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Dickens, Ireland and the Irish¹

Part I

LEON LITVACK

IN IRELAND Dickens was clearly a popular and renowned figure. In a letter to his sister-in-law Georgina Hogarth he recalls how on a reading tour of the country he was approached by an admirer in the streets of Dublin, who shook his hand, saying 'Do me the honour to shake hands, Misther Dickens and God bless you sir; not only for the light you've been to me this night, but for the light you've been in mee house sir (and God love your face!) this many a year!'² The fact that Dickens chooses to render an approximation of a Dublin accent is interesting, for it not only points to his attention to the qualities and inflections of local speech; it is also indicative of his more general attitude towards Ireland and the Irish, which was a fusion of objectified pronouncements and informed observation. Evidence of Dickens's approach appears in a number of areas in his life and work, including his fascination with the theatre; his interest in Irish poetry and balladry; his familiarity with Irish politics – particularly with Daniel O'Connell and the Repeal Movement, and later with Fenianism; his observations on the Irish in America and in London; his appreciation of his own popularity on the other island, verified personally on three reading tours; and the friendships he enjoyed with specific figures, including the Irish lawyer Percy Fitzgerald and the Cork painter Daniel Maclise.

Dickens's theatrical interests ensured that he was familiar with the tradition of the stage Irishman. In a letter to George Henry Lewes in April 1848 – a time when he was involved in amateur theatricals to raise funds for preserving Shakespeare's house at Stratford – Dickens wrote: 'I can't find a suitable farce with an Irishman in it'.³ By June, however, he had done so: he had selected Dion Boucicault's *Used Up*, a play first performed in 1844, which praised the simple life, and expressed nostalgia for rural values.⁴ Dickens played the part of the bored hero, Sir Charles Coldstream, and never took on the role of the stage Irishman, though in 1858, while in Dublin, he wrote in jovial mood to his sister-in-law to say, 'I have become a wonderful Irishman – must play an Irish part some day'. Indeed in the same letter Dickens includes a dialogue with a young boy, which embodies a theatricality that informs the wish he expresses:

INIMITABLE. Holloa old chap.

YOUNG IRELAND. Hal-loo!

INIMITABLE (*in his delightful way*). What a nice old fellow you are. I am very fond of little boys.

YOUNG IRELAND. Air yer? Ye'r right.

INIMITABLE. What do you learn, old fellow?

YOUNG IRELAND (*very intent on Inimitable, and always childish except in his brogue*). I lairn wureds of three sillibils, and wureds of two sillibils, and wureds of one sillibil.

INIMITABLE (*gaily*). Get out, you humbug! You learn only words of one syllable.

YOUNG IRELAND (*laughs heartily*). You may say that it is mostly wureds of one sillibil.

INIMITABLE. Can you write?

YOUNG IRELAND. Not yet. Things comes by deegrays.

INIMITABLE. Can you cipher?

YOUNG IRELAND (*very quickly*). Wha'at's that?

INIMITABLE. Can you make figures?

YOUNG IRELAND. I can make a nought, which is not asy, being roond.

INIMITABLE. I say, old boy, wasn't it you I saw on Sunday morning in the hall, in a soldier's cap? You know – in a soldier's cap?

YOUNG IRELAND (*cogitating deeply*). Was it a very good cap?

INIMITABLE. Yes.

YOUNG IRELAND. Did it fit unkonmon?

INIMITABLE. Yes.

YOUNG IRELAND. Dat was me!⁵

The exchange, complete with stage directions, is meant to recall a dramatic performance, and contributes to a large body of evidence concerning Dickens's remarkable attentiveness to the pronunciation of Irish English. He emphasises such distinctive features as the fronted vowel in 'Air'; the lowered vowels in 'deegrays' and 'asy'; the lengthened vowel in 'Wha'at's'; defrication of the target 'th' in 'Dat'; vowel insertion (epenthesis) in 'wureds' – thus explaining his comment about learning words of one syllable; and, in a line Dickens himself speaks, the Irish English construction 'Wasn't it you I saw' (rather than 'Didn't I see you').⁶ This level of perception, characteristic of Dickens, goes well beyond what a casual English observer of Irish speech might appreciate or – and this is far more challenging – render in written form.

Dickens knew the work of prominent Irish balladeers and poets, particularly Thomas Moore (Fig. 1, 1779-1852), whom he first met through Richard Bentley in 1838,⁷ and to whose work he alludes in his fiction. Moore, who was born a Catholic, was from an early age an Irish patriot, with a 'thorough and ardent passion for poor Ireland's liberties, and a deep and cordial hatred of those who were then lording over and trampling her down'.⁸ These sentiments were strengthened after his entry into Trinity College Dublin in 1795, where he acquired a reputation as a political speaker, and became a close friend of Robert Emmet (1778-1803), who was later executed for treason.⁹ The amatory and convivial poetry that Moore was writing at the time suited the taste of fashionable London society, to which he was introduced in 1799.¹⁰ His songs were in great request, and his performances enlivened many soirées,¹¹ thus reinforcing the sale of his poetry.



Fig. 1. *Thomas Moore in his Study at Sloperton College* (English School; artist unknown). The setting for this panel painting is the poet's home in Wiltshire, where he had lived since 1817. He is depicted as a man of culture, at home in both the literary and musical worlds. A harp (an instrument often associated with Moore) sits on the floor on the left, in front of the piano. By kind permission of the National Gallery of Ireland.

Moore's success was also fostered by the patronage of Francis Rawdon-Hastings, Earl of Moira,¹² who secured for him the offer of the Irish Poet Laureateship – an honour which was declined, partly on account of Moore's Irish patriotism. His passion for his country's culture is perhaps most evident in his *Irish Melodies* (Fig. 2), which he conceived during 1806-7. He was approached by two music publishers, William and James Power, to write words for arrangements by Sir John Stevenson from characteristic Irish folk-tunes;¹³ Moore's splendid performances were sufficient justification to recommend the songs to fashionable society. The *Melodies*, published in ten 'Numbers' between 1808 and 1834, were congenial; but Moore also hoped that they would have a softening effect on the English, whom he considered harsh, scornful, or indifferent, and would, as he said, 'catch the eye of some of our patriotic politicians'.¹⁴ Moore earned a great deal from the work: James Power paid him £500 a year for the publication of new numbers of the *Irish Melodies*, and for its companion volume, *National Airs* (1818-27).¹⁵ These, along with such works as *Lalla Rookh* (1817), established him as a leading poet of his time.

Moore's reputation in Ireland was pre-eminent. Though he had no liking for vociferous nationalists like Daniel O'Connell, he was keenly aware of the oppressive atmosphere occasioned by the 1800 Act of



Fig. 2. Daniel Maclise, frontispiece to *Moore's Irish Melodies* (London: Longman, Brown, Green and Longmans, 1845). This collage features a host of images traditionally associated with Ireland and with music (including harps, shamrocks, uilleann pipes, fairies, keening women, and men singing in a tavern). A likeness of Moore on a medallion forms the centre of the illustration. In the lower right a bugler calls soldiers to arms, as he points towards an occurrence in the distance (an echo, perhaps, of the rousing calls to the people of Ireland which feature throughout the *Irish Melodies*). The theme of music is pervasive – even in the union of a couple above Moore's image (the man attempts awkwardly to play the fiddle as he kisses his beloved).

Union. Several works attest to this position: the *Memoires of Captain Rock* (1824), a fierce indictment of the misgovernment of Ireland, the publication of which established Moore as a leading Irish patriot;¹⁶ *The Life and Death of Lord Edward Fitzgerald* (1831), a respectful treatment of one of the leaders of the 1798 rebellion; *Travels of an Irish Gentleman in Search of Religion* (1833), which, though it served as a defence of the ancient national faith, was, by Moore's own admission, 'deeply political' in its 'bearings on the popular case of Ireland';¹⁷ and his *History of Ireland* (1835-46), which illustrated the impressive cultural achievements of the Irish people before their subjugation by what was perceived as an unjust régime. Given this evidence of Moore's Irish sympathies it is interesting to examine what use Dickens made of his work.

In 'The Boarding House' from *Sketches by Boz*, Mr Calton exclaims, 'Tom Moore is my poet'¹⁸ – a sentiment that is then echoed by several other characters. The words might also apply to Dickens himself, at least in the context of his deep familiarity with Moore's songs. He owned a set of the twelve-volume Paris edition of the poet's works,¹⁹ and knew the *Irish Melodies* well enough to exchange verse-letters based on them with Mark Lemon.²⁰ There are over thirty allusions to Moore's songs in Dickens's novels and sketches; they have been identified by Donal O'Sullivan, who notes that Moore 'held a special place in Dickens's affections'.²¹ They appear in *Sketches by Boz*, *Nicholas Nickleby*, *Martin Chuzzlewit*, *David Copperfield*, *Bleak House*, *Little Dorrit*, *Great Expectations*, *The Uncommercial Traveller*, *Our Mutual Friend*, and *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*; by far, however, the greatest number occur in *The Old Curiosity Shop*, and are mostly recalled by Dick Swiveller, either as quotation or parodic variation. Titles from *Irish Melodies* include 'When first I met thee',²² 'I saw thy form in youthful prime' (*OCS*, p. 271), 'Oh! blame not the bard' (*OCS*, p. 346; Fig. 3), 'Go where Glory waits thee' (*OCS*, p. 530; Fig. 4),²³ 'Drink of this cup' (*OCS*, p. 562), and 'When he, who adores thee' (*OCS*, p. 345). From *National Airs* Dickens includes "'Tis when the cup is smiling before us' (*OCS*, p. 530); he also recalls 'Mary, I believed thee true' from Moore's *Juvenile Poems* (*OCS*, p. 117), 'Holy be the pilgrim's sleep' (*OCS*, p. 596), and from *Lalla Rookh* the quatrains concerning 'The Fire-Worshippers', beginning 'Oh! Ever thus, from childhood's hour' (*OCS*, p. 513). Despite the overt nationalist sentiments of some of these, Dickens recalls them as touchstones of popular culture, fit to be recited by the Perpetual Grand Master of the 'Glorious Apollers' – a convivial glee club which Dick tells Quilp about in chapter 13 (*OCS*, p. 159). J. W. T. Ley comments on Swiveller's extensive knowledge of songs, explaining that it is an indication of his mental expansiveness and 'flow of soul' (important to his role as an adaptable 'pivot' in the novel, capable of change and growth).²⁴ Dick also functions as an evocation of sentiment, which is readily apparent in his quotations from Moore, as well as his recollections of other songs, including the seventeenth-century melody 'Begone! Dull Care', Thomas Haynes Bayly's 'We met – 'twas in a crowd', and the tune Dick plays on the flute, 'Away with Melancholy'



Fig. 3. Daniel Maclise, illustrated version of 'Oh, blame not the bard', *Moore's Irish Melodies*, p. 45. This melody treats the dual themes of patriotism and song, and emphasises the fact that the bard (now departed) might have sung of victory in battle, had the circumstances been different. It is recalled in chapter 35 of *The Old Curiosity Shop*, when Dick Swiveller asks the name of the Single Gentleman (the Grandfather's brother, who turns out to be Master Humphrey), in case anyone should call. When the anonymous character says 'Nobody ever calls on me', Dick exclaims 'If any mistake should arise from not having the name, don't say it was my fault, Sir... Oh blame not the bard'.



Fig. 4. Daniel Maclise, illustrated version of 'Go where Glory waits thee', *Moore's Irish Melodies*, p. 1. The Germanic influences on Maclise's art can clearly be seen in this image. The melody concerns a warrior who takes leave of his beloved before going to battle; he is asked to remember her in various circumstances. It is recalled in *Martin Chuzzlewit*, chapter 11, and in chapter 58 of *The Old Curiosity Shop*, when Dick, on learning from the Marchioness that 'the Baron Sampson Brasso and his fair sister' are at the play, inquires of the diminutive servant, 'Do they often go where glory waits 'em and leave you here?'

(*OCS*, pp. 100, 350, 533). It would seem, then, that Dickens's passion for Moore was for the writer and songster who was the favourite in the convivial clubs and fashionable English society of the novelist's youth, rather than the one whose poetry and prose works served as vehicles for Irish romantic nationalism.

There is, however, a greater attention to the Irish – and particularly to their political aspirations – evident in Dickens's pronouncements on the United States. In chapter 6 of *American Notes*, where Dickens describes New York, he espies 'two labourers in holiday clothes, of whom one carries in his hand a crumpled scrap of paper from which he tries to spell out a hard name, while the other looks for it on all the doors and windows'. He continues:

Irishmen both! You might know them, if they were masked, by their long-tailed blue coats and bright buttons, and their drab trousers, which they wear like men well used to working dresses, who are easy in no others. It would be hard to keep your model republics going, without the countrymen and the countrywomen of those two labourers. For who else would dig, and delve, and drudge, and do domestic work, and make canals and roads, and execute great lines of Internal Improvement! Irishmen both, and sorely puzzled too, to find out what they seek. Let us go down, and help them, for the love of home, and that spirit of liberty which admits of honest service to honest men, and honest work for honest bread, no matter what it be.²⁵

The passage is perceptive, because it reflects predominant patterns of Irish emigration to America before the Great Famine began in 1845.²⁶ Also, here Dickens characterises them as honest labourers, thus clearly discriminating between them and those unnamed figures he describes in *Sketches by Boz*, including the Irishman who 'comes home drunk every other night, and attacks everybody',²⁷ or the 'knot of Irish labourers' who have been 'alternately shaking hands with, and threatening the life of each other'.²⁸ In chapter 11 of his travelogue (Fig. 5) he describes a journey from Pittsburgh to Cincinnati on a steamboat:

Further down still, sits a man who is going some miles beyond their place of destination to "improve" a newly-discovered copper mine. He carries the village – that is to be – with him: a few frame cottages, and an apparatus for smelting the copper. He carries its people too. They are partly American and partly Irish, and herd together on the lower deck; where they amused themselves last evening till the night was pretty far advanced, by alternately firing off pistols and singing hymns.²⁹

The singing of hymns is a telling detail, because it points to a certain type of religiosity,³⁰ which is also evident in a temperance parade in Cincinnati in which the Irish were prominent:



Fig. 5. Marcus Stone, 'Emigrants', illustration for *American Notes*, chapter 11 ('From Pittsburg [*sic*] to Cincinnati in a Western Steamboat'). In 1862 Stone was commissioned to supply supplementary scenes for the Library Edition of this travel book, as well as for *Pictures from Italy*, *A Child's History of England*; in the same year he was asked by Dickens to illustrate the volume publication of *Great Expectations*.

There happened to be a great Temperance Convention held here on the day after our arrival: and as the order of march brought the procession under the windows of the hotel in which we lodged, when they started in the morning, I had a good opportunity of seeing it. It comprised several thousand men; the members of various "Washington Auxiliary Temperance Societies"; and was marshalled by officers on horseback, who cantered briskly up and down the line, with scarves and ribbons of bright colours fluttering out behind them gaily. There were bands of music too, and banners out of number: and it was a fresh, holiday-looking concourse altogether.

I was particularly pleased to see the Irishmen, who formed a distinct society among themselves, and mustered very strong with

their green scarves; carrying their national Harp and their Portrait of Father Matthew, high above the people's heads. They looked as jolly and good-humoured as ever; and, working (here) the hardest for their living and doing any kind of sturdy labour that came in their way, were the most independent fellows there, I thought.³¹

This genial description might indicate that Dickens was particularly interested in depicting the Irish in America as honest and sober labourers, making a fresh start in the new Republic. In contrast, however, he viewed with disgust the poor Irish immigrants, whose settlement, complete with sod huts, he espies en route to the Shaker village:

At one point, as we ascended a steep hill... we came upon an Irish colony. With means at hand of building decent cabins, it was wonderful to see how clumsy, rough, and wretched, its hovels were. The best were poor protection from the weather, the worst let in the wind and rain through wide breaches in the roofs of sodden grass, and in the walls of mud; some had neither door nor window; some had nearly fallen down, and were imperfectly propped up by stakes and poles; all were ruinous and filthy. Hideously ugly old women and very buxom young ones, pigs, dogs, men, children, babies, pots, kettles, dung-hills, vile refuse, rank straw, and standing water, all wallowing together in an inseparable heap, composed the furniture of every dark and dirty hut.³²

Dickens's ability to offer contrasting presentations in the same work points to the difficulty for scholars in pinpointing any unified attitude on the part of the novelist towards Ireland and the Irish.

Whereas the presentation of the Irish in *American Notes* reveals Dickens's biases as a journalist and travel-writer, the treatment in *Martin Chuzzlewit* provides evidence of his skill as a satirist. In chapter 21, Martin and Mark attend the meeting of the Watertoast Association of United Sympathisers, whose secretary, in reading the minutes, enlightens Martin concerning the group's allegiances:

He then learned that the Watertoast Association sympathized with a certain Public Man in Ireland, who held a contest upon certain points with England; and that they did so, because they didn't love England at all – not by any means because they loved Ireland much; being indeed horribly jealous and distrustful of its people always, and only tolerating them because of their working hard, which made them very useful; labour being held in greater indignity in the simple republic than in any other country upon earth.³³

The man in question is the Irish 'Liberator', Daniel O'Connell (Fig. 6, 1775-1847), who campaigned for Catholic emancipation and the repeal of the 1800 Act of Union, and, interestingly, expressed his pleasure with *American Notes* and with *The Old Curiosity Shop*.³⁴ The episode in



Fig. 6. David Wilkie, *Daniel O'Connell* (1836-38). By kind permission of the Royal Bank of Scotland. Wilkie exercised a profound influence on the work of Daniel Maclise, who, in August 1841, involved Dickens in a campaign for a monument in Wilkie's memory.

Chuzzlewit was inspired by a series of articles in the *Times* in June and July 1843, which satirised the anti-English meetings held by Americans in favour of Home Rule.³⁵ Dickens, writing the Watertoast episode shortly after the appearance of these pieces, takes a similar stance; however, in tracing the Association's dissolution to General Cyrus Choke's discovery of O'Connell's opposition to slavery, Dickens was able to evoke his own emancipatory sentiments.³⁶

The novelist was sensitive to the strong feelings aroused by O'Connell at public meetings. In 1836, when he was working for the *Morning Chronicle*, the then radically minded³⁷ Dickens was sent to report on the Irish MP's famous Ipswich speech, made as part of his 'Justice for Ireland' campaign. He wrote to Catherine on 27 May:

It is now half past one, and huge mobs are assembled to greet O'Connell who is every moment expected. From the appearance of the crowd, and the height of party feeling here, I rather expect a Row.³⁸

A more animated (though less authoritative) instance of Dickens's admiration is recorded by William Carleton, who quotes several sources which recall that during the passage of the Irish Coercion Bill through the House of Commons, a speech by O'Connell had such an effect on Dickens (who was reporting the debate for the *Morning Chronicle*) that he was forced to lay down his pencil, because he was so moved by the orator's account of a widow seeking her only son among the peasants killed by soldiers in a tithe riot, and another of a young girl shot down while leading her blind grandfather along a country lane.³⁹ While the provenance of this anecdote cannot be unquestionably established, the degree to which Dickens appreciated O'Connell's ability to excite pathos is evident in comments made to his American friends James and Annie Fields in 1868, when he compared O'Connell to the reformer John Bright: '[O'Connell] had a fine brogue which he cultivated and a magnificent eye. He had written a speech on the wrongs of Ireland, and, though he repeated it many, many times during the three months when I followed him about the country, I never heard him give it twice the same, nor ever without himself being deeply moved'.⁴⁰

O'Connell's reaction to Dickens's work in the early 1840s has become the stuff of legend. He supposedly threw his copy of *The Old Curiosity Shop* out of a train window in a fit of indignation.⁴¹ Of greater import is Dickens's reaction to the Liberator's trial, in which the latter was accused of sedition, fined £2000, and was supposed to be imprisoned for one year. Dickens alluded to the case in the leader he wrote for the *Morning Chronicle* in March 1844; it opened thus:

The present Government, having shown itself to be particularly clever in its management of Indictments for Conspiracy [that is, the trial of O'Connell], cannot do better, we think (keeping in its administrative eye the pacification of some of its most influential and most unruly

EJECTMENT OF IRISH TENANTRY.



Fig. 7. 'Ejectment of Irish Tenantry', *Illustrated London News* 13 (1848). This grimly effective image depicts the brutal bailiff evicting the pleading tenant, along with his weeping wife and children; the soldiers and unfeeling onlookers are convincingly presented.

supporters), than indict the whole manufacturing interest of the country for a conspiracy against the agricultural interest.

The article was largely an ironic assault on the entrenched opponents to the repeal of the Corn Laws; yet it contains several references to injustices and absurdities in evidence at O'Connell's trial, including the challenge of the defence lawyers to a duel by Thomas Barry Smith (the Attorney General for Ireland). The leader concluded with the observation that 'An indictment against the whole manufacturing interest need not be longer, surely, than the indictment in the case of the Crown against O'Connell and others'.⁴²

Later in the year the case was brought to appeal before the Law Lords; after deliberation the two sides were evenly divided, leaving Lord Denman with the deciding vote. He used it to reverse the decision, and O'Connell was released from Richmond Bridewell in September 1844, after serving three months. In a letter to Forster, written from Italy, Dickens expressed delight with Denman, saying 'I am glad to think I have always liked him so well'. His opinion of the newly released O'Connell, however, was rather less adulatory: in the same letter he spoke of the *Liberator* being 'beleaguered by vanity', making speeches about the justice system that were 'fretty', 'boastful', and 'frothy'.⁴³ Dickens is not known to have commented on O'Connell again until 1868, in the exchange with the *Field*s quoted above. He did not express a view on the *Liberator*'s death in 1847, and never found sympathy with the Irish nationalist cause, which fell into the hands of the radical Young Ireland group in O'Connell's final years.

For one so interested in the workings of Parliament and the issues of reform and social change in these islands, it would seem on first glance extraordinary that Dickens never once expressed an opinion on the Great Irish Famine, which caused the death of one million people, and the emigration of another million, between the years 1845 and 1851.⁴⁴ It is important to remember, however, that the reportage in England of the Famine generally accorded with prevailing imperial rhetoric. Leslie Williams discusses the coverage in the *Illustrated London News* – a journal which has, for many scholars, served as a treasure-trove of Victorian illustrations (Figs. 7, 8):

In a deeper reading of the text and graphic material, there appears a very strong recurrent theme of the otherness of the Irish. Even while reporting current events on the neighbouring island, most of the writers and illustrators view the Irish experience by contrast with the happy homes and fair fields recorded more often in illustrations of the English countryside. The editorial viewpoint regarding the Irish is comparable to the proto-anthropological view of the imperial or colonial reportage in the paper. The Irish experience is seen by the *ILN* as foreign and is reported in that context. The effect of distancing, of course, reduces involvement or any sense of political or social responsibility. Whatever passed for social contract in London

or England was not expected to be applied to the colonies, nor to the sister island. While the *ILN* is at first sympathetic and positive towards the Irish, the very tragedy of the famine and emigration makes their experience “other”.⁴⁵



Fig. 8. ‘Bridget O’Donnell and her Children’, *Illustrated London News* 15 (1849). This pathetic group is one of the few illustrations in the London journal to show signs of emaciation and desperation. Prior to the food crisis, O’Donnell’s husband was a tenant holding a small parcel of land; late in 1849, however, the family was evicted for non-payment of rent, and Bridget, ill with fever, was left homeless.

This rationale helps to explain the novelist’s silence.

Comments on the Famine did, however, appear in *Household Words*, in an article by Harriet Martineau published in November 1852; ‘The Irish Union’ championed the workhouses established in Ireland in 1838-41, and stressed their benefit to the population in the wake of the Famine.⁴⁶ Dickens certainly knew of the piece; yet he comments only on ‘rampant Irish nonsense (and worse) about the Saxon’⁴⁷ – that is, the more violent anti-English elements of the Catholic Defence Association – rather than on the effects of Famine. Dickens’s feelings about the Association (never mentioned in the article) are made clear in a letter to Angela Burdett Coutts:

The Government will do with those Irish Ruffians, exactly what it did with Puseyism – interfere, feebly, when the mischief is done. I feel

quite certain that but for the *laissez-aller* dealing with the Candlestick and Confessional matters, we never should have got to this pass – for the Pope was made, through that medium, to believe that there was a tendency towards him in England which does not exist – and presumed upon it – and went too far to retract. Now, a War between the Roman Catholic Religion – that curse upon the world – and Freedom, is inevitable.⁴⁸

The anti-Catholic bias clearly evident here also characterises Dickens's own pronouncements about the Irish in *Household Words*. In 'A Crisis in the Affairs of Mr John Bull' Dickens adopts a piteous-contemptuous posture in his characterisation of 'Miss Eringobragh' (the sister of John Bull), 'grovelling on the ground with her head in the ashes'; he continues: 'This unfortunate lady had been, for a length of time, in a horrible condition of mind and body, and presented a most lamentable spectacle of disease, dirt, rags, superstition and degradation'. The ferociously partisan piece was prompted by the restoration of the Roman Catholic hierarchy, and centres on how recent political and ecclesiastical developments might affect life in England. The pitiful state of Miss Eringobragh (whom Dickens deals with rather cursorily) has been aggravated, he writes, because of inexorable Catholic influence; the conclusion he draws is that 'wherever you see a condition at all resembling hers, you will find, on inquiry, that the sufferer has allowed herself to be dealt with by the Bulls of Rome'.⁴⁹ Dickens seems to give Ireland up as a lost cause; what concerns him more is the influence of a newly strengthened Catholicism – and indeed Tractarianism – on John Bull's island. As Malcolm Andrews notes, while Dickens's relationship to his country is a 'continually changing one', he wrote very little that was not to do with England and the English, and he usually considered 'barbarism' and 'Catholicism' to be synonymous.⁵⁰ These observations, combined with Dickens's own pronouncements about Ireland's prospects, serve to indicate that his concern with English matters far outweighed his consideration of Irish ones.

The subject of the Irish in Britain (the destination of many who emigrated in the wake of the Famine) was a far more fertile field for Dickens's imagination. His intimate knowledge of London ensured that the Irish – who formed nearly five per cent of the capital's population in 1851 – frequently found their way into his work.⁵¹ They are often stereotyped to enhance the general atmosphere Dickens wishes to create: they appear, for example, as prisoners in Newgate, 'indifferent' to the presence of visitors;⁵² occupants of Saffron Hill public houses, 'wrangling with might and main';⁵³ servants to the likes of Harold Skimpole;⁵⁴ and as the mass of urban poor, whose 'miserable affairs' are observed by the Uncommercial Traveller.⁵⁵ The greatest number are, however, found in 'On Duty with Inspector Field', an account in *Household Words* of a nocturnal visit by a forensic observer to the St Giles rookery, the East End, and the Mint lodging-houses in the Borough, in the company of Charles Frederick Field (Fig. 9), who

became chief of the Detective department of Scotland Yard in 1846, and retired in 1852, with a testimonial to which Dickens contributed £300. Michael Slater points out that Field may have first acted as Dickens's guide as early as 1839 when, together with John Forster, Daniel Maclise, and the actor James R. Anderson, the novelist made a nocturnal tour of St Giles – the district which excited in him, according to Forster a 'profound attraction of repulsion'.⁵⁶ In this article he presents a tramps' lodging-house, featuring various Irish occupants:



Fig. 9. Inspector Charles Field; by kind permission of Dickens House, London. He joined the New Police in 1829, and first worked in Holborn Division, which included the notorious slum area of St Giles. He was made an inspector in 1833, and became Chief of the Detective Department in 1846. On his retirement in 1852 he opened a private detective agency. Field contributed to Dickens's conception, in *Bleak House*, of Inspector Bucket, who, interestingly, demonstrates his familiarity with Moore's *Irish Melodies* on three occasions: chapters 49, 57, and 59 (see Charles Dickens, *Bleak House*, ed. Nicola Bradbury [Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1996], pp. 763, 874, 907).

Ten, twenty, thirty – who can count them! Men, women, children, for the most part naked, heaped upon the floor like maggots in a cheese! Ho! In that dark corner yonder! Does anybody lie there? Me sir, Irish me, a widder, with six children. And yonder? Me sir, Irish me, with me wife and eight poor babes. And to the left there? Me sir, Irish me, along with two more Irish boys as is me friends. And to the right there? Me sir and the Murphy fam'ly, numbering five blessed souls. And what's this, coiling, now, about my foot? Another Irish me, pitifully in want of shaving, whom I have awakened from sleep – and across my other foot lies his wife – and by the shoes of Inspector

Field lie their three eldest – and their three youngest are at present squeezed between the open door and the wall. And why is there no one on that little mat before the sullen fire? Because O'Donovan, with his wife and daughter, is not come in from selling Lucifers! Nor on the bit of sacking in the nearest corner? Bad luck! Because that Irish family is late to-night, a-cadging in the streets!⁵⁷

From the way he recounts the incident, it seems that Dickens never doubted his prerogative to break in and wake up the trampers as they took their poor rest; clearly he uses the presence of the police to justify this intrusive surveillance. Indeed it would be interesting to discover whether such thoughts ever occurred to the readers of *Household Words*. Nevertheless, the tone he adopts should be clearly distinguished from the apocalyptic pronouncements of Thomas Carlyle in *Chartism* (1839), where the Scotsman notes that 'The uncivilised Irishman, not by his strength, but by the opposite of strength, drives out the Saxon native, takes possession in his room. There abides he, in his squalor and unreason, in his falsity and drunken violence, as the ready-made nucleus of degradation and disorder'.⁵⁸

While Dickens's art depended on his readers' immediately recognising the various types which constituted the social fabric of his time, he did not simply juxtapose 'apes' and 'angels', and avoided marking out the Irish in particular as creatures of vice.⁵⁹ He was, rather, reflecting the conspicuousness of the Irish in a specific London district,⁶⁰ and was describing the social reality for the tramping class, which was not the realm of the social outcast, but rather of the working people who followed itinerant callings and trades; these lodging-houses were the night-time havens for hawkers and travelling labourers who could afford the penny- or twopenny-a-night beds. The mingling of the sexes and the crowded, impromptu conditions in which the inmates ate and slept were deemed by reformers to be immoral and unsanitary; yet those in lodging-houses were, in fact, better off than those who either slept rough or resorted to the metropolitan casual wards and night refuges, where accommodation was free. Because the period of residence was variable, there was a high turnover rate; thus Dickens's appellation 'Irish me' underscores the anonymity of the inhabitants. The visitations by the police, with their bull's-eye lanterns, were frequent; indeed in exploring the more notorious tramps' havens in London, such as the labyrinthine Adelphi Arches off the Strand, 'no sane person', one account stated, would have entered 'without an armed escort'.⁶¹ Bearing these circumstances in mind, it appears that in this article Dickens is not evoking an anti-Irish bias, or objectifying them because of any innate antipathy; he is, rather, doing what he had attempted earlier, in presenting the sod huts in *American Notes*, that is, to draw on the English reading public's perception of the foreignness of the Irish experience, particularly in emphasising that his party is 'stricken back by the pestilential breath' issuing from within.⁶² It was a distancing technique, which, if Leslie Williams's assessment is correct, reduced or obviated the

need for an informal political or social response, while encouraging the employment of stereotype by the reader to sketch in the scene depicted.

The complexity of Dickens's disposition towards the Irish is best observed by juxtaposing these literary and journalistic pronouncements with the respect and admiration he demonstrated for Ireland and its people during his three reading tours of the island, in August-September 1858, March 1867, and January 1869.⁶³ During his first sojourn (in the company of his manager Arthur Smith) he read in Dublin, Cork, Limerick, and Belfast, and was 'greatly surprised' that imagined stereotypes were not confirmed. Dublin, he noted, had 'far fewer spirit shops' than other 'great cities' and was 'very much larger' than he had supposed it to be.⁶⁴ Some of the places he visited reminded him of Paris and Naples.⁶⁵ Newspaper reports of the time confirm that audiences were enraptured by his renditions. The *Freeman's Journal* summarised Irish public opinion of Dickens thus:

We are very glad to find that so large a number of our fellow citizens assembled on this occasion to give Mr Dickens a hearty Irish welcome on his first visit to this country.... There are a great many writers for whose brilliant works and admirable genius we may have the most intense appreciation – as Macauley [*sic*], Carlyle, Thackeray, or Tennyson [*sic*], but no one of these seems to have acquired such a hold upon the affections of the reading public as Mr Dickens can proudly boast of.... But mingled with this natural curiosity to see a man so distinguished, we believe there was a strong desire on the part of the audience to express by their presence on this occasion the respect, the reverence, and the affection which they feel towards a great public teacher whose lessons have ever inculcated the divine principles of kindness, charity, and love.⁶⁶

Though Dickens spent more time in Dublin than he did elsewhere (largely because of the profitability of readings there),⁶⁷ it is interesting to consider his observations on other parts of the island, where the inhabitants revelled in the presence of the most famous author of the day. Forster believes that he liked Belfast 'as much as Dublin in another way'; he continued, interspersing his narrative with extracts from Dickens's correspondence:

"A fine place with a rough people; everything looking prosperous... every cottage looking as if it had been whitewashed the day before; and many with charming gardens, prettily kept with bright flowers." The success, too, was quite as great. "Enormous audiences. We turn away half the town. I think them a better audience on the whole than Dublin; and personal affection is somewhat overwhelming...". He had never seen men "go in to cry so undisguisedly", as they did at the Belfast *Dombey* reading; "and as to the *Boots* and *Mrs. Gamp* it was just one roar with me and them. For they made me laugh so, that sometimes I *could not* compose my face to go on".⁶⁸

He also took a long walk to Carrickfergus (ten miles from the city), and purchased, with the help of his friend Francis Finlay, a ‘trim, sparkling, slap-up *Irish jaunting car*’, which he later used to convey guests from Higham Station to Gad’s Hill.⁶⁹

His visit to Cork (where he read on 30 and 31 August) included a trip to Blarney Castle, where he kissed the famous stone; he did not, however, think the audience for the *Carol* as good as those in Dublin or Belfast.⁷⁰ Of Limerick he said ‘there is not much to be done’; he remarked on the town’s peculiarity in a letter to W. H. Wills:

This is the oddest place – of which nobody in any other part of Ireland seems to know anything. Nobody could answer a single question we asked about it.... Arthur [Smith] says that when he opened the doors last night, there was a rush of – three Ducks! We expect a Pig to-night. We had only £40; but they seemed to think *that*, amazing! If the two nights bring £100, it will be as much as we expected. I am bound to say that they are an admirable audience. As hearty and demonstrative as it is possible to be. It is a very odd place in its lower-order aspects, and I am very glad we came – though we could have made heaps of money by going to Dublin instead.

From other remarks it is clear that Dickens’s dominant concern was with profits; at times his audience was reduced, in his estimation, to so many pounds and shillings: when he wrote to his daughter about Victoria Hall (his Belfast venue), he noted; ‘The room will not hold more than from eighty to ninety pounds.’⁷¹ He delights in the fact that, as he tells Wills, he ‘made, last week, clear profit, £340; and have made, in the month of August, a profit of One Thousand Guineas!’⁷²

The evidence concerning the first Irish reading tour indicates that though Dickens appreciated some aspects of the locations and people he encountered, the ways in which he thought about them did not point to an especial interest in – or estrangement from – Ireland and the Irish.

Part II will follow in the next issue

¹This article is developed from ideas originally presented in the *Oxford Reader’s Companion to Dickens*, ed. Paul Schlicke (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1999), pp. 297-8; permission has been granted by OUP to reproduce portions of the argument. I am grateful for opportunities to speak on this topic at the Dickens Society Boston conference in November 1999, and at Dickens Fellowship gatherings in October 2000 and July 2001. I am also grateful to Michael Slater, John Drew, Paul Schlicke, Graham Storey, Patrick McCarthy, James Murphy, and Nial Osborough, for useful discussions on various points, both general and specific.

²*Letters of Charles Dickens*, The Pilgrim Edition, 8, ed. Graham Storey and Kathleen Tillotson (Oxford: Clarendon, 1995), p. 643 (hereafter ‘*Pilgrim Letters*’); dated 29 August 1858.

³*Pilgrim Letters* 5, p. 282; dated 16 April 1848. The letter continues: ‘I have no doubt you are a good countryman, however; and in the enclosed farce (excellent for our purpose) there is [a] very excellent and telling part of Emery’s – Andrew’. The play to which Dickens refers was *Love, Law, and Physic*; the countryman (which Lewes agreed to play)

was one of the best-known parts of the actor John Emery (1777-1822).

⁴See Pilgrim *Letters* 5, p. 354; to Mark Lemon, dated 30 June 1848.

⁵Pilgrim *Letters* 8, pp. 637-9; dated 25 August 1858. The Pilgrim editors have chosen to reproduce the text from *The Letters of Charles Dickens, edited by his Sister-in-law* [Georgina Hogarth] and *his Eldest Daughter* [Mamie Dickens], vol. 2 (London: Chapman & Hall, 1880), where Dickens's title is given as 'Inimitable'. The exchange is also, however, reproduced in John Forster's *Life of Charles Dickens* (ed. J. W. T. Ley, London: Cecil Palmer, 1928, p. 663), where Dickens is referred to as 'Old England', which, the Pilgrim editors note, is 'probably what CD wrote'. The juxtaposition is potentially significant in political terms: 'Young Ireland' is also, of course, the term used for the group led by Thomas Davis which agitated for Irish independence; for further information see Charles Gavan Duffy, *Young Ireland: A Fragment of Irish History* (London: Cassell, Petter, Galpin & Co., 1880).

⁶I am grateful to my colleagues Joan Rahilly and Paul Simpson for their assistance in performing this linguistic analysis. The encounter described in the opening paragraph of this article shows a similarly high degree of perception: the dentalisation of [t] in the proximity of [r] ('Misther'); diphthongisation ('ounly'); demonstrative articles ('this night', 'this many'); as well as the idiomatic straight translation from Irish of 'but for the light you've been in mee house sir (and God love your face!)'.

⁷See Pilgrim *Letters* 1, p. 460. Bentley gave a dinner in November 1838, which was attended by Moore, Dickens, Harrison Ainsworth, and others whom the Irish poet described in his diary as 'all the very *haut ton* of the literature of the day' (*Memoirs, Journal and Correspondence of Thomas Moore*, ed. Lord John Russell [London: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1853-6], 7, p. 244; entry for 21 November 1838). Moore adds that he refused to sing on this occasion, 'saying, rather unluckily, that I should feel as doing something unnatural to sing to a party of men' (p. 245).

⁸*Memoirs, Journal and Correspondence of Thomas Moore* 1, p. 21. I am grateful to Geoffrey Carnall, who has written the entry on Moore for the new *Dictionary of National Biography*, for his insight into the poet's nationalist sentiments, and for some of the details that follow.

⁹Emmet in fact discouraged Moore from involving himself in the conspiracies that led to the 1798 rebellion.

¹⁰Moore was enrolled in the Middle Temple, with a view to a legal career.

¹¹According to William Jerdan, Moore's face was 'sparkling with intelligence and pleasure, whilst Beauty crowded enamoured around him and hung with infectious enthusiasm upon every note' (*The Autobiography of William Jerdan: with His Literary, Political and Social Reminiscences and Correspondence during the Last Fifty Years* [London: A. Hall, Virtue & Co., 1852], 4, p. 91).

¹²Moira persuaded his friend the Prince of Wales to be the dedicatee of Moore's *Odes of Anacreon, Translated into English Verse*, published in 1800.

¹³Most of these airs were drawn from Edward Bunting's *General Collection of Ancient Irish Music* of 1796 and 1809 – a pioneering work in Irish folklore studies; the songs were collected at a meeting of itinerant Irish harpers in Belfast on 12 July 1792.

¹⁴*The Letters of Thomas Moore*, ed. Wilfred S. Dowden, vol. 1: 1793-1818 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1964), p. 128; to Lady Donegal, dated 29 April 1808.

¹⁵*National Airs* had arrangements by John Stevenson and Henry Bishop. Most of them are said to be derived from the folk music of various countries; thus 'Oft in the stilly night' is termed a 'Scotch air'. There is a strong probability, however, that the majority were written by Bishop or Stevenson, with some contributions from Moore, who composed some of the music for pieces in the collection identified as 'Miscellaneous Songs'.

¹⁶Moore's work served as the inspiration for Daniel Maclise's painting *The Installation of Captain Rock* (1834). For a detailed consideration see Luke Gibbons, 'Between Captain Rock and a Hard Place: Art and Agrarian Insurgency', *Ideology and Ireland in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. Tadhg Foley and Sean Ryder (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1998), pp. 23-44.

¹⁷*Letters of Thomas Moore* 2, p. 787; to Cornelius Lyne, dated 26 September 1834.

¹⁸Charles Dickens, *Sketches by Boz*, in *The Dent Uniform Edition of Dickens' Journalism*, Volume 1: *Sketches by Boz and Other Early Papers 1833-39*, ed. Michael

Slater (London: J. M. Dent, 1993), p. 281.

¹⁹*The Poetical Works of Thomas Moore*, 12 vols. (Paris: A. & W. Galignani, 1823-7). The volumes are included in the inventory of the contents of 1 Devonshire Terrace, completed on 27 May 1844 before Dickens's departure for Italy, and reproduced in volume 4 of the *Pilgrim Letters* (see p. 712); they also appear in the catalogue of the library at Gad's Hill (*Catalogue of the Library of Charles Dickens from Gadshill*, ed. J. H. Stonehouse [London: Piccadilly Fountain Press, 1935], p. 82). For further information on Dickens's book purchases see Leon Litvack, 'What Books Did Dickens Buy and Read? Evidence from the Book Accounts with His Publishers', *The Dickensian* 94.2 (1998), pp. 85-130.

²⁰See *Pilgrim Letters* 5, pp. 467, 496; Dickens begins the first of these letters 'My Dear Tom Moore – (I mean Lemon – but the verses have confused me –)'.

²¹Donal O'Sullivan, 'Charles Dickens and Tom Moore', *Studies* 37 (1948), p. 169. The article is reprinted by Jim Cooke in his *Charles Dickens's Ireland: An Anthology* (Dublin: Woodfield Press, 1999), pp. 60-77; see Leon Litvack's review in *The Dickensian* 96.2 (2000), pp. 163-4.

²²Charles Dickens, *The Old Curiosity Shop*, ed. Angus Easson (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985), p. 237 (hereafter 'OCS'); subsequent references will appear in the text.

²³Dickens also recalls this song in a letter; see *Pilgrim Letters*, vol. 4, p. 540, letter of 22 April 1846, to H. P. Smith.

²⁴J. W. T. Ley, 'Songs that Dick Swiveller Knew', *The Dickensian* 27 (1931), p. 205. On the importance of this character to the novel see Gabriel Pearson, '*The Old Curiosity Shop*', *Dickens and the Twentieth Century*, ed. John Gross & Gabriel Pearson (Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1962), pp. 77-90; see also Garrett Stewart, *Dickens and the Trials of Imagination* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1974), pp. 89-113.

²⁵Charles Dickens, *American Notes*, ed. F. S. Schwarzbach (Everyman Dickens, London: J. M. Dent, 1997), p. 91.

²⁶David Fitzpatrick calculates that one million Irish emigrants crossed the Atlantic between 1815 and 1845 ('Emigration 1801-1870', *A New History of Ireland*, 5, ed. W. E. Vaughan [Oxford: Clarendon, 1989], p. 565). He also notes that the majority of Irish emigrants to New York in the period 1830-45 were classed as 'labourers', a designation which included industrial and construction workers, as well as carpenters and other artisans (p. 575).

²⁷Charles Dickens, 'Seven Dials', *Sketches by Boz*, pp. 74-5.

²⁸Charles Dickens, 'Gin Shops', *Sketches by Boz*, p. 184. An extensive (though still incomplete) list of the named and unnamed Irish characters in Dickens's work may be found in George Newlin's *Everyone in Dickens* (Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 1995), pp. 316, 441-2.

²⁹*American Notes*, p. 165.

³⁰On the singing of hymns by Irish emigrants see Leon Litvack, 'The psychology of song; the theology of hymn: songs and hymns of the Irish migration' *Religion and Identity, The Irish World-Wide: History, Heritage, Identity*, 5, ed. Patrick O'Sullivan (Leicester: Leicester UP, 1996), pp. 70-89.

³¹*American Notes*, p. 169. The 'Father Mathew' to whom Dickens refers was Theobald Mathew (1790-1856), the much loved Catholic cleric who embarked on a temperance campaign in Ireland in 1838, and achieved remarkable success. Known as the 'Temperance Apostle', he mounted similar campaigns in London in 1843, and in the United States from 1849-51. Mathew (after whom many American temperance societies were named) gave evidence before the Select Committee on Colonisation from Ireland in 1847.

³²*American Notes*, p. 217

³³Charles Dickens, *Martin Chuzzlewit*, ed. Margaret Cardwell (Oxford World's Classics, Oxford UP, 1991), pp. 310-11

³⁴See O'Connell's letter to the *Dublin Pilot*, 24 March 1843, reprinted in W. J. Fitzpatrick, ed., *Correspondence of Daniel O'Connell* (London: John Murray, 1888), vol. 2, pp. 296-7.

³⁵See Lowell L. Blaidsell, 'The Origins of the Satire in the Watertoast Episode of *Martin Chuzzlewit*', *The Dickensian* 77 (1981), pp. 92-101, and K. J. Fielding, '*Martin Chuzzlewit* and "The Liberator"', *Notes & Queries* 198 (1953), pp. 254-6.

³⁶On O'Connell's petitions to the Americans in the 1840s on abolition and on repeal of the Act of Union see Noel Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White* (New York: Routledge, 1995), pp. 6-31.

³⁷Andrew Sanders, *Dickens and the Spirit of the Age* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1999), p. 52. Sanders demonstrates how in the 1830s Dickens's 'radical hopes for the continued reform of the constitution and for the further evolution of representative government' were 'consistently confounded by his experience of vested interest in action (and inaction)'.

³⁸Pilgrim *Letters* 1, p. 152; dated 27 May 1836. Fred Kaplan records that Dickens and Thomas Beard attended two dinners given for O'Connell in Liverpool and Birmingham in January 1836 (*Dickens: A Biography* [London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1988], p. 61).

³⁹See W. J. Carlton, 'Dickens Reports O'Connell: A Legend Examined', *The Dickensian* 65 (1969), pp. 95-9. His sources are Justin McCarthy's *The Epoch of Reform 1830-1850* (London, 1882), and two works by Michael MacDonagh, *The Life of Daniel O'Connell* (London: Cassell & Co., 1903), and *The Reporters' Gallery* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1913). The incident is also recalled by Ley, in a note to his edition of Forster's *Life of Charles Dickens* (p. 66).

⁴⁰Quoted in Carlton, 'Dickens Reports O'Connell', p. 99; Carlton gives as his source *Harper's Monthly Magazine* 145 (June 1922), p. 114. Dickens's comparison is interesting: Bright, who served as President of the Board of Trade in Gladstone's first ministry (1868-74) pushed for the disestablishment of the Church of Ireland and for the Land Act of 1870; he did not, however, support Irish Home Rule. See also James T. Fields, *Yesterdays with Authors* (Boston: J. R. Osgood and Company, 1872), George Curry, *Dickens and Annie Fields* (San Marino: Huntington Library, 1988), and 'His Closest American Friends: James and Annie Fields', in *Dickens: Interviews and Recollections*, ed. Philip Collins (London: Macmillan, 1981), pp. 320-1. Dickens was also asked to stand for Parliament alongside Bright; see Pilgrim *Letters* 12, p. 181.

⁴¹Edgar Johnson, for example, records that O'Connell, reading the book in a railway carriage, 'burst into tears when he read the death of Nell, groaned "He should not have killed her"', and despairingly threw the volume out of the train window' (*Charles Dickens: His tragedy and Triumph* [New York: Simon and Schuster, 1952] p. 304). Fitzpatrick provides a more sober account: O'Connell, he says, was reading *The Old Curiosity Shop* 'excitedly', but on reading of the death of Nell he 'flung away' the book in a fit of indignation, declaring that 'never again' would he read a line that Dickens wrote, because the novelist 'had not sufficient talent to maintain Nell's adventures with interest to the end and bring them to a happy issue, so he killed her to get rid of the difficulty' (*Correspondence of Daniel O'Connell* 2, pp. 112-3).

⁴²'The Agricultural Interest', *Dickens' Journalism, Volume 2: 'The Amusements of the People' and Other Papers: Reports, Essays and Reviews 1834-51*, ed. Michael Slater (London: J. M. Dent, 1996), pp. 64-7. Dickens visited the site of O'Connell's trial when he travelled to Dublin in 1858; see Pilgrim *Letters* 8, p. 635, dated 23 August 1858, to Mamie Dickens.

⁴³See Pilgrim *Letters*, vol. 4, pp. 193-4; dated ?15-16 September 1844.

⁴⁴The reason for this tragedy was the failure of the staple crop, the potato, in three seasons out of four, beginning in 1845. Because over three million Irish people were totally dependent on the potato as their sole source of sustenance, famine ensued, the horrors multiplying with each successive failure. Recent assessments of the Famine include Christine Kinealy, *This Great Calamity: The Irish Famine 1845-52* (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 1994); Peter Gray, *Famine, Land and Politics: British Government and Irish Society, 1843-50* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1998); Donal Kerr, *A 'Nation of Beggars'? Priests, People and Politics in Famine Ireland, 1846-1852* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1994); Chris Morash and Richard Hayes, eds., *Fearful Realities: New Perspectives on the Famine* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1996); John Killen, ed., *The Famine Decade: Contemporary Accounts, 1841-51* (Belfast: Blackstaff, 1995); and Noel Kissane, *The Irish Famine: A Documentary History* (Dublin: National Library of Ireland, 1995).

⁴⁵See Leslie Williams, 'Irish Identity and the *Illustrated London News*, 1846-51: Famine to Depopulation' *Representing Ireland: Gender, Class, Nationality*, ed. Susan Shaw Sailer (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1997), p. 91. On the journal's Famine illustrations in particular see Margaret Crawford, 'The Great Irish Famine 1845-9: Image

Versus Reality'. *Ireland: Art into History*, ed. Brian P. Kennedy and Raymond Gillespie (Dublin: Town House, 1994), pp. 75-88.

⁴⁶[Harriet Martineau], 'The Irish Union', *Household Words* 6 (6 November 1852), pp. 169-75 (hereafter 'HW'). There were other contributions to the journal on Irish subjects: William Allingham's 'The Irish "Stationers"' (*HW* 2 [5 October 1850], pp. 29-33), 'Irish Ballad Singers and Irish Street Ballads' (*HW* 4 [10 January 1852] p. 361) and 'Saint Patrick' (*HW* 13 [5 April 1856], pp. 279-83); Harriet Martineau's 'Triumphant Carriages' (*HW* 6 [23 October 1852], pp. 121-5); Sidney Smith's 'The Spade in Ireland' (*HW* 3 [26 April 1851], pp. 114-5); G. A. Sala's 'The Length of Quays' (*HW* 7 [20 August 1853], pp. 582-6) and 'An Irish Stew' (*HW* 7 [27 August 1853], pp. 617-20); and William Moy Thomas's 'The Last Howley of Killowen' (*HW* 9 [15 July 1854], p. 513-9). For authorship of *Household Words* articles see Anne Lohrli, *Household Words:... Table of Contents, List of Contributors and their Contributions* (Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1973). Dickens commented on several of these in his correspondence. On 'Irish Ballad Singers and Irish Street Ballads' see *Pilgrim Letters* 6, p. 778 (to Wills, dated 13 October 1852); on Smith's 'The Spade in Ireland' see *Pilgrim Letters* 6, p. 432 (to Lady Grey, dated 16 July 1851); on Sala's 'An Irish Stew' see *Pilgrim Letters* 7, p. 130 (to Wills, dated 12 August 1853).

⁴⁷*Pilgrim Letters* 6, p. 795; to Angela Burdett Coutts, dated 3 November 1852.

⁴⁸See *Pilgrim Letters* 6, p. 466; to Angela Burdett Coutts, dated 22 August 1851. The impetus for the letter was a meeting in Armagh on 19 August 1851 of the newly formed Catholic Defence Association, whose aim was the repeal of the Ecclesiastical Title Assumption Act (passed on 1 August), which forbade the use of diocesan titles by the new Catholic bishops in Britain as a whole.

⁴⁹[Charles Dickens], 'A Crisis in the Affairs of Mr John Bull', *HW* 2 (23 November 1850), p. 195. The article is reprinted, with helpful commentary, in Slater's *Dickens' Journalism, Volume 2*, pp. 297-305.

⁵⁰Malcolm Andrews, *Dickens on England and the English* (Hassocks: Harvester, 1979), pp. xix, xv. For an incensed response to Dickens's anti-Catholicism see the review of *Pictures from Italy* in the *Dublin Review* 21 (Sept. 1846).

⁵¹For information on the Irish in Victorian Britain see Lyon Hollen Lees, *Exiles of Erin: Irish Migrants in Victorian London* (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1979); Roger Swift and Sheridan Gilley, eds., *The Irish in the Victorian City* (London: Croom Helm, 1985), and *The Irish in Britain 1815-1939* (London: Pinter 1989); Graham Davis, *The Irish in Britain 1815-1914* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1991); and Donald MacRaild, *Irish Migrants in Modern Britain, 1750-1922* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999).

⁵²Charles Dickens, 'A Visit to Newgate', *Sketches by Boz*, p. 204.

⁵³Charles Dickens, *Oliver Twist*, ed. Kathleen Tillotson (Oxford World's Classics, Oxford: Oxford UP, 1982), p. 49.

⁵⁴Charles Dickens, *Bleak House*, ed. Nicola Bradbury (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1996), p. 930.

⁵⁵Charles Dickens, 'A Small Star in the East', *The Uncommercial Traveller* (Illustrated Library Edition, London: Chapman and Hall, 1875), p. 598. Dickens provides a vivid portrait of a woman who has suffered from working in the dust-laden, poisonous atmosphere of a white-lead factory; she is described by her companion thus: 'Sure 'tis the lead-mills, wher the women gets took on at eighteen-pence a day, sur, when they makes application early enough, them gets lead-poisoned later, and some, but not many, niver; and 'tis all according to the constitooshun, sur, and some constitooshuns is strong, and some is weak; and it hurts her dreadful; and that's what it is, and niver no more, and niver no less, sur'. It is important to note that the vast majority of the Irish in Britain were not reliant on either poor relief or charity for their subsistence, except, perhaps, during the worst Famine years.

⁵⁶*Life of Charles Dickens*, p. 11. For Slater's comments see *Dickens' Journalism, Volume 2*, p. 356. St Giles was, according to Samuel, one of London's ancient haunts of the travelling fraternities (Raphael Samuel, 'Comers and Goers', *The Victorian City: Images and Realities*, ed. H. J. Dyos and Michael Wolff [London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973], 1, p. 126).

⁵⁷'On Duty with Inspector Field', *HW* 3 (14 June 1851), pp. 266-7; the article is reprinted in *Dickens' Journalism, Volume 2*, pp. 359-69. For Field's proximity to Inspector

Bucket see Philip Collins, *Dickens and Crime* (London: Macmillan, 1962), pp. 206-11.

⁵⁸Thomas Carlyle, *Chartism* (London: James Fraser, 1840), pp. 27-8. For Carlyle's comments on the repeal of Act of Union ('We'll joost cut every one of yer thraits first') and on Thomas Moore ('puir little Tammy Moore'), both discussed at dinner parties given by John Forster, see Percy Fitzgerald, *Memories of Charles Dickens, with an Account of 'Household Words' and 'All the Year Round' and the Contributors Thereto* (Bristol: J. W. Arrowsmith, 1913), pp. 95, 97.

⁵⁹See L. Perry Curtis, Jr., *Apes and Angels: The Irishman in Victorian Caricature* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1971) and Sheridan Gilley, 'English Attitudes to the Irish in England, 1780-1900', *Immigrants and Minorities in British Society* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1978), p. 88. David Fitzpatrick treats the available evidence for Irish distinctiveness, and makes clear that there was no universal stereotype of the Irish immigrant; see "'A peculiar tramping people": the Irish in Britain, 1801-70', *A New History of Ireland* 5, p. 623. Dickens was not, however, immune from stereotypical identification; for example, he commented on an Irish girl at Urania Cottage, 'shewing a very national incapability of getting on with anybody on any subject' (Pilgrim *Letters* 6, p. 513; dated 9 October 1851, to Angela Burdett Coutts).

⁶⁰Fitzpatrick notes that Irish conspicuousness in Britain was a result of their concentration in particular areas of a handful of cities; he cites such examples as Liverpool's Irishtown, London's rookery of St Giles, and Manchester's Little Ireland ("A peculiar tramping people", p. 634). He adds, however, that the 'Irish quarters' were seldom exclusively Irish.

⁶¹See Samuel, pp. 126-9; he explains that in winter, when employment was more scarce, labourers gravitated towards towns and cities, often remaining in the lodging-houses for extended periods. This great influx occurred in October, after hop-picking or 'hopping' – an occupation for which, one journal noted, the Irish poor developed a 'positive mania' ('The Irish in England', *Dublin Review* [1856], p. 508).

⁶²'On Duty with Inspector Field', p. 266.

⁶³Dickens had considered travelling to Ireland on two previous occasions: he told Forster in July 1839 that he intended going 'either to Ireland or to America and to write from thence a series of papers descriptive of the places and people I see' (Pilgrim *Letters* 1, p. 564; dated 14 July 1839); in May 1852 he was invited by the Cork attorney John William Bourke to come to Ireland with members of the Guild of Literature and Art, to mount amateur theatricals at the time of the National Exhibition of the Arts, Manufacturers, and Materials (see Pilgrim *Letters* 6, pp. 668-9, 693; letters dated 8 May and 11 June 1852). Neither plan was executed, though Dickens did seriously consider Bourke's invitation to Cork.

⁶⁴Pilgrim *Letters* 8, pp. 633, 634; letters to Angela Burdett Coutts and Mamie Dickens, both dated 23 August 1858. It is interesting to note that before departing for Liverpool on 18 August 1858 Dickens, recovering from a cold, 'sang half the Irish Melodies' to himself to test his voice (Pilgrim *Letters* 8, p. 628; to Georgina Hogarth). By chance Dickens's arrival in Ireland coincided with that of Cardinal Wiseman.

⁶⁵Forster, *Life of Charles Dickens*, p. 662.

⁶⁶'Mr Charles Dickens', *Freeman's Journal*, 24 August 1858. Newspaper reports of the Irish reading tours were collected by Jack Shaw, in his 'Dickens and Ireland', *The Dickensian* 5 (1905), pp. 33-8. Shaw's account was extensively used (though never acknowledged) by Cooke in his *Charles Dickens's Ireland*, pp. 3-20.

⁶⁷When Dickens wrote to his daughter about Victoria Hall (his Belfast venue), he noted 'The room will not hold more than from eighty to ninety pounds' (Pilgrim *Letters* 8, p. 641; dated 18 August 1858).

⁶⁸Forster, *Life of Charles Dickens*, p. 664. The extracts are reprinted in Pilgrim *Letters* 8, pp. 642-3. Percy Fitzgerald recalls that Dickens described the citizens of Belfast as 'curious people' who 'all seemed Scotch, but quite in a state of transition' (*Memories of Charles Dickens*, pp. 7-8).

⁶⁹Pilgrim *Letters* 8, p. 644; to Georgina Hogarth, dated 29 August 1858. Again Dickens drew a continental comparison, calling the 'gay and bright' jaunting car 'Wonderfully Neapolitan'. See also his letter to Finlay confirming the order, in Pilgrim *Letters* 8, pp. 645-6. Fitzgerald describes Dickens's coming to collect him in this vehicle

(*Memories of Charles Dickens*, p. 25).

⁷⁰See *Pilgrim Letters* 8, p. 646; to Francis Findlay, dated 2 September 1858.

⁷¹*Pilgrim Letters* 8, p. 641; dated 18 August 1858.

⁷²*Pilgrim Letters* 8, p. 647; to W. H. Wills, dated 2 September 1858.

