Galway and Mayo (Printed for private circulation 1928) p40.

140. Survey of Galway p470. Dutton was here referring to ancient monuments.

141. Ibid, p 490.

142. Tuam Herald 14 December 1918 p2.

Liverpool stating that he had a valuable manuscript account of Galway duellists which he wished to have published. "It is a great pity to let all those valuable papers and documents perish", he wrote[143]. Kirwan's sense of history was obviously influenced by the military career of his grandfather Richard Kirwan ("Dick of the Sword") who was an officer in Dillon's Brigade and fought at Fontenoy in 1745 and in the service of Maria Teresa of Austria. Richard's nephew, Richard Kirwan of Cregg the eminent scientist, was a member of most of the literary institutions of Europe[144].

Gentry in decline, like the Kirwans of Woodfield, tended to have a romantic and fanciful approach to their past. Families who prospered, on the other hand, like the Mahons of Castlegar, were reluctant to publicise some parts of their history particularly the way they had repaired their fortunes in the 17th century in close alliance with the Clanricarde family. Attitudes to history were also coloured by the success or failure of families in surviving the 17th century turmoils. It might be expected that family tradition and religion was more cherished by those who opted or were compelled to take their reduced fortunes overseas. But while examples could be found of a somewhat casual or unprincipled attitude to religious denomination among some there were also those who were proud of their allegiance to the old faith. For instance the Chevers family almost lost their entire estate twice for their adherence to their religion and the Stuart cause. It might also be expected that a great divide

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143. N.L.I. MS 9856 (Kirwan MSS); D.A.R. Kirwan and J.W. Kirwan, Pedigree of the Kirwan Family. Edmund Kirwan was unwilling that his papers should go to Patrick Weston Joyce. Joyce was married to Caroline Waters, a sister of Kirwan's wife.

144. D'Alton, Irish Army list, ii, 519; E.M. Philbin, 'Richard Kirwan, a Galway scientist 1733-1812' in Galway: town and gown 1484-1984. Ed. D. O'Cearbhaill (Galway 1984) p110.

should have existed between those who lost estates and those who survived by compromising with the new regime. In the case of many families however it is likely that such divides were bridged by relations or kinsmen overseas. Nor were the exiles allowed to have a monopoly of interest in ancestral history. Denis Kelly of Castle Kelly represented the most successful of the Kelly families who came through the confiscations of the 16th and 17th centuries. He nevertheless cultivated a deep interest in both Kelly history and the Irish language. A Protestant and an Orangeman, he was described by John O'Donovan as "a perfect Milesian gentleman, with all the hospitality and pride of his ancestors"[145].

The question of historical identity was complicated not only by what happened to families in the 17th century but also by their subsequent fortunes. There were also in some cases an indistinct social relationship between families even though they had come from a common ancestor. The Dalys of Dunsandle for example established their fortunes in the 17th century and were part of the Protestant Ascendancy in the 18th century. A younger son of the Dunsandle family founded the Dalys of Raford who were Catholic and closely associated with the Clanricarde family. A junior branch, that of Dalysgrove and Castle Daly, suffered transplantation in the 17th century and also remained Catholic. Little is known however about the degree of social intimacy between these Daly families.

On a simple analysis it might appear that the basic historical division in the gentry was between those who had their roots in Galway long before the 17th century and the new families who profitted by the decline of the 'old stock'. There is little certainty however about the exact circumstances in which some families, for example the Redingtons or even the Trenches, came into the county in the 17th century. Some came

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145. J. O'Donovan, Ordnance Survey letters: Roscommon, p45.

from England with Royalist or Jacobite backgrounds like the Forsters, St. Georges and Fetherstonhaughs[146]. Caution must be exercised when attaching tags, e.g. 'Cromwellian' to particular families. Sensitivity about what might be uncovered by research led to hostility at times, as when Francis Comyn objected to Francis Blake-Forster writing about Comyn history in the Galway Vindicator. The Comyn family had been transplanted from Clare to Galway but had a connection with a family which had got a grant from Cromwell[147]. The reality was that survival, and the preservation or acquisition of estates, resulted in the formation of a gentry made up of many strands. There were cases of Irish families prospering at the expense of other Irish families as when the Mahons acquired the Castlegar estate of the O'Shaughnessys. The main Gort estate of the O'Shaughnessys was given to Sir Thomas Prendergast as a reward for revealing the assassination plot of 1696 to William III. Some of the O'Shaughnessys, including one who was bishop of Ossory, tried in vain to recover the estate. One of them, according to tradition, "assisted by his relatives and the gentry of ... Galway, took forcible possession of the mansion - house of Gort, on which occasion they caused the bells of Athenry and Galway to be rung for joy"[148]. Blake-Forster claimed that many of the gentry throughout the county "had their residences illuminated" in celebration[149]. It was the kind of incident which appealed to Blake-Forster who belonged, like Kirwan of Woodfield, to a

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146. The Fetherstonhaughs, originally from Northumberland like the Forsters, were Catholic refugees from Cromwellian England and acquired estates in Westmeath and Galway (W. Magan, Umma-More: the story of an Irish family, Shaftesbury, 1985, pp 179, 222).

147. Galway Vindicator 26 February 1870 p3, 2 March 1870 p3, 5 March 1870 p3, 12 March 1870 p3.

148. J. O'Donovan's Tribes and customs of Hy Fiachrach, quoted in Fahey, Kilmacduagh, p336.

149. Blake-Forster, Irish chieftains, p567.

declining gentry family and who typified the romantic approach to the past.

CHAPTER 7

THE GENTRY AND COUNTY ADMINISTRATION

During the progress of the House of Commons select committee on grand jury presentments in 1868 a witness was asked if he was aware "that they could call three grand juries in the county of Galway, without going under £2000 a year"[1]. Dutton stated over forty years previously that six grand juries could be selected, "of ample fortune and sound judgement; and petty jurors are generally of a description and fortune rarely to be met with elsewhere"[2]. This was one of the beneficial results of a large resident gentry. In addition to their official role as magistrates and grand jurors the gentry were actively involved in the promotion of public works and the commercial and industrial schemes which formed part of the railway age. In this economic role the gentry took their place on committees along with merchants and others and with officials and agents of central government. They also had a dominant role in the local organisation of charity, benevolence and relief works. This role had a major social aspect in that funds for local charity came from the social activities of the gentry. It also illustrates the connection between the social life, landlord role, and administrative functions of the gentry.

The administrative role of the gentry as grand jurors was the traditional right of their class as the major landowners in the county. The gentry as a body normally gave their passive support to projects and schemes of local benefit. But an

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1. Report of the select committee on grand jury presentments (Ireland), H.C., 1867-8, X, p243.

2. Dutton, p412.

exceptional active role in public affairs was played by a smaller group of public spirited individuals. This group included grand jurors like Robert Bodkin of Annagh, Denis Kirwan of Castle Hacket, Martin Blake of Ballyglunin and Lords Clanricarde and Clancarty[3]. It also included Andrew H. Lynch who was a townsman, large landowner and lawyer; John Blake, townsman and lawyer, and Rev. John D'Arcy rector of Galway. The membership of the group illustrates their concern for both county and town. Many gentry had ancestral links with the town and even non - Tribal gentry like the Dalys and Persses had long political or commercial associations with it. The gentry dominated the corporate offices of the town. In 1823 for instance James Daly of Dunsandle was mayor, James H. Burke of St Clerans, deputy mayor, James O'Hara of Lenaboy recorder, and Nicholas Browne of Mount Hazel sheriff[4]. The gentry therefore linked town and county and linked both with Dublin and London. The employment needs of an expanding population in both town and county was the chief motive behind the efforts to promote railways, canals, drainage and other public works. Two individuals stand out as public minded propagandists for the social and economic progress of Galway town and county and the west of Ireland in general. They were Father Peter Daly and Thomas Bermingham. Daly was a townsman of obscure background. He had however a large personal fortune including much property in the town and had a rent-roll of £1000 a year[5]. Bermingham was connected with the Grattan family, and had wide experience as a land agent.

The two main aspects of gentry involvement in county and local

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3. Peers did not sit on grand juries because if criminal business came up they could not sit in trial upon commoners (Report of the select committee on grand jury presentments, (Ireland), pp 225, 243.

4. Connaught Journal, 29 September 1823, p3.

5. Galway Vindicator, 12 May 1866 p2.

affairs are, firstly, their official role on bodies which were part of the structure of local government like the grand juries and boards of poor law guardians, and secondly the energetic role played by a small group of public minded gentry and clergy headed by Father Peter Daly and Thomas Bermingham. It seems strange that Bermingham was never called on the grand jury while he was agent on the Clonbrock estate. Judge Keogh was said to have criticised the practice of agents appearing on the Galway grand jury[6]. There was however nothing in the statutes to bind the sheriff in the selection of his panel apart from the £50 freehold rule for the one juror who had to be selected from each barony[7]. Charles Filgate, agent on the Mahon of Castlegar estate, appeared on the grand jury on a few occasions and Robert D'Arcy of Woodville, Clanricard's agent, did so almost without interruption from 1837 to 1846. Clancarty's agents too were regular grand jurors. Henry Gascoyne filled that office for most of the 32 years of his agency. Clancarty was obliged by ill health to spend much time on the continent and Edward Fowler, who succeeded Gascoyne as agent, represented the landlord on the grand jury, board of guardians, asylum board and agricultural society[8]. Agents who were grand jurors were usually magistrates and sometimes had estates, as in the case of D'Arcy of Woodville and George Robinson who was agent on the Berridge of Ballinahinch estate.

The grand jury of the county at large was drawn from a range of about 180 gentry families almost one third of whom were

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6. Report of the select committee on grand jury presentments, (Ireland), p 243.

7. Ibid pp243, 251.

8. Pellew, In castle and cabin or talks in Ireland in 1887, p 196. When the 9th Earl of Clanricarde was attainted after the Jacobite War his agent Bryan Mahon of Castlegar acted on his behalf at Galway assizes (Mahon, Mahon history, ii, p29).

Tribal families. There was also the grand jury of the county of the town of Galway. This body was made up of merchants and other substantial townsmen. But the dominance of the county gentry is seen in the fact that they made up from one-third to over one half of the town grand jury. Those who appeared most frequently were the gentry residing in the environs of the town, such as the Blakes of Merlin Park, Joyces of Mervue, Lynches of Renmore, Burkes of Danesfield and Martins of Ross. Catholics had been barred from serving as jurors by the 6th of Queen Anne and were re-admitted by the Catholic Relief Act of 1793. The ban on Catholic sheriffs remained on and Michael Dillon Bellew became the first Catholic high sheriff of Galway in 1825. Earlier Protestant sheriffs had appointed juries to suit the wishes and views of party. Bellew's choice of both grand and petty jurors however did not give rise to any complaints from the Protestant aristocracy of the county[9]. Of the 56 high sheriffs between 1834 and 1889 29 were Catholics. Anthony Blake of Holly Park, the Catholic chief remembrancer of the Court of Exchequer, believed that in Galway Catholic gentry sat on grand juries "in a fair proportion to their property"[10]. The proportion ranged from one third to almost one half. At the 1830 spring assizes twelve of the 23 grand jurors were Catholics[11]. Robert Bodkin of Annagh, one of the most publicly active members of the Catholic gentry and a grand juror during 47 years, was a witness before the committee on grand jury presentments in 1868. He claimed that no decision of the Galway grand jury was ever influenced by religion or politics. They had never had anything "but the

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9. Connaught Journal, 8 April 1830, p2. The Connaught Journal and Tuam Herald (which was founded in 1837) were, it should be noted, the chief organs of the popular Catholic and liberal, or radical, causes.

10. Report of committee of Lords on the state of Ireland, H.C., 1825, ix, p111.

11. Connaught Journal, 29 March 1830, p3.

most friendly feeling upon our grand jury; and.... never inquired what a man's religion or his politics are in the discharge of our duty, or in our social intercourse"[12]. Bodkin admitted that occasionally there was "a little invidiousness in respect to the preferences given by the sheriff"[13]. Complaints were made in 1832 about the composition of the grand jury, the need to exclude "jobbers", and the financial embarrassment of some of its members[14]. In 1826 the grand jury was accused of jobbing because it gave the contract to renovate Galway gaol to Robert Martin of Ross[15]. The Galway Advertiser, representing the extreme Protestant and Conservative viewpoint, jeered at the composition of special and petty sessions juries in baronies dominated by Catholic gentry. It taunted the "O'Mulgrave Magistrates" of localities like Mount Bellew and Milltown where the bench was "exclusively Radical and Popish" and contrasted the superior education and integrity of the Protestant clergy in their role as magistrates. It also claimed that some Catholic magistrates were not fully supporting the police. "Where", it asked, "were the radical magistrates of this county in the winter of 1819, when the Conservatives, at the risk of their own lives and properties, protected the loyal and the good- suppressed agrarian outrages, and restored tranquillity"[16].

Many of the Catholic gentry were prosperous, especially

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12. Report of the select committee on grand jury presentments (Ireland), p398.

13. Ibid, p 408.

14. Western Argus, 14 March 1832, p3. Complaints were made about the unsuitability of Walter Lawrence who was apparently in financial difficulties. (Ibid, 17 March 1832, p3).

15. Connaught Journal, 23 November 1826, p2.

16. Galway Advertiser, 27 January 1838 p3, 10 February 1838 p3, 9 June 1838 p3.

families like the Bellews of Mount Bellew, Blakes of Ballyglunin, Redingtons of Kilcornan, Smyths of Masonbrook and Burkes of Marble Hill. This renders suspect on political grounds the adverse criticism which appeared in the more reactionary sections of the Galway press. For instance the county grand jury at the summer assizes in 1838 was strongly criticised. The Catholic High Sheriff, Sir John Burke of Marble Hill, had appointed twelve Catholic grand jurors. They were John Bodkin of Kilcloony, Thomas Ffrench of Castleffrench, Sir M.D. Bellew of Mount Bellew, Andrew Blake of Furbo, Robert D'Arcy of Woodville, Francis Blake of Cregg Castle, James D'Arcy of New Forest, Robert Bodkin of Annagh, Nicholas Lynch of Barna, John Chevers of Turlough, Patrick Blake of Gortnamona and Walter Joyce of Mervue. The Galway Advertiser claimed that the richest of these, with the exception of Bellew, was not worth £1000 per annum, and many of the others were not worth £100 if they discharged their debts. It was also claimed that St George of Headford had declined to serve on this grand jury, a charge which he indignantly rejected, while at the same time defending the character of that body.[17] The major buyers of estates after the Famine were duly selected as grand jurors. These included Pollok of Lismany, Guinness of Ashford, Lewin of Castlegrove, Cowan of Gortnamona, Meldon of Coolarne, Berridge of Ballinahinch and Waithman of Merlin Park. Some gentry were unable to attend as grand jurors because of military or other career service[18]. Others did not appear as magistrates or grand jurors although they had estates of several thousand

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17. Galway Advertiser, 28 July 1838, p2, 4 August 1838 p2, Tuam Herald, 18 August 1838, p2. The conservative press also criticised the town grand jury of summer 1838 and referred to the absent aristocracy (Galway Advertiser 28 July 1838, p2).

18. Lynch of Clydagh appeared in 1839 only, Burke of Ower in 1883 only and Henry of Tohermore in 1902 only.

acres. Examples are the Jamesons of Windfield, Digbys of Moate Lodge and Carters of Annakeen. Some people served only once and this indicated that they were barely on the accepted fringes of the gentry class, examples being Mc Donnell of Dunmore and Barrett of Greenhills.

The gentry active in local and public affairs were mainly large wealthy proprietors and professional men from the town. Some of these, like Andrew Lynch, had large estates. But even those who did not have estates, such as John Blake or Rev. John D'Arcy, belonged to gentry families. Blake and his distinguished lawyer cousins James Henry Blake and Patrick Blake were scions of the Dunmacrina family. Rev. John D'Arcy belonged to the D'Arcy of Houndswood family in Mayo and his mother was a Blake of Merlin Park. The predominance of the Tribal families in county affairs was understandable because their traditions embraced land, commerce and town government. They assumed the role of local leadership which their education, social background and wide contacts equipped them. The active core of county and town gentry were motivated by the desire to improve all classes of society. Thomas Bermingham did not belong to a Galway family and had little property in the county, yet his disinterested lifelong efforts on behalf of Galway were never surpassed. Lord Clancarty was the leader in agricultural affairs and Clanricarde was active on committees dealing with Corrib and Shannon drainage, railway and transatlantic communication.

Thomas Bermingham was the main driving force behind most committees on Galway county affairs whether held in Galway, Dublin or London. He was a member of the Reform Club almost from its foundation in 1836. Bermingham described a meeting at the Thatched House Tavern in London in 1832 to raise money for the cultivation of waste land in Ireland[19]. Clanricarde

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19. Connaught Journal, 16 August 1832 p2.

was chairman and also present were Lords Ashtown and Clonbrock, James Staunton Lambert M.P. for Galway county and John Bodkin who became M.P. for the County in 1835. At the meeting Bermingham produced "all the plans and maps which I have so often shown in Galway, and which I think are at last bringing conviction home to all who examine the details and the utility of executing works of public nature in the West of Ireland". He had submitted his plans to societies in London and Birmingham and acknowledged the assistance he received from Andrew Lynch, John Blake and Rev. John D'Arcy. Bermingham's plans for public works were largely motivated by the employment needs of an increasing population. At a Mansion House railway meeting John Blake referred to a tract of 400,000 acres in Connemara occupied by only 10,000 inhabitants. He pointed to the folly of leaving this land unreclaimed while the government paid for sending out to New South Wales and Van Dieman's land people who should be settled on such land.

Most of the schemes for employment and progress were in the area of land and water transportation. A bill was brought to parliament in 1830 on the suggestion of Anthony Blake the influential chief remembrancer. John Blake was the main author of the measure which began as a private bill for new docks and quays and a canal from Galway to Lough Corrib[20]. A public meeting about these measures in 1830 was chaired by James O'Hara of Lenaboy and attended by John Blake, Anthony Blake, Patrick Lynch of Renmore and Valentine Blake of Menlo[21]. A working committee on the bill also included Bishop French of Kilmacduagh, Hon. Martin Ffrench, Thomas Bodkin of Rahoon, Lachlan MacLachlan, Rev. John D'Arcy, Walter Joyce of Mervue and John Lushington Reilly the port collector. The Galway-

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20. Ibid 21 March 1831, p1 Report of the select committee on state of poor in Ireland, H.C., 1830, V11, p.344.

21. Connaught Journal, 11 January 1830 p2.

Corrib link was eventually effected by the Eglington Canal which was begun in 1848 and completed in 1852[22]. Thomas Bermingham had for long been campaigning for a canal to connect the Corrib and Mask lakes and a report from the select committee on Connaught lakes was published in 1835[23]. The Connaught Journal wrote that D'Arcy "next unto the philanthropic and active Mr. Bermingham is entitled to the highest praise for the energetic course which he has pursued in endeavouring to effect this undertaking"[24]. The Corrib-Mask canal was begun in 1848 but the project was overtaken by the advent of the railway as well as engineering problems and high costs and the work was terminated in 1858[25].

Rev. John D'Arcy was inspector of prisons in Galway, secretary to the harbour and town commissioners and collector of tolls[26]. He made efforts to improve the streets and square which had been walled in by the proprietor, Robert Hedges Eyre, at his own expense[27]. Families like the Lynches of Renmore who were both large landowners and merchants gave respectability to commercial activity. Patrick Lynch of Renmore was president of the Galway Commercial Society. Other members of the Society included Hon Thomas Ffrench and his

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22. M. Semple, Reflections on Lough Corrib (Galway 1974), p11.

23. H.C., 1835, XX.

24. Connaught Journal, 28 July 1834, editorial.

25. M. Semple, By the Corribside, (2nd ed. Galway, 1984), p 133; Sir W. Wilde Lough Corrib (Dublin 1936) p36. James Caird had predicted the failure of the project because of the high cost involved (The plantation scheme or the West of Ireland as a field for investment, p153).

26. H.C. 1847, LlV, p48.

27. Connaught Journal, 16 June 1831, p2. Eyre died in 1840 and was succeeded by his grand - nephew Rev. Robert Hedges Maunsell Eyre.

brother[28]. Committees dealing with commercial activities in the town or its environs were usually made up of both gentry and merchants. For instance a meeting of Lough Corrib Improvement Committee in 1848 consisted of Anthony O'Flaherty, M.P. of Knockbane, Patrick Lynch of Renmore, Lachlan Mac Lachlan, John Ireland, John Gunning, Rev Peter Daly and Martin Blake, M.P. who had house property in the town. Mac Lachlan, Gunning and Ireland were merchants[29]. Other gentry members of Galway harbour commissioners included James Martin of Ross and Andrew Blake of Furbo[30].

The gentry dominated county affairs because they owned the bulk of the land, controlled influential committees, had little interference from central government and had powerful contacts and representation in parliament where their class interests were largely protected. At local level they had to relate to and interact with commercial interests and government agencies like the Board of Works. The problem of Corrib drainage was of particular concern to proprietors who owned extensive estates in the area. The objective was to develope inland navigation and bring arable lake banks into cultivation. The work of drainage would provide greatly needed employment. The balance of private speculation and public interest was referred to by John Mac Mahon in his report on the Loughs Corrib, Mask and Carra districts in 1846 prior to the commencement of the Corrib - Mask canal in 1848. His brief was "to ascertain how far the measures of land drainage and improvement of mill power could, as private speculations, be combined advantageously for individual benefit, with the opening of a canal communication, as a matter of public interest, between Loughs Corrib, Mask and Carra, and uniting their navigable waters with the tideway in

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28. Ibid.

29. Tuam Herald, 29 January 1848, p 2.

30. Galway Vindicator, 30 May 1849, p 3.

the port of Galway "[31]. Private speculation was represented by the Lough Corrib Improvement Company which was held to have failed to comply with the conditions of the general drainage acts and which was in litigation with the Board of Works. In 1844 Lords Clanricarde, Oranmore, and Andrew Lynch and others formally requested the Board of Works to take over the operation of the drainage acts in the Corrib district[32]. Clanricarde had himself subscribed £100 towards the expenses of the survey of the district which he urged the government to undertake[33]. Delay was caused by difficulties in getting the co-operation of local millers, and local gentry like Staunton Lynch of Clydagh pressed the M.P. Martin Blake who had accompanied Clanricarde in his approach to Peel in 1844. Clanricarde, however, as appears from his private correspondence, was against the idea of heavy spending on Corrib drainage. He thought the money would be better spent on developing the seaside at Galway and the railways, than "in a wild barren country in which the people have shown no power or inclination to develope the simple resources they have"[34]. Clanricarde was chairman of the Lough Corrib Navigation Trustees which were set up by statute in 1857 and whose membership was mainly drawn from the gentry. Clanricarde's interest and influence spanned not only the town and county of

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31. Board of Public Works and Lough Corrib Improvement Company: 1847, LIV, p 415.

32. Ibid, p 391-3.

33. Correspondence between the Lough Corrib Improvement Company and the Board of Works, H.C. 1847-8, LVll, pp 310, 316, 320, 327.

34. Galway Vindicator, 17 March 1847, p3, 1 May 1847, p3. Leeds District Archives: Clanricarde papers, 63 (119). Clanricarde to Clarendon, 3 October, 1847. The chief millers in question were Messrs Gunning, Arthur Ireland, Edward Cussen Burke, Lachlan Mac Lachlan and tenants holding mills under Hedges Eyre, Messrs Rush and Palmer, Valentine, Duffy, Franklin, Regan and FitzGerald.

Galway but extended to Athlone and the Shannon. The need for local employment in the Tuam district had prompted Dr Oliver Kelly, Archbishop of Tuam, Lords Clanricarde Clonbrock and others to form a company in 1831 to construct a canal between Galway and Tuam[35]. An attempt to cut such a canal had been made in 1765 by John Bodkin of Lackagh at his own expense[36]. In 1861 Clanricarde chaired a meeting of gentry at Athlone and pointed out that drainage of the Shannon was being subordinated to river navigation[37]. A deputation was appointed to meet the lord lieutenant about the problem and it included Lords Clanricarde, Clancarty, Crofton, Dunlo, and Denis Kelly of Castle Kelly. At the Athlone meeting Clanricarde produced an unpublished Board of Works report on the river Suck and both he and Clancarty made continued efforts to improve the course of the river[38]. The Western Star claimed that Clancarty and Denis Kelly "worked might and main" towards drainage of the Suck[39]. Clanricarde brought over the eminent London engineer Nathaniel Beardmore to inspect the Shannon works and report to him personally on the matter[40].

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35. Connaught Journal 14 July 1831, p 3.

36. Tuam Herald, 7 October 1837, p 3; Third report on bogs, H.C., 1813-14, Vli, p128; inscription on bridge at Claregalway.

37. Tuam Herald, 7 December 1861, p 4.

38. Western Star, 5 May 1860, p 3.

39. Ibid, 31 August 1850, p 3. Clancarty and Hubert Butler Moore of Shannon Grove gave evidence to the select committee on Shannon navigation and drainage (H.C. 1865, Xl).

40. Select committee on Shannon river, H.C. 1867-8, X, p 620. The Hon. William Le Poer Trench, R.E. visited the Danube and Seine in order to observe engineering works on those rivers (Report of the committee appointed to inquire into the Board of Works, Ireland, H.C., 1878, XXlll, p 266).

Thomas Bermingham made a unique contribution to local progress because of the volume of his social and economic writings and constant activity as a publicist and his sustained enthusiasm. He devoted most of his efforts to bringing the railway to Galway, although Fr Peter Daly also claimed a large share of this venture[41]. Transatlantic travel was a related idea and Bermingham prepared a plan which showed the many advantages which Galway had as the possible packet station for America. Those closely associated with Bermingham in railway committees in the 1830's included Clanricarde, Andrew Lynch, James Martin of Ross, William McDermott of Springfield, John Blake, Hon. Martin Ffrench, Henry Sadleir Persse, Patrick Burke of Danesfield, Rev. John D'Arcy and the M.P.'s John Bodkin and Martin Blake. Bermingham held railway meetings at his residence in Dover Street, London, which Clanricarde attended, and he presented a memorial on Irish railways to the viceroy in 1839[42]. Bermingham was chairman of the general Irish railway committee which also included Sir John Burke of Marble Hill, Andrew Lynch and William Blacker. The committee gave Bermingham an "enthusiastic vote of thanks .... for his great exertions for the West of Ireland and his general exertions for the benefit of the country at large"[43]. Bermingham praised the public role of Anthony O'Flaherty, Blakes of Merlin Park and Furbo, Bodkin of Annagh and Lords Dunsandle and Oranmore. Ashtown and Clonbrock allowed the railway officers to lockspit the line through their land. Bermingham also paid tribute to the co-operation of Lambert of Cregclare, Browne of Mount Hazel, Joyce of Rahasane and Martyn of Tulira. Bermingham was said to have spent over £3000 of his own money on the promotion of public works of which £1000 was spent in

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41. Galway Vindicator 1 September 1849 p1.

42. Tuam Herald, 17 October 1840, p1.

43. Papers relating to Railroads, Ireland, H.C. 1839, XLVl, pp 385-6.

promoting the Galway railway[44].

Martin Blake of Ballyglunin was also a director and large investor in railways and Bermingham praised his efforts in London although he rarely spoke in parliament[45]. Clancarty's exertions in London were also noted. Clancarty however was unwilling to give his land for the railways, arguing that the extension of the railway to Galway would mainly benefit the citizens of Galway. He claimed that there was just as much need for industrial and commercial enterprise by the citizens of Galway as for proprietors' co-operation in bringing the railway[46]. Clancarty was also reluctant to buy shares in the packet station, claiming he "had no money to spare"[47]. The question of a packet station for Galway consequent on the advent of the railway was discussed throughout the 1850's. Bermingham was writing on the subject in 1849 and 1850 and his efforts were contrasted with the apathy of many of the gentry[48]. In 1851 however Irish merchants and gentry, including Lords Dunsandle and Westmeath, had a meeting at the Royal Exchange to press for a packet station[49]. Bermingham's

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44. Tuam Herald, 10 January 1852, p2; Galway Vindicator, 21 June 1849, p2.

45. Tuam Herald 1 September 1849, p2; Galway Vindicator, 29 August 1849, p1. Blake was a £10,000 shareholder in the Mullingar Company (Ibid, 7 April 1849 p2).

46. Galway Vindicator, 27 September 1848, pp 2, 3, 11 October 1848, p2. Fr. Daly accused Owen Blake of Frenchfort and his agent John Thunder of opposing the railway (Ibid 22 August 1849, p.3). Thunder however refuted the charge (Ibid 1 September 1849, p1; 5 September, p2).

47. Galway Vindicator, 8 October 1851 p2; criticised ibid 11 October p2.

48. Tuam Herald, 29 September 1849, p3; 5 October 1850, p2; 12 October 1850, p3.

49. Ibid, 8 February 1851, p2.

efforts continued throughout the 1850's. Dudley Persse, a wealthy paper merchant in New York and younger son of Henry Stratford Persse who founded the Persse distillery, was working on the transatlantic project with his political friend John Blake Dillon[50]. Dudley Persse was also in communication with James Perry of Obelisk Park Dublin, a director of the Midland Great Western Railway, who bought an estate in Galway in the Incumbered Estates Court[51]. "The exertions of Mr Dudley Persse", according to the Galway Vindicator,[52] "in arousing American sympathy for Ireland is beyond all praise and entitles him to the deep and lasting gratitude of the people of Galway". Father Peter Daly and Denis Kirwan of Castle Hacket were particularly involved in the transatlantic project. Both were directors of and large shareholders in John Lever's Royal Atlantic Steam Navigation Company which was formed in 1858. Clancarty said that Father Daly might be almost said to have been the originator of the project, though it actually originated with Lever[53]. Daly was a director of the Lough Corrib Steam Company, bought his own paper the Galway Press, which replaced the Galway Mercury, and was wealthy and influential[54]. He was instrumental in bringing Lever to Galway in 1859 and, in addition to his shipping project, planned to erect a cotton factory on Clanricarde's

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50. Ibid, 21 June 1851, p2; Galway Vindicator, 11 June 1851, p2; 5 July 1851 p2. This was the paper firm of Persse and Brookes of Nassau Street, New York (Tuam Herald 30 October 1852, p4).

51. M. Goodbody, The Goodbody family of Ireland, p44. The Perry fortune passed to the Goodbodys through marriage.

52. 21 June 1851, p2.

53. Tuam Herald, 8 October 1859, p3.

54. Galway Vindicator 12 May 1866, pp2-3. Bane, pp298, 234. He gave balls to the College professors and their families (Bane, p246).

estate at Terryland[55]. In April 1859 a contract was agreed with the Post Office for a fortnightly mail service between Galway, Boston and New York. The service began in June 1860 and in August 1860 the House of Commons voted the subsidy. Denis Kirwan went to Newcastle-on-Tyne to inspect steamers being built for the Galway line, and Lord Dunkellin, Sir Thomas Burke and Sir William Gregory negotiated with Lord Palmerston about the subsidy[56]. The company however sustained unfortunate shipping losses and difficulties and in May 1861 the Post Office declared the contract at an end[57]. The contract with the Cunard line for the Liverpool - American mail had been due to expire in 1862, but was awarded a further £200,000 annual subsidy. These events were noticed by Clanricarde "who closely watches on the spot the interests of Galway and the success of Mr Lever's enterprise"[58].

Lever's Galway line failed as did his plan for a cotton factory which he shared with Father Daly and George Burke of Danesfield. Bishop McEvilly reported to Archbishop Cullen of Dublin that Daly had employed Burke "to go about from house to house with a requisition" to Daly to go to Belfast with a view

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55. Tuam Herald, 5 March 1859, p3. Daly wanted to raise Galway to the eminence he believed she had in earlier times, "when the Spaniards, wondering at its importance would ask what part of Galway Ireland was in" (Ibid, 18 August 1860, p3).

56. Ibid, 18 February 1850 p3; 28 July 1860 p4.

57. See Report of the select committee on Royal Atlantic Steam Navigation Company, H.C., 1861, Xll.

58. Tuam Herald 23 October 1858, p4; J. Mitchell, 'Father Peter Daly', Galway Arch. and Hist. Soc. Jn., xxxix (1983-84) ppl08-9; W.S. Sanderlin, 'Galway as a transatlantic port in the nineteenth century', Eire - Ireland, V, (1970), pp 15-31.

to having factories established in Galway[59]. Clanricarde and Denis Kirwan of Castle Hacket were proposed to head a company for the construction of a graving dock. Directors from the Harbour Board should include Patrick Lynch of Renmore, Pierce Joyce of Mervue and George Morris. The county gentry were called on to support the enterprise. The local press complained however that Clancarty, Clonbrock, Dunsandle and Ashtown among others were opposed to the guarantee of a penny rate, while the people of the county of the town were willing to pay four pence rate for the same purpose[60]. Father Daly wanted to form a great flax company with a board of local directors and export to America. He described how 300 Belfast men had visited Galway in 1864 and were astounded at the lack of progress. Daly had proposed a loan of £152,000 for docks improvement and £50,000 to be raised to establish industry in Galway[61]. He proposed that a committee of gentlemen from the county to be formed to co-operate with a committee from the town to carry out the resolution. The full committee should include Anthony O'Flaherty of Knockbane, Denis Kirwan, James Blake of Cregg Castle and James O'Hara of Lenaboy. A letter was read from Sir William Gregory, M.P. stating why he refused to join the committee. He believed the county would not guarantee the loan for the harbour works and he appears to have had little faith in the industrial capacity of the gentry. "When commercial undertakings offer to capitalists a good prospect they will be commenced in Galway", he stated, "but I have little faith in such enterprises, originating from and depending on country gentlemen".

Gentry in the Connemara region had an interest in industries

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59. McEvilly also spoke of Daly "giving most expensive entertainments at which Protestants almost exclusively attend" (Bane, pp294-5).

60. Tuam Herald 25 July 1863 p2.

61. Ibid, 18 March 1865, p2.

as individuals rather than as members of committees. Dutton blamed the merchants of Galway for lacking a spirit of enterprise and not forming an extensive fishing company. They were disgraced by the frequent advertisement for Scotch herrings. John D'Arcy of Clifden had plans for the fishing industry and William Le Poer Trench, the late collector, had introduced regulations and bounties though his "unceasing endeavours to promote every plan beneficial to the town met with frequently an illiberal opposition"[62]. Clancarty said that if due exertions had been made the Galway fisheries would have provided abundant food during the Famine[63]. James Martin of Ross admitted the employment potential of the fishing industry[64]. John Lambert of Errislannan went to London to call attention to the neglected state of Galway fisheries and got a poor response, with the exception of Clanricarde[65]. But it was enterprising outsiders who got industries off the ground. For instance the Scots agent on the Ballinahinch estate, John Robertson, had a fish factory established where fish was tinned and exported[66]. The gentry were much more actively involved in agricultural life. In some cases their roles on committees were purely honorary as when Clanricarde was appointed president of Loughrea agricultural society at its foundation in 1840. Other gentry involved included Burkes of Marble Hill and St Clerans, Tully of Rafarn, Dolphin of

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62. Dutton, pp 385, 397.

63. Galway Vindicator, 27 September 1848, pp 2,3.

64. Report of select committee on fisheries (Ireland), H.C. 1849, xiii, p201.

65. Galway Vindicator, 4 August 1847, p3.

66. S.G. Osborne, Gleanings in the West of Ireland, pp69-71. Caroline Blake told the Royal commission on congestion in Ireland that Renvyle had been, before the Famine, one of the great herring fisheries and how her husband had revived the kelp industry (H.C., 1908, XL11, p373).

Turoe, D'Arcy of Woodville and Persse of Roxborough[67]. The Ballinasloe society under the Trenches however eventually dominated the entire county and part of Roscommon. It was the only society to survive the Famine years. The Tuam agricultural society was founded in 1841 and prominent members included Denis Kirwan of Castle Hacket and Robert Bodkin of Annagh. Kirwan and Bodkin were also active in setting up the Galway (Union) agricultural society in 1842[68]. The tenantry had their popular ploughing matches which originally dated from the Farming Society of Ireland[69].

Agriculture and banking were closely linked. Some families like the Joyces and Ffrenches had their own banks and directors and managers were usually gentry. In 1839 Denis Kirwan was appointed manager of the Bank of Ireland in Galway as successorto John O'Hara of Raheen[70]. When the Agricultural and Commercial Bank of Ireland opened in Tuam in 1834 the committee included John Kirwan of Hillsbrook, William Burke, the Blakes of Tuam and others[71]. Denis Kirwan and the Brownes of Tuam were later added to the Tuam committee. Gentry on the committee of the National Bank in Loughrea included Dolphin Dalys and Mahons[72]. Banks in Ballinasloe had less gentry on committees, apart from the Trenches and Major Lynch of

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67. Tuam Herald, 17 October 1840, p3, 23 January 1841, p3.

68. Ibid, 23 October 1841, p2, 26 March 1842, p2.

69. Dutton, p420.

70. Tuam Herald, 6 April 1839, p3. Kirwan retired from the post in 1843 (Ibid, 20 May 1843, p3). The bank had opened in Galway in 1830 (Connaught Journal, 10 June 1830, editorial).

71. Connaught Journal, 14 August 1834, p3.

72. Ibid, 21 April 1836, p3.

Oatfield[73]. In addition to banks there were also charitable loan societies such as at Ballymoe, and at Ahascragh under the patronage of Lord Clonbrock and Sir Ross Mahon of Castlegar[74]. Poverty and the need for employment got a response from the more enterprising and enlightened of the proprietors. Lord Clonbrock, for instance, owned the Gailey tile works which produced tiles used in drainage[75]. A factory was set up at Killimer by Kirkaldy of Hearnesbrook and other gentry and farmers to employ the destitute in the manufacture of flannel, tweed and stockings[76]. Denis Kirwan of Castle Hacket negotiated with the firm of Wallace and Sharp of Glasgow for the establishment of a muslin industry in Tuam to match that in Ballinalsoe and Loughrea[77]. O'Connor-Donelan of Sylane, a smaller proprietor, studied the timber industries of the Black Forest and headed a committee formed in Galway to introduce the basket industry and promote osier growing[78]. The Galway Industrial Society had its origin "in a ladies' drawingroom" in 1846 during a discussion on the state of the poor. The object of the society was to provide work for poor women[79].

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73. For lists of bank committees, national and local, see ibid, 18 September 1834, p1.

74. Lewis, Topographical dictionary of Ireland, i, 23, 150.

75. Western Star, 21 July 1850, p3; Twenty-sixth report of Commissioners of Public Works,H.C. 1857-58, xxvi, pp545-6.

76. Ibid, 15 June 1850, p3. The factory was short lived as Kirkaldy had to emigrate due to ill-health.

77. Tuam Herald, 28 February 1846, p2.

78. Ibid, 24 September 1887, p2. This general idea was supported by Sir Robert Kane and Daniel Howitz who had been superintendent of forests in Australia (Report of the select committee on industries (Ireland), H.C., 1884-85, lX p180.

79. Galway Vindicator, 13 December 1848, p4.

The gentry therefore played a leading role in the promotion of public works, local industries and the organisation of agricultural societies. The administration of charity was mainly a social function of the gentry before the Famine although charity bazaars were held right through the century. The fact that Galway had a large resident gentry meant that destitution and poverty could, in most areas, be alleviated with more or less success up to the Famine crisis. Gentry and clergy however were compelled to appeal for governm ent intervention in the 1840's. The result was the increasing and unwelcome intrusion of the poor law bureaucracy and greatly strengthened Board of Works. Prior to the setting up of the poor law system in the 1840's its role was filled by mendicity associations and charitable dispensaries. Richard Kirwan of Cregg, in a lecture on poor laws to the Galway Institution, pointed out that this system was insufficient as a mode of relief to the poor and that Galway petitioned parliament to make legal provision for the destitute[80]. During the extreme destitution in 1822 the Irish Distress Committee agent in Loughrea referred to the "devotedness with which many of the country gentlemen have applied themselves to the business" (of administering relief). Leading clergy and gentry were appointed trustees for the encouragement of industry and Archbishop Kelly of Tuam and Lord Clonbrock advocated a linen industry for Galway[81]. Concerned gentry like Henry Blake of

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80. Ibid 8 January 1851, p4. The paper pointed out that Kirwan was more humanitarian than the political economists (ibid, 11 January 1851, p2).

81. Report of the Irish Distress Committee of 1822 (London 1823), p105, 276, 278, 290. In the 18th century local linen industries were fostered by Robert French of Monivea and Bishop Cumberland of Clonfert (Young's tour in Ireland, i, pp271-2; Memoirs of Richard Cumberland, London 1807, i, p262).

Renvyle visited the sick on his remote estate[82]. The bad social effect of the absense of gentry and presence of middlemen was explained by the Distress Committee agent, Major Thomas D'Arcy. He pointed out that in many districts there were no resident gentry to form societies or enter into subscriptions to relieve the distressed "and where there are some few residents of the better classes, they are unable to give assistance from the difficulty of finding sale for their stock, and the impossibility of getting rent from their poor tenantry; and in some instances there is such a variety of persons having interest between the head landlords and the actual cultivator of the soil, that little or nothing can be expected in those cases of application for aid on the present occasion"[83].

In 1825 the Medicity Association had a ladies' committee formed from the town and neighbourhood of Galway[84]. In 1827 a meeting of the local committee of the Loughrea charitable dispensary was told that 500 patients had received medicine during the previous six months. Christopher Ussher of Eastwell was chairman of the committee and the members included Catholic and Protestant clergy and gentry such as the Burkes of Ballydugan, Dolphins of Turoe and Dalys of Clooncah[85]. The Connaught Journal reported in 1830 that in almost every town in the country the gentry had come forward to mitigate the sufferings of the unfortunate[86]. Rev. John D'Arcy was secretary to the central relief committee of Galway

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82. Report of the Irish Distress Committee of 1822, pp62, 216.

83. Ibid, p72.

84. Connaught Journal, 7 November 1825, p3.

85. Ibid 25 January 1827, p4.

86. Ibid 24 June 1830, p3.

town and county which included gentry and clergy[87]. In the Connemara region the resident gentry were few and the tenantry reduced to pauperism. Roadmaking was one of the few methods of employment and proprietors had made considerable efforts in that area. Thomas Martin of Ballinahinch used road funds to buy meal, seed, corn and flax for roadworkers during the distress in 1822[88]. The poverty of Ross parish in 1831 was described by the curate. He blamed high rents, absentee landlords and crop failure due to flooding. He praised the charity work of the Blakes of Menlo who had to contend with the plunder of boatloads of meal sent from the central committee in Galway[89].

A wide variety of charity functions were held in the 1830's under gentry patronage. Galway town had an annual charity ball for clothing the poor of the Mendicity Institute. Similar functions were also held in Loughrea and Oughterard[90]. An annual ball was also held in aid of the Widow and Orphan Asylum. The gentry headed the list of stewards at these functions. The Royal Western Yacht Club held its own charity ball[91]. Social functions were also held to aid Claddagh fishermen and cholera victims. Clonbrock and James Daly of Dunsandle supported their poor tenantry at their own expense without aid from relief committees. Daly claimed that in one

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87. Ibid 14 April 1831 p3.

88. Reports to government on public works for employment of poor, H.C. 1823, X, pp36-37.

89. Connaught Journal, 23 June 1831, p3. Criticism of absentee landlords and the resulting poverty also came from the other side of the county in a letter from one of the Trenches of Garbally (Report of the select committee on employment of poor in Ireland, H.C., 1823, vi, pp 38-9).

90. Connaught Journal, 25 January 1827, p4 ; 8 September 1828, p3.

91. Ibid, 16 August 1830, p2; 22 July 1833; p3; 7 August 1834, p3.

particular year the rental from his Kent estate was spent on the parish poor[92]. Arthur French St. George's contribution to the cholera fund was contrasted with the "apathy and worthlessness of others of our landlords"[93]. Gentry castigated for ignoring the cholera fund included John Bodkin, M.P. of Kilcloony, James Lambert, M.P. of Cregclare, Dominick Browne, M.P., Hedges Eyre and Robert Whalley, especially since all except Bodkin derived "a great portion of their incomes" from Galway town[94]. In 1850 the Galway Vindicator criticised the large proprietors around the town of Galway, Clanricarde, Blake of Menlo, Hedges Eyre and Martin of Ballinahinch, for not being on the subscription list of Galway Dispensary[95]. The benevolence of some gentry extended beyond their own estates. The Redingtons of Kilcornan were special benefactors in the relief of cholera in Loughrea and in the Aran Islands, whose neglectful proprietor, John Digby of Landanstown, Naas, was severely criticised[96]. When cholera reached Kilcolgan St. George of Tyrone employed a physician, apothecary, and nurses at his own expense[97]. There were conspicuous examples of generosity by some gentry families. In 1842 Robert Blake-Forster bought £100 worth of cloth and 100 pairs of blankets for his tenantry[98]. Michael Blake Bermingham gave large

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92. Ibid, 30 June 1831, p3; A. Atkinson, Ireland in the 19th century (London 1833) p146.

93. Ibid, 25 June 1832, p2.

94. Ibid, p3. The site of Queen's College Galway was bought from the Whalley estate.

95. Galway Vindicator, 23 February 1850 p2. They were compelled to contribute by the Medical Charities Bill.

96. Connaught Journal, 10 September 1832, p2; 22 October, p3.

97. Ibid, 8 November 1832 p3.

98. Tuam Herald, 26 February 1842, p3.

quantities of meal to tenants at market price[99]. In some cases absentee proprietors had responsible agents. The Messrs. Cromie of Hollymount, who were extensive agents in Mayo and Galway, gave to charity and relief out of their own pockets[100]. Alexander Clendining, agent to the absentee Sir George Shee at Dunmore, loaned £500 to tenantry to buy provisions in 1842[101].

In post-Famine years bishops and clergy came to assume leadership in the campaign against social problems like poverty. Prelates like MacHale and Duggan however were active in this campaign several years before the Famine. A relief committee was set up in Tuam in 1842 with Archbishop MacHale as chairman. MacHale wrote to the Prime Minister, Robert Peel, that local charity was not sufficient to solve distress and unemployment[102]. His call for Treasury assistance heralded a new and centralised approach to the growing problem of destitution. At a special session in Tuam in 1846 Rev. Patrick Duggan, later bishop of Clonfert, pointed out that the Catholic clergy in surrounding parishes had hitherto prevented any crime by holding forth the prospect of employment. But they could not venture to promise a continuance of social harmony unless immediate and extensive employment was

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99. Ibid 16 July 1842, p2.

100. Ibid, 23 July 1842, p3. Archbishop Trench of Tuam said that absentees were not a liberal as resident landlords, although in general more wealthy, and McHale accused the affluent gentry of throwing the burden of relief on their poorer but more generous neighbours (First report of commissioners of inquiry into the condition of the poorer classes in Ireland, H.C. 1835, XXXll, p191).

101. Ibid, 11 June 1842, p3: 16 May 1846, p3. Clendining also improved agriculture on the Shee estate (Ibid, 18 May 1844, p2).

102. Ibid, 2 July 1842, p3.

forthcoming[103]. In the Famine years Edward Blake of Castlegrove gave daily employment to 400 people, mainly tenants from adjoining estates, and James Blake of Cregg Castle gave work to 600 men[104]. In 1846 Robert French of Monivea gave £300 to his poor tenantry[105]. Gentry fears of increased taxation for public works was voiced by Michael Browne of Moyne in a letter to Prime Minister Russell in 1846. He pointed out that the relief bill threw all the expense on those who had an interest in land over a certain value, and asked why should the depressed landed interest of Ireland be saddled with the entire cost of relieving a population reduced to famine by the visitation of providence[106]. The Tuam Herald however said of Browne that there was "no better landlord, or one who gives more employment to the poor"[107].

This illustrates how the gentry continued to be regarded as the providers of both employment and relief even though new legislation was enlarging the powers of the Board of Works in respect of drainage operations for employment purposes[108]. The Famine Relief Commission correspondence[109] shows the gentry playing an active role as chairmen of local relief committees and in the practical work of relief organisation

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103. Ibid, 19 September 1846, p2.

104. Ibid, 3 October 1846, p2, 23 January 1847, p3.

105. Ibid, 17 October 1846 p2.

106. Ibid, 26 September 1846, p3.

107. ibid, 15 January 1848, p2.

108. Hansard, LXXXlll (1846). col 429; Black, Economic thought and the Irish Question 1817-870, p184; Griffiths, The Irish Board of Works 1831-1878, pp71-3.

109. P.R.O.I.: IA/50/69 and 81: Relief Commission incoming correspondence, Galway 1846-47 and incoming correspondence, Connacht.

and distribution. They were seen officially as having the necessary authority and integrity for the management and control of relief funds and contributions. The work of famine relief was an example of gentry and clergy co-operating for the common good. The clergy were almost unanimous in their tributes to the crucial role of the resident gentry and contrasted the greater problems of areas lacking this social advantage such as Arran, Spiddal and Dunmore. In some areas gentry wished to relinquish the burden of being chairmen of relief committees. Robert Martin of Ross expressed such a wish, adding, "but there are applications from all parts of this barony to me to rectify abuses"[110]. William McDermott of Springfield pointed out that he was the only resident proprietor in the district. His private resources were exhausted, and "the eyes of all are turned towards me, and my health has suffered much from the fatigues I have been subjected to.. in endeavouring to alleviate the miseries of my poor neighbours"[111]. Richard D'Arcy, like McDermott, was one of the few resident gentry in north-east Galway. His threatened resignation as chairman of Kilkerrin relief committee was commented on by Captain H.T. Ainslie, inspecting officer for the county: "The situation of a country gentleman who takes the trouble of doing all the work of the head of a committee, his house surrounded all day by needy applicants, is disagreeable and discouraging and I do not know how such a loss could be remedied, unless by a paid functionary, as few gentlemen will encounter the business single-handed, even if one could be found"[112].

Ainslie complained that many persons of "an objectionable class" were members of relief committees, such as publicans

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110. P.R.O.I.: IA/50/69. Robert Martin to Sir John Burke, November 1846.

111. Ibid, letter 31 December 1846.

112. Ibid, letter dated 1 January 1847.

and grocers, who signed and issued tickets "which were received with the greatest contempt by the peasantry"[113]. Magistrates, clergymen and poor law guardians were considered to be the proper condidates for relief committees and local representations were made against the selection of shopkeepers or professional men[114]. In the Dunmore area, which had no resident gentry, the committee secretary, the landlord Martin McDonnell, was a "grocer and dealer in meal" which he sold at a large profit. The protestant rector refused to work with such a committee and established a store where he sold meal at cost price[115]. The severest attack on the unsuitability of certain poor law officials came from Edward Archer, the agent to the Law Life Asssurance Company who had foreclosed their mortgage on the Martin estate in Connemara. Speaking of poor rate collectors and relieving officers in the area Archer said they were "not of that class of people in whom I have the slightest confidence, knowing full well that they are very deficient in those principles which would induce them to perform their duty conscientiously and well". He accused them of being corrupt and claimed to know cases where collectors and relieving officers were said to have obtained land and purchased cattle at their own prices[116]. Archer's solution to the problem was the suggestion that noncommissioned navy or

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113. Ibid, letter dated 2 October, 1846.

114. Ibid, letter dated 9 September 1846, and signed "A.B.," from Kinvara.

115. Ibid, report on committees, 2 February 1847. Shawe-Taylor attacked the food monopolies of Limerick and Galway merchants (ibid, letter 14 October 1846).

116. Report of select committee on operation of Irish poor law, H.C. 1849, XVl, pp952-4. Archer was an army officer and brother-in-law to Anthony O'Flaherty, M.P. of Knockbane, Moycullen. Robert Bodkin explained to the select committee on grand jury presentments that cess collectors were a "very much higher class of person" than poor rate collectors (H.C., 1867-8, X, p399).

army officers should be brought in to take up the posts.

In letters written from the Connaught circuit in 1847 and 1848 chief justice Thomas Lefroy paid tribute to the co-operation and good will which he found among the gentry in Galway especially as they were comparatively almost as much distressed as the poor[117]. Several members of the gentry died from fever in 1847. Thomas Martin of Ballinahinch had been distributing turnip-bread to his starving tenants[118]. Robert Gregory of Coole had been ministering to the poor[119]. Gregory had been chairman of Kinvara relief committee and Stepney St George died of fever at Headford Castle, "caught in the laborious execution of his duties as chairman of Headford relief committee"[120]. Others who died included John Nolan of Ballinderry, Paul Dolphin of Turoe and Lord Dunsandle[121]. Others who caught plague, but survived, included Hyacinth D'Arcy of Clifden Castle, Stephen Leonard of Queensfort and James Kirwan of Blindwell. The wealthy Father Peter Daly had soup kitchens in his house and claimed to have fed 2000 people daily with soup and bread[122]. A wealthy absentee proprietor, Thomas Bermingham Sewell, was castigated in the local press, along with Lord Oranmore, for ignoring appeals from John

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117. T. Lefroy, Memoir of chief justice Lefroy (Dublin 1871) pp247-8.

118. Tuam Herald, 1 May 1847, p2, 14 August 1847, p2, 9 January 1847, p4.

119. B. Jenkins, Sir William Gregory of Coole, p91.

120. Tuam Herald 22 May 1847 p2.

121. Ibid, 1 May 1847, p3, 24 April 1847, p3; A.M. Sullivan, New Ireland (1877), i, pp 133-4.

122. Reports of the select committee on poor laws, (Ireland) H.C. 1849, XVi, p655.

Lopdell the chairman of Athenry relief committee[123]. Cases of resident gentry refusing to take responsibility or ignoring appeals from local relief committees appear to have been rare. Where they occurred they were usually highlighted by the clergy and local press. For example the Western Star backed up Father Thomas Coen's attack on Dudley Persse over the poverty and deaths on his Perssepark property near Ballinasloe[124]. Sir John Burke of Marble Hill was criticised by Father Patrick Lyons who had to communicate with him about the establishment of a local relief committee. This had a wider relevance because Burke, as vice-lieutenant of Galway, had to submit committee lists to Clanricarde who was custos rotulorum of the county. Lyons accused Burke of aloofness and inefficiency and added the interesting comment that he would not consider himself responsible for the future conduct of his "poor starving parishioners"[125].

The majority of the gentry in Galway, as in Cork,[126] accepted the obligations which their place in local society imposed on them. Sir Richard O'Donnell, chairman of Newport board of guardians, said that by attending the meetings he had learned the "moral obligations there are between the poor and the rich"[127]. Conditions in Mayo were worse than in Galway and the unpopular rate-in-aid enactment of 1849 was intended to support distressed unions by a special national levy. The gentry viewed with alarm the relentless rise in poor rates and

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123. Galway Vindicator, 13 January 1847, p2. Sewell was described as "one of the wealthiest landlords in this province" (Tuam Herald, 9 June 1849, p3).

124. Western Star 27 March 1847, p3.

125. P.R.O.I.: IA/50/69. Letter dated 8 October 1846. Lyons preached and instructed in Irish.

126. D. M. Nolan, "The County Cork grand jury 1836-1899". M.A. Thesis. University College Cork, 1974, p.146.

127. Report of the select committee on poor relief (Ireland), H.C. 1861, X, p312.

they resented the powers of the poor law commissioners. The Board of Works and the appointment of stipendiary magistrates represented the gradual encroachment of central government. In 1847 the full burden of poverty was placed on the ratepayers by the Poor Law Extension Act. But even before this there was considerable opposition to poor rates. The Tuam board refused to collect rates and had to be compelled by the poor law commissioners. Gentry and clergy held meetings and declared the poor law too expensive, oppressive and bureaucratic[128]. Denis Kirwan of Castle Hacket said there was "a class of large farmers and graziers who objected greatly to putting their hands into their pockets and paying the rates". He also claimed that Archbishop McHale and the Catholic clergy were very much opposed to the collection of poor rates[129]. The position in Tuam was complicated by the existence of two distinct relief committees. One was made up of Catholic gentry lead by Charles Blake together with Catholic clergy and principal shopkeepers. The other was supported by Bishop Plunket and Protestant clergy and proprietors such as Arthur Netterville Blake and William Marshall Day. Other Protestant gentry like Denis Kirwan, David Ruttledge and John Dennis supported both committees[130].

As the Famine crisis reduced gentry incomes and rents several protests were made against high poor rates, particularly in 1848 and 1849. The comte de Basterot of Duras estimated that

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128. Tuam Herald, 21 January 1843, p2, 18 February, p3, 6 May, p2; H. Burke, The people and the poor law in 19th century Ireland (Dublin 1987) pp82-3.

129. Report of the select committee on poor relief and medical charities (Ireland), H.C. 1846, xi, pt. i, pp633-4.

130. H. Coulter, The West of Ireland: its existing conditions and prospects (Dublin 1862) p139. Denis Kirwan stated that Charles Blake was not influenced by McHale, "for they are not very intimate".

Gort union rates amounted to over three-fifths of the annual value of the property in the union and stated that the payment of rents had ceased[131]. Dunsandle believed that the poor law system would desolate "most of the property in this part of Ireland and plunge the country into a state of ruin"[132]. When paid vice-guardians were imposed on Loughrea union to administer the poor law in that locality Dunsandle, Sir Thomas Burke and James Smyth - members of the late board - advanced their own money to prevent the poor-house being closed[133]. In the case of the Galway union the pressure of poverty was such that Lord Wallscourt and John Blakeney, crown solicitor for Galway, proposed the dissolution of the board and the appointment of vice-guardians[134]. Blakeney admitted that proceedings had to be taken against defaulting rate payers among the gentry in Galway and Tuam unions[135]. Richard Kirwan of Cregg made strong but unavailing protests about the high rates in Galway union and Christopher St George and William Gregory brought several appeals before Gort quarter sessions[136]. During the passage of the Poor Law Extension Act

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131. Galway Vindicator, 22 November 1848 p4.

132. Ibid, 25 November 1848, p3.

133. Ibid, 16 February 1848, p2, 23 February p2, 26 February, p2. Dunsandle wrote to the Evening Mail about the dismissal, but he was accused by a "Loughrea ratepayer" of not persisting in his protest (Ibid, 25 March 1848, p4, 19 April p2).

134. Ibid, 2 June 1849, p3. Board dismissals were common during the Famine period (W.L. Feingold, 'The Irish boards of poor law guardians, 1872-86: a revolution in local government'. Ph.D. University of Chicago, 1974. p.24).

135. Reports of the select committee on poor laws (Ireland), H.C. 1849 XVi, pp672-3. Martin Blake of Ballyglunin was mentioned as a defaulter. A Tuam curate, Rev. Luke Ryan, also accused Blake of not paying his rates (Tuam Herald 4 March 1848 p3).

136. Galway Vindicator, 29 September 1849, p2, 31 October, p2.

in 1847 the Western Star pointed out the injustice of a system whereby benevolent resident proprietors like Lords Clancarty, Ashtown and Clonbrock, with full employment on their own estates, would be subject to the general rating of the district in order to support paupers on the estates of absentee neighbouring owners[137]. This was also a grievance with proprietors who tried to alleviate poverty on their estates. For example Mrs Lambert of Castle Lambert gave free bread and soup daily to 100 families. Her estate was surrounded by the properties of Lord Oranmore and Browne an absentee, Blake of Tower Hill a Mayo resident and Lord FitzGerald an absentee whose estates were in trustees' hands, "and all of vast extent and containing a vast population, many of whom are daily fed at my expense"[138]. Cases of reluctance to subscribe to relief committees show the desire of the gentry to confine their individual responsibility to their own estates and their unwillingness to accept the idea of general responsibility for the wider problem. Thomas Redington of Kilcornan explained why he did not contribute to the Oranmore relief committee and was supplying the wants of his own tenantry in food and employment[139].

There were both collective and individual complaints about the nature and scope of poor relief and rates. The grand jury petitioned parliament in 1848 about the iniquity of the non-liability of mortgagees, annuitants and fundholders while the

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137. Western Star, 24 April 1847, p2.

138. P.R.O.I. IA/50/81. Relief Commission: incoming correspondence, Connacht. Letter, dated 4 March 1847. When the Tuam workhouse opened in 1842 the local press claimed that ninetenths of Tuam's poor came from the Mayo estates of the absentees Lords Sligo and Dillon and Sir Roger Palmer (Tuam Herald 28 May 1842, editorial).

139. Ibid, letter of 17 May 1846. Redington became a poor law commissioner in 1847 and was knighted for his famine work (D.N.B.).

full burden fell on the landed proprietors and hardworking tenant farmers[140]. At a public meeting to petition against the rate-in-aid to support poorer areas strong objections came from Lords Clancarty and Clonbrock. Clancarty pointed out that £23,000 poor rates had been imposed on Ballinasloe union and £13,000 was still uncollected so a new burden could not be tolerated[141]. In 1851 a large meeting of nobility and gentry was held in Galway to protest against the rate for the repayment of advances under the Loans Consolidation Act[142]. Many gentry were also present at a Ballinasloe meeting of Connaught poor law guardians[143]. There was strong gentry opposition to outdoor relief on the grounds that it demoralised tenantry and interfered with the labour supply. A greater grievance was the Labour Rate Act of 1846 which greatly centralised the initiation and control of local relief works which were explicitly to be non-productive in nature. The act also rated proprietors for the smallest class of occupiers, those under £4 valuation. James Martin of Ross attacked the system of outdoor relief and advocated the setting up of model farms. He also admitted that rating proprietors for the smallest class of occupiers was an inducement to clearance - "the landlord is compelled to do it or abandon his own position as a gentleman, because it is as much as he can do to live; he cannot pay those excessive rates that are thrown upon him so suddenly". He argued that labour should be employed in the production of food, not on useless

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140. Western Star, 19 August 1848, p1. A similar argument was put forward by John Blakeney the crown solicitor for Galway (Galway Vindicator, 21 February 1849, p3).

141. Western Star, 17 March 1849, pp2,3; Black, Economic thought and the Irish Question 1817-1870, p128.

142. Galway Vindicator 10 September 1851 p3.

143. Ibid, 8 October 1851, p2.

and demoralising projects[144]. Clancarty also attacked outdoor relief during his extensive debates on the Poor Law Extension Act of 1847 and he made an eloquent plea for the educational potential of the workhouse system[145]. Clanricarde was more tolerant of the idea of outdoor relief and supported the bill though he had opposed the first Poor Law for Ireland[146]. Clancarty told the select committee on poor laws that the result of outdoor relief was that the poor became demoralised "and their industrial habits had become altogether interfered with". He admitted that his policy had necessitated the provision of 14 auxiliary workhouses in Ballinasloe, which the Western Star had condemned as "Lord Clancarty's sepulchres"[147]. The same paper however also published the militant philanthropist Sidney Godolphin Osborne's praise of Clancarty. He said Clancarty never left his post during the Famine and that he had already learned enough of his character "to wish Ireland had hundreds like him"[148].

The necessity for some form of poor law and hostility to its expense, powers and interference had been voiced at length during the debates on the Poor Laws (Ireland) Bill in 1837-8.

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144. Ibid, 30 December 1848, p2; Report of the select committee on poor laws (Ireland): H.C. 1849, XVi, pp483-5.

145. Hansard, XCll (1847), cols 75-87, 450, 814-5.

146. Ibid, cols 441, 800-802, 1046.

147. H.C. 1849, XVi, pp 718-720; Western Star 21 April 1849, p3. When the numbers in the workhouses almost equalled the population of the town complaints were made "by several of the respectable citizens of Ballinasloe" (p72l).

148. Western Star 30 June 1849, p4. Clancarty used his casting vote as chairman to ban the press from Ballinasloe board meetings (Galway Vindicator 29 January 185l, p3). He was attacked by the press over his refusal to admit to the workhouse a widow and children because her son was in employment (ibid 5, 12 February 185l, p2).

Andrew Lynch the member for Galway, believed in a more expanded role for central government as did others like Thomas Redington of Kilcornan, Thomas Bermingham and Lord Clonbrock. In 1834 Lynch had moved a Commons resolution to enlarge the powers of the Board of Works and undertake reclamation of wast land[149]. He was chairman of a select committee on public works and shared Bermingham's view that employment was preferable to emigration[150]. Like Lynch, Thomas Redington supported the Poor Laws Bill, declared that he was willing to undertake a large portion of the rate, but objected to the powers of the commissioners[151]. Clanricarde strongly attacked the Bill on four grounds. It entailed enormous expense, gave a completely despotic power to the government throughout Ireland, established an unlimited power of taxation, and allowed the unacceptable practice of paid guardians. He was convinced "that the machinery of this bill would in no degree tend to knit together the upper, middle, and lower classes in the way in which it was desirable for the peace and prosperity of Ireland that they should be united"[152]. In his warning against the growth of government and bureaucracy Clanricarde said the stipendiary magistracy "were gradually and by degrees superseding the resident gentry". Similar sentiments were expressed by Lord Clancarty during the debates on the 1842 Drainage Act which strengthened the powers of the Board of

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149. Connaught Journal, 1 May 1834, p3. He got a government grant of £12,000 for roads and public works in Connemara (Galway Free Press 7 June 1834 p2).

150. Black, Economic thought and the Irish Question 1817-1870, p174; Griffiths, The Irish Board of Works 1831-1878, p51. Lynch's address to the electors of Galway on the Poor-Law Bill for Ireland (London 1838) contained a petition of the inhabitants of the town and county of Galway in favour of poor laws (pp 75-7).

151. Hansard, XL (1837-8), cols 985-6. Redington was M.P. for Dundalk.

152. Ibid, XLlll (1837-8), cols 42, 43, 475-6.

Works[153]. Clanricarde said the Act would not be tolerated in England as it amounted to the confiscation of property. Clancarty did not fully agree with Clanricarde and those who utterly opposed the Act. He then proceeded to declare that Ireland was already overrun with commissioners and the "powers exercised by these bodies are always a deduction from the stewardship of others, and their appointment a new and permanent charge upon the country". He claimed that the stipendiary magistrates would altogether supersede the county gentlemen "in their proper functions as the guardians of the peace and good order in the county and of the rights of the poor"[154].

Clanricarde and Clancarty together were landlords of up to 80,000 acres of land and so had a strong vested interest in the control of public expenditure. In 1845 Clancarty presented a petition to parliament from the Ballinasloe guardians complaining of the powers of the poor law commissioners which he believed should be reviewed[155]. The prospect of undefined rating was a barrier to estate improvement. Richard St George of Headford suggested in a letter to the Times that proprietors should be enabled to give up a portion of their land to Peel's projected plantation commission in lieu of poor rates. He had been brought to the point of bankruptcy by Famine and increased poor rates the result of having spent 35 years trying to improve the condition of his tenantry[156]. The most bitter attack on the

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153. McDowell, The Irish administration, p207; Black, Economic Thought and the Irish Question 1817-1870, pp184-5; Griffiths, The Irish Board of Works 1813-1878, p59. The act "marked the entrance of the civil servant into the administration of land and property in Ireland".

154. Hansard, LXV (1842), cols 318, 319.

155. Ibid, LXXXll (1845) cols 124-126.

156. Tuam Herald, 14 April 1849, p4.

poor law system was made by Owen Blake of Frenchfort, part of whose estate was sold in the Incumbered Estates Court in 1853. Blake had rejected his own appointment as poor law guardian in the troubled Galway union because the poor law commissioners refused his request for an inquiry into the conduct of a poor rate collector. Blake took this as an insult believing it would leave him with no authority locally. "Indeed from all I can see", he declared, "and I have for some time observed the working of this board, a poor law guardian is a perfect cypher, with the privilege of viewing the squalor and misery of his fellow creatures in the workhouse, while the well paid commissioners from their piled Turkey - carpetted rooms and easy chairs in the Custom-house, issue forth their ill-digested orders which must be obeyed and from which there is no appeal"[157].

Blake's outburst illustrates the effect of the Famine crisis on the less prosperous section of the gentry. Fear of financial ruin and alienation from government was aggravated at local level by what was perceived as the high handed approach of the poor law authorities who like the Board of Works, were increasing their powers at the expense of the grand jury. It was also true that prominent members of the gentry class were in the service of government such as Anthony Blake, Thomas Henry Burke and Sir Thomas Redington. The expanding officialdom even at local level provided welcome posts for poor gentlemen, and broken down gentry found welcome employment even in the hated rank of receiver[158]. Before the Famine gentry could be pursued for debts. Martin Blake of

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157. Galway Vindicator, 10 November 1849, p3.

158. John Kelly of Woodmount, Ballinasloe, was severely attacked in his capacity as Chancery receiver (Tuam Herald 23 December 1848, p3). Kelly became bankrupt and got a government post in Australia. His two sons became immensely wealthy, one became known as the "Copper King" of Australia.

Ballyglunin had stock seized for tithe claims in 1837[159]. The effects of Famine however made hard pressed gentry more hostile towards poor rate collectors and valuators. James Kilkelly of Drimcong petitioned the House of Lords against the conduct of a collector who seized stock for a balance due[160]. Gentry criticism of the Board of Works came to a head in 1852 when Lord Rosse called for a select committee to examine the Board's expenditure under the Drainage Acts. He pointed out that the cost of works in some cases would exceed the fee-simple of the land[161]. Frequent disputes occurred in the 1850's between the gentry and Board of Works over the charges placed on land as a result of drainage carried out by the Board. Objections related to the area of land improved by drainage and to the estimated increase in value which resulted from the works. In the Turloughmore drainage, covering 8000 acres, the Board spent £60,000 of which £28,000 was to be charged to the proprietors. They wished the sum assessed to be reduced to the original £23,000[162]. It was reported that Sir Thomas Redington was going to bring an action against the

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159. Tuam Herald, 22 July 1837, p3. Lawrences of Lisreaghan forcibly ejected a bailiff who entered to make a seizure in 1851 (Galway Vindicator, 24 September 1851, p1).

160. Galway Vindicator 28 September 1850, p2.

161. Hansard, CXXl (1852) col 93; Report of the select committee on operation of the acts relating to the drainage of lands in Ireland as administered by the Board of Works, H.C., 1852-53, XXVl, p314; R.C. Cox, 'The engineering career of Richard Griffith', in Richard Griffith 1784-1878, ed. G.L. Herries Davies and R.C. Mollan, Dublin 1980, p51.

162. Tuam Herald 31 March 1855, p3, 26 April, p3. Gentry active in the Turloughmore scheme included Denis Kirwan of Castle Hacket, Robert Bodkin of Annagh and Thomas Redington of Kilcornan (Ibid, 7 July 1849, p3). Trustees appointed under the Drainage Act included Martin Blake of Ballyglunin, Edward Browne of Cooloo, O'Connor Donelan of Sylane and John Smyth of Masonbrook (Ibid, 11 August 1855, p3).

Board of Works. But Mulvany, the drainage commissioner, explained that the problem was that Redington had to pay for the drainage, which was effective, but which yielded no material benefit because of the impoverished state of the tenantry[163]. In 1856 Redington accompanied a deputation consisting of Clanricarde, Clonbrock and Sir Thomas Burke to appeal to the chancellor of the exchequer against the charge put on drained lands in the Killimer district of Galway[164].

Gentry also bought complaints against the Board of Works for damage to lands by flooding and uncompleted operations. Thomas Joyce of Rahasane claimed £3000 for flooding damage[165]. Robert French of Monivea claimed that the original contract of the Board was not completed and that he had sustained a loss[166]. When the Corrib Mask canal was suspended in 1858 local gentry objected to the amount of charges put on their lands especially as the works were left in a defective and unfinished state. The complaints were made by Charles Lynch of Ballycurrin Castle, Anthony O'Flaherty of Knockbane, James Martin of Ross, and George O'Flahertie of Lemonfield[167]. When George Burke of Danesfield, Moycullen, contested the drainage charges which were put on his land, the Board of Works appointed a receiver to recover the amount they claimed due. Instead of paying the charges, Burke claimed a large sum of money for damage to his land by unfinished works, including a

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163. Report from commissioners of inquiry on arterial drainage, Ireland, H.C. 1852-53, XL1, p145.

164. Tuam Herald, 26 April 1856, p3.

165. Ibid, 28 October 1854, p1.

166. Ibid, 18 April 1857, p4.

167. Report of the commissioners of inquiry into arterial drainage in Ireland upon Lough Corrib drainage and navigation district in the counties of Galway and Mayo (Dublin 1878) pp15-17, 21-23; M. Semple, By the Corribside (2nd ed. 1984) pp 135-6.

canal forty feet wide through the best part of his demesne. The Board accepted the charge but paid him a mere £412 compensation. Burke stated that the action of the Board towards him was "unjust, oppressive and arbitrary". He was suffering the economic effects of the Famine and his friends advised him not to enter costly litigation with a Board "whose power over the country appeared to have been absolute and irresponsible by the provisions of act of Parliament after act of Parliament and being unable to undertake the expensive Chancery suit, saw nothing for it after the implied threat of the Board, but to strike and accept the terms, however unjust, which were offered him"[168].

Burke had given the Danesfield demesne free to the Board of Works on condition that Corrib navigation be effected. In both the Corrib and Shannon works the Board were primarily concerned with navigation. Gentry however became increasingly resentful on seeing their lands flooded because drainage was subordinated to navigation. East Galway landowners said the Shannon improvements were a complete failure and in a memorial to the Treasury claimed the faulty works "exhibit striking evidence of the ignorance and negligence with which Government works are designed and executed in this country". Clanricarde, Dunsandle, and other proprietors had asked the Board of Works to be allowed construct sluices at Meelick at their own expense but were refused such permission[169]. Under the Drainage District Act of 1863 Clanricarde and others wished to undertake a certain amount of drainage which they contended would not injure the Shannon navigation, but the

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168. Bord of Works (Ireland) inquiry committee, H.C. 1878, XX111, pp XXX-XXX1, 227-8.

169. Ibid, p263; Shannon Improvement Works (Ireland): H.C. 1861, LV11, pp559-576; for other extensive lists of gentry complaints over drainage see Arterial drainage Ireland: Part I: general correspondence 1842-1852, H.L. 1852, V1, pp190-7, 299.

Board again refused permission. Clanricarde described these conflicts in his evidence to the select committee on taxation in 1865. He also explained the gentry's distrust of the Board of Works and detailed the events leading up to Lord Rosse's attack on the Board in 1852. Although the 1863 Drainage Act had restored drainage initiative to the gentry[170], Clanricarde thought they should have more power to inspect and control the details of expenditure. He also underlined the criticism of the Board for being too subservient to their Treasury overlords. They "struggled as .... strongly as they could to impose upon us all that they could by possibility charge and in no one instance that I have ever heard had the Board interfered with the Treasury in favour of the landlord"[171]. Large proprietors like Clanricarde, as well as the leading gentry, were concerned with the wider administrative developments which might affect their pockets or property. The gentry's social life was the most self-contained aspect of their activity because they were primarily a social class. Their active local role, like their role in politics, was confined mainly to the more public minded, apart from their routine role as magistrates. An important effect of the Famine was that the gentry began to lose power to government departments and to the clergy. Whatever residue of local or administrative role they exercised resulted from their continued social prestige. They continued to play a role in the provision of relief and charity. Amateur theatricals for relief of the poor of Galway were held in the 1860's with the gentry playing the leading roles[172]. Charitable "fancy bazaars" were held in Tuam "in aid of the sick and suffering poor and other charities of the Sisters of Mercy". These

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170. Griffiths, The Irish Board of Works 1831-1878, p146.

171. Report of the select committee on taxation of Ireland, H.C. 1865, XII, pp46-50, 57.

172. Tuam Herald, 7 February 1863, p2.

bazaars were held under the patronage of long lists of county ladies[173]. Clanricarde chaired relief committee meetings in Loughrea, and his son, Lord Dunkellin, voiced the usual caution against taxation for public works[174]. The clergy's advances in social leadership however is seen in the career of Bishop MacEvilly in Galway. In a letter to Clanricarde in 1865 acknowledging a donation of £10 McEvilly explained the problem of poverty in the Galway union. He called for government aid and organised public meetings and voluntary bodies[175]. Archbishop Trench of Tuam was also prominent in relief work and vigorously directed the evangelical movement in Connaught[176]. The effect of party spirit on the administration of relief in Tuam has already been described. The Quaker John Eliot Howard while travelling in Connemara noted that his (Catholic) driver viewed the dilapidated national schools with no regret. "He said they were very much against the Protestants; and for his part he was sure the Protestants had done great good in the country, and but for them the people would all have starved"[177].

Religion, politics and poverty were all related in various ways to the periodic local violence and agrarian unrest which seemed to threaten the very existence of the gentry. The Ribbon outbreak of 1819 and the Terry Alt movement of 1831

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173. Ibid, 6 October 1860 p3, 12 October 1861, p2.

174. Ibid, 7 December 1861, p2, 28 January 1865, p1, 18 March, p1.

175. Bane, pp552-3, 557. MacEvilly got a letter signed by seven Catholic members of Galway Harbour Board, including Pierce Joyce and George Morris, complaining about Father Peter Daly's abusive behaviour (ibid, p238).

176. D'Arcy Sirr, Memoir of Archbishop Trench (Dublin1845) p660; Godkin, Ireland and her churches, p377; D.N.B.

177. J.E. Howard, Island of saints: or Ireland in 1855 (London 1855), p139.

were agrarian in character. The violence during the 1826 Galway election came from the hostile factions behind the candidates. The violence during the 1972 election came from the whipped up hostility of tenantry to gentry and landlords. The violence of the Famine period was largely due to poverty. When law and order broke down, various enmities and tensions manifested themselves. During Repeal disturbances for instance violent sectarian sentiments were expressed. High rents, cess, tithes and other clerical dues were the main grievances behind agrarian unrest. Sir John Burke of Marble Hill told the select committee on grand jury presentments in 1822 that people paid taxes very unequally - "the larger farmers do not pay in proportion to that which they hold". All the poor people then complained to him about the enormous grand jury taxation which affected them[178]. During disturbances in Connaught in 1806-7 hostility was shown to tithes "and peculiarly so to the payment of what they called the dues of the Catholic Clergy"[179]. Archbishop Kelly of Tuam said Catholic clergy had their corn set on fire[180]. Anthony Blake stated that dues paid to Catholic clergy "were complained of as much as, or at least in common with the

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178. Report of the select committee on grand jury presentments, H.C. 1822, vii, p11. For the explanation of the sharp rise in county budgets in the late 18th century see D. Dickson, 'Taxation and disaffection in late eighteenth-century Ireland' in Irish peasants: violence and political unrest 1780-1914 (Ed. S. Clark and J.S. Donnelly) pp50-52.

179. Report of the select committee of Lords on state of Ireland in respect of crime and outrage, H.L. 1839, XX, p1237.

180. People said they could not afford 2/6 for baptisms and a guinea for marriages, on top of tithes of grain, flax, wool, lambs, though not potatoes or hay (Report of the select committee on state of Ireland, H.C. 1825, V111, p258-9).

tithes"[181].

The slump in grain prices after the Napoleonic war resulted in gentry and landlords favouring pasturage as being more profitable as a source of rent. They were reluctant therefore to let con-acre for tillage and charged high rents when they did let it. This made tithes and other charges more intolerable. Contemporary observers agreed that the Ribbon and Terry Alt movement differed in name only. Rev. George Dwyer, Rector of Ardrahan, described the violence of the insurgents against tithes, the Protestant church, and property of every kind. "They denounced landlords and conacres and the whole system of property in the county was attacked"[182]. Richard Rathborne of Ballymore explained the objective of both movements. He had been an extensive landholder in Galway "and mixed a good deal with the peasantry". It would appear that his leaving the county was not unconnected with the objective of the rebels, as he described it. "My own opinion was, that it was to alarm the gentry and well-disposed, and to turn them out of the country if possible; several of my own tenants told me so, and that they would then get the land cheap to themselves"[183]. The Ribbon campaign appeared to have had a sectarian aspect because of the leading role played in its suppression by Archbishop Trench of Tuam, Rev. John O'Rorke

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181. Ibid, p40.

182. Report of the committee of Lords on tithes in Ireland, H.C. 1831-32, XXll, p73. The increase in pasture farming adversely affected the poorest classes. The situation was made worse by the landlords' having to curtail their own economic activity in an effort to keep up their earlier living standards (L.M. Cullen, An economic history of Ireland since 1660, London 1976, pll5).

183. Report of the select committee of Lords on state of Ireland in respect of crime and outrage, H.L. 1839, XX, ppl247-8. Rathborne was at this time a stipendiary magistrate in Wexford.

and other Protestant gentry. But although Catholic gentry had a grievance over tithes they were active in putting down disturbances which threatened all property owners[184]. Rev. John O'Rorke of Moylough, agent on the Digby estate and a rising landowner, was an active magistrate and personally shot at several Ribbonmen. Edward Browne of Castle Moyle, a neighbouring Catholic gentlemen, was shot and killed by Ribbonmen who mistook him for O'Rorke[185]. It was common for police an d military to be billetted in the gentry's houses many of whose occupants had fled to the towns. For instance the chief magistrate Samuel Pendleton and a detachment of police were in occupation at Castlegar, the seat of Sir Ross Mahon[186]. Michael Bermingham of Dalgin made repeated appeals to Dublin Castle for police and military and complained that the locality was being neglected by the government. "The country for miles about was ... alive with Ribbon men a great number of whom were from very distant parts of the county of Roscommon, calling themselves Steelmen", he warned[187]. In the same region Captain Blake of Belmont had the North Mayo Militia residing in his house and succeeded in defending his property against Ribbon men "after having slain some of them on the scene of action"[188]. General Sir John Elley in his

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184. G.C. Lewis, Local disturbances in Ireland (London, 1836, p128) The Catholic clergy also were credited for their condemnation of crime (Leahy, Evidence upon crime in Ireland, London 1839, pp134-4).

185. J. D'Arcy Sirr, Memoir of Archbishop Trench of Tuam (Dublin 1845), p100.

186. Mahons of Castlegar, p27.

187. Letter dated 24 February 1820 (SPO/SOC/2171/76) Bermingham claimed that upwards of 3000 Ribbon men were assembled in the areas around Milltown and Irishtown on the Galway - Mayo border.

188. D'Arcy Sirr, Memoir of Archbishop Trench, p100. Captain Blake's brother, James Blake of Belmont, referred to the "villainous superstition of the lower orders of this county" (letter dated 6

reply to Blake's appeal for assistance wrote that he considered "the neighbourhood of Mr Blake's residence on the confines of Galway and Mayo to be the focus of illegal combinations among the lower orders"[189].

The Ribbon movement had spread from Roscommon into north Galway and by January 1820 many of the gentry there were abandoning their residences and taking refuge in the nearby towns. The movement spread southwards into the county and James Daly of Dunsandle reported large nightly meetings in his area. Arms were taken from several houses and landowners yielded to Ribbon demands regarding the letting of land and the value of tenants' labour in part payment of rent. James Daly told the House of Commons that "upwards of 70 gentlemen's seats had been attacked and plundered, and there were actually not five seats in the whole district which had either not been entered, or defended and saved from the depredators after an obstinate engagement"[190]. The whole county, except Connemara, was placed under the provisions of the Peace Preservation Act. A resolution was passed to have the Insurrection Act revived. This was the more popular measure as it was paid for by central government rather than being a charge on the county. The grand jury criticised the government for its delay and the magistrates in turn were blamed for their failure to act earlier against the insurgents[191]. The government granted a

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December 1821 to General Sir John Elley, SPO/SOC/1271/76).

189. Letter dated 19 December 1821. Elley was governor of Galway in 1826 (D.N.B.).

190. Hansard, ii, 1820, cols 92-3. Daly failed to move that a select committee be appointed to examine the extent of the unrest.

191. G. Broeker, Rural disorder and police reform in Ireland 1812-1836 (London 1970) p114. The Clare gentry were almost unanimous in favour of the Insurrection Act (Report of the select committee on districts of Ireland under Insurrection

military force of 3500 men and gave the qualification of the peace to field officers commanding detachments. Some insurgents were hanged and others transported but so little effect had this on the spirit of rebellion that James Daly had found Ribbon leaders holding meetings at places of execution[192]. Shots were fired at magistrates on these occasions and a particularly violent attack took place against the Persses at Roxborough and Castleboy. The Persses had brought in a colony of Northern Protestants after 1798 and in the adjoining village of Kilchreest Ribbon men made Protestants swear on their knees that they would attend Mass on pain of having their houses burned[193]. The rector's house at Ballymacward was attacked and destroyed and Lord Clonbrock complained to Dublin Castle when police fired into Ahascragh chapel during Mass killing one person. These were obviously sectarian incidents but they appear to have been isolated as was the case of Rev. John Galbraith of Tuam who accused Rev. William Jennings of Killereran of inciting people to rebellion from the altar[194]. The chief magistrate Samuel Pendleton claimed that persons whose station and habits were far above the ordinary were concerned in the management of the Ribbon movement[195]. The presiding judge at the assizes accused the gentry of yielding to the Ribbon threat and the counsel for the crown contrasted their weakness to the vigilance displayed by the Galway gentry in 1798.

The Terry Alts spread into south Galway from Clare in 1831.

Act, H.C.1824, Vlll, p45).

192. Hansard, op. cit. col 93.

193. Lady Gregory (ed.) Mr Gregory's letter-box 1813-1830 (London 1898) pp19-20.

194. Connaught Journal 15 August 1825 p2, 18 August p4.

195. One of the Ribbon men transported for life, Bernard Rochfort, was a middleman on the Lynch of Rathglass estate near Woodlawn.

They were responsible for a series of outrages and attacks on houses, property, livestock and persons of gentry and others in 1831-32 and in a few cases up to 1836. The Connaught Journal claimed that the cause of the Clare trouble was "the oppression and grinding severity of many of their landlords" and "exorbitant demands for con-acre and rack-rents..."[196]. Features of the Terry Alt campaign in Galway included the plunder of arms and property, the imposition of illegal oaths, "and dictating to the landed proprietors and farmers relative to the letting of ground, the employment of servants and labourers, and all other circumstances connected with agricultural pursuits"[197]. Bartholomew Warburton, a police magistrate, told the Wharncliffe committee on crime and outrage that there was a combination against rent and taxes "among the lower orders of the people in the county of Galway"[198]. The baronies of Kiltartan, Dunkellin, Longford, and Leitrim in south Galway were in a state of "dreadful disturbance and disorganisation; no property of any kind has been secure"[199]. Magistrates assembled in Loughrea and agreed with the representation of fellow magistrates who had met in Galway and informed the government that the ordinary powers of

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196. Connaught Journal 4 April 1831 p2; A. Reid, 'The tenant farmer in the social and political life of Clare, 1849-1885'. M.A. thesis, UCG, 1976. pp11-25. The Clare gentry were extensive graziers (Report of the select committee of Lords on state of Ireland in respect of crime and outrage, H.L. 1839, XX, p1038. The Terry Alts took their name from "a harmless shoemaker of Corofin" (H. Blackall , 'The Butlers of county Clare', N. Munster Antiq. Jn. V1, 1952, p120).

197. Connaught Journal, 13 June 1831, p1. These crimes came under the operation of the Whiteboy Act.

198. H.L. 1839, XlX, p729. This committee is usually named after Lord Roden who moved the original motion.

199. Report of the select committee on tithes in Ireland, H.C. 1831-32, XXl, p114.

the law were not sufficient[200]. Lord Clonbrock called for more government action and warned of the threat of anarchy. He had been active against the Ribbon men in 1819. Lord Talbot, the lord lieutenant, while a guest at Clonbrock, described to under-secretary Gregory how Lord Clonbrock had "established a chain of signals by bonfires and patrols at the head of 40 well armed followers every other night at least, and on the least symptom of the approach of these rascals a fire is lighted and 300 or 400 fellows are, and have been, in less than an hour at some specified rendezvous"[201].

Arms were robbed from Burke of Marble Hill in June 1831 and magistrates met in Killimer to consider the shooting of a yeoman farmer named Sheil and an attack on Quansbury the seat of Major William Burke[202]. These Burkes were Catholics, as was Peter Daly of Castle Daly who had his windows broken by "a riotous and tumultuous mob"[203]. Catholic clergy were also victims as was shown by the attack on Boula friary near Portumna[204]. There were incidents of stewards being shot and cattle houghed in the Eyrecourt area[205]. James Daly of Dunsandle was active in defending his locality and rebels were shot by police in Clonfert[206]. Houghing was also going on in the Monivea area and Anthony French of Carrarea who had most

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200. Connaught Journal 25 July 1831, p3.

201. Dillons of Clonbrock, p36.

202. Connaught Journal, 13 June 1831, p2; 30 June p3; 16 June p4 (Rockite visit to Ahascragh).

203. Ibid 9 January 1832, p2.

204. Ibid 30 January 1832 p2.

205. Ibid 4 July 1831, p3; 22 August, p2.

206. Ibid 23 January 1832 p3; 30 January p2.

of his land set in con-acre had his outhouses burned[207]. A group was charged with "aggravated Terry Altism" in the Athenry area and with entering the premises of Mark Browne of Rockfield and taking arms and imposing oaths[208]. General distress and few gentry were problems in the Connemara region[209]. Travellers generally referred to the peaceable state of the region including the huge Martin of Ballinahinch estate[210]. South Connemara however was in a disturbed state. There were incidents of Terry Alts being aided by the coast guard officers[211]. One group, active in Lettermullen, was apprehended by the Spiddal and Tully police under the orders of James Blake of Inverin Castle[212]. "Indeed", observed the Connaught Journal in 1825, "had it not been for the respect in which the lower orders hold Mr James Blake of Tully [Inverin], and for his exertions to preserve the peace, the country would be in an awkward situation..."[213]. The Blakes of Tully however were - or became - unpopular as proselytisers and their evictions during the Famine became the subject of debate in the House of Commons.

It is clear that the gentry took very seriously the threat posed by the Ribbon and Terry Alt movement. One proof of this is the large sums they subscribed towards the apprehension of

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207. French was in debt to Jasper Villiers Fowler of Mecklinburgh Street in Dublin and later sold out in the Incumbered Estates Court (Ibid, 16 January 1832, p3; 16 April p2; M.J. Blake, 'Family of French of Carrorea', Tuam Herald 7 July 1928).

208. Connaught Journal 26 March 1832, p3; 29 March, p2 (assizes report).

209. Discussed in Ibid 6 June 1831 p3, 23 June p3.

210. Tuam Herald 17 November 1849 p2.

211. Connnaught Journal 22 October 1832 p3.

212. Ibid, 13 October 1836 p3.

213. Ibid, 24 November 1825 p3.

the killers of Edward Browne in 1820[214]. It is also obvious that the extensive adoption of the 'harvest home' and other festivities for tenantry was a device of social control used to represent a social harmony more wished for than real. Clonbrock's agent Thomas Bermingham was one of the chief authors of this policy. Bermingham's evidence to the select committee on the state of Ireland in 1831 shows that on the question of social unrest and law and order he saw the solution to the former in good landlordism while the latter he clearly regarded as the responsibility of central government. He advocated a conciliatory approach, the relief of congestion, and the use of stipendiary magistrates, police and military during unrest. He believed these authorities should be controlled and directed by central government rather than by the county magistrates and gentry. He believed that many magistrates would lack the capacity to act in a crisis. "... as for myself I am very ignorant of the duties of a magistrate; I have been but two years one. I am not very conversant with the laws; and a great many of my brother magistrates in Ireland are not fitted from their knowledge and experience for thief-takers half so well as half a dozen of your stipendiary and police magistrates..." "... I am not for depending on the arming of the people, but I am more for the kind good feelings of a neighbourhood meeting and driving away bad characters who are in the country, without arms; but above all, do not arm one class, for as surely as you do, you bring all the mischief upon you, and you will be obliged to have other arms to put down the troubles thus created"[215].

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214. The sums ranged from £20 to £100 (The Dublin Gazette 1 April 1820).

215. Report of the select committee on state of Ireland, H.C. 1831-32, XVl, pp463-470. Barrington also claimed that magistrates did not have much legal knowledge (Personal sketches of his own time, ii, p325). For the wider issues of social control and the use of benevolence and coercion see D. Jones's review of A.P. Donajgrodzki (ed.)

When Lord Ffrench's stock were being attacked Bermingham told the tenantry - "If you let such people come in there I will stop the buildings on the estate, and the drains and improvements, and leave you to the military..." Most of Clonbrock's tenants were sworn during the Ribbon movement and Bermingham claimed that his policy of relieving congestion on parts of the Clonbrock estate restored peace to the area and "has saved many of those poor wretches from being Terry Alts". Bermingham's disapproval of the idea of yeomanry or locally controlled forces was shared by George Warburton the inspector general of police in Connaught. Warburton had family estates in Galway, Kildare, Dublin and Wexford and his police work was praised by the Galway grand jury who expressed the wish that he should reside on his Galway estate[216]. "In support of the civil authority I do not think any parties, locally connected, are advantageous", Warburton claimed, "I apply that observation with respect to the police also; I think men that are strangers always do their duty better than those who have local attachments"[217]. Violence in both town and county was an increasing problem and the Galway town magistrates applied to the lord lieutenant in 1830 for a permanent police force for the town "to counteract and suppress the late many shameful and daring excesses perpetrated in the town, reflecting such discredit upon its heretofore peaceable and orderly character where there has been recently no protection for life or property"[218]. But the gentry, as magistrates, were always concerned to reduce expenditure. They objected,

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Social control in nineteenth-century Britain , in Social History, Vol 4 (1979) p540.

216. Connaught Journal 24 March 1836, p2, 7 April p2; Warburton memoir (Dublin 1848) pp22-3.

217. Report of the select committee on state of Ireland, H.C. 1825, Vlll, p844.

218. Connaught Journal, 15 November 1830 p3.

at a special sessions in 1840, that a grand jury memorial calling for a reduction in the police had been ignored, and claiming that Galway was "most unjustly taxed"[219]. During the Terry Alt troubles gentry and magistrates petitioned against being burdened with the cost of extra police where they were not required and that such expense should be borne by districts which were disturbed[220].

Local disturbances widened the gulf between gentry and tenants[221], although this gulf was artfully concealed by the estate festivities which were a marked feature of the mid-19th century. The gentry themselves were responsible for some violence. The Galway county election of 1826 was disturbed by severe rioting fomented by opposing factions which supported the candidates[222]. During the election frenzy a group of gentry, including the Hon. Denis Bingham and Thomas Lambert of Cregclare fired on a rioting crowd in Galway killing one person. Lambert was tried for murder but was acquitted[223]. In 1837 fighting occurred in Tuam between supporters of James Daly and James Bodkin. Next day John Kirwan of Hillsbrook came into the town, dined with Charles Blake, brewer and Daly supporter, drank too much and ordered the police to fire on the crowd killing two people. A verdict of wilful murder was returned against Kirwan and the police. Kirwan did not give himself up until the following year when the grand jury threw

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219. Ibid, 30 May 1840 p2.

220. The half-barony of Ballymoe in Roscommon was disturbed while the half-barony in Galway was peaceable (Ibid 30 May 1831, p3).

221. Lewis, Local disturbances in Ireland, p298.

222. Report of the select committee on Galway election, H.C. 1826-27, lV, p3; S. Lynam, Humanity Dick: a biography of Richard Martin, M.P. 1754-1834, p265.

223. Connaught Journal, 29 June 1826 editorial, 3 July p3, 31 July p2, 3 August p1.

out the charges against him[224]. Thomas Martin, M.P. of Ballinahinch, a magistrate and deputy lieutenant, was gaoled for two months in 1837 after heading an armed mob against O'Flahertie of Lemonfield over a piece of bog[225]. Such incidents gave weight to the argument for stipendiary magistrates. Although formal courtesy was usually shown to these government agents they were resented by the gentry. A stipendiary magistrate attended Headford petty sessions in 1837 and notified the bench of his orders to be present at all future meetings. Mansergh St. George of Headford Castle complained to the lord lieutenant and described the action as "the first open step that has been taken by his Majesty's government in this part of the country to supersede the authority of the local magistrates". He referred to the peaceful state of the locality and "to send down a paid officer of the crown to take upon himself the duties which we, the more constitutional authorities, are fully competent and willing to perform; and that too without the common and cold courtesy of an official communication, appears in the face of the public to cast a slur on us which I know to be wholly undeserved". St. George's remonstrance was answered by his own dismissal from the bench of county magistrates[226].

The appointment of stipendiary magistrates however did not resolve local conflicts. The year of Repeal - 1843 - was marked by an upsurge of disturbances. At a riot at Turloughmore fair one person was shot by police under orders from Tomkins Brew, a government magistrate. Brew and the

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224. Tuam Herald, 12 August 1837, p2, 31 March 1838, p2.

225. Sir W. Wilde, Irish popular superstitions (ed. 1979) p76; Tuam Herald 30 December 1837, p2, 31 March 1838 p2, 7 April p1, 21 April p1, 19 May p2.

226. Tuam Herald, 13 May 1837 p1. The under-secretary Thomas Drummond pointed out in his reply, 6 May 1837, to the Headford magistrates that paid magistrates were intended to assist, not replace, local magistrates (Clanricarde papers, 26(57)).

police were charged with murder[227]. Brew was an Orangeman, had served as a yeoman in 1798, and was an active opponent of Ribbonmen and Terry Alts in Clare, where he had been an extensive landowner[228]. A number of Catholic magistrates had been dismissed in 1843 for Repeal sympathies and there were sectarian aspects to some disturbances. When O'Connell visited Ahascragh in 1843 Sir James Mahon of Castlegar ordered the police to remove a triumphal arch. During the ensuing disturbance "some of the low Protestants were using very exciting language, such as wishing to be knee deep in Popish blood and that it was as well now to have a riot as at any future time as the contest must come at last"[229]. The administration of justice could at times be questioned in ways which revealed latent prejudice. O'Conor Donelan of Sylane attacked Rev. Charles Seymour rector of Tuam in 1852 for stating that "the Tuam bench was packed with partisan magistrates, to acquit the guilty and convict the innocent"[230]. As the century progressed stipendiary and resident magistrates were seen as symbols of the new order. They were resented by people as well as gentry especially where the ties between people and gentry had been close as with the Martins of Ross. When a new resident magistrate named Brady took over the Martin pew in Oughterard church and refused to give it up he aroused strong local opposition and

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227. Ibid, 19 August 1843, pp2-3.

228. Report of the select committee of Lords on state of Ireland in respect of crime and outrage, H.L. 1839, XX, p1035. Brew said he spoke Irish "more fluently than I do English" (Ibid).

229. Tuam Herald, 29 July 1843 editorial, 12 August p3, 4 November p3. For sectarian outbreaks at this time see S.J. Connolly, Priests and people in pre-Famine Ireland (Dublin 1982) pp12-13.

230. Tuam Herald 6 November 1852 p3.

resentment[231].

The presence of a large resident gentry made them the natural leaders of social, political and public life. Their dominance served to link social life, benevolence, charity and local administration. The resident gentry had to deal with the social problems on their own estates and those arising from the estates of non-gentry absentee landlords and also the less caring members of their own class. The gentry who were active publicly and locally were dominated by the Catholic and liberal Protestant gentry who outnumbered the Protestant conservative gentry. The great liberal interest in the county was led by the first Marquess of Clanricarde and his uncle Sir John Burke of Marble Hill. It was therefore of considerable significance that the highest office in the county, that of Lieutenant and custos rotulorum, was held by Clanricarde from 1831 until his death in 1874, when it passed to the Clonbrock family. Just how influential Clanricarde was can be seen from his action in 1838 when he was appointed ambassador at St Petersburgh and had to nominate a vice-lieutenant for the county in his absense. He ignored fellow Protestant (Tory) peers like Clancarty and Clonbrock and instead nominated his Catholic uncle, Sir John Burke of Marble Hill[232].

Clanricarde was the administrative head of the county at a time during which, on the one hand, the powers of the central government were increasing and, on the other hand, the actual administration was becoming more liberal. The state

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231. M. Collis, Somerville and Ross: a biography (London 1968) p56.

232. Clanricarde was criticised by the Tory press for his action (Galway Advertiser 6 October 1838 p2; Annual Register 1874, pp148-9). In 1832 however he was credited for selecting his deputy lieutenants by property and standing unlike in Roscommon where the lieutenant (Lord Lorton) selected his own partisans (Western Argus 14 January 1832 p3; 22 February 1832 p3).

interfered very little with county affairs in the early 19th century[233]. Increasing lawlessness however made it necessary that the police should be put under direct government control in 1836 and the selection of their officers taken out of the hands of the local magistrates[234]. The advance of Catholic claims was marked by the appointment in 1823 of Anthony Blake as chief remembrancer of the Exchequer[235]. But the clearest indication of the new regime was the termination of William Gregory's long tenure of the under secretaryship in 1831. Gregory, a younger son of the Coole family, had been a determined upholder of Protestant ascendancy[236]. The growing strength of the Catholic position was further marked by the appointment of Thomas Redington of Kilcornan as under secretary in 1846. The tensions at local level were mainly in the area of law enforcement and policing and Clanricarde in his role of lieutenant of the county kept in regular touch with the chief police magistrates. Local intrigues were fuelled by political as well as religious differences and misrepresentations were made to Clanricarde about the problems of law and order[237]. The rich barony of Longford was particularly troubled owing to the lack of resident gentry and prevalence of graziers. There was hostility even between the few resident gentry there, as for example Stratford Eyre of Eyreville and Lawrence of Belview who clashed over the

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233. R. B. McDowell, The Irish administration 1801-1914 (London 1964), pp164-5.

234. J.F. McLennan, Memoir of Thomas Drummond (Edinburgh 1867) p273.

235. D. A. Kerr, Peel, priests and politics (Oxford 1982) p136.

236. R.B. McDowell, Public opinion and government policy in Ireland 1801-1846 (London 1952) p68; G. Ó Tuathaigh, Ireland before the Famine 1798-1848 (Dublin 1972) p183.

237. Leeds District Archives: Clanricarde papers: 25(59): Dunlo to Major Warburton at Eyrecourt Castle, 29 April 1833.

location of a fair[238]. Clanricarde was alarmed at the influence of local intrigues in thwarting government policy. He told Anglesey the lord lieutenant that the removal of a police magistrate from Longford barony was effected by "a party of violent enemies of the administration". "I hate all local petty intrigues", Clanricarde continued, "I have never been a party to them. But I have had the mortification of seeing a great many. In Ireland they are lamentably abundant and effective"[239].

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238. Galway Free Press, 14 June 1834 p2. For the continuing agrarian outrages in Longford barony see Western Argus 30 January 1833 p3.

239. Clanricarde papers: Clanricarde to Anglesey, 19 April 1833.

CHAPTER 8

PATERNALISM UNDER CHALLENGE

Regular tenant festivites were held at about fifty gentry seats or mansions in Galway in the 19th century. Traditional celebrations surrounding births, marriages and homecomings were often elaborate events, such as at Clonbrock in 1828. Mammoth harvest festivals were introduced by the new landowners in the post-Famine period apparently to convey the impression of social harmony between landlord tenant and labourer. The county newspapers colluded in this process by their detailed and deferential reports of such events. All festivities were a central part of a consciously directed and landlord dominated social ritual to support a paternalism which was perceived to be under threat. Before considering these festivities in detail some background factors must be emphasised. In the pre-Famine period the main cause of alarm and insecurity for the gentry had come from the violence of the Ribbon and Terry Alt movements. During these agrarian disturbances, as during the violence of the Trench - Nolan election contest in 1872, Catholic gentry and Protestant gentry were attacked. In many respects the religion of the gentry did not affect their paternal role. At the same time it is true that a largely Catholic tenantry had close bonds with the Catholic gentry especially in the Emancipation period. After the Famine many of the smaller Catholic proprietors did not survive and those of the tenantry who survived were becoming more politicised with the help of the clergy who were beginning to align themselves against the gentry, not with them, as in the Emancipation period. Gentry and landlords therefore saw the necessity for a more deliberate policy of social rituals. Tenant festivities always had both a social and a political purpose, and the latter became more important after the Famine. There was

considerable variation of all kinds within the county and examples of deference and defiance occurred up to the end of the century. This variety and complexity makes generalising from hindsight unwise. A Catholic Nationalist landlord like John Nolan of Ballinderry dined with his tenantry in Land League times. But so did Denis Kelly of Castle Kelly who was a Protestant Tory Orangeman, although he did so in pre-Famine years.

A rich and varied pattern of festivities and customs made many of the gentry's houses into local social pivots. The 'harvest home' banquets for tenantry which were given by the Meldons of Coolarne, Guinness's of Ashford and the Polloks of Lismany were lavish and elaborate affairs. The number of guests at Lismany festivals often reached 2000. Some interesting features emerge from an analysis of these festivals which were described in detail in the county press. Aristocracy and gentry mingled with tenantry. Sons of gentry families played sports with them. Festivals were given by both Catholic and Protestant gentry. It appears however that the tenants regarded the gentry in these ritualised social contexts purely in their capacity as landlords. The festivals were regarded as functions of the 'lord of the soil' whether he belonged to an old or a new family. In mansions where there was a succession of proprietors the festivals were carried on with no break in tradition. The new landowners after the Incumbered Estates Court sales appear to have been anxious to keep these customs and 'harvest home' festivals proliferated during the decades 1850, 1860, and 1870. Some were held without any known local precedent. The custom held out longer with the older gentry, in some cases up to the end of the 19th century. The question arises as to what extent these social events were spontaneous affairs or whether the gaiety was contrived as part of a public relations exercise to foster good will between landlords and tenants. Gentry and landlords had an underlying fear of tenantry ever since the Ribbon and

Terry Alt movements. A cynical, though probably realistic, interpretation would be that these festivities were simply social devices to keep the tenants quiet and induce them to pay their rent on time. In some cases prizes were given out for agricultural proficiency and as a reward for good behaviour. It is noticeable too that agents were the organising powers behind these celebrations. For example Thomas Bermingham and Charles Filgate were active in directing the Clonbrock festivities in 1828.

The festivities were held on the occasion of the coming of age of Robert Dillon, 3rd Lord Clonbrock. A tent was erected in a field over which floated a green flag displaying the family arms. Numerous tables diverged from the tent on which were placed flags bearing the names of the participating villages. The "village piper" accompanied each "clan" of villagers. The huge gathering included the neighbouring gentry and their families. Various popular sports were followed by a dinner of beef, pork, bread and ale, accompanied by the band of the Galway Militia. After dinner "the pipers again commenced operations... and 150 of the higher order of tenants were entertained at the mansion house, and his Lordship had a select party of gentry at dinner". The festival concluded with a hurling match and fireworks display[1]. A feature of social events at Clonbrock was the simultaneous lighting of monster bonfires at other houses of gentry in the area and tenants also took part in celebrations on the remoter parts of

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1. Connaught Journal, 24 April 1828. The field became known as the "Dinner Field" (Dillons of Clonbrock, p 46). Dutton stated that disturbances caused by alcohol resulted in the abandonment of hurling matches "(the Irish crickets), at which some years since it was the custom of ladies and gentlemen of the first rank to attend..." (Dutton, p 518).

the estate[2]. In 1830 Lord Clonbrock married Caroline Spencer, grand-daughter of the 4th Duke of Marlborough. During the celebrations a bonfire was lit on top of the old castle at Clonbrock which destroyed the roof[3]. At celebrations in 1855 the catering for the tenantry was undertaken by Mr Bermingham of Ballinasloe and Johnston the Dublin pyrotechnist was engaged in arranging a huge display of fireworks and balloons[4]. Many gentry and aristocracy were present and dinner for the select guests was provided at Gill's Hotel in Ballinasloe. Music was supplied by a "splendid string band" and long after - dinner speeches were followed by a song from Denis Kelly of Castle Kelly which he composed himself. When Elizabeth Dillon, daughter of the 3rd Lord Clonbrock, married Hugh Ellis - Nanney of Caernarvon in 1875, the North Wales Chronicle described festivities, decorations, bonfires, bell-ringing and fireworks around Caernarvon on the wedding day[5]. When the 4th Lord Clonbrock came of age in 1854 a large party took place at Clonbrock attended by Lords Clanricarde and Dunsandle. The tenants were treated to a large dinner[6]. When Robert Dillon, 5th Lord Clonbrock, came of age in 1890 there was a large gathering at the house. Two of the "chief tenants" presented him with an illuminated address and with a large portrait of his father both of which were permanently hung in Clonbrock. The tenants had a "large luncheon" in a special marquee and toasts were drunk to the Dillons, the tenants, the agent and the Queen. Addresses were read by the masters of five National Schools on the estate. The children had a huge school feast and the day ended with "very good

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2. In addition to the 28,246 acre Galway estate the Clonbrock property at this period also included 1545 acres in Roscommon.

3. Dillons of Clonbrock p 47.

4. Tuam Herald 2 June 1855.

5. Dillons of Clonbrock, pp 70-71.

6. Ibid, p 76.

fireworks"[7].

In 1827 the Connaught Journal reported that the absentee Sir George Shee of Dunmore had issued a thousand invitation tickets for a public dinner "to the best conducted and most moral of his numerous and happy tenantry. We understand that is is the worthy Baronet's intentions to renew such a festive scene once in the summer of every year - thus holding out a sort of reward to virtue and good conduct and creating a strong and firm link between the regards of an amiable landlord and a happy and grateful peasantry. It is by acts such as these that peace and harmony and good will can be preserved in the country... Is it not a delighful duty to put such matters upon record - to avert the eye from the odious and disgusting ravages which the despotic hand of fanaticism is making in one or two places in ... Galway amongst the poor... It is also consolatory to reflect that Ireland does not produce anywhere a body of landed proprietors more attached to the true interests of their poor tenants than the gentry of the county of Galway, nor any who have so generally escaped the poisoned epidemic which the canting traders in bibles and religious tracts have sent abroad throughout the country. We congratulate the county of Galway on this fact"[8]. The very Catholic stance of the Connaught Journal on the eve of Emancipation is interesting, but it should also be borne in mind that proselytising gentry like the Blakeneys, Trenches and Blakes of Renvyle were also given full credit by the press for their paternalism and general benevolence. Shee kept his promise and the next year entertained 350 of his tenants at a public dinner. Tables were laid out in front of the house and each village arrived led by musical bands. After dinner they danced "quadrilles, reels, and country dances alternately, till six o'clock to the great amusement of many of the

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7. Ibid, pp 95, 114.

8. Connaught Journal, 27 August 1827.

neighbouring gentry..."[9].

Home - comings were usually marked by tenant celebrations. When Arthur French St. George and his wife arrived at Tyrone House from Bath in 1827 they were met "by a vast number of his comfortable and attached tenantry who expressed the greatest demonstrations of joy and exultation at the safe return of their benevolent and humane landlord, by taking the horses from his carriage and drawing it to his house; and in the evening several bonfires were lighted up on his estates"[10]. When St George's eldest son was born in 1810 a dinner was given to the tenantry on the lawn where 800 persons were present. "The tables were loaded with plenty of beef and mutton, roast and boiled, and as much porter and ale as they could consume after dinner"[11]. There were celebrations in Headford in 1841 on the arrival of R.J. Mansergh St George[12]. When his son arrived in 1859 from military service in India crowds met him several miles from Headford lead by a band. The majority of the tenants were on horseback. His carriage was drawn to the house and salutes were fired followed by fireworks and bonfires[13]. Similar festivities accompanied the arrival at Castle Hacket in 1839 of the Hon. Edward Lawless and his bride, Miss Kirwan[14]. When Clanricarde visited Galway and Loughrea in 1823 he was not recognised by the people as he had been born in England. But the county and local gentry received him enthusiastically and public dinners were given in

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9. Ibid, 11 August 1828.

10. Ibid, 10 May 1827.

11. Hibernian Journal 1810 quoted in G. St. George Mark, Tyrone House (Quarterly bulletin of the Irish Georgian Society, July - December 1976, p 27-8).

12. Tuam Herald 10 July 1841, p2.

13. Ibid, 12 February 1859.

14. Ibid, 28 September 1839.

his honour[15]. When Clanricarde arrived at Portumna in 1860 "a band of music preceded his carriage with 100 torchlights borne by the young men of the town from the bridge to the Castle, and accompanied by an immense concourse of persons of every age"[16]. This type of event therefore went on both before and after the Famine although the numbers attending in some cases were smaller after the Famine.

The social use of mansion festivities could sometimes be affected by politics and religion. In 1829 a banquet was given for Daniel O'Connell by the Bodkins of Kilclooney. The Connaught Journal reporter described the scene: "I saw the rank and talent and all the young beauty of the neighbourhood, Catholic and Protestant, drawn together in the bond of good feeling and social sympathies to celebrate the name and victories of one of the greatest men that ever rose in any country to vindicate a nation's rights"[17]. The tenants were grouped outside along the avenues. In 1875 the children attending the Irish Church Mission School at Renvyle were entertained by Mrs Blake in the dining room of Renvyle House. After the feast the children assembled in the hall, where they underwent "a searching examination in Scripture...."[18]. A family's politics or religion however did not usually affect their treatment of their tenants. Some of the most sophisticated entertainments were provided by the Trenches of Garbally. They were the leaders of the minority group of Protestant gentry who expressed strong anti - Emancipation views in the 1820's. Others in this group included the Kellys

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15. Connaught Journal 1 December 1823 p 3.

16. Tuam Herald 1 December 1860. This was the father of the last Clanricarde. His popularity is indicated by the local belief that he liked to play cards with the parish priest of Woodford.

17. Connaught Journal 18 June 1829.

18. Tuam Herald 18 September 1875.

of Castle Kelly, Burkes of Ballydugan, and Blakeneys of Abbert. The clearest statement about socialising between landlord and tenant is given in an account of a dinner at Blakeneys of Abbert in 1876 on the coming of age of John Blakeney. The function was provided for a large number of the immediate tenantry and labourers on the estate and many of the gentry of the locality and county were present. During the festivities "all present, gentle and simple, high and humble, intermixed with the most perfect good will and freedom from the restraints and checks of social distinction..."[19]. James Martin of Ross sang and danced jigs at a tenants' ball[20].

"Harvest home" festivals and dinners for tenantry and labourers appear to have been introduced shortly after the Famine. They took place mainly, but not entirely, on the estates of the new proprietors who bought large estates in the Incumbered Estates Court. The biggest were on the estates of owners who were particularly involved in large scale agriculture like the Polloks and Meldons. The "harvest home" was part of the fabric of 18th century rural life in England though it was in decline by the 19th century[21]. Some of its features, such as the reversal of the master and servant roles, as seen at Garbally, were devices used to bolster the flagging morale of social relations in post-Famine Galway. At Garbally in 1849, 400 labourers and tenants were entertained, Lord and Lady Clancarty and Lord Dunlo "attending the tables, and anxiously providing for the requirements of their

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19. Ibid 5 February 1876, p 2; Galway Vindicator 30 October 1847 p2.

20. M. Collis, Somerville and Ross, p 137.

21. D.H. Morgan, Harvesters and harvesting 1840-1900: a study of the rural proletariat (London 1982) p 161; R.W. Malcolmson, 'Leisure', in G.E. Mingay, ed. The Victorian countryside, ii, pp 608, 612.

guests"[22]. At the 1850 'harvest home' dinner the Trench family "intermingled with the people and danced freely with them"[23]. Elizabeth Grant (later to become Elizabeth Smith of Baltiboys in Wicklow) described 'harvest home' festivals in her native Scotland. "We were accustomed to dance with all the company", she wrote, "as if they had been our equals; it was always done. There was no fear of undue assumption on the one side, or low familiarity on the other; a vein of good breeding ran though all ranks influencing the manners and rendering the intercourse of all most particularly agreeable"[24]. In 1852 300 sat down to a dinner in Garbally and Lord and Lady Clancarty waited at table "and were most assiduous in their attentions to have all satisfied and well pleased". Afterwards Lord and Lady Clancarty joined in the dancing[25]. Having described a similar scene in 1853 the Tuam Herald commented: "Were such scenes more common throughout the country, we would hear less of landlord tyranny or a want of confidence in the higher classes"[26]. In 1854 the feast was such that 52 joints smoked on tables at the same time. The guests were attended to by the Clancartys and other gentry. Pipers and fiddlers were present and beer, punch and cordials were served out[27]. The Clancartys' apparent familiarity with their tenants brings to mind Lord Chesterfield's lack of aristocratic prejudices and his observation: "For the quintessence of pride is a condescension that passes as

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22. Tuam Herald 6 January 1849.

23. Western Star 5 January 1850 p3.

24. E. Grant, Memoirs of a Highland lady (ed. London 1950), p 148. Elizabeth Smith's granddaughter married Captain T.R.A. Stannus (father of Ninette de Valois) grand-nephew of Walter Stannus who was joint owner of an estate in Galway.

25. Tuam Herald 17 January 1852.

26. Ibid 3 February 1853.

27. Ibid 14 January 1854.

democratic, and the supreme gesture of aristocracy is the scorn of asserting itself"[28].

Large scale festivals for tenantry, whether pre-Famine or later 'harvest home' dinners, were obviously intended to impress by their scale in addition to creating the impression of harmony or social bonding between landlord and tenant. Pollok's 'harvest-home' festival of 1857 was described by the Tuam Herald as "one of the most extraordinary which has ever occurred in this country"[29]. Pollok employed 1500 persons on the Lismany estate and had a weekly wage bill of £1000. Because of the numbers to be entertained the labourers of each farm were assembled at its own steading, under the management of its steward. A bullock was slaughtered and distributed to the different farms. Mr and Mrs Pollok visited Lismany Farm Buildings. There 300 were assembled in the huge granary loft; 200 at Sycamore Hill, 100 at Redmount Hill; over 100 at Coolcarty, where Watt the steward, "excited the astonishment and admiration of all present by his execution of some of the more difficult Highland dances"; 100 at Fynagh Farm Building; 200 at Kylemore; and 80 artisans and mechanics were entertained at the great workshop at Ohilmore". The entire assembly totalled 2000 persons. Pollok's employees were entertained again at a 'harvest home' supper in 1860. "A magnificent ox and several sheep were slaughtered for the occasion. At Ganaveen, Kylemore, Abbeyland and Ballinakill suppers were given and dancing kept up until morning, when all separated giving loud cheers for their excellent landlord and employer[30]". Despite the Tuam Herald's favourable attitude to the idea of 'harvest home' festivals, it made an attack on Pollok in 1858. A popular Roscommon landlord, Edmond Kelly of

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28. S. Shellabarger, Lord Chesterfield (London, 1935) pp 65-66.

29. Tuam Herald 7 November 1857.

30. Ibid 17 November 1860.

Ballymurry, had sold part of his estate in the Incumbered Estates Court. One lot was in Galway adjacent to the "tenantless" property of Pollok. Kelly, according to the Tuam Herald, "at no small inconvenience and expense, became himself the purchaser of the property in question, in order to save the tenantry from the insatiable grasp of Scotch or English exterminators"[31]. The tenants expressed their relief and joy by wild celebrations. An observer commented to the editor of the Roscommon Messenger that the event proved that "notwithstanding all that has been said in favour of Mr Pollok as being an extensive employer, and all the lengthy articles that have appeared about his harvest dinners etc, that he is, indeed, far from being popular amongst those who have a just knowledge of his dealings"[32].

The buyers of land in the Incumbered Estates Court are usually thought of as profit - hungry speculators. The Meldons of Belmont and Coolarne, however, come across as benevolent and sociable, though progressive. At 'harvest - home' festivals the sons of the family played football with the tenantry. Later members of the family were noted cricketers[33]. The Meldons resided at Belmont, an old Blake house near Tuam and later at Coolarne, near Athenry, where they built a shooting lodge surrounded by extensive stabling. The Meldons were leading agriculturists and they used the annual festivities to provide incentives for their tenantry. The following account was given of the 'harvest home' at Belmont in 1855; "The tenantry, wives, families, and also the numerous labourers employed in the extensive works of improvement carrying on at Belmont assembled and an inspection having been made of the

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31. Ibid 11 December 1858, p 3.

32. Ibid.

33. According to their pedigree (Burke's landed gentry, ed. 1886) the family originated in Fore in Westmeath and were originally O'Muldoons.

several holdings, various prizes including a new grubber were awarded to those of the tenantry who had the best tilled farms, neatest cottages, and most promising crops". Sports then followed, horse and donkey racing, running and leaping. A substantial dinner was then laid down to the 500 - 600 guests, consisting of beef, mutton and rice, with ale and beer. After dark there was dancing on the lighted lawn. Coffee and cakes were served and there was a fireworks display. Several neighbouring gentry and clergy were present at the dinner. The Tuam Herald commented on these festivities: "Considering what pleasures they afford and how firmly and closely they help to knit together the bonds which unite the owner of the soil to his tenantry, it is a matter of suprise that such scenes are not of more regular occurrence in this part of the country"[34].

The 'harvest - home' at Coolarne a decade later in 1866 was on a grander scale. Numerous groups of peasantry of both sexes, dressed in their gayest attire, "arrived at the demesne at 10 a.m. A huge barn was laid out to seat 400 people. Another larger barn was arranged for dancing. Both barns were decorated with branches and flags and the walls were covered with mottoes such as "Welcome to all", "Success to the Coolarne Tenants and Labourers", "Speed the Plough" and "Industry brings its own reward". A large crowd of young men played football, including the five sons of Mr Meldon. Other sports included sledge throwing, bullock and donkey races, hurdle, wheelbarrow and sack - races. Dinner consisted of

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34. Tuam Herald 6 October 1855. The heavy consumption of meat and drink appears to have been the only similarity with the European carnivals. See P. Burke, Popular culture in early modern Europe (London 1978) pp 186-7. For other festivities outside direct gentry control see E. Malcolm, 'Popular recreation in nineteenth - century Ireland', in O. Mac Donagh, W.F. Mandle and P. Travers, Irish culture and nationalism 1750-1950 (London 1983).

beef, mutton and bacon, followed by plum and rice puddings. Large jugs of porter were served out after which all adjourned to the ballroom where the large party was increased by additions from the surrounding countryside. "There jigs, reels and hornpipes were the order of the night, and four pipers and some fiddlers had a busy time of it till near morning. Mr Meldon, his family, and many of the surrounding gentry were present, and the young ladies and gentlemen forgetting for the nonce their fashionable quadrilles and fascinating valse, enjoyed the real Irish jig and graceful hornpipe. Shortly after midnight all present partook of supper, after which dancing was recommenced and continued to a late hour. A brilliant display of fireworks concluded a day, the enjoyment of which has been never surpassed in the county Galway..."[35].

James Lahiff gave a 'harvest - home' on his newly purchased estate near Gort in 1866. He "entertained a large number of his friends and tenantry at a most sumptuous banquet well worthy the best days of old Ireland's hospitality"[36]. "Such reunions of landlord and tenantry", commented the Tuam Herald,"... are of late years, alas! few and far between, and it reflects the greatest credit on Mr Lahiff to be amongst the few who have revived this time honoured custom..." Lahiff may well have wished to emulate the hospitality of the time of the O'Shaughnessy chiefs, but the Tuam Herald obviously wished for a continuation of the landlord dominated and - as yet- tranquil rural hierarchy. Lahiff had been an existing tenant on the Gort estate, not an outside buyer. A central point about festivities was the desire to foster the idea of continuity despite the changes in ownership brought about by the Incumbered Estates Court sales. This was actually facilitated in the Galway context because of the larger

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35. Ibid 20 October 1866.

36. Ibid 10 November 1866.

numbers of small tenantry and relative absense of big farmers as for instance in Tipperary[37]. Sir Arthur Guinness entertained over 500 of his tenantry at Ashford in 1871. The event took place in a temporary building erected on the grounds and decorated for the occasion. When the company had assembled Sir Arthur, accompanied by Viscount Berehaven, Sir George Colthurst, Lord Clonbrock and other gentlemen entered and were seated at the principal table. The guests also included the Countess of Bantry, Lady Olivia Guinness and Lady Olivia White. The dinner was supplied by Messrs B. and W. Murphy of Dublin and the wines were supplied by Deakers of Eden Quay. A toast to the Guinness family was proposed by Father Lavelle[38].

It is clear from these descriptions that elaborate tenant festivals were held without any apparent precedent. This is especially true of the Meldons and Polloks. The Meldons had purchased the Coolarne estate which the Brownes of Castle Macgarrett had sold in the Incumbered Estate Court. This property originally belonged to a cadet branch of the Brownes who declined through debts and family disputes[39]. These Brownes retained a small part of their ancestral estate, including Kilskeagh, where the family seat had been located[40]. Perhaps festivals did take place there in earlier times. The Meldon shooting lodge on the adjoining townland of Coolarne was built in 1865, only one year previous to the first 'harvest - home' festival there. The festivities of Moyne, near Tuam, also illustrate how a succession of owners kept up

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37. Ibid; G. Carpentier, 'Kickham's panorama of rural Ireland , 1840-1870', Tipperary Historical Journal, 1990, p63.

38. Ibid 21 October 1871.

39. Reg. Deeds: book 265, p 170.

40. Leet, p 249. They were known as the Brownes of Coolarne since the 17th century as recorded in their monument in Athenry Abbey.

the ritual of mansion entertainment. When the Brownes were at Moyne they had a tradition of hospitality. When John Browne died in 1825 he was lamented by the poor peasantry "to whom he was a kind and paternal friend". There was "no better landlord or one who gives more employment to the poor than Mr Browne...[41]. When Moyne was sold it was bought by John Stratford Kirwan whose family were lawyers in Dublin and acquired property through marriage. The Moyne tradition was maintained by the Kirwans although there is no evidence that it was done knowingly. When they celebrated a birth in 1861, the peasantry "from the surrounding country, where Lady Kirwan is so justly popular.... poured in to participate in the rejoicings... and ale, beer, porter and other good things, profusely provided by Mr Henry the steward"[42]. The Kirwans were succeeded at Moyne by the Waithman family who were originally from Lancashire. They gave a New Year's Day festival in 1874 which was attended by 2000 people. Festivities began with Tuam Brass Band. "Abundance of good cheer" was provided and administered "with unsparing hand". The extensive barns and outoffices were thrown open for the reception of the company and dancing went on accompanied by violins and bagpipes[43]. It is difficult to explain why three successive owners at Moyne kept up the tradition of tenant festivities whereas Ballyglunin, with a continuity of Blake owners, appears to have lacked such a tradition.

The Moyne tradition of hospitality was fostered by a succession of Browne, Kirwan, and Waithman landlords. Carrantrila had a succession of Burke, Henry and Handcock proprietors and was also noted for hospitality. The Burkes of

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41. Connaught Journal 3 October 1825; Tuam Herald 15 January 1848, 28 December 1867.

42. Tuam Herald 19 October 1861. Kirwan's wife was Lady Victoria Hastings sister to the Marquess of Hastings who committed suicide in 1868.

43. Ibid 3 January 1874.

Carrantrila were dispossessed after the Williamite wars. The estate however was part of the Clanricarde family lands and some time later Clanricarde gave Burke a fee - simple title to the lands for £3900[44]. Cormac Ó Comáin was the author of 'Elegy on the death of John Burke of Carrantrila' and he also wrote verses on the death of Burke's race horses[45]. The riotous three - day party at Carrantrila, as described by Sir William Gregory, appears to have been confined to the gentry[46]. When the tenants gathered to clean Carrantrila lake in 1885 Captain Handcock "hearing of their being at work, had barrels of porter, with a good Irish piper provided... eating drinking amd dancing commenced ... and continued to an advanced hour in the morning...[47]. Kilcornan, like Carrantrila, had previously been a Burke estate which was acquired by the Redingtons. The following is a typical example of a popular landlord's return to his estate. When Thomas Redington arrived back after a continental tour in 1836 he was "received by the whole mass of his comfortable and happy tenantry, accompanied with music and carrying banners". There followed "a splendid rural banquet on the demesne of Kilcornan, on which occasion a large bullock, together with several beeves and a great number of sheep were immolated and consumed; and a proportionable quantity of beer... and whiskey..." The popularity of the Redingtons in illustrated

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44. Reg. Deeds: bk 116 p 20. The case illustrates the importance of Clanricarde to Galway landowners. The local story was that when Burke and his daughter Eileen were bought to London in chains the Queen took a fancy to Eileen and her Irish costume and had the attainder reversed (O. J. Burke, Connaught circuit, pp 68-70).

45. Tuam Herald 13 November 1909, 9 July 1913. An account of Ó Comáin was printed in J.C. Walker, Historical memoirs of the Irish bards (London 1786).

46. Sir W. Gregory, An autobiography, pp 40-3.

47. Tuam Herald 5 September 1885.

by Hugh Clarke's 'Lines to the memory of the late Christopher Redington Esq'.[48].

It is clear therefore that the traditions of 'big - house' festivities were carried on by new proprietors whether as buyers in the Incumbered Estates Court like the Meldons and Polloks or as earlier newcomers through marriage or purchase like the Redingtons and Handcocks. Burkes and Kellys, because of their dominance and ubiquity in former times, appear to have had a particular grip on the popular mind. Reference has been made to Cormac Ó Comáin's elegies on the Burkes of Carrantrila. Even minor Burke families received attention from local scribes. One of these was celebrated by Patrick O'Kelly in his 'Elegy on the death of the late Gerald Burke Esq of Cloonagh'[49]. O'Kelly published The eudoxologist: or an ethicographical survey of the western parts of Ireland in 1812 in which he praised the gentry and aristocracy of Galway Mayo and Roscommon. The work was dedicated to James Daly of Dunsandle and had a long list of gentry subscribers[50]. Kelly also wrote "Lines addressed to Mrs Daly"; "An Ode on the birthday of St George Caulfield Esq, of Dunamon Castle on attaining his twenty - first year"; "Elergy on the death of the Rt. Hon George Canning, Clanricarde's father-in-law'; "An Elegy on the much - lamented death of Matthew Coneys, Esq. of

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48. Connaught Journal 27 June 1825, 5 December 1836.

49. Ibid 22 May 1828. These Burkes were thought to be an offshoot of the Carrantrila family. Douglas Hyde stated that the numerous Kelly families "were destroyed by that generosity and open - handedness that Raftery and the other bards praised so highly" (Songs ascribed to Raftery, Irish University Press 1973, p 159).

50. For O'Kelly see, F.S. Bourke, 'An itinerant poet: Patrick O'Kelly', The Irish Book Lover (March-April 1935) pp 42-45; H. Maher, Galway authors (Galway 1976) p 93.

Ardbear in the County of Galway"[51]. He also inscribed lines to Lord Clonbrock "for the expenditure of a princely fortune in the bosom of his native country, giving energy and extension to trade, beautifying the district of his residence, and fomenting a spirit of industry among the surrounding peasantry"[52]. O'Kelly was probably a brother of the author of The recollections of Skeffington Gibbon, a detailed and intimate account of the gentry of Roscommon and north Galway[53].

The lavish scenes at Garbally, Clonbrock and Carrantrila were the high points in the relationship of landlord and tenant, as presented or portrayed at festivals. This relationship was controlled by the landlord and even evictions did not interfere with it. James Dillon Meldon distributed 100 tons of meal among his Belmont, Coolarne and Turloughmore tenants in the 1850's. He advanced money for the purchase of seed, farm implements and horses. At the same time families were evicted off the Belmont estate[54]. Landlord - tenant festivities proliferated in the 1850's and 1860's due to the activity of the new purchasers in the Incumbered Estates Court and the general rise in rural prosperity. The seats of the older gentry continued to be centres of festivity over family events, whereas the 'harvest home' dinners were usually more prevalent with the major new proprietors. But there were some exceptions, like the Tullys of Rafarn, near Loughrea. Their

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51. Connaught Journal 29 May, 15 June 1828. For popular verses in praise of Lynches, Blakes, Kirwans and St. Georges see Mícheál agus T.Ó Máille, Amhráin chlainne Gaedheal (1925) and E. Costello ed. Amhráin Mhuighe Seóla: traditional folk songs from Galway and Mayo (1923).

52. The eudoxologist, p 94. When George lV was in Ireland in 1821 O'Kelly waited on him at the Phoenix Park and presented him with his work.

53. Bourke, 'An itinerant poet', p 43.

54. Tuam Herald 2 October 1852, 18 January 1862.

property had become reduced over the years although Tully was described as "one of the most extensive stockmasters in the West of Ireland, and a perfect model of the gentleman farmer"[55]. In order for a proprietor to entertain his tenantry it was necessary for him to have a country seat. One of the wealthiest of the new proprietors, Martin Mc Donnell, perhaps for this reason but more probably for reasons of thrift, is not on record as an entertainer of his tenantry even though he had a 12,000 acre estate. Occasionally gentry entertained their tenants, not in their demesnes, but like the Woodlawn tenants, at "the hotel"[56]. Apart from McDonnell other noticeable exceptions include Pallas, Dunsandle and Ballyglunin. The fact that festivities for tenantry were largely ritual events is seen by the ease with which successive proprietors on the same estate, often strangers, adopted the role of benevolent "lord of the soil". An interesting variation occurred on the Gort estate where two failures of male heirs resulted in the estate passing twice to nephews. The Gort family were noted for their generosity and on the "gale day" the tenantry attended at the Bridge House "and whether they had their rents or not, they shared the lavish hospitality provided for them; and the Baron was there, like a chieftain amongst his retainers, to see that all enjoyed the good cheer. And so the Castle of Gort and its ruined chief were soon forgotten; and the memory of the old baronets of Gort passed away more quickly than might have been expected"[57]. The estate was sold in the Incumbered Estates Court by John Prendergast Vereker 3rd Viscount Gort and the demesne was later bought by Lord Gough. The tradition of

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55. Ibid, 13 December 1856. This is one of the few references to "Gentlemen - farmers" in Galway.

56. Ibid 5 March 1864.

57. J. Fahey Kilmacduagh, p 364, quoting men "still living". The Bridge House was the family residence prior to the building of Lough Cutra Castle which commenced in 1811.

tenant entertainment then appears to have passed to the Lahiff family who bought much of the Gort estate and were merchants in the town[58].

At the other end of the county in Connemara Lord Campbell entertained his tenantry on the Moycullen and West Barna lands which previously belonged to Andrew Henry Lynch. Campbell, author of Lives of the lord chancellors of England, admitted that it was with reluctance that he became an Irish proprietor. Although he was a total stranger he was accepted by his tenantry and courted their popularity by observing the traditional rituals. He gave dinners to his Moycullen tenantry in the local school[59]. His Barna tenants greeted him with bonfires and were entertained likewise at the local school[60]. Further evidence of continuity of tradition surviving a change of landlord comes from the fact that festivities at Hearnesbrook under the Kirkaldys were carried on under a new occupant. This was William Bermingham Trotter (late Otway - Ruthven). Trotter's grandfather had sold in the Incumbered Estates Court his portion of the scattered Bermingham estate which he had acquired on his marriage to Lady Mary St. Lawrence grand daughter of the last Lord Athenry. Trotter appears to have been renting Hearnesbrook, a different estate, as it was still Kirkaldy property. The village of Killimor and the neighbouring houses were illuminated on Trotter's arrival, and the entrance gates to Hearnesbrook were festooned with evergreens. There followed a torchlight procession after which Trotter "having thanked the vast concourse for their enthusiastic display of respect and affection for him and his family, ordered a liberal supply of

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58. They bought the adjacent house and estate of Cloon from the Eyres (Ibid p355).

59. Tuam Herald 27 August 1853.

60. Galway Express 20 August 1853, 27 August 1853, 3 September 1853.

refreshments, after which they all returned to the gates, where an immense bonfire was blazing, and kept up the merry dance to Monahan's band till an early hour next morning"[61]. The estate of the Butlers of Cregg, near Gort, was bought by Robert Lattey who was a London solicitor. When he arrived at Cregg House Lattey gave "a series of feasts and entertainments to his tenantry and nobility of the neighbourhood[62].

Many of the older gentry families had estates in different baronies of the county and in adjoining counties. They were therefore of necessity absentee landlords of some areas of their property. This could sometimes result in variations in the pattern of tenant festivities. It was seen in the case of Clonbrock that such events could be spread over more than one location. The management of festivities at Clonbrock, and probably on most large estates, was undertaken by the agent. The direction of tenant gatherings on the FitzGerald - Kenney estate was also done by the agent, who was merely a substantial tenant. The Kenneys were an old Wexford family who had married into the Jacobite O'Kellys of Kilclogher Castle near Monivea. Most of their property was in this locality and they had erected a modern mansion there[63]. They also owned one townland twenty miles northward which originally formed part of the Burke of Glinsk estate[64]. It seems strange that it was there, rather than at Kilclogher, that festivities were held in 1872 on the occasion of the birth of an heir to the Kenney family. "Two very large bonfires blazed at the crossroads, it being the central part

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61. Tuam Herald 26 November 1864. John Bernard Trotter was a member of this family.

62. Ibid 12 April 1856.

63. Burke's visitation of seats and arms., ii, pp162-3.

64. The under secretary, Thomas Henry Burke, belonged to this branch of the family which took its name from Keelogues, the name of the townland.

of this property, around which could be seen young and old enjoying themselves... the service of two musicians having been secured. After refreshments of every description were supplied in abundance from Mr Morgan the popular local agent of this property, he proposed the health of their youthful heir - apparent..."[65]. Mrs FitzGerald Kenney was a Lynch of Clogher in Mayo and there were simultaneous celebrations around Clogher House.

Celebrations may not have been held at Kilclogher because of its close proximity to other gentry seats in the area, such as Ryehill, Newtown, Abbert and Monivea. This area had more old Catholic proprietors than East Galway, and their houses were centres of traditional patterns of landlord - tenant relationship. Festivities were held at Ryehill under the Redington - Roches and at Cooloo, where O'Kellys had inherited from Brownes. Kellys had also replaced Brownes at Newtown and as late as 1900, on the marriage of Miss Ida Kelly, tenants are on record drawing the carriage by hand to the door of the mansion[66]. Catholic gentry had been transplanted to North Galway in the 17th century and their historical traumas were sometimes referred to during festivities. For instance the Chevers family had twice almost lost their entire property through their devotion to their faith and to the Stuart monarchs. At the Chevers's house, Killyan, it was customary, as at Newtown, for the carriage to be drawn by hand to the door on special occasions. When the head of the family returned from a continental honeymoon in 1894 with his bride, a tenant's ball was given at which 700 persons were present. The tenantry read an address which referred to the tyrannical sword of Cromwell: "Monkstown Castle... with its vast estates in the counties of Dublin, Meath, Westmeath, Kildare, Wexford

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65. Tuam Herald 7 December 1872.

66. Photographs held by Miss Kelly's grand - nephew, Jaques de Montroy of Paris.

and Wicklow, the possessions of your illustrious kinsman, Edward Chevers, Baron of Bannow and Viscount Mount Leinster, were greedily grasped by the Cromwellian general (Ludlow) and the Chevers's with their retainers were forced across the Shannon..."[67].

On the day in 1863 on which Robert Percy French was to be married in Paris the tenantry gathered at Monivea and other parts of the estate for entertainment[68]. Monivea was a Protestant household and this was reflected in some of the social events there. At a school fete in 1870 over 100 school children were entertained on the estate. "After the Doxology had been given by the Rev. Mr Greer (incumbent of Monivea) and sung most impressively by all present, hurdle races, sack races, besides 'Aunt Sally' and numerous other amusements were the order of the day. Prizes were presented to the winners of each race by John E. Berwick the esteemed and popular agent over the Monivea estate"[69]. Tenant celebrations were also customary at mansions in the environs of Galway such as Furbo, Ardfry, Lenaboy, Menlo and Spiddal. For instance at the marriage of George Morris in 1875 a huge bonfire was lit in the town of Spiddal around which the people danced all night to the music of "Kelly the Piper". There were "open houses" by the principal shopkeepers to give refreshments to all who had assembled, and several barrels of "Guinness's best" were laid beside the bonfire[70]. In 1865 Captain O'Hara of Lenaboy invited his tenantry to dinner in order to introduce them to his new bride. The guests comprised about 100 prosperous farmers and the wines were "abundant and excellent"[71].

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67. Tuam Herald 10 March 1894.

68. Ibid 2 May 1863.

69. Galway Vindicator 18 June 1870.

70. Ibid 7 April 1875.

71. Ibid, 14 January 1865.

There are several references to the gentry speaking Irish. But instances of the use of Irish as a link between gentry and peasantry were, according to Henry Blake of Renvyle, isolated and not significant. The language, he wrote, "is neither generally studied, nor patronized by the upper ranks; in fact very few of them understand it at all; and it then becomes a barrier of separation between the higher and lower orders". This however had certain disadvantages. "I never cease to regret our ignorance of the Irish language", Blake confessed. "It completely shuts us out from that communication with the lower orders, so interesting in itself, and without which no accurate judgement is to be formed of the character of a nation"[72]. At a meeting in Dunmore in 1828 James Blake of Belmont "detailed the wrongs of Ireland first in English, and afterwards in our native tongue..." These Blakes also had an interest in music and John Blake of Belmont, who died in 1866, was described as "the best performer on the Irish pipes in the country"[73]. The Galway Vindicator considered that Spiddal courthouse was the only one in Ireland "in which the presiding magistrate, Mr George Morris examines the litigants and gives his decisions in the old Irish language". James Morris of Ballinaboy, Clifden, was also a fluent Irish speaker[74]. An example of an agent using Irish was William Burke, of the Protestant Ballydugan family. He was agent on the Ashford estate (his mother was a Guinness) and managed large

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72. H. Blake, Letters from the Irish Highlands of Connemara (London 1825), pp 94, 149.

73. Connaught Journal 3 November 1828; Tuam Herald 24 March 1866. East Galway was noted for its piping tradition.

74. Galway Vindicator 7 April 1875; Tuam Herald, 8 August 1914 p4. Sir George Morris, M.P. for Galway 1867-68 and 1874-80, was younger brother of the 1st Lord Killanin. His niece, Maud Wynne, described how the family went to the village chapel "and sat through interminably long sermons in Irish" (M. Wynne, An Irishman and his family: Lord Morris and Killanin, p13).

properties in Mayo, Galway, and elsewhere. "Being able to speak the Irish language from his boyhood", according to his obituary, "he was brought so much closer in touch with the peasantry by whom he was sincerely beloved..."[75]. Denis Kelly of Castle Kelly was the most distinguished Irish scholar among the gentry and the Blakes of Furbo were patrons of local Irish writers in the 18th century[76].

Cases of gentry attempting to settle Protestant tenants on their estates include the Persses of Roxborough, St. Georges of Headford and Martins of Ballinahinch. Colonel Martin introduced a body of Protestants in the late 18th century who settled chiefly at Clifden and Ballinakill. However their minister became a smuggler and they became Catholics[77]. "Humanity Dick" settled over 1000 Catholic refugee families from the North on his vast estate. He gave to each an allotment of land rent free for some years, after which they

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75. Galway Express 18 July 1908.

76. The poet Seán Ó Catháin wrote the manuscript Egerton 184 in Furbo in 1726 for Francis Blake (M. Ní Mhuiríosa, Traidisiún liteartha na nGael, Baile Átha Cliath 1979, pp 228-9.

77. H. McManus, Sketches of the Irish Highlands: descriptive social and religious: with special reference to Irish Missions in West Connaught since 1840. London 1863, p67. McManus was first Irish missionary of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. For the wider background see L.M. Cullen, 'The social and cultural modernisation of rural Ireland 1600-1900' in L.M. Cullen and Furet, F. (eds.) Ireland and France 17th-20th centuries: towards a comparative study of rural history (Paris 1980). These Protestants included families of Coneys, Corbet, Baker, Powell, Dissel, Disney, and Cottenham. McManus does not specify which Martin he means by "Colonel Martin". Robert Martin, Humanity Dick's father, did conform to hold his estates, but he was nevertheless the active head of the Roman Catholic party in West Connaught and a staunch Jacobite.

were to pay a small annual rent[78]. Catholic refugees were also settled on the Burke of Marble Hill estate[79]. Apart from the Trench family, the most active gentry in the proselytising movement were the D'Arcys of Clifden, Thomsons of Salruck, Persses of Roxborough and Taylors of Castle Taylor[80]. It is significant that two of these had extensive estates in Connemara and, apart from this area, the larger towns were the main scenes of proselytising activity. The gentry as a whole were not much involved on one side or the other.

There was a close link between proselytism and poverty and bitter controversy arose over what the Freeman's Journal described as "the monstrous system of seeking to traffic upon the souls of a people writhing in the agonies of famine". A staunch member of the Catholic gentry, Michael J. Browne of Moyne, attacked proselytism in 1850[81]. In 1853 Headford petty sessions charged a "jumper" with wilful perjury against a poor Catholic boy. The Freeman's Journal praised the chairman of the jury, George Staunton Lynch of Clydagh. The Tuam Herald also commended Lynch and O'Connor Donelan of Sylane but took the opportunity to castigate the gentry as a group for being

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78. Callwell, Old Irish life, p184.

79. For these Ulster migrants to the Woodford area in 1798 see M. Ó Conaill, Cineál Feichín agus Síol Anmachadha (Atha Cliath 1932) p71. P. Tohall, 'The Diamond Fight and the resultant expulsions', Seanchas Ardmhaca (1958); P. Hogan, 'The migration of Ulster Catholics to Connaught 1795-96', Ibid, (1979).

80. A. Dallas, The story of the Irish church missions (London 1867) pp 125-6, 131-142. D'Arcy went to Dublin to confer with Count Streletzki a Polish nobleman, under whose management the Protestant schools were placed (ibid, p139). For the Persses and Taylors see Lady Gregory, Seventy years, p16; Fahey, Kilmacduagh, pp 397, 429; M. Fahy, Education in the diocese of Kilmacduagh in the nineteenth century (1972) pp 72-73.

81. Tuam Herald, 20 July 1850.

too lax with "a few arch - proselytising Protestants both lay and clerical in this county. There has been hitherto too much of sickly sentimentalism and squeamishness about our Catholic gentry in dealing with this mercenary gang. With few exceptions our respectable gentry seem to think that it would be quite unfashionable to protect their poorer brethern from insult by hunting away this nuisance from our streets and highways"[82]. Anthony Blake thought that Galway was freer from religious dissentions than most Irish counties and Dutton agreed that there was religious harmony in the county[83].

Dutton in his Survey of Galway, said that the people were "shamefully neglected by the landed proprietors"[84]. This view must however be considerably modified. The case of Denis Kelly of Castle Kelly gives support to a different argument and is a typical example of paternalism. Local folklore portrayed Kelly as zealous in promoting his Protestant faith. His father was a clergyman and the Church Mission societies were seen as a source of income by impoverished landlords. People saw Kelly in various poses, that of Gaelic scholar, womaniser, builder and tyrant. Kelly told the Devon Commission that when he had inherited his 10,000 acre estate it was mostly covered with a pauper population. Agriculture was then improved, rundale strips were amalgamated and green crops introduced. Paupers were put on a few acres which he set aside for them. Kelly carefully fixed his rents by valuation which he personally supervised. Small tenants who needed money to pay their rent could avail themselves of the local office of the Reproductive Loan Fund of which he was a trustee. All over the county the demesnes of resident gentry

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82. Ibid, 10 December 1853, editorial.

83. Report of committee of Lords on the state of Ireland, H.C., 1825, lX, p111; Dutton, pp 227-8.

84. p 516. Dutton rather suffered from a feeling of neglect.

were bordered by lands controlled by non-gentry landlords. Kelly described how in a local district in which several properties were under the courts the tenantry had rows about drainage and mearings and had nobody to go to for settlement. They "fight it out with the slane, an instrument they cut turf with, and then they come before the magistrates with their heads broken"[85]. It is clear from Kelly's statements that he saw himself as a benevolent landlord. Thomas Bermingham outlined his philosophy of benevolent and enlightened landlordism in his Letter addressed to Lord John Russell on duties of a resident landlord in Ireland[86]. He suggested a nine - fold division of population on an estate depending on their condition and described how the humane landlord should help each category. This process succeeded in Galway where he was enabled by the landlord to enforce it for sixteen years while administering the Clonbrock estate. The process also succeeded on other estates and, Bermingham argued, produced tranquillity, respect for the law and attachment to the landlord. He referred to his long experience as agent to noblemen and gentlemen throughout Ireland and claimed that nine - tenths of crimes were caused by bad management of estates[87].

Gentry and aristocracy in some cases adopted a marked paternalistic role as landlords. Lord Clancarty's tenantry used him as their banker[88]. John Kirwan of Hillsbrook had to put notices in the press forbidding tenants seeking credit

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85. Devon comm. evidence, pt ii, p 342.

86. 3rd edition, London, 1846.

87. Bermingham made confusing statements about class harmony in Galway(Report of the select committee on state of Ireland, H.C., 1831-32, XVl, p462).

88. Western Star 30 April 1859, p3. John Nolan of Ballinderry claimed that priests were used as bankers.

from shopkeepers by using his name[89]. Major Burke of Tuam spent two weeks in London in an effort to change a transportation order against local people convicted by a perjured witness[90]. There is also evidence of traditional obligations being performed by tenants. In the 18th century this practice occurred around Galway. Edward Eyre and Mark Lynch insisted on specified periods of annual service from tenants. Eyre compelled his tenants to grind all their corn in his mill. Lynch of Barna got both rent and service from his tenants, the service consisting of help with gardens and crops[91]. Archdeacon Butson's tenants gathered in large numbers at his residence and reaped and stooked his wheat and oats. Butson entertained them hospitably and some "good speeches were made, highly complimentary to the Archdeacon as a landlord"[92]. Michael Browne of Moyne had his turf brought home by several hundred labourers with carts and horse[93]. This custom also prevailed on the Clonbrock, Masonbrook, and Dunsandle estates[94]. In 1844 a case was brought against the Blakes of Tully near Spiddal, for compelling tenants to give free labour including the reclamation of 80 acres of waste land. This case, according to the Blake's counsel, was unique in the history of litigation. The case was dismissed mainly on the grounds that an arrear of almost £2000 was due by the tenants[95]. Relevant factors in this particular case were the poverty of the locality and the unpopularity of the Blakes of Tully. The violence surrounding the Carraroe ejectments in

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89. Tuam Herald 13 June 1840 p3.

90. Connaught Journal 31 March 1836 p2.

91. R. Hughes, 'Galway Town 1692-1750', pp117, 126.

92. Tuam Herald 29 September 1860.

93. Ibid 6 July 1850.

94. Otway's Tour in Connaught (1839) quoted in Dillons of Clonbrock, p15.

95. Tuam Herald 26 October 1844.

1880 was inflamed by 'estate rules' being enforced by an unpopular agent. The 4000 acres in the Carraroe townlands were owned, in almost equal parts, by the Kirwans of Blindwell and the Berridges of Ballinahinch. The Carraroe tenants had to perform a certain number of days free 'duty work' during the year. In addition some twenty families were fined substantially by Robinson, the agent of both landlords, for marriages taking place without his permission having been obtained[96].

There was considerable variation in the role of the gentry as landlords and in their attitude to tenants. Sharp contrasts in behaviour were often found in neighbouring estates. Various factors had an important influence in particular situations. These included agricultural backwardness, bad agents acting for minors or absentees, and the personality of individual landlords. These factors applied particularly to the Connemara region. This region also showed contrasts in landlord behaviour. The Martins of Ross, Martins of Ballinahinch and Morris's of Spiddal showed benevolence and kindness to their tenants. The St. Georges of Tyrone, Blakes of Tully and Berridges were less popular. The Blakes of Tower Hill who became the new landlords of the Bunowen estate contradict the belief that buyers of land in the Incumbered Estates Court were harsh and grasping landlords. Valentine O'Connor Blake's tenants wrote a praising letter to the Irish Times telling how he had reduced rents by 25% on his Bunowen estate when he bought the property in the Incumbered Estates Court[97]. He won praise later by dividing a large grazing farm among poor tenants on his Claregalway estate[98]. Thomas Martin of Ballinahinch died of famine fever after visiting tenants in

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96. M. Davitt, The fall of feudalism in Ireland (1904) p216. A fine ranged from £5 to £10.

97. Tuam Herald 7 November 1868.

98. Ibid 4 February 1888.

the workhouse. The Freeman's Journal reported that there had been no outrage on the estate for half a century[99]. Tenants whose rent was in arrear on the Martin of Ross estate were given time to pay or were allowed to supply turf in its place. Evictions were unknown. Even before the famine Martin had incurred debts. "All were known to the Master and he was understood by them", wrote Violet Martin[100]. The Ross tenantry had medical care provided for them by the Martin ladies who were sought even in the middle of the night and Lady Gregory described her own early visits of charity to the poor tenantry on the Roxborough estate[101]. The tenantry on the Spiddal estate regarded Michael Morris "to be quite omnipotent and came with every possible and impossible demand for his help". To their appeals for leniency in cases of imprisonment or fines for making poteen Judge Morris retorted humourously: "Here I am spending my time in Dublin sending blackguards into prison and do you think I come down here to let them out"?[102] When times became difficult chief justice Morris and his brother George Morris, M.P. reduced rents and distributed tons of seed potatoes to poorer tenants[103].

The severity of the Connemara evictions of the Blakes of Tully

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99. S. Lynam, Humanity Dick: a biography of Richard Martin, M.P. 1754-1834, p282; Tuam Herald 17 November 1849 p2. Martins last words were, 'My God, what will become of my people'. A.M. Sullivan confused Martin with his father (New Ireland, London 1877, i, pp 133-4).

100. M. Collins, Somerville and Ross, p18.

101. Callwell, Old Irish life, pp 302-4; Lady Gregory, Seventy years, pp 16, 27. For the benevolent record of the Blakes of Renvyle and D'Arcys of Clifden see Portrait of a parish: Ballynakill Connemara (1985) p20; K. Villiers - Tuthill, History of Clifden 1810-1860 (1981) p52.

102. M. Wynne, An Irishman and his family: Lord Morris and Killanin, p50.

103. Galway Express 14 February 1880.

and St Georges of Tyrone caused the matter to be raised in the House of Commons[104]. James Blake of Tully was agent for his nephew Patrick Blake whose Gortnamona estate in east Galway, in addition to the Tully estate, made him landlord of over 17,000 acres. The Tully evictions appear to have been illegal as notices had not been served. Witnesses stated in court that members of the Blake family had personally carried out evictions in harsh circumstances and while under the influence of alcohol[105]. The St George case related to the 8000 acre Lettermore and Garomna estate which was part of the 32,000 acres put up for sale in the Incumbered Estates Court by Christopher St. George. The case arose from the report of a poor law commissioner on ejectments on St George's Connemara estate. St. George, who was M.P. for Galway, ably defended himself in the House of Commons. He said that the 600 households on the property had been under two middlemen, that large arrears of rent had accumulated and that squatters had been allowed to crowd into the lands. He had, he claimed, borrowed £6000 under the Land Improvement Enactment and alotted £1500 to Lettermore and £1000 to all parts of Connemara. "I am not receiving my rents and have paid an immense poor rate... I feel indignant at being accounted a bad landlord. I scorn any charge of dereliction as to the duties of my position in society"[106]. In 1848 a tenant took St George to court on a charge of false imprisonment and illegally taking his crops. The tenant was awarded almost

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104. Hansard 1847-48, XCVll, pp 862, 1006-1014; Papers relating to the relief of distress and state of the unions in Ireland, H.C. 1847, LV, p 465.

105. Tuam Herald 8 April 1848; W.F. Wakeman, A week in the West of Ireland (Dublin 1852) p39.

106. St George's full statement, 'The case of Mr St George' was printed in the Commons debate of 4 April 1848. See also G. St George Mark, Tyrone House (Quarterly bulletin of the Irish Georgian Society, July - December 1976) pp 135-42.

£800 damages[107]. In 1857 St George had a violent turbary dispute with John Kilkelly of Mossfort, near Tuam. This was another division of the estate which St George sold in the Incumbered Estates Court. Kilkelly had been a gentleman tenant under St George but had recently become the owner of his estate. Although he had always exercised his turbary rights on the property by virtue of his lease, St George now contested this right on the grounds that Kilkelly's deed of purchase was silent on the point. St George in particular objected to Kilkelly allowing his tenants to avail of the turbary right and he appeared at the head of 40 retainers and personally tumbled piles of turf into the drains. The court refused to bring in a verdict on the case[108].

Christopher St. George was a good example of a landlord with a large scattered estate, much of it poor. Relations with tenants were adversely affected by his hot temper. Given the power and dominance of the gentry the question of a gentleman's temperament was not unimportant. Walter Blake of Ballyglunin had succeeded his uncle Martin J. Blake, M.P. in 1861. When the local clergy arrived to present a memorial requesting a reduction in rent Blake replied that they should "mind their own business and not interfere between himself and his tenants, and that they were encouraging robbery and disorder". Canon Burke retorted that his tenants were "heavily rack-rented and perhaps the worst clad and worst fed in all Ireland". Blake refused any abatement, lost his temper, and shouted both the clergy and trespassing tenantry

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107. Tuam Herald 1 July 1848. The paper attacked St George over his treatment of the tenant and claimed he had held a double - barrelled pistol to his head on the way to Galway goal.

108. Ibid 18 July 1857. St. George had earlier incurred unpopularity in this part of his estate through the actions of a bailiff named Roche (Ibid 18 May 1850).

off the demesne[109]. Blake later raised the rent from 10s to £1 and the Tuam Herald condemned him as "a bloated aristocrat wallowing in wealth which he will never spend". Eviction decrees were issued but those to be evicted were reinstated as caretakers due to the intervention of the parish priest[110]. Bad relations with clergy was also a problem with St George of Headford Castle. His father Stepney St George had died of fever "caught in the laborious execution of his duties as chairman of the Headford relief committee"[111]. The son, Richard St. George, had a long conflict with the parish priest, Rev. Peter Conway over his refusal for a church site in Headford[112]. Conway got the site eventually, due to St George's wife who was a London actress and lapsed Catholic. Fr Conway stated at a tenant - right meeting in 1850 that 500 houses had been demolished in his parish and more than 1500 deaths had been caused by starvation. Yet he described St George as "a good landlord and humane gentleman", and laid the blame on agents and drivers[113]. St George served eviction notice on 23 families in 1852. When however he got anonymous threatening letters in 1870 the tenants supported him[114]. In 1861 Fr Conway listed Catholic tenants who were turned out of their farms which were then given to Protestants. He blamed the agent, Robert Botteril, who "represents and expresses the condensed animosity of the handful of Puritans in Headford"[115]. The unreasonable conduct of the agent on the

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109. Ibid, 12 December 1855.

110. Ibid 23 January 1886.

111. Ibid 22 May 1847.

112. The matter was raised in parliament by Patrick McMahon M.P. for Wexford.

113. Tuam Herald 15 June 1850.

114. Ibid 10 Jan 1852; Galway Express 5 February 1870.

115. Tuam Herald 7 December 1861, 15 December 1917, 22 June 1918.

Bodkin of Annagh estate resulted in the Plan of Campaign being adopted there by some tenants[116]. Good agents on the other hand fostered harmonious relations with tenantry even where the landlord was absentee. Examples are Sir George Shee and Sir George Staunton of Clydagh. Sir George Shee only visited his 11,000 acre Dunmore estate occasionally. He was however fortunate in having excellent agents in Alexander Clendining and his successor William Downes Griffith. Even though Shee was an absentee he was always praised by the county press. He was, according to the Tuam Herald "beloved and respected as a kind considerate and benevolent landlord"[117].

During the Famine rents were reduced on the estates of Browne of Moyne, Burke of Glinsk, Lord Gort and Gregory of Coole. These were all sellers in the Incumbered Estates Court. Rent was also reduced on many other estates. St George of Headford reduced rents by 25% because the tenants "drove away out of the parish the harpies who had beset the chapel doors for the purpose of extorting 'tribute' for the maintenance of the Great Agitator"[118]. Gentry, both Catholic and Protestant, noted for particular kindness and benevolence to their tenants included Gregory of Coole, Jameson of Windfield, Kelly of Newtown[119], Lynch of Petersburgh[120], Redington of Kilcornan,

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116. Ibid 10 March 1888. The agent was James Browne of Carnacregg who was a member of the Browne of Ardskea family.

117. Ibid, 24 October 1857; J. Greaney, Dunmore (1984) p75. For Staunton see J. Barrow, A tour round Ireland (London 1836) p253.

118. Barrow, A tour round Ireland, p 251.

119. Charles Kelly gave annually £100 to tenants to purchase seed (Tuam Herald 23 April 1853).

120. The traditional benevolence of his family was praised by Father Lavelle, who was not noted for love of landlords (Ibid 12 January 1861).

Redington - Roche of Ryehill[121], Kirwan of Gardenfield and Chevers of Killyan. Gregory was responsible for the amendment to the Poor Law Extension Act of 1847 by which the owner of more than a quarter of an acre of land should not be entitled to poor-law assistance[122]. He did not however raise his rents despite a desperate need for money[123]. The Dillons of Clonbrock were particularly noted as good landlords with a caring attitude to tenantry. In 1812, a bad year for the poor, Lord Clonbrock sold all his pigs and turned out his horses to grass to save their food for the poor[124]. In 1846 the next Lord Clonbrock had his deer killed and distributed as food. He also sold his horses and hounds. There was local praise for Mrs Daly of Raford who bought all wool and flax in the area and fed the destitute with rice, meal and American biscuit[125]. The Ardfry estate was much poorer than estates like Clonbrock a fact which may have induced Lord Wallscourt to adopt radical political and social ideas. It was reported in 1847 that he had joined the Young Ireland Confederation and he later announced to his tenants his intention of establishing 'tenant right' as it existed on the estates of Lord Londonderry, Sharman Crawford and other Northern proprietors[126].

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121. Redington -Roche treated his tenants to a 50% rent abatement, guano fertiliser at half price, and free flax - seed (Ibid 14 May 1864).

122. An autobiography, p135.

123. B. Jenkins, Sir William Gregory of Coole: a biography (1986) p278.

124. Dutton, p351. ".. in every respect his lordship is an excellent landlord ... much beloved by his tenants and very universally esteemed" (Ibid).

125. Dillons of Clonbrock, p50; Western Star 24 December 1847.

126. Tuam Herald 28 August, 11 December 1847. Lord Wallscourt died in 1849.

Eviction was prevalent mainly on estates under Chancery, financial institutions or managed by the agents of absentee proprietors. Evictions were not usual on the estates of the resident gentry though there were some exceptions among the buyers of estate in the Incumbered Estates Court such as Pollok of Lismany, Berridge of Ballinahinch and Lewin of Castlegrove. In cases where gentry did evict the question arises as to whether they did so to display their power, implement more profitable agricultural schemes, or from other less rational motives. Wilfred Scawen Blunt observed what had been a benevolently run Blake estate but "for some reason of pique his daughter at one swoop swept them all away, eighty families, turning them out and burning down the houses, to let the whole as a cattle run"[127]. Some evictions by new progressive proprietors resulted from their attempt to reorganise tenant practices. For example Berridge evicted rundale tenants but then reinstated them as caretakers until they signed the agreement existing on the estate[128]. Tenants on this estate had been treated more harshly by the Law Life Assurance Company from whom Berridge had bought the property[129]. Another wealthy but absentee proprietor, Thomas Bermingham Sewell, had 56 houses levelled on his Creggs estate in 1849. The Tuam Herald, as yet on the landlord side, stated that the tenants had owed a large arrear of rent and were able

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127. The land war in Ireland (London 1912) p66.

128. Galway Vindicator 6 November 1875. Berridge was criticised for leaving £200,000 for advancing sanitary science in England (Tuam Herald 22 October 1987).

129. Forbes spoke sympathetically of evicted tenantry on what had been the old Martin estate (Memorandums made in Ireland in the autumn of 1852, i, 226). Caird said 800 died near Roundstone on one lot of the Martin estate (Ireland and the plantation scheme, p 50).

to pay[130]. Disputes sometimes occurred as to whether evictions were actually carried out. For instance Father Lavelle accused Hyacinth D'Arcy of New Forest of evicting 157 families. D'Arcy vehemently denied the charge and the attack by Lavelle was one of the most severe made by clergy on gentry[131].

The clergy as a body took sides with the tenant farmers in their attack on the political power of the gentry in 1872. But there were several other individual cases of Catholic clergy questioning the power of the gentry. Clergy supported the tenants in their demand for a rent reduction at Ballyglunin and parish priests frequently acted as mediators between landlords and tenants during the Land War. The parish priest of Headford attacked St George over his refusal to grant a site for a Catholic Church. In 1822 Bishop Archdeckin of Kilmacduagh had reason to complain to Archbishop Kelly of Tuam that the local gentry were not giving him sufficient cooperation in contributing to the cost of the new church at Kinvara. Archbishop Kelly replied: "I am surprised to find that Messrs Lynch and Basterot[132] do not faithfully cooperate with your Lordship in forwarding what you so justly call the work of God. But I would most strongly recommend your Lordship not to avail yourself of the full exercise of your spiritual authority without first having recourse to persuasive arguments and gentle and private remonstrance which I am confident, will make the wished for impression on the minds of these gentlemen, and preclude the necessity of having

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130. Tuam Herald 9 June 1849. Sewell inherited Galway estates from his grandfather the last Lord Athenry. The Creggs estate was later bought by Allan Pollok.

131. Ibid 23 September 1871. D'Arcy gave rent reductions in 1886 (Ibid 16 October 1886).

132. The Lyches of Renmore had bought part of the Duras estate from James comte de Basterot whose father had married the heiress of the Frenches of Duras.

recourse to measures of severity. At all events may I conjure you not to have recourse to interdict unless necessity compel you thereto"[133]. Archdeckin's complaint seems puzzling as Basterot had granted the site for the church and used his skill as an amateur artist to beautify it[134]. Archdeckin would have dealt with the gentry as a social equal as he was related to the Redingtons and Blakes of Ballyglunin and had benefitted, like Archbishop Kelly, from a liberating continental education[135]. Another noted conflict was fought between Thomas O'Flahertie of Lemonfield and Rev. Dr. J.W. Kirwan parish priest of Oughterard and first president of Queen's College Galway. O'Fflahertie tried to deprive Dr. Kirwan of a chapel he had built at Oughterard on lands granted by Thomas Martin of Ballinahinch. O'Fflahertie claimed that he had leased the land to Martin and that the lease had expired[136].

A conflict more significant for the history of landlord-tenant relations was that fought by the Burkes of St Clerans against Rev. Dr. O'Fay the parish priest of Craughwell. The case reflected badly on the Burkes and showed the need for a tenants' compensation bill for Ireland. James Hardiman Burke of St Clerans was the gentleman shot at during the Ribbon outbreak in 1820 when Anthony Daly was hanged for alleged

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133. Oliver Kelly to Nicholas Archdeckin dated Tuam 28 July 1822 (copy of letter in my possession).

134. Fahey, Kilmacduagh p406. The Lynches and Basterots were generous petrons of the Catholic Church (M. Fahy, Education in the diocese of Kilmacduagh in the nineteenth century (1972) pp 24, 43, 59.

135. He preferred discoursing with his poor parishioners in Irish to the "well-meant attentions of his aristocratic relatives" (Fahey, Kilmacduagh, p380).

136. Tuam Herald 10 November 1838, 7 December 1839. Dr Kirwan claimed that O'Fflahertie was a proselytiser (ibid, 30 November 1839).

involvement in the crime[137]. The O'Fay V. Burke case hinged on the fact that Dr. O'Fay, a tenant of Burke, expended over £500 on improving his property on the faith of a life lease promised to him by James Hardiman Burke[138]. O'Fay had requested a 31 year lease but Burke stated that his power to lease had been limited by a disentailing deed[139]. Burke was succeeded in 1854 by his son Major John Hardiman Burke who went to serve in the Crimea having appointed as agent his younger brother Robert O'Hara Burke who was to achieve fame as an Australian explorer. Dr. O'Fay's subsequent bad treatment brought severe legal censure on the Burkes. When Major Burke returned from the Crimea and observed O'Fay making his extensive improvements he concealed his intention to put him out of possession, having repudiated his father's promise of a life lease. Although in point of law O'Fay's case could not be sustained he had the strong sympathy of the law officers. The Master of the Rolls summed up by stating that "nothing can be more repugnant to the principles of natural justice than that a landlord should look on at a great expenditure carried on by a tenant from year to year, without warning the tenant of his intention to turn him out of possession. The respondent's offer to allow the petitioner to remove the

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137. Fahey, Kilmacduagh pp 421-2; C. Ó Coigligh, Raiftearaí: amhráin agus dánta (Baile Átha Cliath 1987) pp 8-9.

138. The case is detailed in W.N. Hancock, 'The present law of landlord and tenant as exhibited in the recent decision of the Master of the Rolls in the case of O'Fay v. Burke' (Dublin Statistical Society Journal, 11, 1859, pp 345-9); Irish Chancery reports, viii, 1857-59, pp 225-251, 511-524.

139. The opinion of the Master of the Rolls was that he did have such leasing power. The deed to which Burke referred was made to secure to the Patriotic Insurance Company a sum of £17,000 to pay off his debts.

buildings was a mockery"[140]. The Lord Chancellor was equally critical of Burke's behaviour in his closing statement: "I think I am not overstepping my duty in suggesting to Major Burke... that, under all the circumstances of this case, he will best maintain the character and honour of a British officer, satisfy the exigencies of justice, and uphold the rights of property, by making such an arrangement with the petitioner, as to the possession of this farm, as may leave him the full benefit of an expenditure made in good faith, and with the reasonable expectation of having the full benefit of it sufficently secured by an undisturbed possession"[141].

For a considerable time before the Clanricarde evictions therefore, individual conflicts and the harsh treatment of tenants on some estates made the terms 'gentry' and 'landlordism' synonymous in the popular mind. There were incidents, or alleged incidents, of eviction by the father of the notorious last Clanricarde which aroused controversy at the time[142]. With the exception of the Pollok clearances the most publicised case of eviction was that which occurred on the Netterville estate in 1846. A younger son of the first Viscount Netterville was transplanted to Galway by Cromwell and the heiress to the 7000 acre estate in the early 19th century was the absentee Marcella Netterville who married John Gerrard of Gibbstown in Meath[143]. Mrs Gerrard's eviction of

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140. Ibid Chancery reports, viii, p250.

141. Ibid, p522.

142. Galway Express 8 March 1856. The controversy was over Clanricarde's alleged evictions at Meelick to make way for a Captain Wyndham (Galway Mercury 10 January 1852, 24 January 1852, Tuam Herald 24 January 1852).

143. Sir Patrick Netterville, obviously a member of this family, wrote abusive verses on Rev. John O'Rorke of Moylough and Frederick Trench of Garbally (R.I.A. Ms 23 0 42, pp 137-141) The Nettervilles and Trenches were intermarried.

270 persons in order to make a grazing farm was condemned by the majority of landlords in the region according to the Freeman's correspondent who came down to investigate the matter at first hand[144]. Prominent among these were resident neighbouring gentry like the Bellews and Chevers's of Killyan, the latter in particular being singled out for praise by some of the witnesses who spoke to the Freeman's correspondent. The Dartfield estate near Loughrea, like the Netterville estate, was badly managed by another absentee lady, Maria Blake, widow of James Henry Blake, a distinguished member of the Irish bar. The turbulent Dartfield tenantry took up arms to resist the law although the newspaper reports denied that the Ribbon system was rife - "all that took place was the effect of agrarianism"[145]. Some of the Blakes of Dartfield were noted lawyers but the estate was adversely affected by litigation. Mrs Blake appears not to have had a very conciliatory approach to opponents and had a bitter legal dispute with her own solicitor[146]. Adjoining the Dartfield estate was the far larger estate of Lord Dunsandle. The Duke de Stacpoole claimed that Dunsandle was an unpopular landlord and that his estate was "periodically unmanageable"[147]. There was agrarian trouble also on the Lismany estate even before Pollok bought it and the lawlessness and ribandism on Pollok's Glinsk and Creggs estates indicated the extent of their neglect by the declining Burkes of Glinsk who had been the

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144. S. Redmond, Landlordism in Ireland: letters on the eviction of the Gerrard tenantry (Dublin 1846), p47. Peter Bartleman a Scots farmer and steward on the estate was shot at during the land League (Tuam Herald 14 June 1879).

145. Galway Express 1 December 1855, 15 December 1855.

146. Galway Vindicator 23 February 1859.

147. Irish and other memories (1922) p4.

previous owners[148]. The severest attitudes to tenantry were shown, not by gentry or landlords, but by economic theorists like James Caird. Caird claimed that most Galway landlords were anxious to get good tenants[149], but he believed "that until all native owners were got rid of, an entirely new race of tenant farmers imported, and at least 250,000 supernumerary hands exported, nothing could be done profitably by English enterprise in Connaught"[150].

Whereas the political power of the gentry was attacked in the Nolan - Trench election campaign of 1872 their economic power was attacked during the Land War. The Land Leaguers branded all gentry as oppressive landlords. Their sweeping denunciations extended even to old Catholic gentry like the Burkes of Ower and Brownes of Claran[151]. The social status and privileged position of the gentry was also attacked by a compaign against fox hunting, although the sport had received some ill will during the anti - landlord hysteria in 1872. In Galway however the only noted incident in this campaign was when a large crowd stopped the Galway Hunt under Burton Persse at Kilcornan demesne[152]. However the trouble only lasted one season and Persse went to England to hunt there that

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148. P.G. Lane, 'An attempt at commercial farming in Ireland after the Famine' (Studies lxi, 1972 pp 54-5, 57).

149. Ireland and the plantation scheme, p45.

150. Tuam Herald 25 May 1850.

151. Special Commission Act 1888,: Speeches, proceedings and evidence, i, p23.

152. Galway Vindicator 31 December 1881. For the campaign in general see L.P. Curtis, 'Stopping the Hunt 1881-1882: an aspect of the Land War', in C.H.E. Philpin, Nationalism and popular protest in Ireland (Cambridge 1987).

winter[153]. Speaking of the Tuam area during the Famine, John Bright had noted in his diary: "Evictions incessant. People hunted off the land. Proprietors many ruined... Houses and demesnes guarded... Some of these gentlemen still live as gentlemen and keep cars, horses etc"[154]. During the Land League the gentry became more apprehensive for their safety. One of Edward Martyn's Catholic neighbours told him he had not been outside his gates for five months except to go to Mass, and he reported the burning of Corgary and Vermont which were the seats of Catholic gentry, Joyces and Blakes[155]. But even during the Land League not all gentry were unpopular as landlords. Lord Westmeath visited his estates near Woodford in 1880 and remitted a half year's rent and gave employment. He was met by the local temperance band and well received by his tenants[156]. Colonel Nolan of Ballinderry (Tuam) met his tenantry in a Headford hotel in 1885 to receive his rents.

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153. Information from the late Edmond Mahony, author of The Galway Blazers: memoirs (Galway 1979).

154. The Diaries of John Bright (ed. P. Bright, 1930), p 104. Bright was probably referring to the evictions on the 800 acre Day estate near Tuam. The Days were a legal family and a branch of the Days of Beaufort, Killarney (Dictionary of the landed gentry ed. 1853, ii, supplement, p99). The case shows that contested statements and disputed allegations were made about evictions even at the time they occurred. The Tuam Herald of 21 July 1849 stated that 367 persons were evicted, mainly on the Day estate. But William Marshall Day, in the following issue, pointed out that the villages in question had, because of the neglect of a trustee, been placed under the temporary management of the Court of Chancery and it was that institution which carried out the evictions. Day further stated that he had himself paid the rent of some of the tenants and other money was given to the receiver to distribute among tenantry.

155. Denis Gwynn, Edward Martyn and the Irish Revival (London 1930) p55.

156. Galway Vindicator 17 January 1880.

There was no agent, bailiff or police present and afterwards Nolan sat down with his tenants "to a substantial dinner"[157]. Other gentry families with traditions of good tenant relations included the Chevers and Comyn families[158].

It is a matter for debate whether the fundamental rift between gentry and tenants dates from the political conflict of the Trench - Nolan election campaign of 1872 or from the violence of the Land League and Land War or indeed from even earlier events. Clanricarde's agent, John Henry Blake, told the Bessborough Commission in 1872 - interestingly - that the tenants regarded landlords and agents as "a different race of people to what they are"[159]. The gentry, frightened by the excesses of the Ribbon outbreak in 1820 and largely impoverished by the Famine, gained a 30 year reprieve as a result of improved economic conditions. But the bad seasons culminating in 1879 combined with the education conferred by the National Schools tipped the balance in favour of agitation. But where gentry had a long tradition of popularity the reluctance of tenants in breaking the bonds of deference is seen in conflicting or inconsistent social behaviour. Some of the gentry themselves have left on record their perceptions of the social changes which they were unable to control. Matilda Kelly of Newtown described how as children they had listened, fearfully, to the Fenian songs under their windows. When the Land League forbade the paying of rent it was not unknown for a tenant to throw his rent, attached to a stone, through an open window. After 1880 most tenants refused to remove their hats as the Kellys arrived for

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157. Tuam Herald 14 February 1885.

158. It was said locally that the Comyns of Ballinderry (Kilconnell) "never quenched a fire" (Mahony, The Galway Blazers: memoirs p28).

159. Report of inquiry into working of the Landlord and Tenant (Ireland) Act 1870, H.C., 1872, xl., p 816; Bane, p 559; Galway Vindicator 28 June 1848.

Sunday Mass. Yet as late as 1900 tenantry drew the family carriage to the door on festive occasions[160]. The same hesitant break with the old ways is evident in the case of the popular Martins of Ross. When James Martin died in 1872 disillusioned by the action of his tenants having voted for Captain Nolan, "a curtain fell for ever on the old life at Ross"[161]. The people were still fond of the Martins but there was a rift. It was a rift which marked the final overthrow of paternalism. "The separation had begun", Violet Martin wrote, "and only those who have experienced it will understand how strange, how wounding it was"[162].

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160. Memoirs of Matilda Kelly of Newtown, pp26-27.

161. G. Lewis, Somerville and Ross: the world of the Irish R.M. (1985) p27; M. Collis, Somerville and Ross, p 18.

162. Collis, p19.

CHAPTER 9

POLITICAL ATTITUDES AND NATIONAL AFFAIRS

The great majority of Catholic gentry in Galway, as well as gentry who had conformed, supported Catholic national issues in the early 19th century. These made up the great liberal interest in the county which was headed by the Clanricarde family. The history of Galway and of its landowners resulted in both the liberal and conservative groups each having a variety of different strands. The conservative camp was headed by the Trench family who became large magnates in Galway in the 17th century. The Trenches, and others of the same provenance like the Persses and Taylors, represented the evangelical wing of the Protestant gentry. The Dillons of Clonbrock were another important pillar of the conservative side, though they had a Norman background. The Dalys of Dunsandle, also conservative, were of Irish ancestry and, like the Dillons and Trenches, had established their fortunes in the 17th century. The Dalys were sympathetic towards Catholic claims. The most vocal supporters of Protestant ascendancy in Galway were two members of old Irish families, Rev. John O'Rorke of Moylough and Denis Kelly of Castle Kelly. O'Rorke and Kelly were regularly attacked and reviled in the liberal press which liked to emphasise their minority support. The general lack of religious conflict in Galway was widely acknowledged. During the debate on the Irish Colleges Bill in 1845 Sir Robert Peel said that Galway had always less bitterness of religious feeling than almost any other part of Ireland. "There has been on the part of the higher classes a desire to live together in peace and amity, and their example has extended to the lower orders"[1].

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1. Hansard, LXXXII, 1845, col 371.

During the Catholic Emancipation movement, which the great majority of the gentry supported, the liberal press in Galway frequently referred to the events of the 17th century. The older gentry, with their Norman pedigrees and medieval merchant origins, were constantly hailed as the saviours of the liberties of the county. The implication was that they should now stand against Protestant ascendancy just as they had resisted the tyranny of Strafford in the 17th century[2]. The Tuam Herald commented in May 1837 that Galway had "a greater number of gentry, (chiefly liberal), of more distinguished ancestry, and more honourable escutcheons than any other Irish county". The vast majority of these gentry put their weight and influence behind the movement for Catholic Emancipation. Local gentry almost always chaired parish meetings and acted as secretarys. These were usually drawn from the densely located major and minor Tribal families as well as Burkes and Kellys. Others played an active role at national level. The numerous liberal Protestant gentry also supported Emancipation though some of them opposed the Catholic Rent. The Connaught Journal wrote in 1828: "The Protestants of the County of Galway are first among the foremost in claiming for their Roman Catholic countrymen an equal participation with themselves of the blessings of civil and religious liberty. They are acquainted with Roman Catholics, as gentlemen, and with extensive mercantile men of that persuasion, all of whom they recognise as loyal subjects, and they can find no difference of opinion, but that which the right of conscience marks out"[3]. The conservative gentry were smaller in number but large in influence. Prominent among those of them who were hostile to the Emancipation

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2. Many families suffered property losses in the Cromwellian period, such as the Blakes of Menlo and Kiltolla and the ancestors of the Renvyle and Ballyglunin Blakes (Blake family records 1600-1700 pp 136, 144, 169, 214).

3. Connaught Journal 21 January 1828.

movement were the Trenches, Blakeneys, Seymours, and Kellys of Castle Kelly. The Trenches and Kellys were closely linked to the Established Church[4]. Clancarty, head of the Tory interest in Galway, opposed the Catholic Association and blamed Catholics for supporting it[5]. The proselytising activity of the Trench family was strongly resisted by the Catholic clergy who had the support of many of the Catholic gentry and aristocracy. Clancarty offended his own class when he snubbed the Duc de Montebello, a French Catholic aristocrat[6].

Many Protestant gentry on the other hand were noted for their liberal attitudes, a good example being the Frenches of Monivea. The Frenches had been temporarily removed from Monivea by the Cromwellian government. Robert French of Monivea was one of the first to propose the repeal of the Penal Code around 1766 and one of his descendants, Edward Hyde French, was proposed for membership of the Catholic Association[7]. The family were intermarried with both Catholic

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4. Clancarty's brother, Power Trench, was archbishop of Tuam. Denis Kelly's father was a clergyman. James Daly's brother, Robert, became bishop of Cashel and Waterford.

5. He accepted the justice of giving full equality to Roman Catholics "as far as might be consistent with the security of our Protestant constitution in church and state" (Hansard, XXl, 1829, p478). See also B. Jenkins, Era of Emancipation: British government of Ireland 1812-1830, p222.

6. K. Egan, The parish of Ballinasloe, pp200 - 1; Sheil's speeches, ed. T. Mac Nevin, pp 373-4. Montebello was refused admittance to Garbally. But when he visited the North of Ireland he was hospitably received by Lord Northland at Dungannon where he met many of the nobility and gentry of Ulster. He also met the Munster gentry. "The only cold shoulder he got was from Lord Clancarty brother to Doctor Trench - Connaught ought to be proud of this 'holy family'" (Connaught Journal 12 October 1826 p2, 19 October, p2).

7. Connaught Journal 20 December 1824 p2.

and Protestant gentry. In the Emancipation period Nicola French had established schools on the Monivea estate where children of tenantry were educated under Catholic clergy. She rejected the aid of the Kildare Street Society, as their aim was proselytism[8]. Also strongly liberal were the Blakes of Belmont, near Tuam, who addressed popular meetings in English and Irish [9]. Tuam and Loughrea were noted Catholic strongholds. Tuam was an ancient ecclesiastical centre and was surrounded by Blakes, Brownes, Kirwans and Lynches, most of whom were Catholic and liberal to a man. Loughrea also had many Catholic gentry in the area such as Burkes, Dalys and Dolphins. It is clear that women took an interest in the Catholic movement. The Loughrea Ladies Association was formed to promote the aims of the Catholic Association and was lead by Mrs Emily McNevin[10]. She was sister to Francis Blake-Forster who took an active part in the struggle for Catholic Emancipation. At a Catholic Rent meeting in Tuam there was "a numerous attendance of elegantly dressed females... From the great anxiety manifested by the lower classes to become more fully acquainted with the nature of the Catholic Rent, three gentlemen who attended... could hardly supply them with the printed reports which were sent down by the Catholic Association for distribution"[11]. Blake - Forster was chosen chairman at the great meeting at Ennis which resulted in the

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8. Ibid.

9. Ibid, 3 November 1828, p2. The Blakes shot several Ribbonmen in 1820.

10. Her husband, Daniel McNevin, was agent to the Blake - Forsters and their son, Thomas Mc Nevin, wrote for the Nation newspaper. Daniel Mc Nevin "was a member of the old Catholic committee, of the Catholic Association, of the Repeal Association, and of the '82 Club" (Tuam Herald 25 July 1846, p1).

11. Connaught Journal, 29 July 1824, p3. Reference was made to the liberality of Tuam area Protestant gentry in 1793 when Catholic delegates were sent to London.

representation being contested and he was one of the committee appointed to conduct the return of Daniel O'Connell. The fact that an issue like Emancipation was regarded by the gentry as a political issue is seen in the remark of Thomas Gisborne Burke in his letter which accompanied his cousin Clanricarde's subscription to the Catholic Association. Burke stated that, though not a Catholic in creed, "in politics I am a warm one, because I believe the cause of Catholicity to be the cause of my country"[12].

Clanricarde's contribution to the Catholic Rent was praised and he was contrasted to the "mushroom Noblemen" of the time[13]. He told the Lords he had signed two documents "most respectably signed by Protestants" in favour of Emancipation. He thought Irish Protestants were driven to absenteeism by the state of the country and he supported the Associations Suppression (Ireland) Bill of 1829 as it was equally directed against Catholics and Orangemen[14]. He refused to support the Qualification of Freeholders (Ireland) Bill. As the law now stood, it would be impossible to bribe the 40s freeholders of any county in Ireland. It would be otherwise when the number of voters were reduced. "The noble duke (of Wellington) wished to introduce a race of yeomen into Ireland. But what was he to do - how was he to provide for the thousands who must be removed from the soil, in order to make way for them? It was true that peace and tranquillity would introduce manufactures; and that manufactures would beget industry, and

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12. Connaught Journal 27 January 1825 p1. Burke was the last male descendant of the Kilcornan branch of the Clanricarde family (ibid 10 September 1835; M.J. Blake, 'An old Lynch manuscript', Galway Arch. and Hist. Soc. Jn. Vlll, 1913-14, p69).

13. Connaught Journal 24 January 1830 p2. The gentry gave a ball at the Linen Hall, Loughrea, to celebrate the arrival of Clanricarde (ibid, 30 June 1825 p3, 4 July, editorial).

14. Hansard xx, 1829, pp 305, 395.

give employment. Then, and not till then, could the more humble classes be safely withdrawn from the soil"[15]. He also felt that the Catholic clergy would exert their influence over the £10 freeholder as they had done over the 40s freeholder. Priests, Clanricarde believed, possessed "considerable power", but it had been exaggerated. There had during the previous autumn, been large gatherings in the south against the wishes of the priests, some of whom had been insulted for their interference[16]. Clanricarde's liberal attitude was very likely influenced by the fact that his mother, a Burke of Marble Hill, was a Catholic and had reared him from boyhood.

Protestant gentry hostile to the Catholic Association included Lord Gort, William Burke of Ballydugan and St. George of Headford. Gort told the priests there should be no Catholic Rent meetings[17]. The Catholic Association, he told the Lords, had as object Catholic Emancipation. Its real tendency was, however, to overthrow the constitution. "He did not mean to insinuate that any of the leaders of the Catholic body were capable of advising the people to resist the laws, but he would say, that the power which they now assumed was too great to be left, consistently with prudence, in the hands of the people"[18]. D'Arcy of Clifden warned his tenants against

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15. Ibid, XXl, p415. Clanricarde appears to have been in a minority of his party in his defence of the 40s freeholders (See F. O'Ferrall, Catholic Emancipation: Daniel O'Connell and the birth of Irish democracy 1820-30 p253). It was part of his general preference for small tenants.

16. Ibid, p586.

17. Connaught Journal 18 November 1824 p2.

18. Ibid, 29 Nov, 10 February 1825, p2; Hansard Xll, 1825, pp 15 - 16. Gort was president of Limerick Brunswick club (Connaught Journal 20 October 1828 p2, 29 January 1829 pl).

paying Catholic Rent but did not oppose Emancipation[19]. St. George of Headford attempted to stop Catholic Rent being collected at Headford[20]. The Connaught Journal expressed regret at his action, adding - "for there is not in our county another individual who has done more for the good of his tenantry..." St. George claimed he was no enemy to religious liberty, but objected to O'Connell for having joined the religious cause with that of the "Radical Reformers"[21]. The local press carefully distinguished the majority of the liberal Protestant gentry from the minority of those who opposed Emancipation. Anti - Emancipation activities were branded with the taint of Orangeism and Kelly of Castle Kelly and Blakeney of Abbert were tagged with this label. Kelly admitted to being a Brunswicker, Tory, and Orangeman[22]. Although James Daly of Dunsandle supported the Catholic question he too was attacked for having dealings with the Tories and Orange party[23].

Protestant opponents of the Catholic cause were branded as being low class people of little property. When a Headford anti - Association petition appeared, signed by five Protestants, the Connaught Journal taunted them as being men of no property except St. George, who was censured for having signed the document[24]. When Lords Clonbrock, Ashtown and the Trenches of Garbally refused to attend Ballinasloe Brunswick club the same paper commented that it was "positively quite

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19. Connaught Journal 24 January 1825 p2; 19 Oct. 1826 pp2,3.

20. Ibid, 8 November 1824, p2, 11 Nov, p2, 15 Nov. p2.

21. Ibid, 15 November 1824, p2.

22. Ibid, 23 April 1832.

23. Ibid, 24 April 1828. The attacker was Frederick William Conway of Galway and editor of the Dublin Evening Post.

24. Ibid, 6 November 1826, p2, 9 Nov, p2.

laughable to discover the sort of gentry who attended there. Now we would attach a great deal of importance to their resolutions at Ballinasloe, if we found the meeting got up by the majority of the men of weight and consequence connected with our county; but really, one cannot stifle a smile, when he sees pawnbrokers, weavers, nailors ... undertaking to represent the Protestant feeling of this great county"[25]. The Catholic cause on the other hand was headed and supported by the majority of the gentry and aristocracy. The greater Protestant magnates such as Lords Clanricarde Clonbrock and Ashtown usually declined invitations to provincial Catholic meetings, which were left to their Catholic fellow gentry like Lords Ffrench and Riverston and the Bellews and Mc Dermotts. For instance many Catholic gentry attended the Connaught provincial meeting at Ballinasloe in 1826. Foremost were Lords Ffrench and Riverston, Gonville Ffrench, Colonel McDermott, Bellew of Mount Bellew, Browne of Moyne, French of Rahasane, Joyce of Mervue and Mc Donnell of Carnacon. The following apologised for not attending: Lords Sligo, Clanricarde, Kingston, Clonbrock, Ashtown, Crofton, Wallscourt and Clanmorris; Hon. Frederick Ponsonby, James Daly, Richard Martin, Valentine Blake and French of Frenchpark[26].

The leading Catholics in the county were Lord Ffrench, Sir John Burke of Marble Hill, William McDermott of Springfield and Sir Michael Dillon Bellew of Mount Bellew. In his graphic portrait of Lord Ffrench, Thomas Wyse stated that "everything about him, mind or body, was energy"[27]. When the Catholic Committee was revived in 1805 Sir John Burke of Marble Hill was a member. John Burke of Glinsk, writing to the secretary of the Catholic Committee in 1811 about the nomination of

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25. Ibid, 30 October 1828.

26. Ibid, 16 January 1826, pl.

27. T. Wyse, Historical sketch of the late Catholic Association of Ireland. (London 1829), ii, 149.

persons to accompany Lord Fingall to London, pointed out that no family in Ireland "has lost more than mine by our adherence to our religion.."[28] McDermott was a close friend of O'Connell and a founder, along with Frederick William Conway, of the Connaught Club. The close marriage connections of the active Catholic gentry is evident from the pedigree of the Ffrench family. Lord Ffrench's mother was a Redington of Kilcornan and his wife was a Browne of Moyne. Other members of his family, including nieces and nephews, were married with the families of Bodkin of Rahoon, Blake - Forster of Ashfield, Chevers of Killyan and Blake of Ballinafad. His daughter married Valentine O'Connor Blake of Tower Hill in Mayo who was a prominent Repealer. Lord Ffrench's brother, the Hon. Gonville Ffrench, was equally prominent and chaired many provincial meetings of the Catholic Association.

The Catholic Association provided a hitherto unique cohesion among the vast majority of the numerous gentry, clergy and people. At the same time the strong divisions of party politics persisted as exemplified in the intrigue and violence of the 1826 general election in Galway. The violence of the 1872 general election was directed against the gentry, who were seen as the opponents of the popular Catholic candidate, Captain Nolan of Ballinderry. In 1826 the violence occurred between opposing factions of the competing candidates. They were James Daly of Dunsandle, Richard Martin of Ballinahinch the favourite of the Catholics, and Clanricarde's candidate, James Staunton Lambert of Cregclare, who was the leader of the anti - Daly faction. Daly had presented a petition from Galway Catholics to the Commons in 1815 and supported the Roman Catholic Relief bill of 1825[29]. Francis Blake - Forster

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28. The correspondence of Daniel O'Connell (ed. M. O'Connell), i, 1792 - 1814, p243 - 4. In 1813 Burke was one of the five delegates appointed to accompany Fingall to London (ibid, p319).

29. Hansard, XXXl, 1815, p525, Vlll, 1825, p57-9.

of Ashfield, who was the voice of the independent gentry, made a strong attack on Daly and declared him unworthy of Catholic support in the coming election. He accused Daly of being hostile to the Catholic Association, of being in league with the Bible Society and of being supported by the Orange faction. Peel found that Daly was "one of those... who would be very sorry if Catholic emancipation... was carried, though he is afraid of opposing it"[30]. Richard Martin, on the other hand, had given steadfast support to the Catholic cause. The Protestant Petition in favour of Catholic Emancipation sent from the Protestant gentry and aristocracy of the county had originated with Martin[31]. Martin had the approval of Sheil and O'Connell and had financial support from Martin J. Blake of Ballyglunin[32]. The ambiguous attitude to James Daly was shown by the remark of a Catholic freeholder that he had the good wishes of a large part of the people of Galway town and this was enhanced by the kind acts and protection given by his ancestors to the town Catholics in times of persecution[33]. The Dublin Evening Post always opposed Daly and favoured Martin. It considered Daly "a Tory of the old Irish school, and though an emancipationist, in other respects a marvellous proper Orangeman... His great fault was, the desperate

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30. Connaught Journal 17 April 1826 p2. R.G. Thorne (ed.) The House of Commons 1790-1820 (History of Parliament Trust 1986) iii, p564. Blake - Forster sent a copy of his letter to O'Connell (The correspondence of Daniel O'Connell, iii, 1824-1828, pp243-4).

31. Connaught Journal 10 January 1825 p2, 10 February p3. There were 39 Protestant names on the list. James Daly said the list contained "all the Protestant rank and property of the county, so far as they were assembled at the Assizes" (ibid, 15 August 1825 p1). Denis Kelly of Castle Kelly was, alone among the grand jurors, absent from the list (ibid, 18 August 1825 p3).

32. S. Lynam, Humanity Dick: a biography of Richard Martin, M.P., 1754-1834 pp 179, 188.

33. Connaught Journal 17 June 1824.

fidelity he had shown to his party, and his indisposition to accommodate himself to the altered circumstances of the times"[34]. Daly's position shows that the Emancipation issue represented an emerging political divide.

The election was won by Daly and Martin. Martin's result was contested and he was unseated and replaced by Lambert. The select committee on the election reported that "an organised system of rioting prevailed ... by which houses were destroyed, several persons lost their lives, and others were greviously injured.."[35] The commander of the police described the election as "a continued scene of riot". The freeholders of John D'Arcy of Clifden Castle, who were pro - Lambert, were attacked and obstructed at Oughterard by the Martin faction[36]. One of the witnesses, Lieutenant Ffrench of Lord Ffrench's family, stated that rioting occurred on both sides and would have resulted in great damage were it not for the Catholic clergy. He added the social comment - "I would sooner have one priest to keep down a mob than I would have a hundred soldiers"[37]. There was danger of further election violence from the possibility of a by - election which would result if James Daly got his promised peerage[38]. When the Tories went out of office in 1830 the royal letter recommending his elevation to the peerage had not passed all stages and when

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34. Ibid 22 January 1835, p4.

35. Report of the select committee on Galway election, H.C. 1826-27, lV, p3.

36. Connaught Journal 19 February 1827 pl.

37. Report of the select committee on Galway election, pl22.

38. Discussion about this took place between Peel and the Duke of Wellington (C.S. Parker, Sir Robert Peel: from his private papers, London 1899, ii, p62-64; N. Gash, Mr Secretary Peel: the life of Sir Robert Peel to 1830, p535).

the Whigs came it was not proceeded with[39].

Clanricarde, Clonbrock, James Daly and Sir John Burke had a meeting in Woodford in 1829 about the representation of the county. It was believed that Clanricarde and Daly were to form a mutual agreement. Clanricarde would support Daly's son as member for Galway town and Daly would support Clanricarde, along with Clonbrock Sir John Burke, young Nugent of Pallas- lately married to Sir John Burke's niece - cousin to Captain Blake - Forster. "Where", asked the Connaught Journal, "are the Bellews, Ffrenches, McDermotts, Brownes, Donnellans, Martins... and the rest of the independent interest of the County"[40]. The fear of aristocratic political cabals and the desire to forward the Emancipation and reform movements lead to the setting up of a Liberal Club by the Catholic gentry in 1828. Prominent in its foundation were McDermott of Springfield, the Hon. Martin Ffrench, Mark Lynch, Francis Blake - Forster and Thomas Bodkin[41]. There was also a Galway town Liberal Club which was joined by many of the county gentry[42]. The object of the Liberal Club should be the return of two independent members for the county who would support

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39. Connaught Journal 14 May 1835. Daly got his title in 1845.

40. Ibid, 21 December 1829 p3 and editorial. Clanricarde and Daly however appear not to have been on very good terms. Clanricarde's eldest son, Lord Dunkellin, writing to Sir William Gregory in 1852, referred to the "disgraceful and spiteful behaviour of the Daly family" who wanted to force Clanricarde not to allow his second votes to go to Captain Bellew. "I often heard from older people than myself that the Dalys never were to be trusted, and now I subscribe to that doctrine". (Leeds District Archives: Clanricarde papers, 109(96)).

41. Ibid, 4 February 1828, p3, 7 February p3, 27 March editorial.

42. Ibid 28 August 1828 p3, 22 September p3, 25 September p3.

Emancipation and every measure for the improvement of the town and county. In a speech Blake-Forster referred to the feared coalition between Daly and Clanricarde and said the Club "would form a strong battalion of patriots who would tear assunder the coalition with the same ease that a child would shatter the web of a spider". The most radical voice among the gentry was that of Francis Blake - Forster of Ashfield and his son Robert of Knockmoy Abbey. Blake - Forster condemned the system of "aristocratical dominion - an oligarchy of tyrant despots ... which precludes the people's triumph"[43]. He was referring to the belief in 1830 that Clanricarde would support his uncle Sir John Burke of Marble Hill, and that James Daly and Martin of Ballinahinch would be supported by Lord Clancarty[44]. Blake - Forster attacked the aristocracy[45] and described himself as a plain country gentleman[46]. He believed that parliamentary reform must precede Emancipation[47]. In 1830 he sent petitions to the Commons on Repeal of the Union[48]. His support of the Repeal question was usually accompanied by attacks on the Irish aristocracy[49]. He was refused the use of Gort sessions house for a Repeal meeting by Lord Gort[50]. He was arrested for attending meetings of the peasantry in the open air[51]. In 1832 he went to London to lay a memorial before the King "on behalf of himself, and several other landed proprietors in this

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43. Ibid 12 August 1830 p3.

44. Ibid, 5 July 1830 p2.

45. Ibid 6 December 1830 p3.

46. Ibid, 18 February 1828 p1.

47. Ibid, 11 October 1827 p1, 15 October p1.

48. Ibid, 15 April 1830 p2, 19 April p2.

49. e.g. Ibid, 6 December 1830, p3.

50. Ibid, 17 January 1831 p3, 20 January p4.

51. Ibid, 17 March 1831, p3, 21 March p2, 4 April, p2.

unfortunate country, condemnatory of the horrible Stanley tithe act, now before the house"[52]. Robert Blake - Forster was enrolling Repealers on the Aran Islands in 1843[53].

After Emancipation the Catholic gentry became more prominent in politics. Sir John Burke of Marble Hill was member for the county from 1830 to 1832. His son, Sir Thomas Burke was member from 1847 to 1865. John J. Bodkin of Kilcloony (Quarrymount) was member for the town in 1831 and for the county from 1835 to 1847. Andrew Henry Lynch of the Castle was member for the town from 1832 to 1838. Martin J. Blake of Ballyglunin was member for the town from 1835 to 1837 and from 1841 to 1857[54]. Patrick M. Lynch of Renmore believed that by the return of Bodkin, the power of Daly in the county had got as fatal a blow as it had earlier got in the town by the return of Blake[55]. Three families had dominated political life in Galway in the early 18th century. They were the Stauntons of Waterdale, Eyres of Eyrecourt and the Shaws of Newford. The Dalys came to power in the town in the latter

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52. Ibid 30 July 1832 p4.

53. Tuam Herald 29 April 1843, p3.

54. B. M. Walker, Parliamentary election results in Ireland 1801-1922 (Dublin 1978).

Galway Borough

Year	Population	Electorate
1832	33,120	2,062
1861	25,161	1,161
1881	19,171	1,146

Galway County

1832	394,287	3061
1861	246,317	5572
1881	222,834	4807

55. Connaught Journal 12 February 1835 p2.

half of the century. Between 1777 and 1820 every mayor except one bore the name of Daly. The opponents of the Daly influence were called the Independents. The most active of these was Sir Valentine Blake of Menlo and the barrister John Blake, of the Galway town Blakes[56]. James Daly continued to be the favourite candidate of the Tories, whose leader was Lord Clancarty, ably supported by St. George of Headford Castle. William Mc Dermott of Springfield referred to the Tories as "that unholy monster, Protestant ascendancy". In the opposing camp, that of the Liberals, Reformers, Whigs or Radicals, were the St. Georges of Tyrone, Bellews, Burkes, Lamberts, D'Arcys, Chevers, Bodkins, Blakes and Brownes. Lord Clanricarde, the leader of the Whig gentry, was praised by O'Connell who said "that while his neighbours, the Trenches, divide the people, he seeks to combine all classes, and by promoting tranquillity to secure the prosperity of the country and the stability of the throne"[57].

The greater gentry, were much less willing to give any form of support to the Repeal and Reform movements than they had given to the Emancipation movement. Meetings had very few gentry and the Connaught Journal chided the absent aristocracy[58]. A declaration against Repeal was signed in 1831 not only

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56. Burke, Connaught Circuit p 316. It was the "distinguished merit" of Sir Valentine Blake to have contributed, as the leader of the Liberals of Galway, in eventually placing the corporation and the representation of the town under the control of the inhabitants (Galway Vindicator, 3 February 1847 p2; P.J. Jupp, 'Urban politics in Ireland 1801-1831', in D. Harkness and M. O'Dowd, eds., The Town in Ireland, Historical Studies, Xlll, Belfast 1981, pp108, 114, 117-119).

57. Connaught Journal 27 January 1825, p1. Clanricarde appears to have been a close friend of O'Connell (W.H. Dixon, Lady Morgan's memoirs: autobiography, diaries and correspondence, ii, p291-2).

58. Tuam Herald 6 December 1830 p2.

predictably by Archbishop Le Poer Trench of Tuam and the Hon. William Le Poer Trench, but by the Marquess of Sligo, Clonbrock, Clanricarde, Sir George Shee and Sir Richard O'Donnell[59]. Lord Gort refused to present a Repeal petition to the House of Lords though he had opposed the Act of Union[60]. Other Tory gentry, like St. George of Headford, and Robert Gregory while high sheriff in 1843, attacked the idea of Repeal[61]. But the numerous Catholic gentry in the north of the county appeared willing to give token support to Repeal meetings. John J. Bodkin and the Berminghams of Dalgin attended meetings in Milltown. An O'Connell "Grand Repeal Breakfast" in Galway had five Blakes among the gentry present[62]. Martin J. Blake wrote in support of Repeal[63]. A group of leading Catholic gentry were dismissed from the magistracy in 1843 because of Repeal activities. Lord Ffrench was dismissed for announcing that he would attend a Repeal meeting in Caltra[64]. Also dismissed was the M.P. John J. Bodkin, who was a deputy lieutenant of the county[65]; Valentine

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59. Connaught Journal 21 January 1831 editorial.

60. Ibid 7 February 1831 p3.

61. Tuam Herald 5 August 1843 p 3; B. Jenkins, Sir William Gregory of Coole: the biography of an Anglo-Irishman, p 58.

62. Connaught Journal 23 December 1830 p 3, 13 August 1840 p 1. The Blakes of Renvyle viewed a local Repeal meeting disapprovingly - through a telescope (Tuam Herald 9 September 1843, p3).

63. Tuam Herald 17 June 1843 p3. Blake of Oran Castle and Athy of Renville were also mentioned as Repealers (Galway Vindicator 26 April 1848, p2).

64. Ibid, 27 May 1843 p2; Correspondence on superseding of magistrates from the commissions of the peace in Ireland, H.C. 1843, Ll, 29.; C.G. Duffy, Young Ireland: a fragment of Irish history 1840-5, p251-2.

65. Ibid 5 August 1843 p 3.

O'Connor Blake of Towerhill[66] who owned a large estate in Galway; Sir M.D. Bellew, and Francis Comyn, whose house at Woodstock, Moycullen, was a resort of leading members of the Repeal movement[67]. John O'Neill of Bunowen Castle gave up his commission as magistrate in protest at the government's attitude to Repeal and Clanricarde in the Lords attacked the policy of dismissing magistrates for attending Repeal meetings[68]. Ffrench, Bellew, Comyn and O'Neill were restored as magistrates in 1846[69].

The plight of Ireland in 1848 prompted Lord Ffrench to utter grim warnings of civil war and even the setting up of a republic. The gentry themselves did not escape the ravages of the Famine and consequent fever. Victims included Thomas Martin of Ballinahinch, Robert Gregory of Coole, John Nolan of Ballinderry, Paul Dolphin of Turoe and Lord Dunsandle. When Lord Ffrench was restored to the commission of the peace in 1846 he told the government that he was attached to the British connection[70]. In a letter to the Repeal Association in March 1848 he stated that if the right of legislating for themselves were promptly and generously granted, the people of Ireland did not wish for any change in the form of the constitution. "On the other hand," he went on, "when hatred

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66. Ibid, 22 February 1845, p1, 6 September 1845 p 1.

67. Galway Vindicator 12 July 1873.

68. Tuam Herald 5 August 1843 p4; 22 July 1843 p 1 and editorial; Hansard, LXX, 1843, pp 1103-6. When the government allowed the Party Processions Act lapse in 1845 there was serious Orange rioting and in the Lords Clanricarde demanded the dismissal of an Antrim deputy lieutenant who presided over a Lisburn meeting of 300 Masters of Orange Lodges (Hansard, LXXXll, 1845, p 652-3).

69. Ibid 22 August 1846 p3.

70. Tuam Herald 22 August 1846, pp 2,3, 29 August p1.

of foreign oppression makes us strongly sympathise with men, who openly profess their intention of overthrowing the English government in Ireland, and glory in having spoken the language of sedition, it has already to my thinking, become a bond of union - it is a cement that will permanently connect bodies which do not naturally cohere; and if England do not, by concession, anticipate the determination of united millions, a severance of legislatures will not be the only separation contemplated. Our demands, therefore, if not now gratified, a civil war is the inevitable consequence, which will, probably end in total separation, and in the establishment of a Republican form of government"[71]. At the same time a meeting of the most substantial landed proprietors was called during the assizes to petition parliament for reform of the poor law system. One of the nine resolutions read-

> Resolved - that fully convinced of the utter incapacity of an English Legislature (owing to its profound ignorance of our social condition) to frame laws which would either remedy the awful miseries of the people, or preserve the property of the country, we hereby pledge ourselves to use henceforth our best efforts to procure a Domestic Legislation, whose knowledge of our condition, and sympathy with our wants, will ensure the enactment of laws calculated to meet the dreadful exigencies of the country.

Lord Ffrench's advice to the Repeal Association was that if the government persisted in a policy of repression "the association would not then interfere to prevent the people raising their demands - and these demands, I have little hesitation to say, would then be a total separation from Great Britain, and the establishment of a Republic".

The most resolute opponent of popular movements was Denis Kelly of Castle Kelly. In 1832 he headed a band of shillelah - wielding tenantry against Lord Ffrench at an anti - Tithe

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71. Ibid, 1 April 1848, p1, 8 April, p 2, 15 April p1.

rally[72]. In 1843 he ordered the police and military into Ballygar to protect his tenantry from being forced to attend a Repeal meeting in Roscommon[73]. Kelly had been the only member of the grand jury who refused to sign a Protestant petition in 1825 in favour of Emancipation[74]. Kelly was surpassed in severity by Rev. John O'Rorke of Moylough. In 1826 he processed "one hundred poor wretches" for non-payment of tithes and was opposed by the Hon. Gonville Ffrench and Eneas McDonnell[75]. Petitions were sent to parliament about his neglect of his Foxford parishioners[76]. His conduct was criticised by O'Connell in a speech in Galway[77]. Some Catholic gentry who refused to pay tithes included the Nolans of Ballinderry, Blakes of Cregg Castle[78] and Martin J. Blake of Ballyglunin[79]. A large detachment of military came to Ballyglunin and impounded stock in payment of the sum claimed. Liberal Protestant gentry supported Catholic gentry in their opposition to tithes. For example tithe and repeal meetings in Galway were attended by Martin J. Blake who was Catholic and Valentine Blake and John D'Arcy of Clifden who were

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72. Connaught Journal 19 April 1832 p 2, 23 April p3.

73. Tuam Herald 26 August 1843 p2.

74. Connaught Journal 18 August 1825 p 3.

75. Ibid 26 October 1826 editorial. This paper claimed he had read the Riot Act "and shot our poor people like dogs" (ibid, 22 September 1828 p2).

76. Hansard, XXll, 1830, p259: Connaught Journal 11 March 1830 editorial, 29 March p 2. Lord Mountcashel presented the Foxford petitions to the Lords (ibid, 13 May 1830 pl).

77. Tuam Herald 24 November 1838 pl. Tithe cases were defeated in 1835 (ibid, 29 October 1835 p2).

78. Connaught Journal 23 January 1834 editorial.

79. Tuam Herald 22 July 1837.

Protestants[80].

The dominant factor in north Galway was the large number of Tribal gentry who were either Catholic or liberal Protestant in alliance with Catholic families like the Bellews and Burkes. Some Burke families were Protestant and Tory such as the Burkes of Ballydugan younger sons of whom became clergymen, one marrying into the Guinness family. The situation was different in east and south Galway because of the presence of large landowners like Clancarty, Clanricarde and Burke of Marble Hill. This meant that people other than gentry were active in meetings. For instance a reform meeting in Loughrea was attended by Rev. Dr. Coen, J.H. Ridge a solicitor, Laurence Fahy a merchant, Rev. Mr. Gannon O.D.C., Edmond Silk a merchant and Michael Winter a journalist[81]. A Galway Liberal Club meeting in Tuam, by way of contrast, had M.J. Blake as president, John Browne of Tuam secretary, John Nolan of Ballinderry, Pierce Blake of Corofin, John J. Bodkin of Kilcloony, Andrew Nolan of Ballybanagher, Major Burke of Tuam and Michael Blake Bermingham of Dalgin - all gentry[82].

John Mitchel in his Last Conquest of Ireland asserted that nine-tenths of the people of Galway were Repealers, but "the landlords of the city and of the rural district around were principally of the sort called 'Catholic gentry', - the very worst class perhaps, of the Irish aristocracy". "The Irish gentry," continued Mitchell, "almost unanimously volunteered addresses denouncing Repeal and Repealers, and pledged themselves to maintain the Union"[83]. O'Connell said of the gentry in Galway that they "were one day Repealers and the

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80. Connaught Journal 10 April 1834, p 2, 3, 21 April p 2.

81. Ibid, 29 September 1831 p2.

82. Ibid, 14 May 1835, p 2, 17 December 1835 p2.

83. Last conquest of Ireland, pp 147, 150.

next nothing[84]". The Members of Parliament listed as Repealers included A.H. Lynch, M. J. Blake, Sir Valentine Blake, Anthony O'Flaherty and Sir Thomas Burke of Marble Hill. Burke's father, Sir John Burke, was noted for his political independence[85]. He "gave the patronage of his high name, influence, and station in society to the Catholic Rent, the Catholic Association, and other measures recommended by O'Connell, at a moment when many others of the Roman Catholic aristocracy stood aloof from them..."[86]. Sir Thomas Burke was accused of being the lackey of his uncle Lord Clanricarde and the Whigs[87]. He was elected to Parliament in 1847 on the strength of Clanricarde. In the same election Christopher St. George of Tyrone was elected in the Tory interest through the support of Lord Dunsandle, elevated to the peerage on the recent death of his father[88]. Gentry involved in the Young Ireland movement included John O'Neill of Bunowen[89] and Francis Comyn of Woodstock[90] who were council members. Martin O'Flaherty of Lisdona was also active in the movement. He was a solicitor in partnership with John Blake Dillon's brother. He bought land in the Incumbered Estates Court and became a

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84. Tuam Herald 1 April 1843 p 2.

85. T.U. Sadleir 'The Burkes of Marble Hill', Galway Arch. and Hist. Soc. Jn. Vlll (1913-14) p 8.

86. Connaught Journal 19 August 1830.

87. Tuam Herald 3 April 1852 p3.

88. Ibid, 14 August 1847, editorial.

89. C.G. Duffy, Young Ireland: a fragment of Irish history p 342; Ibid, Four years of Irish history, pp 164, 180, 194.

90. Ibid, Four years of Irish history, pp 134, 363, 406. Comyn is described as "wealthy and influential" (R. Davis, The Young Ireland movement, Dublin 1987, p120). He sold land in the Incumbered Estates Court, but retained almost 13,000 acres.

magistrate[91]. He married a daughter of Richard O'Gorman the Young Irelander[92]. O'Flaherty went to America to raise funds for the movement and is mainly remembered as a relation of Eva O'Kelly - "Eva of the Nation" - who was likely influenced by his nationalism[93].

Political issues in the decades after the Famine included the demand for tenant right, income tax, and the abolition of the Protestant Establishment. Occasional interest was shown in European affairs. For instance Lord Wallscourt was described as "an advanced patriot" in 1848 and accompanied a deputation to France to congratulate the new French Republic on its regaining power[94]. Wallscourt chaired a meeting of the Irish Confederation in Dublin in 1848 and hoped the confederation would see the necessity of imitating the French resolution for the organisation of labour to secure to the labourer and artisan a fair share of the produce of their toil[95]. Wallscourt, Sir William Gregory, and Robert Blake-Forster claimed to have had sympathy for tenant right. Gregory, possibly suffering from remorse over the unpopular 'quarter-

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91. He was also a member of the County Club.

92. Tuam Herald 12 May 1923; Galway Vindicator 15 March 1899.

93. O'Flaherty was a friend of T.F. Meagher and went to America in 1848 to work for the movement (Tuam Herald 19 August 1848 p 2).

94. The deputation consisted of William Smith O'Brien, T.F. Meagher, Richard O'Gorman, and Lord Wallscourt. They were received by Martin Mc Dermott, Paris correspondent of the Nation (Tuam Herald 31 January 1914 p 4).

95. Galway Vindicator 8 March 1848 p4. The Vindicator had referred to Wallscourt as among those "who have at length begun to see in the ruin of their own interests, and the desolation which broods over their native land, the bitter fruits of alien usurpation and of their Country's provincialism" (ibid 4 September 1847 p2).

acre-clause' and selling Kinvara to the merchant Comerford, became a tenant - righter and in 1863 introduced a bill to provide some stability of tenure[96]. Blake-Forster, who sold in the Incumbered Estates Court, also recognised tenant - right on his estate[97]. These were very probably isolated cases. Not so isolated was the attendance of Catholic gentry at a public meeting in Galway in 1851 to protest at the "Penal Laws" policy of the Russell cabinet in introducing the Ecclesiastical Titles Act[98]. The passage of that measure had been opposed by the Catholic Defence Association which in Galway had support from Catholic gentry such as Anthony O'Flaherty and the Burkes of Danesfield[99]. Religious divisions became heightened with the strong support of the Catholic hierarchy for the candidature of Captain Thomas Bellew in 1852[100]. Divisions among the clergy however, left the way open for the restoration of the gentry's electoral influence and the unpopular Bellew was defeated by Sir William Gregory in 1857[101]. A temporary switch to local issues was seen in the election of John Orrell Lever in Galway in 1859. Lever had worked to make Galway a transatlantic port and had

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96. J. M. Hone, 'Sir William Gregory', Studies, XLlV (1955) p340. Clonbrock stigmatised Gregory's views as those of an "advanced Radical" (Jenkins, Sir William Gregory of Coole: the biography of an Anglo-Irishman, pl82).

97. Galway Vindicator, 8 October 1851 p 2.

98. Ibid, 5 March 1851 p 2.

99. Ibid, 20 December 1851 p 2.

100. Jenkins, Sir William Gregory, pp 116-119.

101. Sir W. Gregory, An autobiography, pl63 (quoted in J.H. Whyte, The Independent Irish Party 1850-9, pp 169-171). Bellew's unpopularity arose from his having voted for the introduction of income tax to Ireland.

the support of the influential Fr. Peter Daly[102]. Church disestablishment was supported by Sir William Gregory and Martin J. Blake[103], but opposed by Clanricarde. In addition to local and national issues the Catholic gentry were also interested in European affairs as for instance in the attack on the Papal states from Italian nationalism. Catholic gentry spoke at a great meeting in Galway in 1870 to express sympathy for the Pope[104]. Their sympathy over the fall of the Papacy's temporal power was, however, soon to give way to serious concern for their own survival from a radical challenge to their political power.

The great political challenge to the gentry, Catholic and Protestant, came in 1872 when Colonel Nolan of Ballinderry, Tuam, stood as the popular candidate against the landlord candidate Captain le Poer Trench. As early as 1830 the English statesman James Bicheno pointed out that the Irish gentry were losing influence to the clergy. The clergy were becoming "the lords paramount in politics as well as religion"[105]. A Galway Liberal club meeting in Tuam in 1835 declared in a resolution "that the exemplary Catholic clergy... be enrolled as honourary members of the county of Galway Liberal club and .... use their influence in their several parishes, to procure members for, and promote the

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102. K.T. Hoppen, Elections, politics and society in Ireland 1832-1885, pp 445-6; ibid., 'National politics and local realities in mid-nineteenth-century Ireland', in A. Cosgrove and D. McCarthy, eds. Studies in Irish History presented to R. Dudley Edwards. pp 200-1.

103. Galway Mercury 8 December 1855 p 2.

104. Tuam Herald 26 November 1870 p 1. In 1860 the Pope's collection from the archdiocese of Tuam amounted to £3250 (ibid 30 June 1860 p2).

105. Ireland and its economy; being the result of observations made in a tour through the country in ... 1829 (London 1830) p137 - 8.

patriotic objects of this Club"[106]. In 1843 O'Connell read a letter from a Galway priest which stated - "It remains for the clergy to engage more ardently in the struggle, and supply the place of the gentry, who may still continue to neglect their duty"[107]. Colonel Nolan himself made interesting comments on the political influence of the clergy during the debates on the Parliamentary and Municipal Elections Bill of 1872. He admitted that the proposed Ballot Act would not deprive priests of their influence. But their power did not spring from their religious functions. "Catholic priests", Nolan claimed, "often acted as notaries, reconcilers of differences, and bankers, and these things gave rise to nine-tenths of their political influence"[108]. In December 1871 a joint conference of the clergy of the dioceses of Tuam, Clonfert, Galway, Kilmacduagh and Kilfenora issued resolutions supporting Nolan for election and expressing the hope that landlords would allow their tenants to vote according to their conscience. Never before, claimed the Galway Vindicator, had a Galway candidate such unanimous clerical support, and the paper declared that the clergy were "the natural leaders of the people in politics as well as morals"[109].

Sir William Gregory stated in his Autobiography that the 1872 election contest "utterly annihilated the political power of the landed gentry of Galway, and sowed the seeds of bitterness

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106. Connaught Journal 14 May 1835 p 3.

107. Tuam Herald 1 April 1843 p2. There was strong clerical involvement in the Repeal movement (J.H. Whyte, 'The influence of the Catholic clergy on elections in nineteenth-century Ireland', English Historical Review, lXXV, 1960, p 243).

108. Hansard, CClX, 1872, cols 479-480.

109. Galway Vindicator 9 December 1871. Clanricarde had wanted Christopher Talbot Redington to stand, but he declined (Fr. P. K Egan was told this by Fr. E. MacFhinn who had examined Clanricarde papers).

between them and the priesthood...[110]" Although his background and family connections were strongly Tory Gregory was disgusted in his youth by the excesses of Dublin Orange mobs and he had represented Galway as a Liberal since 1857. Gregory supported disestablishment, security of tenure and an alliance with the Catholic clergy and he regarded the Catholic gentry of Galway as "respected, true and just in all their dealings, and eminently loyal"[111]. The vacancy in Galway was caused when Gregory was appointed governor of Ceylon. Nolan's selection was opposed by the squirearchy not so much because he was a Home Ruler but because they regarded him as a traitor to his class for having an eviction case on his estates submitted to arbitration. The Portacarron estate, near Oughterard, had been acquired when Nolan's great - grandfather married into the Frenches of Portacarron. Nolan had set these lands to William Murphy, a middleman who farmed over 5000 acres, and Murphy, apparently due to a misunderstanding with the tenants, deliberate or otherwise, evicted a number of them in 1866. An arbitration court was set up with powers from the Court of Exchequer and consisting of Sir John Gray, A.M. Sullivan and Father Lavelle. When the court found against Nolan he accepted the verdict and undertook to have the evicted tenantry compensated[112]. The Freeman's Journal- which was owned by Sir John Gray - commented on his action: "He had set a noble example to the landed proprietors of

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110. Autobiography, p142.

111. Jenkins, Sir William Gregory, pp 184, 187. He believed that "the ties of religion are the only influences which can beneficially affect the unruly will and lawlessness of the Irish lower classes" (Autobiography, p123).

112. For Nolan and his tenantry see Tuam Herald 3 June 1871, pp 1, 2 and supplement; 10 June p 1, 17 June p 1, 24 June p 2 (text of Portacarron award) and supplement; 15 July p 2, 13 July p 2, 9 November p 1. The Portacarron tenants were not restored, although they were compensated (ibid 10 August 1895 p4).

Ireland, which, if largely followed, would put an end forever to the discontent and social disorganisation which so largely prevail throughout the country".

Nolan stated in an election speech: "I consider myself essentially one of yourselves - one of the people, and one of the much persecuted Irish race"[113]. A similar sentiment was expressed by Mitchell Henry in 1871 when he referred to himself as one of the common people and was elected as the first Home Rule member for Galway[114]. Captain Blake-Forster, approving of Henry's democratic sentiments, said they had always been electing aristocratic people to parliament and they had done little for this over - taxed country. He was happy they had now elected a gentlemen of "wealth and talent"[115]. Henry was of a merchant and professional background and was a Protestant. However Nolan's historical credentials and family history were more in tune with the nature of the election campaign of 1871-72. The Nolans had been in Connaught for five centuries and came originally from the barony of Forth - either of Carlow or Wexford. Although long established as merchants in Galway the Nolans were not regarded as one of the Tribal families thought they had some overseas links. The family from which Colonel Nolan descended appears to have been displaced in Ballinrobe by the Cuff family and were transplanted to Ballinderry, near Tuam, in the Cromwellian period[116]. The Ballinderry estate comprised almost 7,000 areas. Another branch of the family was seated at Ballybanagher, also near Tuam. A further branch was seated at Lugboy near Ballyhaunis in Mayo. The Lugboy estate comprised almost 10,000 acres. There was a strong Catholic

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113. Ibid 3 February 1872 p1.

114. Tuam Herald 25 February 1871 p2.

115. Ibid.

116. 'Nolan of Ballinderry' (Burke's landed gentry of Ireland, 1912).

tradition in the Nolan family[117]. The protestantism of the Trench family on the other hand was a useful weapon in their opponents' armoury in a county like Galway where nine - tenths of the electors were Catholic. Anti - Trench posters were printed which claimed they were Cromwellians; that one of them had shot St. Ruth at Aughrim; and that they were guilty of corrupt behaviour at the passing of the Act of Union. The pro - Nolan campaign against the Trenches was so hostile that Charles Blake - Forster, the youthful writer, took it upon himself to correct the errors of historical fact in a letter which he published in the Galway Express on 17 February 1872. Nolan and Trench were both officers and gentlemen, though Trench did not have a landed estate as he was the 3rd son of Lord Clancarty. Nolan was known in military circles purely as the inventor of the "Nolan Range - Finder"[118].

The political opposition of the gentry and aristocracy to Nolan was such that the Houses of Clanricarde and Clancarty forgot their traditional feud and, faced with a common enemy, joined forces in what the Nation described as the "Galway league of feudal vengeance". Direct reference was made to Nolan's restitution when the gentry met at Loughrea to discuss the forthcoming election. A circular was distributed by Sir Thomas Burke of Marble Hill which bluntly stated the landlord's attitude to the political and social order:-

> Almost all classes in this country live by the land and the landlord... and this being the case I cannot see any reason why the landlords alone should be debarred from any interference in politics, or why their tenants should be allured from their guidance and advice... persons who would go between landlord and tenant should remember that no party

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117. One was Mayo agent to the Confederation of Kilkenny. Another, Monsignor Edmond Nolan of the Lugboy family, was chamberlain to Pope Leo Xlll (Who's Who 1927).

118. Tuam Herald 26 February 1870 p 2, 25 March 1876, p2.

is so much interested in the real prosperity of the tenant as his landlord. I now express my hope and confidence that none of my tenants will vote against my will for any canditate and I feel certain they will not forget my conduct to them when they required both forbearance and indulgence. I will wish all my tenants who have votes to give them to Captain Trench. He is as liberal as his cousin, W. Gregory... Give a wise vote now, while you can. You may soon be without one; for, if Captain Nolan's system of Restoration or Restitution becomes law, you will have to restore the land you got from your neighbours, twenty - five years since, when they implored for assistance to go to America... do not listen to Agitators, who would, if they could, reduce this country to the deplorable condition of France. And recollect, when the Election is over, you have no one to expect any favour from but your landlord or his agent[119].

The Loughrea meeting was headed by Lords Clanricarde, Clonbrock, Westmeath and Dunsandle and was chaired by Sir Thomas Burke of Marble Hill. Clanricarde stated that he did not consider himself bound by the House of Commons rule which forbade the interference of peers in elections. He said he had informed Nolan that he considered his actions very indiscreet, very imprudent and mischievous to the county, and he hinted at the need for gentry solidarity. "I wish to see the landed gentry of the county acting together; and so far as it becomes my position, and so far as it would be right for me to act I for one wish to act with them," he declared, and pledged his support for the gentry's candidate. Further insight into Clanricarde's attitude is contained in a statement made to the election enquiry by Captain Daly of Raford. He said that Clanricarde had left it to the gentry to select a candidate - "he said that the gentry of the county had supported his family so long, that not having any

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119. Ibid, 16 December 1871, pp 2, 3.

particular interest in any of the candidates he would like to support any one whom the country gentlemen brought forward and supported... I think Lord Clanricarde was lukewarm in the matter; he said... that he had no great interest in the election and that he merely gave his support to the choice of the gentry..."[120]. The strongest critical voice at the Loughrea meeting was that of Valentine O'Connor Blake of Towerhill. He owned property in seven Galway baronies in addition to his Mayo estate. Blake supported Nolan and said the freeholders wanted him as candidate. He objected to the manner in which the Loughrea meeting had been convened. Captain Nolan's friends had been excluded and he accused Daly of Raford of not admitting merchants on the grounds that they were not gentlemen. Blake said the Catholic landlords were absent and the gentry had been summoned to the meeting to be plainly told that in order to oppose Nolan they must vote for Trench. Martin McDonnell seconded Nolan at the meeting and spoke strongly against the proceedings. Francis Comyn of Woodstock condemned the liberal gentry for having gone over to the Clancarty camp. Comyn and Blake, it will be recollected, were two of the magistrates dismissed in 1843 for Repeal activities.

There were very few gentry present at most of the pro - Nolan election meetings. The exceptions included Captain McDonagh of Wilmount who attended the Portumna meeting[121] and George Jenings of Ironpool who was at the Milltown meeting[122]. John Fallon of Netterville Lodge, who attended a Newbridge meeting[123], said he had known Nolan at school and university.

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120. Galway county election petition: minutes of evidence, H.C. 1872, XLVIII, p 171. Cited as Election petition evidence.

121. Tuam Herald 20 January 1872 p 2.

122. Ibid 27 January p 2.

123. Ibid 3 February p 1.

A Loughrea meeting was chaired by Charles Blake of Towerhill and James Smyth of Masonbrook and Henry Dolphin of Turoe were also present[124]. Charles Blake also attended the Ballinasloe meeting which was chaired by John O'Shaughnessy of Birchgrove[125]. On nomination day Trench's box was full of gentry and Nolan's box full mainly of parish priests[126]. The following gentlemen however were also present: Oliver Dolphin of Turoe, Nolan's seconder; Thomas Browne of Brownsgrove, his agent; Francis Comyn of Woodstock; Charles Blake of Towerhill; George Burke of Danesfield; Martin McDonnell of Dunmore; Captain Patrick Cowan; Peter Dolphin of Danesfort; John Nolan of Garra; Llewellyn Blake of Cloghballymore; John Browne of Claran; James Browne of Carnacregg, Michael Nolan of Ballybanagher and a few unidentified Blakes and Kirwans. Some of these were smaller gentry, some were Nolan's own relations, and most were members of very old Catholic families like the Dolphins and Brownes of Claran. However the bulk of the Catholic gentry - over thirty - supported Trench. A lesser number of Catholic gentry remained neutral. These included Bodkin of Annagh; Basterot of Duras; Burke of Ower; Chevers of Killyan; Ffrench of Ballinamore; Joyce of Corgary; McDermott of Ramore; Lynch of Renmore; Redington of Kilcornan; Redington - Roche of Ryehill and Smyth of Masonbrook[127]. Nolan gave the following slightly vague analysis of the divisions: "... when I say that the landlords would be against us, I mean that the active, stirring men of the county, who are a good deal about, and talk and settle things among themselves, were against me; but as regards a large number of landlords out of the county, who for some reason do not mix with the stiring, active

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124. Ibid 13 January p 3.

125. Ibid 20 January p 1.

126. Ibid 10 February p 1.

127. Election petition evidence, pp 447, 596.

people, I had a very fair share of their support"[128]. John Blake of Rathville, agent to Clanricarde, said that "all the better classes of society were one way, and that all the others were the other way"[129]. Nolan stated that the Catholic and liberal gentry said they would have supported him were it not for the Portacarron award[130]. There were also opposing views about the voting intentions of the freeholders. Blake of Rathville claimed that if the tenantry had been free from clerical influence nine - tenths would have voted as they were asked, i.e. for Trench. Charles Blake of Towerhill on the other hand said that if there had been no interference the people would still have voted for Nolan[131].

In the election Nolan secured 2823 votes and Trench secured 658 votes. Trench petitioned against the result on the grounds of corrupt practices alleged against Nolan and his agents. The ensuing trial went on in Galway for fifty - seven days. The presiding judge, William Keogh, stated that Nolan had not been duly elected and "had been by himself and his agents guilty of undue influence... within the meaning of the Corrupt Practices Prevention Act 1854". He went on to state that intimidation and undue influence had extensively prevailed; that thirty - six people headed by Nolan, his brother Sebastian, Bishops Duggan, Mc Evilly, and Archbishop Mc Hale and the rest of the clergy "were guilty, at, and previous to said election, of undue influence within the meaning of the provisions of said Act"; that twenty - two of the clergy "by threats and denunciations of temporal injury and spiritual punishment, uttered during or immediately after Divine service, and from the altars of their respective places

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128. Ibid p 736.

129. Ibid p255.

130. Ibid p 805.

131. Ibid p 604.

of worship... intimidated and unduly influenced great numbers of the Roman Catholic electors.. to vote for.. John Philip Nolan, or to refrain from voting against him ... that numbers of such electors who had promised to vote for ... William le Poer Trench afterwards had been compelled to vote for ... Nolan, or to refrain from voting for Trench, and had avowed they were so compelled by said intimidation and undue influence"[132]. Having unseated Nolan, Judge Keogh referred the case of Trench's election to the Court of Common Pleas which declared him elected on 11 June 1872. This was the outline of the event which was described in the Freeman's Journal as "unique in the history of the mutual relations of Irish landlords and tenants".

Nolan had identified himself with the interests of the tenantry who then engaged in a historic revolt against the political domination of the gentry. Of all the Catholic gentry who were active on the liberal front in the Emancipation period the Blakes of Towerhill alone were the only prominent supporters of Nolan. The gentry and landlords were taken completely by surprise at the violence which was directed against them during the election campaign and on polling day. Their social rank as gentry was ignored and their economic and political role as landlords was attacked. Sir Thomas Burke of Marble Hill received threatening letters accusing him of intending "to make the whole county vote for that Orange tyrant, Captain Trench.." He was taunted as being "a real Protestant", both himself and all belonging to him, although he was a Roman Catholic. Burke and his family withdrew to England having appointed an agent and set his farms[133]. John Kirwan of Castle Hacket was followed by a mob and hooted at in Tuam. Cries of "Down with the Kirwans" were directed at him and he was pelted with sugar in a Galway

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132. Ibid p iii.

133. Ibid, p 134.

shop[134]. Sir Arthur Guinness was severely attacked with stones as he walked into Oughterard with his tenantry[135]. As in the Ribbon, Terry Alt and Land League days tenant hostility made no distinction between Catholic and Protestant gentry. Thomas Joyce of Rahasane and his family were barred from their pew at Craughwell church and were shouted at in the street[136]. The family pew of the Burkes of Ower at Claren chapel was broken up[137]. Efforts were made to interfere with fox hunting, as appeared by the evidence of Captain Daly of Raford. Burton Persse of Moyode had his carriage stopped and stoned. One of the mob leaders named Barrett shouted: "To hell with the Persses; down with the Trenches, and down with the landlords"[138]. Barrett's son had been tried in 1869 on a charge of attempting to murder Captain Thomas Lambert of Castle Lambert[139].

The violence of 1871 showed that beneath the surface of rural society there existed a hidden reservoir of anti gentry-landlord feeling which awaited effective leadership. Sir George Morris was asked by Judge Keogh to describe the general state of the country at the time. Morris, a large landagent Roman Catholic and Irish speaker, replied: "I think that it was quite approaching a rebellion - a revolution - I can describe it in no other language"[140]. Morris and Captain Blake - Forster were forced to take shelter in a Kinvara hotel when a mob threatened them. "Up to that time I had been vain

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134. Ibid p 82.

135. Ibid p 86.

136. Ibid p119 - 120.

137. Ibid, p244.

138. Ibid, p 88.

139. Report of the trial of Peter Barrett for shooting at.. Captain Thomas Eyre Lambert.. (Dublin 1870).

140. Election petition evidence, p 180.

enough to think that I was very popular in that district..." Morris stated. The mob were shouting: "Your life is not safe if you come out... you dog we will have your life... you jumper"[141].

Morris may have incurred unpopularity by his accepting the agency on the estate of Sir Thomas Burke of Marble Hill. The gentry testified to Judge Keogh as to the disturbed state of the county. William Burke of Ower said that, even in the chapel "the people seemed to be boiling over with excitement; they were literally mad". According to Burke, Fr. Conway of Headford called the landlords shoneens: "He said that people need not be the least afraid of them now; that no landlord would make his voters vote; and that they need not be afraid of the magistrates, for that a resident magistrate had come down who would supersede all their power for three days"[142]. Conway was a Fenian sympathiser and one of Nolan's chief supporters. The more extremist Fr. Lavelle took a very active part in Nolan's campaign. These factors helped to isolate Nolan even among his fellow Catholic gentry. There was no doubt as to how he was regarded by Protestant gentry. Captain Nolan in his evidence stated that Denis Kirwan of Castle Hacket said that both he and his associates "ought to be shot like mad dogs"[143]. Judge McDonnell Bodkin concluded that the result of the case was "the complete collapse of landlord political domination, not merely in Galway, but through the rest of Ireland, while the alliance of the priests and people

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141. p 357. It seems odd that this epithet should have been thrown at Morris in view of the generosity of his family towards the Catholic Church in Galway. For a detailed statement about this, by Lord Morris, see Tuam Herald 6 October 1900, p 4.

142. Election petition evidence, p 153. Fr Conway called Burke of Ower a "Catholic - Orange landlord". For a traditional Catholic attitude to the election controversy see Rev. T Brett, Life of Dr. Patrick Duggan bishop of Clonfert (Dublin 1921) pp 62 - 69.

143. Ibid p 735.

was closer and stronger than ever in furtherance of Land Reform and Home Rule"[144].

The editor of the Tuam Herald, R. J. Kelly claimed- amazingly, in view of the evidence - that religion did not enter into the 1872 election and pointed out that the other sitting member for Galway, Mitchell Henry, was a Protestant and an Englishman and the two sitting members for the town were both Protestants[145]. Colonel Nolan represented Galway as a Nationalist from 1874 to 1895, but in the 1892 campaign changed times were seen in the clergy's efforts to oust him as a Parnellite and landlord. In court proceedings following disturbances in Tuam, clergy who had backed Nolan in 1872 were now charged with attacking him so fiercely that some of them had their teeth knocked out in scuffles[146]. In the 1874 Galway town election F.H. O'Donnell beat Pierce Joyce, junior, of Mervue. "The gentry to a man opposed us", Bishop McEvilly of Galway wrote to Archbishop Cullen of Dublin, "because they did not wish to see one not belonging to the upper 10,000 represent them... their idea is that the clergy should retire to the sacristy and say their prayers"[147]. McEvilly said that O'Donnell's win was a great triumph for the clergy and Catholic education, although he was unseated on petition after the election. A meeting of the gentry had taken place- ironically - at Clanricarde's funeral in Portumna to support Joyce. There was no doubt, commented McEvilly, "but the Queen's College party and the Galway gentry, whose power is

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144. M. McDonnell Bodkin, Famous Irish trials (Dublin 1928), pp 42 - 43.

145. Tuam Herald 16 July 1904. See also E.R. Norman, The Catholic Church and Ireland in the age of rebellion 1859-1873, pp422-5.

146. Bane, pp 658 - 660. Nolan first introduced Parnell to the House of Commons in 1875 and always remained a staunch supporter.

147. ibid, p117.

now ruined, are urging on Mr Joyce senior, and acting on his vanity, in order to get some grounds... for passing a law altogether excluding priests from any share in elections"[148]. Although however the political power of the gentry was in decline and deference to pedigree and rank was being undermined by modern politics nevertheless the strength of tradition in Galway is illustrated by the return of the Hon. Michael Morris as a Unionist in 1900.

In the Land War the main contrast was between the majority of the gentry who settled with their tenants by 1888 and the intransigency of Lewis of Ballinagar[149], Burke of Marble Hill and Lord Clanricarde. These employed the Property Defence Association to carry out evictions[150]. Burke however surrendered to the 'Plan of Campaign' and refunded the cost of maintaining his evicted tenants[151]. Other proprietors who paid legal costs included Lords Dunsandle, Wallscourt and Westmeath, and Pollok of Lismany. Sir William Mahon of Castlegar granted 45% reduction, paid all costs and cancelled all arrears[152]. Clanricarde (last Marquess) had replaced his deceased elder brother, Lord Dunkellin, as Liberal M.P. for Galway in 1867 and he remained a Liberal until the passing of

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148. ibid, p 120.

149. Special Commission Act 1888: speeches, proceedings and evidence, i, 475 - 483, ii, 99 et seq.

150. L. M. Geary, The plan of campaign 1886 - 1891 (Cork University Press, 1986) p15. Sir Henry Burke had not raised rents for forty years (W. S. Blunt, The land war in Ireland, London 1912, p 68).

151. L.P. Curtis, Coercion and conciliation in Ireland 1880-1892. A study in conservative unionism, (London 1963) p 239; Geary, Plan of campaign, pp 107, 158.

152. Geary, Plan of Campaign, pp 162, 170, 173, 178.

the Land Act of 1871[153]. He later wrote a letter to the Freeman's Journal in which he admitted that he was actuated by vindictiveness against his tenantry as a result of the last will of his father at his death in 1874[154]. His father had resented the fact that his tenantry had supported Nolan in the 1872 election and as a result rents were increased on the estate[155]. In December 1885 tenants requested 25% reduction from Clanricarde. He offered 20% abatement to his non-judicial tenants but refused to reduce judicial rents. Tenants demanded an all - round reduction of 40%. Clanricarde successfully defied all government pressure to reduce his rents. Finally, by act of parliament in 1909, the government gave the Congested Districts Board powers of compulsory land acquisition and the Land Court gave a judgement in favour of the Board acquiring the Clanricarde estate in 1915. During the 'Plan of Campaign' Clanricarde had defied Salisbury and Balfour. Balfour was also involved with another troubled estate at the opposite end of Galway. This was the Blake of Renvyle estate which was severely affected by the 'No Rent Manifesto'. The Blakes were forced to take in paying guests and a fund was set up with the support of Balfour[156].

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153. J. L. Hammond, Gladstone and the Irish nation, (London 1938) p 565. He was returned, unopposed, on a wave of sympathy for his deceased brother (Tuam Herald 14 Sept 1867 p2). This was another example of the endurance of tradition.

154. G. S. Lefevre, Combination and coercion (London 1890) pp 51, 65-6.

155. A Forgotten campaign: aspects of the heritage of South - East Galway (Woodford Heritage Group 1986) pp 6, 19. It was stated in the House of Commons that he had raised rents and withdrew custom from Portumna tradesmen after the 1872 election (Hansard, CCXll, col 1806).

156. Special Commission Act 1888: speeches, proceedings and evidence, i, 605-8; J. Stone, Connemara and the neighbouring spots of beauty and interest (Brighton 1906) p 80. Balfour was acquainted with Connemara (Mr. Balfour's tours in Connemara and

The unpopularity of the 2nd and last Marquess of Clanricarde was in total contrast with the popularity of his father the 1st Marquess. The 1st Marquess was a regular and prolific speaker in the House of Lords on a wide range of social and economic subjects on both national and local level. He also had an interest in matters of education and culture. He recommended to the Lords that the Carte and Carew manuscript collections be calendered and opened a discussion on the welfare of the Irish College in Paris[157]. He asked his fellow peers to order a return of books delivered to Trinity College Dublin under the Copyright Acts as well as an analysis of readership in the Library[158]. In politics he was a good enough liberal to hold office under Lord John Russell. Reference to Russell recalls the fact that Sir Thomas Redington of Kilcornan, although a Catholic, continued to hold office under Russell while he passed the anti - Catholic Ecclesiastical Titles Bill in 1851[159]. Clanricarde believed that the Established Church should be retained but that there should also be state provision for Roman Catholic clergy[160]. His views on the land question were stated at length during his presentation of his Tenure of Land (Ireland) Bill which aimed at the encouragement of voluntary contracts between landlords and tenants[161]. In general he blamed rural discontent on poverty and governmental neglect . "Until Ireland was allowed to share in a larger degree than she had

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Donegal, Dublin, 1890).

157. Hansard, CLXXVll, 1865, col 741; CCl, 1870, col 386.

158. Tuam Herald 20 July 1872 p 1.

159. G.P. Gooch, Later correspondence of Lord John Russell (London 1925) ii, 97; C. G. Duffy, My life in two hemispheres (London 1898), ii, 39.

160. Hansard, CLXXXI, 1866, col 1078 - 9; ClXXXII, col 405-6.

161. G. L. Lampson, A consideration of the state of Ireland in the 19th century (London 1907) p 332.

done hitherto in the prosperity of England, there would not be peace and quiet in the country". In spite of the Fenian rising and agitation he believed there was nothing to show that the relations between landlord and tenant were in general, other than cordial and satisfactory. He pointed to recent railway reports to prove that prosperity had grown despite political agitation[162]. He believed there was very little disaffection or disloyalty in Ireland and that Fenianism had little popular support. "Talk of an Irish Republic! The idea of a Republic was altogether contrary to the feelings and habits of the Roman Catholic Church and to the habits of the Irish people. The Irish people had no sympathy with anything of the sort"[163]. He did not believe that the small farmers of the West had any sympathy with conspiracy, the chief supporters of which were shop - boys and artisans. He stated that nothing would be "more unfortunate than that it would be instilled into the minds of the lower orders of people in Ireland that honour and glory and high patriotism were to be associated either with the late {Fenian] or former rebellions in that country"[164].

Clanricarde denounced tenant - right declaring that "it was altogether absurd to propose giving a tenant a vested interest in the lands he held belonging to another". He pointed to the evidence taken by a House of Lords select committee which "plainly showed the gross injustice and exaggeration and absurdity of the statements made by agitators as to exorbitant rents exacted by landlords and frequency of evictions in Ireland". He showed from published statistics that evictions were more frequent in those parts of the country where tenant

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162. Hansard, CLXXXll, col 408, CLXXXV, col 793 - 5.

163. Ibid, CLXXXI, col 1080.

164. Ibid, CLXXXIV, col 2087; CLXXXVll, col 366.

right prevailed than in those where it did not[165]. Clanricarde also made a fierce attack on the ideas of Bright and Mill. "Their propositions amounted to neither more nor less than to turn out all the men of capital in Ireland in order to put in a class of peasant proprietors who had no capital"[166]. He also defended the role of his own class in agricultural improvement.

Clanricarde's eldest son, Lord Dunkellin, was Liberal M.P. for Galway borough from 1857 to 1859 and for Galway county from 1865 until his death in 1867. The knowledge of India which Dunkellin gained while serving as military secretary to his uncle Lord Canning, the Governor General, was displayed in his maiden speech in the House of Commons on 17 May 1858. He spoke sympathetically in the State of Ireland debate on 27 February 1865, and on the Roman Catholic position during the University Education (Ireland) debate on 20 June 1865. T.P. O'Connor, the Irish Parliamentary Party politician and journalist, his views coloured by later political dislike of the 2nd marquess's stance, portrayed Dunkellin as a dandified rake with a face blotched by over - indulgence in the "splendid vices of the aristocracy"[167]. Dunkellin had in fact contracted a disease while serving in the Persian War under Sir James Outram a few years previously. In his obituary the Times paid tribute to his short but distinguished career: "In his regiment, in parliament,
in Ireland,in India, and in general society, Lord Dunkellin was universally popular; his abilities were far above the average, and, being embellished by a ready wit and keen sense of humour, would probably have led him to high distinction had

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165. Ibid, CLXXXX, col 1039 - 41. Clanricarde contrasted Cork and Clare with Antrim and Armagh.

166. Ibid, col 1042.

167. Memoirs of an old parliamentarian, London 1929, ii, 120-1.

not his career been crippled and ultimately cut short by constant ill - health"[168]. His close friend Sir William Gregory referred to the "widespread and universal popularity of Lord Dunkellin in the county Galway... He believed that nothing was so remarkable in the life of Lord Dunkellin as the attachment he had for Galway, and everything connected with Galway". Gregory believed that if Dunkellin had lived his "sound judgement and good sense" would have been exerted against the fatal election contest of 1872 [169]. There could be no greater contrast than that between Dunkellin and his younger brother, the last Clanricarde who acceded to the title in 1874, an absentee, miser and misanthrope. It was believed that he visited Galway only once, which was the occasion of his father's funeral in 1874. He was not present in 1869 when he was nominated as the uncontested Parliamentary candidate to fill the vacancy caused by his lamented brother's death. By 1879 Clanricarde had embarked on his stubborn course which made his name synonymous with bad landlordism.

The "Irish landlord interest" according to George Charles Mahon, had "nothing short of confiscation and possibly extirpation to expect at the hands of Mr Gladstone and his Communistic partisans"[170]. Mahon belonged to the Castlegar family, who were Conservatives and much under the influence of their relations, the Brownes of Westport[171]. The Dillons of Clonbrock were also related to the Mahons and they too were

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168. quoted in Tuam Herald 24 August 1867 p 2.

169. Ibid, 14 September 1867 p 2; Sir W. Gregory, An autobiography, p 142. Lady Gregory found "a great mass" of Dunkellin's letters at Coole after her husband's death, "and reading them I saw how devoted both Members had been to the interests of the County, how hard they had worked for anything that could benefit it or their constituents" (Lady Gregory, Coole, ed. C. Smythe, p85).

170. Mahon, Mahon history, pt 2, p155.

171. Ibid p 101.

Conservatives. The 3rd Lord Clonbrock was a representative peer for many years and attended debates when he was in London and went over specially at other times for any important division. However he never spoke in the House[172]. The 4th Lord Clonbrock was also elected a representative peer and this extended his influence and his work in the Irish Landlords' and Irish Unionist cause. He was much more politically minded than his father. He spent most of each summer in London and when Irish business came up to the Lords he attended the debates regularly and often spoke in the House[173]. He was chairman of the Landowners' Convention and of the Irish Unionist Alliance. The Martins of Ross were also Conservatives whereas their kinsmen of Ballinahinch were liberals. Both families however were on friendly terms and frequently visited each other[174].

On the eve of the first Home Rule Bill of 1886 an anonymous "Galway Landlord " warned that a settlement of the Land Question must precede Repeal of the Union. He could not "regard without alarm the first meeting of an Irish Parliament with a burning land question still raging in the country, with the controlling influence of a leader gone, each county division returning four members to Parliament with absolutely no Conservative element with a dozen agrarian theories agitating the public mind, and we will probably have an assembly composed of the wildest men the country contains from whose hands no institution will be safe, whose proceedings will leave the nation ruined and without credit again at the

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172. Dillons of Clonbrock, p 73.

173. Ibid, p 97.

174. Callwell, Old Irish life, pp 352-4. Robert Martin, Violet's eldest brother, did "valuable political work as a speaker and writer in the Unionist cause" (Somerville and Ross, Irish Memories, p 3).

feet of England"[175]. Christopher Talbot Redington of Kilcornan and Dermot O'Connor Donelan of Sylane seconded a Tuam board of guardians resolution in favour of the Home Rule Bill. The county grand jury proposed an anti - Home Rule resolution. Redington however proposed, as an amendment, that a large measure of self - government should now be granted. He said he objected to the introduction of political matters into the discussions of the grand jury, as they were a body in no way representing the people of the county. He pointed to the return of 86 out of 103 Irish members in the Home Rule interest as showing the inevitability of conceding some kind of local self - government. It should be the object of all who represent property and are in favour of the maintenance of law and order to insert in the scheme of self - government such provisions and guarantees as would safeguard those important interests. The Freeman's Journal said Redington's protest was "in its own way, one of the most notable and significant incidents in the recent history of the national movement. Mr. Redington is a type of the class which the 'loyalists'claim as peculiarly their own. He is an official Catholic. The son of an under secretary at the Castle, he is a commissioner of national education, a grand juror, and a landlord of considerable wealth"[176]. The Home Rulers among the gentry, including Redington, Donelan, Colonel Nolan, and Edward Martyn of Tulira were in a minority among their social class. Colonel Daly of Raford rebuked the Duke de Stacpoole for presuming to hold opinions of his own on the 1886 Home Rule Bill "despite the orthodox tenets of the gentry, who looked upon the Bill as a diabolical invention, and were also strongly adverse to any compulsory purchase of land..." Edward Martyn referrred to Daly as the "Last of the Barons". "He was indeed the last of his generation, an autocrat with the most

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175. Tuam Herald 2 January 1886 p 2.

176. Ibid 20 March 1886, p 1.

delightfully antiquated views"[177].

Seven years later on the occasion of the Home Rule Bill of 1893 Redington made a similar appeal to the reason and judgement of the grand jurors and proposed a similar amendment. His speech was heard with respectable attention and met with but slight applause, apparently from one individual[178]. There was, at the same time, a large assembly of county gentry of all strands, Kellys, Persses, Blakes, Frenches, D'Arcys, St Georges and Eyres, in what the press headed as an "Enthusiastic Meeting of Unionists in Galway"[179]. A large assembly of Galway ladies met to establish a branch of the Women's Unionist Alliance. Their President elect, the Hon. Mrs Dillon, said they had assembled "not only to give expression to their loyalty, but because of their deeprooted conviction that if ever Ireland was separated from England that that moment her downfall commenced"[180]. One of the chief spokesmen for the Catholic gentry was Sir Henry Grattan Bellew. Bellew and his fellow Catholics, Sir Henry Burke of Marble Hill and Lord Westmeath of Pallas, were on the general committee of the Unionist Convention for southern Ireland. Sir Henry Grattan Bellew in his speech to the Convention in June 1892 stated - "We loyal Catholics of Ireland are envious of the Protestant inhabitants of the North, who have up to this apparently got the credit of being the only loyal men in Ireland. I speak not as a landlord, but as a delegate from the West of Ireland, and I see before me my brother delegates, mostly Catholic and comprising farmers, who live by farming

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177. Stacpoole, Irish and other memories\, pp 14-15.

178. Tuam Herald 25 March 1893, p4. The report was relegated to the back page of the paper.

179. Ibid. The editorial condemned their attitude.

180. Ibid 29 July 1893 p 4.

only"[181]. William Burke, of the Catholic Burke of Ower family, in a draft speech prepared for the Unionist Convention stated:".. the Catholic Unionists of Galway, of whom I am one, will henceforth stand shoulder to shoulder with the Protestant Unionists of Belfast in defence of our common country, of our common liberties, and of the Union... Englishmen do not understand us; they have a great middle class that holds the balance between the two extremes. Save in the North we have no such middle class; and the lowest class therefore possess all the power... and it is to these - to the Boycotters, and the men of the Plan of Campaign - to those who coquetted with murderers - is it to these that the East and West and South and the mighty North will be handed over?"[182].

The next Home Rule Bill was attacked in the House of Lords in January 1913 by Lord Killanin. He declared that "even if every Orangeman was a Nationalist", he would still have great doubts about the necessity, or the wisdom, of Home Rule. The Irish were of course perfectly fit to govern themselves. But the terms of the Home Rule Bill were "most disadvantageous in Ireland". The Imperial Parliament "was capable and willing to do everything for Ireland that Ireland could do for herself, and in many respects better than an Irish Parliament could..."[183]. In May 1912 a Unionist meeting was held in Galway under the auspices of the Galway branch of the Irish Unionist Alliance. Lord Clonbrock, the chairman, declared

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181. Unionist Convention for Provinces of Leinster, Munster and Connaught, June 1892 (Dublin 1892) p 134. Bellew, "abandoning his previous unionist principles, signed the Plunket manifesto in favour of... Home Rule - a creditable and patriotic act which we would expect from the descendant of Henry Grattan" (Tuam herald 5 July 1919 p2).

182. N.L.I. Teeling papers: MS 20754. Sir William Teeling's mother was daughter of William Burke.

183. M. Wynne, An Irishman and his family: Lord Morris and Killanin (London 1937) pp 216 - 8. Maud Wynne was Lord Killanin's sister.

that the provisions of the Home Rule Bill were politically, socially and financially unsound and dangerous[184]. Other speakers included Sir William Mahon of Castlegar, Richard Berridge of Ballinahinch, Pierce Joyce of Mervue, Denis Daly of Dunsandle[185] and Captain Arthur Persse of Roxborough. The meeting was also attended by a large number of Galway ladies, including Lady Clonbrock. The Tuam Herald reported in November 1912 that Sir Henry Grattan Bellew, "and other prominent Unionists", had agreed that the Home Rule Bill should be accepted, subject to amendment[186]. Sir Henry believed that the Home Rule problem should be settled, not by legislation, but by agreement between the different parties. He accepted the parliamentary candidature for East Galway in 1914 and had become a Redmond supporter[187]. He expressed the view in a letter to the Daily Mail in 1919 that the future of Ireland was "very dark" and in 1920 he resigned as a magistrate and deputy lieutenant of the county in protest at the governmental regime[188]. Others who resigned their commissions included Lords Fingall and Ffrench - as his grandfather had done in 1843[189]. Lord Ffrench attacked English policy in Ireland in a letter addressed to the landlords in 1893. He stated that coercion had failed and he attacked those gentry who opposed Home Rule. "Would it not then be wise for the portion of the gentry of this county who have up to this time been lead so considerably astray to reconsider the course they ought to pursue... It behoves them

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184. Tuam Herald 1 June 1912, p 4.

185. Daly said he "had been talking to the peasants around Galway, and he found they had no particular wish for Home Rule".

186. Tuam Herald 2 November 1912, p 2.

187. Ibid 17 October 1914, p 2, He was however defeated in favour of a "Portumna publican".

188. Ibid 27 September 1919 p4, 21 August 1920 p2.

189. Ibid 5 July 1919 p 2.

to pursue their proper position by uniting in a desirable movement and joining the great body of the people of Ireland in securing a measure sure to place in a prosperous condition this county, which has been so dreadfully injured and impoverished by the legislation of the last 90 years"[190]. By the early years of the new century Lord Ffrench was out in China as head of a British railway construction firm. Ffrench had a scheming rival name Ginnell, a fellow Irishman who was an engineer but who was regarded by him as lacking in social and diplomatic gifts. "If Ginnell is at all representative of the class which would come into power if Home Rule were granted to Ireland", wrote Ffrench, "then I am a Unionist"[191].

Edward Martyn of Tulira and John Shawe - Taylor of Castle Taylor both played prominent roles in national affairs. It was largely owing to Shaw - Taylor that the Land Conference was brought about which resulted in the Wyndham Act of 1903[192]. He published an address to the Irish in America in the Boston Pilot which spoke of the hopes of the Land Conference and of the importance of settling the land question, while at the same time frankly avowing his Unionist

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190. Ibid 26 August 1893 p2.

191. H. Trevor - Roper, A Hidden Life: the enigma of Sir Edmund Backhouse (London 1976) pp 52-3. The remark may not have reflected Ffrench's view. Backhouse, employed by Ffrench as an interpreter, was a historian and authority on China. Backhouse donated his collection of books and manuscripts to the Bodleian Library and it became recognised as one of the finest Chinese libraries in Europe (Trevor - Roper, p 1).

192. For Shawe - Taylor and the Land Conference see M. Mac Donagh, The Life of William O'Brien (London 1928) pp 154 - 8; W. O'Brien, An olive branch in Ireland, pp 140-8; G. Lampson, Ireland in the 19th century, p 675; F.S.L. Lyons, The Irish parliamentary party 1890-1900 (London 1950) pp 99-100, 238.

principles[193]. Shawe - Taylor's first proposal was for a conference of magistrates of Ireland on the subject of the licensing laws. He was influenced by his observations of army life and his own strict Evangelical beliefs. He stated that fourteen millions yearly was the present drink bill in Ireland and, more generally, he called for "temperance of thought, feeling and action between the men who are called upon to control and conduct all Irish public affairs"[194]. Towards the end of 1903 Shawe - Taylor announced a conference to settle the University Question and the conflict in the North between Orangeism and Catholicism. This conference, he hoped, would follow the lines of the Land Conference and Magistrates Conference[195]. In a speech in Belfast he said that if the education difficulty could be settled the religious differences dividing Irishmen would disappear - "I am convinced that never in the history of Ireland was the spirit of mutual tolerance and forbearance more abroad than at present"[196]. In a speech at Queen's College Galway he deplored the fact that the college was almost three quarters empty - "How can Irishmen succeed and compete successfully with other members of the Empire when such education as is offered to them by the Queen's College is closed to them?"[197]. Shawe - Taylor spoke again at a Galway meeting on the Irish University Question. Other gentry present included Colonel Nolan of Ballinderry and William Daly of Dunsandle. Letters of apology were announced from others, including Lord Killanin, Sir George Morris, Sir Henry Grattan Bellew, Sir William Mahon, Sir Henry Burke, Acheson French and Pierce

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193. Tuam Herald, 14 February 1903 p4.

194. Ibid, 4 February 1905 p 4, 11 October 1902, p2.

195. Ibid 12 September 1903, p 2.

196. Ibid 19 September 1903 p 2.

197. Ibid p 4.

Joyce[198]. In his reply to Lord Oranmore's Times letter stating that Unionists were not getting fair play from Nationalists, Shawe - Taylor advocated "fair play in the present important juncture to every section of Irishmen, and especially to the country gentlemen, and professional and commercial sections of Irish life"[199]. He addressed a London meeting in favour of Irish industries in 1908 and brought about the Industrial Conference in Galway which stimulated local industries. He participated in the second Land Conference held with a view to restoring the evicted tenants and he was a member of the Reform Committee which launched the Dunraven Devolution Scheme[200]. Shawe - Taylor was narrowly defeated for a Galway parliamentary seat in 1906. Despite his public - minded approach to national issues John Dillon referred to him, during the election campaign, as a "black-blooded Cromwellian"[201].

William O'Brien said that Shawe - Taylor had risen above the prejudices of his class[202]. Edward Martyn of Tulira denounced both his class and their prejudices. He was originally hostile to the Land League, and his Beaumont and Oxford education "made him regard Gladstone as a dangerous demagogue

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198. Ibid, 9 January 1904 p 2.

199. Ibid, 26 November 1904 p4. Shawe-Taylor was jostled at a Dublin Orange meeting called to demand the resignation of Sir Anthony McDonnell the under-secretary (Ibid 20 May 1905 p 2).

200. Ibid 28 November 1908 p2, 8 July 1911 p4; Lyons, Irish parliamentary party, p104.

201. Ibid, 8 July 1991 p 4. F.S.L. Lyons, John Dillon, p 481. The Taylors were granted their Galway lands by Cromwell (Fahey, Kilmacduagh, p299) which does not however prove that they were not in Galway before the Cromwellian regime.

202. Ibid.

and his followers as corrupt agitators"[203]. He later admitted how a study of Lecky changed his attitude. He was one of the few Galway landlords to co-operate with the United Irish League and he made most of his tenants proprietors under favourable conditions. By 1900 all tenanted land was sold off except the one - thousand acre demesne[204]. The Boer War changed his politics and during a concert at Tulira he forbade the singing of "God Save the Queen". Soon afterwards in the Kildare Street Club Lord Clonbrock, Lieutenant of Galway, intimated to him that he had thereby violated his oath of allegiance. Martyn at once sent in his resignation as magistrate and deputy lieutenant in Galway. "I was brought up," he wrote to Clonbrock, "like most of my kind, in ignorance of my country, of her language, of her history, and in a sort of subservient acquiescence with England's account of her actions and position in Ireland"[205]. He no longer shared the views of the Unionist Party with which he was brought up. "In such matters," he stated to Clonbrock, "what I want is absolute liberty for my thoughts and actions". In 1903 Martyn published letters in the Freeman's Journal about the proposed visit of King Edward Vll, arguing that the Home Rulers should either give him a bad reception or else drop the pretence of being dissatisfied without Home Rule. He defied the warnings of the Kildare Street Club and when they amended their rules to deal with his indiscretions he took a law case against them and eventually won[206]. He later brought Sinn Feiners into the Club to dine with him. Martyn was a close friend of Arthur Griffith. Both were interested in a movement called the People's Protection Society which was a fore-

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203. D. Gwynn, Edward Martyn and the Irish Revival (London 1930) p 56.

204. Tuam Herald 18 November 1899, p 2, 14 April 1900 p 4, 3 Nov 1900 p 4.

205. Ibid 31 March 1900 p 4.

206. Gwynn, pp 305 - 321.

runner of Sinn Fein[207]. When the first convention of the National Council of Sinn Fein was held at the Rotunda in 1905 Edward Martyn presided[208].

Martyn had a fellow ardent Gaelic Leaguer in Mary Lambert Butler of the Catholic Butler of Bunnahow family in Clare. In their political outlook both had departed from the traditional loyalty of their class. It was Mary Lambert Butler, a cousin of Sir Edward Carson through the Lamberts of Galway, who suggested to Arthur Griffith that he should call his movement Sinn Fein[209]. One of the strongest statements of Home Rule and anti - English sentiment was made by Charles Blake de Burgh of the Merlin Park family. He had retired to France after the sale of the family estates and in a letter to the Tuam Herald in 1897 reflected on the decline of the landlords in general and the old title which the Blakes had to their estate. He concluded: "The English are a cold, insolent, cynical and money - loving race, ever ready to insult an Irishman on account of his nationality. Let England manage her own affairs. She has mismanaged ours long enough, and now let us manage our own. We want utter and complete separation from England, and nothing else ought to satisfy us. Let us waive all petty and unworthy differences of opinion among ourselves and become a really united Ireland..."[210].

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207. Stacpoole, Irish and other memories, p 249.

208. P. Colum, Arthur Griffith (Dublin 1959), p 87.

209. Sir H. Blackall, 'The Butlers of county Clare', North Munster Antiq. Jn. Vl, 1952, p 122. For Mary Lambert Butler and her Sinn Fein activities see N.L.I. MS 4577, and Irish Weekly Independent 17 August 1946.

210. Tuam Herald 8 May 1897.

CHAPTER 10

CONCLUSION: LANDED SOCIETY IN GALWAY

The most distinctive feature about landed society in 19th century Galway was the survival of so many Irish and Norman or old English families. The Galway 'Tribes', especially Blakes, Lynches, Martins, D'Arcys and Frenches, had been investing their merchant wealth in land since the late 16th century. Many of these, and others, adhered to the old religion although some, particularly Blakes, Brownes and Kirwans had a flexible approach to denominational identity, particularly when social and material advancement was at issue. This practice was used to good effect by rising families like, for example, the Blakes of Tower Hill in Mayo. But in many cases it caused title and marriage problems which only benefitted lawyers. Other Catholic landowners, mainly from Leinster, were transplanted to Galway in the Cromwellian period. Most of these too remained Catholic. The gentry were therefore roughly divided between Catholic and Protestant. The Protestant gentry in turn were divided between the more liberal minded majority and the smaller number of families of evangelical leaning led by the Trenches of Garbally. This group could well point to the unenthusiastic religion of some of the convert Burkes and Blakes and particularly to the cases of public disorder at funerals caused by the disputed denomination of the deceased. The real division in the religious sphere was between the evangelical section of the Protestant gentry and the Catholic and liberal convert gentry.

The older proprietors who did not survive the 17th century confiscations were replaced by a group of new Protestant families who acquired large estates in the county. The Trenches, Eyres, Persses, Taylors and St. Georges were the most successful of these families. Others acquired estates in

Galway through marriage or purchase. Some of these were cadet branches of outside gentry families such as the Bagots and Digbys. Other estates were bought by families already resident in the county and by returned families who had gone overseas during the 17th century upheavals. Seventeen estates were sold in the Incumbered Estates Court and some of the largest of these were bought by families who had made industrial or commercial fortunes, such as the Berridge, Pollok, and Guinness families. In the late 19th century Galway had 108 proprietors of 3000 acres and over, which was the largest number of that category of landowner in any Irish county. Landed society, in general terms, was made up of long established families of at least 1000 acres whose pedigrees appeared in the successive editions of Burke's Peerage and Landed Gentry which dated from the early 19th century, or at least in Walford's County Families which first appeared in 1860. Landed society was a social concept, and there were many landlords who were outside the category, ranging from the Court of Chancery, insurance companies, solicitors and many others.

The origins of the gentry reveal a complex combination of change and continuity[1]. Many landowing families declined and others rose over the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries. A sense of continuity was fostered by the main core of gentry who had successfully established major estates by the late 17th or early 18th centuries and held them up to and through the 19th century. These made up at least one half of the 108 proprietors of 3000 acres and over in the late 19th century. Continuity was also emphasised by the survival, albeit in reduced circumstances, of Irish families like the Concanons, Kellys, Kilkellys, Dalys and Donelans, although some of these combined the role of small proprietor with legal practice in

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1. P. Melvin 'The Composition of the Galway Gentry', The Irish Genealogist, Vll, 1986, pp 81-96.

Dublin or locally. The idea of continuity was particularly promoted by the resilience of the Blakes, who got their first land grant in Galway in 1278. The Blakes' love of land was proverbial and the county had twelve Blake estates of 1000 acres and over. The Frenches were not as successful as the Blakes and several of their estates were sold in the 18th century. Several of the 'Galway Tribes' and other families were engaged in commercial activity in the 18th century in addition to owning landed property. The precise activities of many Catholic families in 18th century Galway is not always clear. For instance some who had established seats in the county do not appear to have been residing in them, or if so only irregularly. Some had made considerable wealth such as the Blakes who replaced the Kirwans at Cregg and the Kirwans who bought the Dalgan estate in Mayo from the Clanricarde family[2]. The increasing role of Catholic investment in land was described by Anthony Blake before the 1825 Parliamentary Committee on the state of Ireland[3]. Blake, the "backstairs Viceroy", was the most successful of the younger sons of the county's gentry. Catholic investment came from two main sources. It came firstly from families resident in Galway, 'Tribes' and others, who had made money in commerce, banking and law. Examples are the Blakes of Cregg, Joyces of Mervue, Burkes of Danesfield and Smyths of Masonbrook. The second category included Catholic families who had acquired fortunes overseas, particularly in the West Indies. Some of these returned to Galway and bought estates which were on the market and joined the resident gentry. For instance a Catholic branch of the Dalys bought the estate of the Blakes of Corbally and changed the name to Castle Daly. The Mc Dermotts

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2. Reg. Deeds: Bk 289 p52; Bk 385 p17; Bk 408 p 540; Bk 493 p 255; Bk 562 p 445; Bk 600 p 278.

3. Select committee on the state of Ireland 1825 H.C. 1825, Vlll, p 43) Blake belonged to the Holly Park family and became chief remembrance of the Exchequer (Kerr, Peel, priests and politics, Oxford 1982, passim).

bought a Galway estate from the Brownes of Westport. The Brownes had acquired the estate through marriage with the heiress of Denis Kelly of Lisduff in Galway and Chief Justice of Jamaica.

Apart from these Catholic families who became resident gentry others bought land, as absentees, like the O'Connors of Sylane who had lost estates in Galway and achieved success in business and commerce. Even within the Catholic gentry there was a considerable variety of families, distinguished and differentiated by the way they had survived and reformed their fortunes whether locally or abroad. The Bellews built up a considerable estate in Galway from the 17th century and had family members in business and trade. The Burkes of Marble Hill rose from humble origins and acquired a much bigger estate though extensive farming. Eventual social success came through patronage of the Clanricarde family and good marriages. The Burkes and Bellews were long established in the county by the time the Kellys of Newtown returned from Jamaica and bought their estate early in the 19th century. These Kellys well illustrate the European dimension of Galway Catholic landed society. Their senior branch reached high rank in the Austrian military service and a daughter married Count Marcolini Prime Minister of the Elector of Saxony and director of the famous Meissen China works. Even after the junior branch of these Kellys bought their Galway estate they still resided for long periods in France which indicated that their history and family identity had grown away from a mere county identity. The ancient O'Kelly lands furthermore predated county boundaries. The Stacpoole family, like the Kellys of Newtown, made a considerable fortune in commerce. Count Stacpoole deposited £300,000 in Lafitte's bank in Paris in the 1820's and his son, the first Duke de Stacpoole, had

sufficient income to sustain the highest foreign rank[4].

Many of the gentry had their origins outside the county. By the 19th century however the founding of the County Galway Hunt and the County Club added a county sporting and social dimension to the administrative sphere on the Grand Jury. The division of landed property in Galway between Protestant and Catholic gentry was reflected in the composition of the grand jury. In the 1820's and 1830's almost half the grand jurors were Catholics. Some of these like the Nugents of Pallas and Bellews of Mount Bellew, were families whose ancestors had been transplanted to Galway by Cromwell. Some represented prominent branches of the Blakes, Bodkins, Brownes, D'Arcys, Joyces, Martyns, Lynches and Frenches. Others like the Redingtons had come to Ireland in the Cromwellian period and were originally Protestant. In due course the immigrant Kellys of Newtown and McDermotts of Ramore joined their fellow Catholic gentry on the grand jury together with local families like the Smyths of Masonbrook and Burkes of Danesfield. Religious conformity was not a problem for the Smyths and Burkes because they were not landowners in the 18th century and the Kellys and McDermotts were overseas during the Penal era. The close connection between the county and the town of Galway was shown by the membership of the town grand jury. This was distinct from the grand jury of the county although some gentry were members of both bodies. These were families who resided in the environs of Galway such as the Blakes of Menlo and of Merlin Park, Joyces of Mervue and Lynches of Renmore. These 'Tribal' families kept up their ancestral links with the town and some, like the Lynches, had an

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4. J. Roche, Critical and miscellaneous essays, Cork, 1851, ii, pp226-7; Vicomte A. Reverend, Titres et enoblissements de la Restauration. For the Bellews see K.J. Harvey, 'The family experience: the Bellews of Mount Bellew', in T.P. Power & K. Whelan eds., Endurance and Emergence: Catholics in Ireland in the eighteenth century, Dublin 1990.

involvement with commerce even in the 19th century. Gentry influence in the town was also strengthened by the Persse family who had a thriving brewery there closely allied to the landed main line of the family, and by the O'Haras of Lenaboy who had business interests and a large estate and had their house located adjacent to the town. Galway town was also an important venue for the social life of the gentry, particularly the functions which were held during the assizes and those which were part of their sporting life.

The grand jury of the county consisted of 23 gentlemen who were selected by the high sheriff at each spring and summer assizes. They were in effect drawn from an informal panel of about 110 proprietors almost all of whom belonged to the gentry class. Quarter sessions and petty juries consisted of substantial freeholders, large farmers, merchants, agents and smaller gentry. The numerous gentry in the county was the result of two historical processes. The reduction of many Irish and Norman families in the 17th century left behind many offshoots and branches. In addition the land buying activity of the 'Tribal' families in the 17th and 18th centuries resulted in many being left with small properties. Gentry however who were small in economic terms could be well connected socially. Most Burke families claimed some degree of kinship with the Clanricarde family, who had a unique role in protecting Catholic landowners. Their ancestors had shared a common cause in the 17th century.

Despite some obvious collective aspects the gentry were in many ways a collection of individuals. All had particular historical origins and many estates and fortunes were founded or built up by strong individuals. The Dillons of Clonbrock and some of the Blakes, Lynches and D'Arcys had made money in law and government office in the 17th century. Others made fortunes overseas and returned and bought estates. From the viewpoint of family history the gentry resident on their

estates were the heads of families which had, in many cases, members, relations, kinsmen and even cadet branches overseas. This extended family network is the most striking feature of the gentry as a social class, particularly the families of the 'Galway Tribes'. Lord Clancarty, the head of the Trench family, was seen as the leader of the Protestant gentry, who were Tory in politics. Clanricarde was at the head of the Liberal gentry. These two groups were to a large extent separate at least as regards marriage. Protestant gentry married outside the county more than Catholic gentry. This was because the generality of landed society was Protestant and was inter-connected on a countrywide and to a considerable extent British Isles basis. But Catholic gentry were not limited by the county boundary either. The old families who had been adversely affected by the 17th century confiscations and Penal Laws had their own social world which ranged from Galway and adjoining counties overseas to France, Austria and the West Indies. If Trench and Eyre pedigrees ranged over Ireland and England, Burke, Blake and Kelly pedigrees in addition had ties with Paris, Vienna and Montserrat. The Protestant gentry included some Irish families who had secured large estates and had conformed permanently in the 18th century. These included the Dalys of Dunsandle, Mahons of Castlegar and Kellys of Castle Kelly. Denis Kelly of Castle Kelly was an Orangeman and the only member of the grand jury to refuse to sign a Protestant petition in favour of Catholic Emancipation[5]. He was however proud of his Celtic lineage and a keen Irish scholar with a fine library which contained 15,000 Irish books[6].

Within the two basic marriage groups other smaller groups

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5. Connaught Journal 18 August 1825 p3.

6. R. M. Gilbert, Life of Sir John T. Gilbert, pp 196-7; M. C. Ferguson, Sir Samuel Ferguson in the Ireland of his day, 11, pp 126-7, 230; D.J. O'Donoghue, The Poets of Ireland, p225.

tended to intermarry on the basis of mutual interests. These might include sport, politics or earlier family connnection. In the political area for instance there was a close connection between Catholic families interested in Repeal like the Ffrenches of Castleffrench, Brownes of Moyne and Blakes of Tower Hill in Mayo. The hunting and racing interests of the Binghams, Dalys, Persses and the old Marquess of Clanricarde spanned both Ireland and England. Marriage was sometimes the result of this sporting and social activity or it could lead to it as happened when the Dillons of Clonbrock married into the Spencer family. The Clanricardes, Dalys of Dunsandle, Gregorys of Coole and Lynch - Stauntons of Clydagh all had estates in England though by the late 19th century the only family in this category were the Trenches of Woodlawn. The Trenches had 43,643 acres, spread over eight counties in Ireland, and including 6386 acres in Yorkshire[7]. Much of this property was acquired by marriage. Where marriages brought wealth or additional estates it was usually to families already well off like the Trenches, Clanricardes, Dalys of Dunsandle and St Georges of Tyrone. The Daly estate in the late 18th century was reckoned to be worth £16,000 a year. It was heavily encumbered even then, although encumbrance did not stop Dunsandle raising a £100,000 mortgage as late as 1871. Several of the top gentry had estates of about £10,000 a year which was the average income of a great landowner in England in the late 18th century. Good marriages increased the St George of Tyrone estates from 23,999 acres to 48,000 acres between the late 18th and mid - 19th centuries. Much of the St. George of Headford estate passed through an heiress in 1774 and saved the fortunes of her lucky husband, the 2nd Duke of Leinster[8]. Tribal families like the Blakes and Lynches had

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7. J. Bateman, The great landowners of Great Britain and Ireland p 16.

8. G. St. George Mark, Tyrone House (Quarterly bulletin of the Irish Georgian Society, July-December 1976) p23; A.P.W. Malcomson, The pursuit

a complex extended family network often with supporting links with trade and banking[9]. Many of the Blake estates were established by younger sons including the Ballyglunin and Tower Hill Blakes, who had land in both Mayo and Galway. Church, law and land agency provided some career opportunities for younger sons and over forty gentry families had sons in the army. Apart from younger sons over twenty heads of families had professions, careers or official posts. Those who declined as landowners and were sometimes referred to as "reduced gentlemen" had to find an appropriate role suited to their ability and ambition. Younger sons and other needy gentlemen usually sought military careers throughout the Empire or resorted to land agency or other official posts. The officer class of the constabulary - or officer gentry as they were sometimes called - came largely from gentry backgrounds and the inspector general for Connaught, Major Warburton, had a large estate in Galway.

Gentry who resorted to the pistol and horsewhip over matters of class were usually lesser gentry or declining members of the numerous Kelly and other old families whose pretension to gentility was being increasingly threatened by bankruptcy. Such behaviour was not, in the main, condoned by the upper levels of landed society in Ireland or England. Nevertheless many of the gentry and aristocracy, as individuals, regarded themselves as being above or outside social rules and their behaviour at times amounted to what would ordinarily have been regarded as downright rudeness. Perhaps W.B Yeats pinpointed

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of the heiress: aristocratic marriage in Ireland 1750-1820 (Ulster Historical Foundation 1982) p10.

9. L.M. Cullen, 'Merchant communities overseas, the Navigation Acts and Irish and Scottish responses', in Comparative Aspects of Scottish and Irish Economic and Social History 1600-1900 (Ed. L.M. Cullen and T.C. Smout, Edinburgh 1977); L.M. Cullen, 'Galway Merchants in the Outside World 1650-1800', in Galway: Town and Gown 1484-1984 (Ed. D. Ó Cearbhaill, Dublin 1984).

the character of their social behaviour when he said of George Moore - "He lacked manners, but had manner". The gentry were usually very clear about social distinctions. When one of the Blakes was asked during a court case if he knew a gentleman named Roche, who was in fact a large tenant farmer with a pack of harriers, he replied that he did not, and added that he knew a fellow of that name.

The question of whether the gentry was a closed social class or admitted newcomers is complicated by the large number of gentry in the county and the difficulty in drawing a clear-cut distinction between main branches, and offshoots or cadet branches and poor relations. The obvious difference between the county and national aspect of this question is accentuated in the case of Galway. Blakes, Lynches, Brownes and Frenches practically saturated north and west Galway with their numerous branches and large families. Many of these were undergoing upward or downward mobility from the 17th to the 19th century. Access to the grand jury and county club and participation in the hunt ball constitute what is probably the best index of county acceptance of social standing. Marriage was also a key factor and when examining the question of newcomers to the gentry a distinction must be made between those who married into the existing gentry and those who remained separate from them. The major buyers of estates in the Incumbered Estates Court sat on the grand jury and were admitted to the county club. The principal of these however, families like the Berridges of Ballinahinch, Guinnesses of Ashford, Henrys of Kylemore, Polloks of Lismany and Meldons of Coolarne were outside families who formed scarcely any marriage connections within the county.

There were extremely few cases of families who could be said to have entered the gentry in the 19th century apart from those who bought in from the outside. The Burkes of Danesfield, Smyths of Masonbrook, and O'Rorkes of Clonbern

were three such families. Elizabeth Burke of Danesfield, who became Lady Fingall in 1883, belonged to a family who had been merchants in Galway and bought an estate from the Lynches of Drimcong in the late 18th century[10]. The estate of the O'Rorkes was founded by John O'Rorke an ambitious Protestant clergyman, agent, receiver and extensive farmer. His son's marriage into the Trench family conferred admission to county society. The obscure origins of families occasionally led to misunderstandings. For instance W.B. Yeats referred- inaccurately - to Edward Martyn's "peasant" mother[11]. She was Anne Smyth and her father, James Smyth of Masonbrook, had amassed a fortune through farming, receivership, and the purchase of bankrupt local estates[12]. His brother had a lucrative legal practice. The Smyths did have an obscure earlier background, but Yeats's remark was probably not unconnected with the fact that they were a Catholic family. The Martyn connection elevated the Smyths, just as the Trench marriage elevated the O'Rorkes. James Smyth celebrated his daughter's connection with the Martyns of Tulira by giving her, according to tradition, her own weight in gold sovereigns as a dowery[13].

The possession of a large estate did not necessarily transform a landlord into a gentleman. Martin McDonnell had a 12,000 acre fee - simple estate built up from purchases in the Incumbered Estates Court. His attempt to assume gentlemanly airs was contested, not formally by the gentry, but by the land agent and barister William Downes Griffith who was a

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10. Reg. Deeds: Bk 477, p116.

11. Memoirs: autobiography (ed. D. Donoghue, London 1972) pp 100, 271.

12. Smyth was described as one of the largest stockmasters in Ireland (Tuam Herald 13 January 1849 p 3).

13. D. Gwynn, Edward Martyn and the Irish Revival (London 1930) p 43.

half-brother of Sir Richard Griffith. A heated correspondence occurred when Griffith objected to McDonnell's use of the title "Esquire". The established and long standing county gentry were the ultimate arbiters of who was socially acceptable in their ranks and who was not. In McDonnell's case the lack of a known pedigree was probably not as damaging to his eligibility for the grand jury or county club as the fact that he was a nationalist and shopkeeper. McDonnell was one of the many non-gentry landlords who owned a large amount of land in the county. Before the Incumbered Estates Court sales many small estates and large farms were occupied by small proprietors and sons and relatives of declining gentry. Many of these properties passed to non-gentry landlords. Many other estates were administered by the Court of Chancery. After the Famine many tenants had banks, insurance companies and Dublin-based solicitors as their landlords. These were absentees as were others like Lords Leitrim and Charlemont and the Provost of Trinity College who, between them, owned most of the 'Joyce Country'. Many of the gentry were also partly absentee in cases where they had large scattered estates like the St Georges of Tyrone, or when they spent half the year in Rome and Paris like the Comte de Basterot of Duras[14]. Where heads of families were away on military or other service they usually employed brothers or other family members as agents. This category of agent greatly outnumbered purely professional agents. Estates with absentee owners but having good agents were often better managed than estates with indifferent resident proprietors.

The aristocracy and major gentry had a respectable record as regards agriculture, drainage and general estate improvement. Neat towns were built by the Trenches at Ballinasloe, by the Eyres at Eyrecourt, the Prendergasts at Gort, the St Georges at Headford and the Bellews at Mount Bellew. The 1st Marquess

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14. A. Symons, Cities (London 1903) p30.

of Clanricarde pointed out in a House of Lords speech that all agricultural progress in Galway was effected by the landlords[15]. Many of the large new post-Famine proprietors like Pollok and Meldon introduced the latest farming techniques and machinery. Nevertheless new breeds of stock and progressive methods were by no means unknown before the Famine among better educated proprietors like the Trenches, Dillons of Clonbrock and Blakes of Renvyle in Connemara. Pollok's efforts to transform masses of small tenantry into productive labourers met with resistance and the matter was the subject of debate in the House of Commons[16]. In the same chamber the industry and agricultural progress of another group of new proprietors was praised by Robert Peel. These were the philanthropic minded agriculturists and capitalist farmers who leased or bought fertile tracts in Connemara. They included the Eastwood brothers from the north of England and the Leicester Quaker James Ellis[17]. This group did not belong to the gentry. They illustrate however the variety of landed society - in its wider sense - and the different social strands below the gentry who were engaged in agriculture. The farming gentry were instrumental in setting up agricultural societies in the 1840's though some writers contended that the benefits were mostly confined to their own demesnes[18]. Many of the larger proprietors like Lords Clancarty, Clonbrock and the Redingtons employed Scots agriculturists and there was a widespread effort to encourage the cultivation of green and

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15. Hansard vol CXC, 1867-68, col 1044.

16. P.G. Lane, 'An attempt at commercial farming in Ireland after the Famine', Studies (1972) pp 54-56; Alleged evictions in Ireland-case of Mr Pollok (Hansard, CXCLll, 1856 cols 697-712).

17. The diaries of John Bright (Ed. P. Bright 1930) p 104; Tuam Herald 22 April 1854 p 3; Portrait of a parish: Ballynakill Connemara (Renvyle 1985) pp 48-51; Galway Vindicator 7 July 1849 p4.

18. Sir W. Wilde, Irish popular superstitions (Dublin 1852) p 26; Dutton, p 70.

root crops in the Famine period[19]. Good and bad farming was to be found among both gentry and tenantry.

The dominance of a large resident gentry class prevented the growth of a permanent class of strong tenant farmers of non gentry origin. Both gentry and clergy disliked the idea of large tenants, for their own reasons. Yet as the lists of cess-payers show, there were large tenants in all parts of the county, although a very small percentage of the total population. Many of these were of non-gentry origin particularly in the post-Famine period. Their neglected history is the result of the blinkering effect of a persistent landlord and tenant approach to social history and structure. Large tenants were not a clear-cut social category because they differed in their social origins in different parts of the county. At the top of the range they descended from gentry families. In one instance, in the case of the Cruice family, falling fortunes brought them before the courts as broken down cattle dealers[20]. Some also in the undefined ranks below the gentry had a clear idea of their own identity. We know little about the lifestyle or culture of this particular social group who, like the gentry, tended to intermarry both within and outside the county.

The gentry effectively controlled public and county affairs by their dominant role on committees. They were prominent in charity and relief work even after the Famine and they disliked and distrusted the inefficient and expensive poor law

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19. Lord Ashtown for instance had estate rules to encourage green crops and improve the standards of grain and grasses (Western Star 8 June 1850 p4). For Lord Clancarty's views on the effective implementation of Lord Clarendon's scheme of agricultural instruction see Western Star 30 October 1847 p3.

20. Tuam Herald 25 March 1871 p1, 15 April p1, 16 November 1872 p1.

bureaucracy[21]. They were also hostile to the increasing powers of the Board of Works and the intrusion of stipendiary magistrates into their local sphere of influence[22]. There was very considerable variation in the landlord role of the gentry. Over fifty demesnes are on record as centres for tenant festivities and 'harvest home' dinners. The greater new proprietors after the Famine also adopted this tradition which was organised and managed by agents and estate staff. At dinners and festivities in Garbally the tenants were waited on by Lord and Lady Clancarty. This however was the formalised landlord-initiated social ritual of a strictly class structured society. Paternalism became the dominant social outlook of the governing classes generally in the 1830's and 1840's. There was the belief that the authoritarian hierarchical organic community of the past, still found on landed estates, was the ideal model for society.[23] There was a curious mixture of subservience and defiance by tenantry particularly in relation to Catholic gentry. There were contrasting instances in Land League times of some gentry having armed protection and of others dining with their tenantry on rent day. Colonel Nolan of Ballinderry received his rents from his tenantry in a Headford hotel in 1885 and "afterwards sat down with them to a substantial

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21. Clanricarde strongly attacked the Poor Laws (Ireland) Bill in 1837-8 (Hansard, XLlll, 1837-8, cols 42,43,475-6).

22. In his evidence before the select committee on taxation in 1865 Clanricarde (the 1st Marquess) explained the gentry's distrust of the Board of Works and detailed the events leading up to Lord Rosse's attack on the Board in 1852 (H.C., 1865, Xll, pp 46-50, 57).

23. Tuam Herald 6 January 1849, p 2; J. Gerard, 'Lady Bountiful: women of the landed classes and rural philanthropy', Victorian Studies, 1987, pp187-8. At a 'Harvest Home' dinner at Garbally in 1840 the Trench family "intermingled with the people and danced freely with them" (Western Star 5 January 1850 p 3).

dinner".[24] Although tenant festivities did have a long tradition, as the 19th century progressed they were clearly regarded as public relations exercises stage managed by agents to convey the impression of social harmony. The great mass of gentry, large and small, supported Catholic Emancipation. Tithes too were a common grievance with Catholic gentry and tenantry. At this stage gentry and clergy had common objectives. But as the century progressed the clergy gradually replaced the gentry in leadership roles and this factor, combined with educational advances, brought increasing alienation between tenant and landlord, whether Protestant or Catholic, gentry or non-gentry.

There was always a latent undercurrent of anti-landlord feeling which awaited effective leadership. During the violence of the Ribbon outbreak in 1819 many gentry had to abandon their mansions[25]. There was further violence during the Terry Alt disturbance in 1831-32 and during the Famine. A large resident gentry, dominant socially and in local administration, gave stability to the county. But when agrarian unrest came the ensuing violence could be extreme because it emanated from the most hard pressed sections of rural society and lacked controlling leadership. The gentry, as landlords, had direct experience of this hostility although they were largely cushioned against it by agents and estate staff. There was always a considerable amount of contrast in landlord behaviour and the condition of even neighbouring estates. For instance the Bellew, Chevers and Netterville estates in north Galway belonged to families whose forebears

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24. Tuam Herald 14 February 1885, p 2.

25. James Daly of Dunsandle told the House of Commons that "upwards of 70 gentlemens' seats had been attacked and plundered, and there were actually not five seats in the whole district which had either not been entered, or defended and saved from the depredators after an obstinate engagement" (Hansard, ii, 1820, cols 92-3).

were transplanted there in the Cromwellian period. Harmonious relations existed on the Bellew and Chevers estates. The Nettervilles however had become absentee and had allowed their estate to become mismanaged. Marcella Netterville's harsh and notorious evictions in 1846 did much to make the terms 'gentry' and 'landlordism' synonymous in the popular mind[26]. During the considerable disturbances during the 1872 Nolan-Trench election, Catholic gentry were pelted with stones and had their church pews broken[27]. This was because they were identified with Captain Trench the landlord candidate. An important pro-Trench meeting was chaired by Sir Thomas Burke of Marble Hill one of the leading Catholic landlords in the county whose family had always remained Catholic. Burke was accused in hostile letters - "You are a real Protestant yourself and all belonging to you"[28]. The gentry were attacked as landlords more than as gentry although there were some instances of opposition to fox-hunting during the 1872 election campaign and in the Land League period[29]. During the Land League agitation the extent of the social alienation was shown by the fact that even old Catholic families were condemned and branded as harsh landlords[30].

Excessive addiction to hunting and racing helped to impoverish the Eyres of Eyrecourt, Dalys of Dalyston, Lamberts of

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26. S. Redmond, Landlordism in Ireland: letters on the eviction of the Gerrard tenantry (Dublin 1846).

27. Galway county election petition, H.C., 1872, XLVlll, pp 244, 357.

28. Ibid p. 134.

29. Galway Vindicator 14 May 1879, p 4, 31 December 1881, p 3, 11 November 1882 p3.

30. Examples were the Burkes of Ower and Brownes of Claran (Special Commission Act 1888: Report of the proceedings before the Commissioners appointed by the Act. Reprinted from the Times. Vol 1 (London 1890) p 23.

Cregclare and Gregorys of Coole. Other families were reduced by extravagant entertainment and the maintenance of houses which their estates and incomes could not support. Examples include the Blakes of Merlin Park and of Castlegrove, Handcocks of Carrantrila, Blakes of Ardfry and Martins of Ballinahinch. A wide range of social events accompanied the judicial, administrative and philanthropic activities of the gentry. These included the grand jury dinner, assize ball, agricultural society dinner, charity dinner and mendicity ball. Politics also had a social aspect with occasional tensions between the Tory and Liberal camps. For example Tory gentry attended levees given by Tory lords lieutenant and Repeal functions and O'Connell dinners were hosted by the Liberal gentry like the Bodkins of Kilcloony and McDermotts of Springfield[31]. The assize ball, hunt ball and County Club ball were the backbone of the social calendar in the county. The Connaught Club, founded in Dublin in 1825, had a membership drawn from landed proprietors and gentlemen engaged in commerce and the professions[32]. The members dined regularly in Dublin and in Ballinasloe during the October Fair. This club was an illustration of the mobile aspect of gentry social life which moved freely - by those who could afford it - between Galway, Dublin, London and Europe. The Galway County Club, founded in 1836, was almost entirely the preserve of the aristocracy and gentry[33]. Education and the pursuit of pleasure brought over twenty gentry families as regular travellers to Europe. Those who could not or would not travel could avail of several good quality county newspapers to inform themselves about the wider world.

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31. Connaught Journal 18 June 1829, p 3; Tuam Herald 20 November 1841, p 3, 4 December 1841 p 3.

32. Connaught Journal 5 July 1827, p 2; Dublin Almanack (1837) p 165.

33. Ibid 2 June 1836, pp 1, 3.

The gentry as a class were distinguished by family pride, education and the wider mental horizons developed by foreign travel and cosmopolitan social contacts. There was a wide range of variety within the class, as in all landed classes[34]. Many of the older gentry had a tradition of Continental travel and contact which gave them a European rather than a narrow English outlook. Rome was the centre of aristocratic Catholic society and was frequented by Catholic gentry like the Blakes, Joyces and Redingtons[35]. The Redingtons had connections with the Italian nobility through the Talbots of Castle Talbot and so had the Blakes of Ardfry. European culture was displayed in many houses. In the late 18th century Walter Lawrence of Lawrencetown built a mansion with a maternal West Indian fortune and, like Richard Gregory of Coole, and the Redingtons, surrounded himself with art treasures from Italy[36]. Families like the Kellys of Newtown, McDermotts of Ramore, Basterots of Duras, De Stacpooles of Mount Hazel and FitzGerald-Kenneys all had connections with France. The Kellys of Newtown had residences in Paris and Versailles and were married into the French aristocracy. The De Basterots were an old Bordeaux family who had married into the French of Duras estate at Kinvara. Count Florimond de Basterot, a lifelong traveller, divided the year between Duras, Paris and Rome. He was a close friend of Count Gobineau, secretary to Alexis de Tocqueville, and one of the founders of racist ideology. Duras, like Coole Park, Tulira and Renvyle, was a meeting place for literary celebrities, and Basterot presided over a literary salon which included Edward Martyn and Lady

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34. D. Spring ed., European landed elites in the nineteenth century (Baltimore 1977), p 11.

35. Stacpoole, Irish and other memories, p47. C. O'Brien - Ffrench, Delicate Mission, p 9; Tuam Herald 28 April 1866 p 3.

36. Photographs of the frescoes taken at Lisreaghan, Lawrencetown, Co. Galway. Album in Galway County Library.

Gregory.

Lady Gregory and Violet Martin of Ross witnessed the decay of the landed society to which their families had long belonged. The Martins were always close to their tenantry and evictions were unknown on the Ross estate. But the defiance of the tenants in refusing to vote for the landlords' candidate, Captain Trench, in 1872 marked the beginning of the end for the old order, according to Violet Martin. Her view of that order, or of what she imagined that order had been, was described by her in a nostalgic passage. "It was give and take, with the personal element always warm in it: as a system it was probably quite uneconomic but the hand of affection held it together, and the tradition of centuries was at its back"[37]. George Moore had a less sentimental view of the old social system. "There is no denying that we looked upon our tenants as animals", he wrote in Vale, "and they looked on us as kings"[38]. "There might be, and was, friendship, great loyalty, an age-old concern with blood and race", reflected Thomas Rice Henn after the burning of Paradise Hill his ancestral home in Clare, "but inescapably the Big House was built on wealth, privilege, and the large revolutions of politics and religions"[39].

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37. Somerville and Ross, Irish Memories, p4.

38. Hail and Fairwell: Ave, Salve and Vale. Ed. Richard Cave, Ontario, 1976, p 481.

39. T.R. Henn, Five Arches: with 'Philoctetes' and other poems (New Jersey 1980) p 215.

Appendix

Galway Landowners

This list of landowners, acreage and - where available- valuation, is drawn mainly from Hussey de Burgh, Landowners of Ireland (1878) and Return of owners of land of one acre and upwards (1876). In the case of proprietors who sold their estates in the Incumbered Estates Court the acreage listed is that which was put up for sale in that court. Absentees- allowing for the problems inherent in that term - are excluded as they were not, in most cases, members of Galway families. But the list does include those outsiders who bought estates in the county and became resident and part of county society. Any such list, expecially at its lower end, cannot have statistical preciseness because of the nature of the subject.

Peers	Acreage	Valuation
Clanricarde (cr. 1543)	52,601	£20,836
Ashtown of Woodlawn (cr.1800)	37,257	£15,918
Clancarty of Garbally (cr. 1797)	25,510	£12,817
Clonbrock of Clonbrock (cr. 1790)	28,246	£11,442
Clanmorris of Cregclare (cr.1800)	18,111	£ 8,263
Dunsandle of Dunsandle (cr. 1845)	37,057	£17,393
Ffrench of Castleffrench (cr. 1798)	5,914	
Gort of Lough Cutra (cr. 1810)	8,483	
Gough of Lough Cutra (cr. 1846)	8,638	£ 5,693
Killanin of Spiddal (cr. 1885)	1,278	£ 704
Wallscourt of Ardfry (cr. 1800)	2,827	£ 1,970
Westmeath of Pallas (cr. 1621)	15,692	£ 5,486
Oranmore and Browne (cr. 1836)	32, 582	

	Baronets	
Bellew of Mount Bellew (cr. 1838)	12,411	£ 6,051
Blake of Menlo (cr. 1622)	3,403	£ 763
Burke of Marble Hill (cr. 1797)	27,488	£ 8,339
Burke of Glinsk (cr. 1628)	7,414	
Mahon of Castlegar (cr. 1819)	9,479	£ 4,358
Shee of Dunmore (cr. 1794)	11,206	£ 4,502
	Knights	
Redington of Kilcornan (cr. 1849)	12,678	£ 6,133
	Other landowners	
Athy of Renville	1415	£ 945
Bagot of Aughrane Castle and Ballymoe	12,396	£ 4,400
Bagot of Ballyturin	6,907	£ 2,667
Berridge of Ballinahinch	171,117	£ 8,742
Barrett of Greenhills and Ballintava	2,563	£ 1,061
Bermingham of Dalgin and Millbrook	359	£ 236
Bayley of Rookwood	3,168	£ 2,151
Blake of Renvyle	4,682	£ 1,011
Blake of Meelick		
Blake of Towerhill and Bunowen	11,888	£ 4,096
Blake of Gortnamona	17,335	£ 1,815
Blake of Vermont	5,103	£ 2,006
Blake of Belmount	3,713	
Blake of Cregg Castle	5,615	£ 1,713
Blake of Annaghdown House	1,037	£ 242
Blake of Ballyglunin Park	10,452	£ 3,968
Blake of Crumlin Park	1,405	333
Blake of Furbough (estate merged with Raford)		
Blake of Castlegrove	2,311	£ 981
Blake of Rathville	559	£ 175
Blake of Merlin Park	6,260	£ 3,147
Blake of Dartfield	1,304	£ 634
Blake of Cloghballymore	4,847	£ 1,394
Blake of Holly Park	1,710	£ 976

Blake of Oran Castle	4,251	£ 2,481
Blake-Forster	3,543	£ 1,505
Butler of Cregg	2,786	
Blakeney of Abbert	7,504	£ 2,579
Burke of Annagh	914	£ 549
Burke of Danesfield	2,759	£ 1,010
Burke of Ballydugan	1,574	£ 905
Burke of Ower	1,418	£ 757
Burke of St. Clerans	4,120	£ 2,246
Burke of Tyaquin	5,879	£ 1,432
Burke of Slatefield [Killimer Castle]	1,345	£ 275
Burke of Knocknagur and Waterslade House		
Burke of Quansbury and Tuam	3,997	
Bourke of Rahasane	1,856	£ 914
Bodkin of Annagh	6,506	£ 2,525
Bodkin of Kilcloony	2,312	£ 1,267
Bodkin of Rahoon House		
Browne of Ardskea and Cooloo		
Browne fo Carnacregg	1,521	£ 581
Browne of Claran	592	£ 268
Browne of Mount Hazle	4,892	£ 1,412
Browne of Mount Bernard	1,644	£ 730
Browne of Moyne Park	9,167	£ 3,500
Browne of Kilskeagh (Coolarne)		
Browne of Rossleague	1,507	£ 232
Browne of Greenville and Tuam		
Browne of Brownsgrove	2,259	£ 1,013
Browne of Mount Kelly	3,352	£ 1,026
Butson of St Brendans	4,656	£ 1,994
Chevers of Killyan	6,380	£ 2,469
Clarke of Graig Abbey and Thomastown	1,870	£ 701
Comyn of Ballinderry	1,812	£ 1,135
Comyn of Woodstock	12,881	£ 2,174
Cowan of Prospect	2,373	£ 1,008
Cowan of Gortnamona	1,222	£ 720
Concanon of Carnacregg, Waterloo, Esker and Tuam		

Concanon of Rockfield		
Daly of Castledaly	3,495	£ 584
Daly of Cooliney	533	
Daly of Raford	11,709	£ 3,621
Daly of Dalysgrove	491	£ 115
Davies of Fahy and Hampstead House		
D'Arcy of New Forest	11,434	£ 2,780
D'Arcy of Wellfort	2,974	£ 721
D'Arcy of Woodville	1,590	£ 1,079
D'Arcy of Clifden Castle	18,759	
Dennis of Bermingham House	1,312	£ 481
Digby of Moat Lodge	4,930	£ 1,178
Dolphin of Corr		
Dolphin of Turoe	1,171	£ 630
Dolphin of Danesfort	1,389	£ 530
Donelan of Ballydonelan	1,667	
Donelan of Killagh	1,138	£ 665
Donelan of Hillswood		
Donelan of Sylane	1,917	£ 625
Eyre of Eyrecourt	775	£ 664
Eyre of Eyreville	1,752	£ 890
Fallon of Netterville Lodge	2,681	£ 909
Fetherstonhaugh of Derryhiviney	1,803	£ 1,087
French of Monivea Castle	10,121	£ 3,703
Ffrench of Ballinamore Park	3,818	£ 1,655
Galbraith of Cappard	4,636	£ 944
Galway of Clooncah	1,315	£ 397
Graham of Ballinakill	11,971	
Gregory of Coole	4,893	£ 2,378
Guinness of Ashford	19,944	£ 3,266
Gunning of Kilroe	2,284	£ 742
Hall of Knockbrack	4,371	£ 1,286
Henry of Kylemore Castle	13,752	£ 879
Henry of Tohermore	6,656	£ 2,442
Handcock of Carrantrila	7,856	£ 3,459
Holmes of Rockwood	461	£ 223

Hodgson of Merlin park	17,064	£ 1,121
Jackson of Killaguile	1,062	£ 91
Jameson of Windfield	3,123	£ 1,288
Jenings of Ironpool	1,183	£ 349
Joyce of Merview	4,270	£ 1,995
Joyce of Corgary	4,185	£ 1,951
Joyce of Rahasane	679	£ 160
Kelly of Castlekelly	14,252	£ 5,843
Kelly of Kellysgrove	2,054	
Kelly of Mucklon	5,185	£ 1,287
Kelly of Liskelly		
Kelly of Newtown	2,529	£ 938
Kelly of Mirehill		
Kelly of Clooncannon		
Kenney of Kilclogher and Ballyforan	4,395	£ 1,417
Kenney of Correndoo		
Kilkelly of Drimcong	5,657	£ 451
Kilkelly of Mossfort	1,009	£ 527
Kirwan of Cregg (Baunmore)	4,308	£ 1,323
Kirwan of Woodfield		
Kirwan of CastleHacket	8,374	£ 2,924
Kirwan of Gardenfield	1,895	£ 1,033
Kirwan of Glann		
Kirwan of Blindwell	7,116	£ 1,739
Kirwan of Hillsbrook	2,264	£ 758
Kirwan of Moyne Park	1,102	£ 192
Lambert of Aggard	3,410	£ 1,611
Lambert of Cregclare and Waterdale	10,724	£ 4,276
Lambert of Castle Ellen	3,829	£ 1,442
Lambert of Castle Lambert	4,686	£ 808
Lahiff of Cloon	10,907	£ 3,996
Lawrence of Lisreaghan	2,373	£ 1,342
Leonard of Queensfort	1,878	£ 556
Lewin of Cloghans and Castlegrove	2,123	£ 890
Lewis of Ballinagar	6,683	£ 1,339
Lopdell of Raheen Park	1,365	£ 331

Lynch of Barna	5,811	£ 1,005
Lynch of Renmore and Duras	8,895	£ 3,011
Lynch of Lavally	537	£ 210
Lynch of Carrowbeg	337	£ 197
Lynch of Lydican and the Castle	9,968	£ 1,904
Lynch of Petersburgh Castle	7,260	£ 638
Lynch-Staunton of Clydagh House	2,129	£ 1,028
McDonnell of Dunmore	12,057	£ 2,980
McDermott of Ramore	3,626	£ 1,963
McDermott of Springfield	2,571	£ 948
McDonogh of Wilmount	174	£ 154
Mahon of Bellville	1,786	£ 425
Mahon of Thornfield	1,531	£ 688
Mahon of Beechhill	1,650	
Mahon of Ballinahinch	192,000	£ 7,800
Martin of Ross	5,767	£ 1,326
Martyn of Tullira	4,932	£ 2,424
Meldon of Coolarne	5,864	£ 2,571
Morris of Ballinaboy	597	£ 73
Morris of Spiddal	1,278	£ 704
Nolan of Ballinderry	7,678	£ 1,971
Nolan of Ballybanagher	1,186	£ 455
O'Farrell of Dalyston	5,131	£ 2,493
O'Fflahertie of Lemonfield	2,340	£ 604
O'Flaherty of Lisdonagh	2,128	£ 788
O'Flaherty of Knockbane	1,522	£ 303
O'Hara of Lenaboy	3,552	£ 1,714
O'Hara of Raheen	815	£ 458
O'Kelly of Cooloo	3,152	£ 716
O'Kelly of Tycooly and Gallagh	3,316	
O'Kelly of Gurtray	996	£ 551
O'Neill of Bunowen Castle	12,913	
O'Rorke of Clonbern Park	2,349	£ 625
Persse of Moyode	9,496	£ 4,203
Persse of Roxborough	13,585	£ 6,002
Pigott of Eagle Hill		

Pollok of Lismany	29,577	£ 13,313
Redington-Roche of Ryehill	6,043	£ 3,732
Richardson of Tyaquin	2,654	£ 659
Ruttledge of Barbersfort	6,388	£ 2,491
Ryan of Ashbrook	880	£ 462
St. George of Tyrone	15,777	£ 4,453
St. George of Headford Castle	7,495	£ 4,460
Seymour of Ballymore Castle	3,256	£ 1,638
Seymour of Somerset	759	£ 515
Skerrett of Ballinduff Castle	4,702	£ 2,229
Smyth of Masonbrook and Cooliney	9,670	£ 5,049
Shawe-Taylor of Castle Taylor	7,605	£ 3,016
Trench of Clonfert	5,409	£ 2,124
Thompson of Salruck	8,111	£ 519
Ussher of Eastwell	3,666	£ 1,781
Vesey of Derrynabuie	8,288	£ 2,951
Wade of Fairfield	1,513	£ 810
Villiers of Beech Hill	580	£ 238
Waithman of Moyne Park	9,172	£ 3,950

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