

# Religion and Social Conflict during the Protestant Crusade in West Limerick, 1822-49

I



feature of the Rockite Insurrection that began in west Limerick in 1821 was the capacity for religious tensions in the community to be reflected in violence. This paper will examine the cause of this sectarian tension in west Limerick in the pre-famine decades and the influence thereon of agrarian protest, the campaign for Catholic Emancipation, the Tithe War and the religious fervour of the 'Second Reformation'. In the early nineteenth century organized religion played a major part in the life of the country to a degree that was rarely seen in previous decades. Protestant and Catholic churches

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by Gerard Curtin

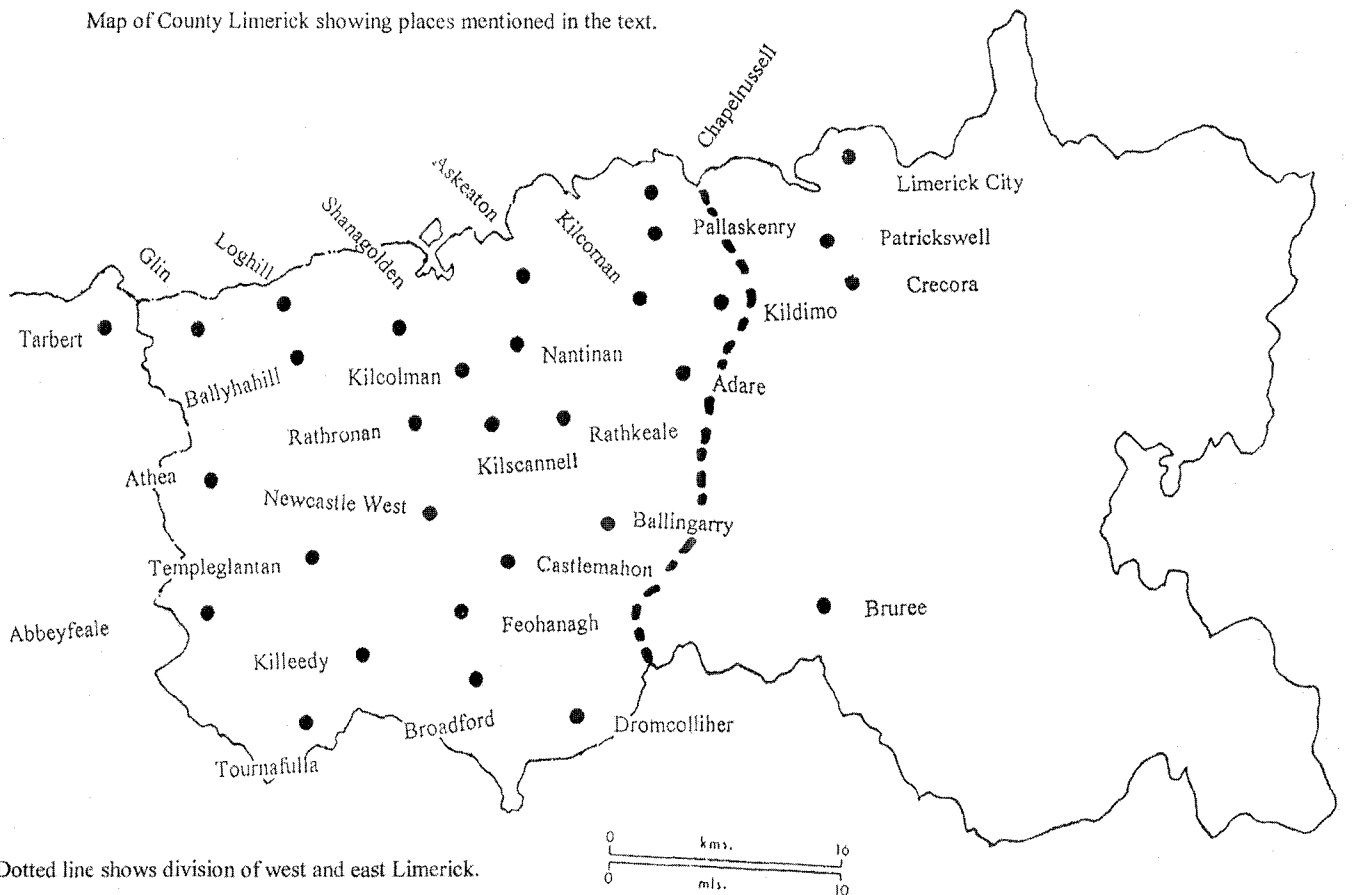
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experienced a period of revitalization. The growth of missionary activity among the different Protestant denominations during the early nineteenth century was due to a reorganization of the Established Church and new interest in missionary efforts in Ireland. During these years a large number of societies was formed dedicated to the task of promoting the conversion of Irish Catholics. The Hibernian Bible Society (1806), the Irish Society for Promoting the Education of the Native Irish through the Medium of Their Own Language (1818) and the Scripture Readers' Society (1822) were among the

most important.<sup>1</sup> Before the famine, Dingle, in County Kerry and Achill, in Mayo, had become famous as areas in which evangelical ministers of the Established Church had succeeded in converting considerable numbers of Catholics.<sup>2</sup> During this period too, the Established Church also found converts in west Limerick, where concerted efforts were made at Abbeyfeale, Askeaton and Ballingarry.<sup>3</sup>

At the beginning of the nineteenth century the Church of Ireland was a largely ineffective and poorly administered body. The general conduct of the Protestant clergy in the discharge of their duties was very often less than satisfactory. Particularly in rural districts the lower clergy of the Established Church

Map of County Limerick showing places mentioned in the text.





Postcard showing Ballingarry Church of Ireland church, 1950s

(Limerick Museum)

failed to reside in the parishes to which they were appointed, more often than not neglecting them completely. The Rev. William Ashe was rector of Glin parish, where he was resident, but he was also rector of the parish of Grange over twenty miles away. A better example of this unsatisfactory state of affairs was the Rev. John Warburton, who was rector of three separate parishes in west Limerick, namely Nantinan, Morgans and Loughill, yet he resided in County Kildare.<sup>4</sup> The first two decades of the nineteenth century witnessed a general reorganization and a tightening up of ecclesiastical discipline. In the late eighteenth - early nineteenth century generous government grants to the Board of First Fruits were used to a large extent to build new churches. Limerick shared in this church building boom. In the west of the county (covering an area of 1,304 square kilometres), new churches were built or rebuilt at Killlialathan, Loughill and Abbeyfeale in 1812; Glin and Shanagolden in 1815; Nantinan 1817; Ballingarry and Rathronan 1820; Kilscannel and Chapelrussell 1822 and Rathkeale 1831. Further building was undertaken in the construction of Glebe Houses at Askeaton and Rathronan in 1827. This outward display, together with an increase in numbers attending the Established Church's religious services in the 1822-24 period due to the large numbers of soldiers and police brought into the district during the Rockite Insurrection, gave the appearance of a reinvigorated Protestant church in west Limerick.<sup>5</sup>

Following the harvest failure of 1826, Protestant missionaries began conversion efforts in west Limerick. At a meeting at Rathkeale in March 1827, a West Limerick

Bible Society was formed as an auxiliary to the Hibernian Bible Society. The main focus of Protestant evangelism was the reading of the bible and evangelists saw themselves as bringing the 'word of God' to the population. A Hibernian Bible Society had been active in previous years in Limerick City, but it was only from 1827 that the society's attention turned to the county in general and Askeaton in particular. Social conditions were poor in Askeaton, as the town was described in August 1827 as having 150 cabins occupied by 'unemployed and hungry paupers.' One of the secretaries of the West Limerick Bible Society was the Rev. Richard Murray, who was also the rector of Askeaton. Offering food and employment and funded by £1,200 from the Board of First Fruits, the early efforts of the Established Church at Askeaton proved successful, with thirty-six people converting to Protestantism. Protestant farmers from the Askeaton area employed three of the converts, with three others employed at Birdhill, Co. Tipperary, Bruree and Newcastle, County Limerick. Another eight were employed at Askeaton Glebe House. The combined income of the fourteen employed was fifty-four shillings a week, a payment that must have increased the standard of living of the converts quite considerably, for during these years the price in labour in west Limerick was between six and eight pence a day.<sup>6</sup> During 1827 claims of conversions to Protestantism were reported from other towns in west Limerick: in May at the church of Ballingarry it was claimed that two Roman Catholics conformed to the Protestant religion. At Newcastle on the same day it was stated that 'a very intelligent man, of the name of Reidy' was

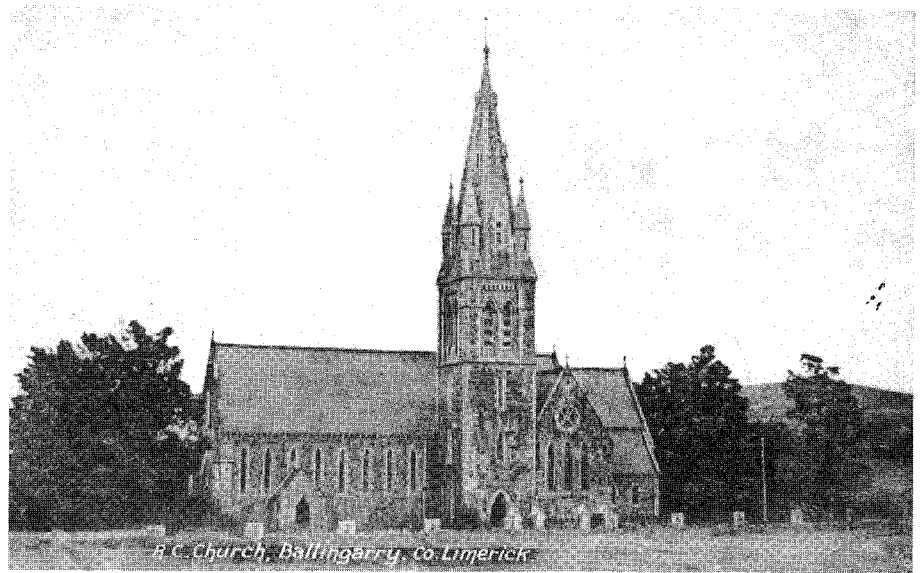
converted to Protestantism and a week later that 'a respectable gentleman and a lady' recanted their Catholic faith at Shanagolden Protestant church.<sup>7</sup>

Due to a lack of primary sources we have little information on the 'Second Reformation' in the years that followed. Local newspapers showed little interest in Protestant conversion attempts following the initial efforts in 1827. The State of the Country Papers contain correspondence from members of the elite, who only reported on matters of particular interest to themselves such as attacks on property and the stealing of arms. In 1839 Protestant evangelists switched their missionary efforts to Ballingarry, when the Rev. George Gough Gubbins was sent there from Dingle to establish a new Protestant colony.<sup>8</sup> The success of this mission is not known. However, we have some information on the conversion effort, as in 1849 the Rev. Daniel Foley visited the Ballingarry colony, where he encountered opposition from the local Catholic population at an early stage, in the form of pulling down the posters announcing his sermon. The Rev. Foley also visited Askeaton, where the Rev. Maxwell had succeeded the Rev. Murray. If he is to be believed, an overflowing congregation, three-fourths Roman Catholic, heard his sermon in a chapel that was so crowded both inside and out that people clambered up the windows on the outside and requested the Rev. Foley to speak loudly so he could be heard. Later Rev. Foley visited Pallaskenry, where he gave his sermon in both English and Irish, taking cognizance of 'the great interest' the local population showed when he spoke in their native tongue. A visit to Abbeyfeale followed, where the Rev. Edward Norman

claimed to minister to a congregation composed 'exclusively of converts from the Church of Rome.'<sup>9</sup> Efforts were also made by the Established Church to establish in the district schools offering an elementary education, free to all who were prepared to accept the religious instruction that accompanied it. By 1835 the London Hibernian Society had set up schools at Chapelrussell in Pallaskenry, Kilcornan and two schools in Rathkeale. In the late 1830s a London Hibernian School was set up in Askeaton between the Protestant Church and the Glebe House.<sup>10</sup>

The Roman Catholic Church in Ireland at the beginning of the nineteenth century suffered from problems very similar to its established rival. Problems included the general laxity of ecclesiastical discipline, particularly among priests. In the mid-eighteenth century at Saint Munchin's parish in Limerick City, it was alleged that the parish priest, Patrick Scanlan, had fathered children with two different women.<sup>11</sup> The early decades of the nineteenth century, however, brought dramatic change. Reforms were introduced, the management of individual parishes was closely regulated and priests were required to preach regularly. As a consequence of these reforms, the number of priests in Limerick diocese increased from fifty-two in 1800 to ninety-seven in 1835. This gave a return of one priest to 2,539 Catholics in Limerick diocese, the highest ratio in Munster.<sup>12</sup> As well as reorganization in administration, the pre-famine period witnessed a major drive to build village chapels. There can be no doubt that this display grew out of the effort to counteract the conversion attempts on some of the Catholic flock by the Protestant missions. In the 1820s Catholic churches were built at Dromcolliher, Broadford, Kilcolman, Ballyhahill, Kilcornan, Newcastle and Templeglantan. The 1830s witnessed the building of churches at Athea, Castlemahon, Feohanagh, Kildimo and Tournafulla.<sup>13</sup> The selection of sites was very much a statement of resistance to conversion efforts. The churches at Kilcornan, Kildimo and Templeglantan were built on recently constructed new line roads, while the chapels at Athea, Kilcolman, Newcastle and Tournafulla were built on high sites where they had a commanding vista.<sup>14</sup>

During the conversion attempts at Askeaton in 1827, the Catholic parish priest was Michael Fitzgerald, who resisted the efforts of the Protestant mission in the locality with vigour. In the competition for converts throughout 1827 there was claim and counter claim between Fr. Fitzgerald and the Rev. Murray in the newspapers as to the success (or lack thereof) of the conversion attempts at Askeaton. It would seem that both were conscious of the potential this theatre could have on conversion efforts, as they favoured this print medium with long letters exposing their views and efforts. In a letter dated 17 July 1827, Fitzgerald claimed that of the original



Postcard, Ballingarry RC church, posted in 1910

(Limerick Museum)

thirty-six converts at least twenty fell away 'when they found nothing could be gained from a change of creed'. He went on to state that the Rev. Murray could not 'boast of a single convert who was not at the commencement of their acquaintance a miserable pauper'. He claimed that the conversions were only temporary and the converts 'may for a time prefer Protestantism to hunger, nakedness and beggary' and counter-claimed that two Protestants at Askeaton had become Catholics and that at Rathkeale 'two highly educated and enlightened Protestants' had conformed to the Catholic faith. The Rev. Murray responded to this attack by letter on 28 August dismissing Fr. Fitzgerald's allegations. However, the Rev. Murray's argument is not entirely convincing as it was mainly based on theology. He mentioned only two of the converts by name, showing little of the local knowledge of his Roman Catholic counterpart, who was familiar with twenty-two of the converts, confirming his greater knowledge of the community.<sup>15</sup> Throughout west Limerick the Catholic Church strongly resisted conversion efforts. At Newcastle, Thomas Coll, the Catholic parish priest, claimed in June 1827 a re-conversion to the Catholic faith of Patrick Meehan, 'a very poor man', who had a few weeks previously converted to the Established Church. In October 1827 Rev. Coll claimed an even bigger prize, when he stated that a lady born a Protestant embraced the Catholic faith.<sup>16</sup>

Later evidence suggests that the Protestant evangelical efforts of the 1820s in the district could not be maintained. Indeed, a traveller to Killeedy in 1837 found that the Protestant church and the glebe house had not been rebuilt following the Rockite attack in 1822.<sup>17</sup> A century later, the Catholic historian, Begley, using unspecified early nineteenth century sources, claimed that Fr. Fitzgerald was successful in seeing off the best efforts of the proselytizers at Askeaton, eventually forcing the Rev. Murray to retire. The Catholic bishop of Limerick, Dr. Ryan, was

so pleased at the efforts of Michael Fitzgerald at Askeaton that the title of Archdeacon was revived and conferred on him and he was transferred to Ballingarry in 1837.<sup>18</sup> All in all, Rev. Foley's optimistic report in 1849 on Protestant evangelical efforts seems not to be the most trustworthy. His claim that Roman Catholics freely attended the reading of scriptures at the Protestant school at Askeaton and that the local Catholic school failed, with the teacher resigning, should therefore be viewed with caution. The impact of the Established Church education efforts seems confined to certain localities, as all five Protestant schools in west Limerick had been set up in areas where the Protestant population was at its greatest, leaving other areas virtually untouched. The twelve parishes in the Rathkeale, Adare and Pallaskenry district held three-quarters of the Protestant population of west Limerick. Therefore the Established Church made little impact in converting the masses of Catholic children, as the education crusade was not carried beyond the area of the county where Protestantism was strongest.<sup>19</sup>

The Catholic Church in west Limerick during the pre-famine era had within its ranks some particularly vigorous parish priests. Bowen has argued that agitating Catholic priests during this period were educated at Maynooth.<sup>20</sup> This view seems to be correct at least for west Limerick, as the records at Maynooth outline that Michael Fitzgerald of Askeaton and Ballingarry and Thomas Coll of Croagh and Newcastle entered this seminary on the same day, 1 September 1808. These two priests in particular mobilised a positive Catholic response to the Protestant crusade in west Limerick and served as a rallying force in the community. The influence of Thomas Coll at Newcastle was immense. In 1829 he built a new church, as the old one was found to be a 'tottering structure' and 'very discreditable even to the name of a temple of the living God.'<sup>21</sup> The vigorous efforts of Michael Fitzgerald against Protestant



Postcard of St Mary Immaculate church, Newcastle West, issued by John J Lacey, Newcastle West c.1910

(Limerick Museum)

conversion efforts has already been shown. The view that these Maynooth priests were strongly anti-Protestant seems to be confirmed in the case of Thomas Coll and Michael Fitzgerald, both of whom strongly influenced the rejection of the Protestant crusade in west Limerick by the Catholic community.<sup>22</sup> Another priest of significance in the resistance to the 'Second Reformation' in west Limerick was Patrick McNamara at Shanagolden. He studied for the priesthood in Rome and was appointed dean of the diocese in 1822 at the age of thirty. This appointment at an early age is likely due to his contacts in the diocese and at the Vatican, as early in 1822 he represented Bishop Tuohy in Rome during a dispute within the diocese. He built Ballyhahill church within two years (1827-9). Patrick McNamara related well with his parishioners and was a man of great intellect, determination and an outstanding orator. An insight into his ability and the thoroughness of his ministry at Shanagolden was recorded in the parish register for 1826, where the names of fourteen Protestants are found that he converted to the Catholic faith.<sup>23</sup>

The influence of Catholic priests on the landlords and gentry of the area is also of significance. Thomas Coll at Newcastle received from the local landlord, Lord Courtenay, a free site for the church and monetary support to a total of £100. At Ballyhahill, the local landlord, Stephen Edward Rice, donated a free site for the church and funds to the value of twenty guineas towards the cost of construction.<sup>24</sup> The greatest example of the interdependence of the Catholic clergy and the landed gentry comes from Kilcornan, where the local landlord, John Waller of Pallaskenny, not only donated a site for the building of Kilcornan Catholic Church, but

also paid for the entire construction cost.<sup>25</sup> It would seem that the landlords in the district were well aware of the social and in particular the political influence of the Catholic priests as organizers at parliamentary elections of the forty shilling and later the ten pound freeholders. Local Protestant gentry and MPs supported the building of Catholic churches in west Limerick. In contrast there was a lack of support from the landlord class for the Protestant evangelical crusade. The evangelical ministers saw the lower classes of the Catholic population as potential Protestants. The landed class did not and seemed to have favoured the social preservation of the membership of the Established Church as the landed gentry and sizeable tenant farmers. This lack of enthusiasm towards the mission in Protestant circles was found throughout the country, where the missionaries were generally looked upon as 'disruptive intruders.' The donation of sites and large subventions of money by gentry who were members of the Established Church to the Catholic Church and the lack of support for evangelical efforts, suggests a similar attitude in the west Limerick.<sup>26</sup>

## II

Anti-Protestantism was deeply rooted in Gaelic culture. Ballads and pamphlets popular amongst the lower classes kept alive a sense of hatred of the Protestant religion, fostering a strong sectarian component at the heart of popular culture. A report from Limerick in 1821 outlined that 'for many years past', the 'songs of the people' published in that city were graphically sectarian.<sup>27</sup> A typical example was reported, sung in a public house in Rathkeale in November 1824 by four

civilians and a soldier: 'we will wade knee deep in orange blood and fight for liberty.'<sup>28</sup> Whereas these religious prejudices were always latent in popular culture, it was only at times of severe economic recession, such as the years following 1815, that these beliefs translated into violent action. In 1822 the Protestant Archbishop McGee made his declaration of a religious war and began the so-called 'Second Reformation.' As a consequence of the growth of evangelicalism and a whole series of events that took place in the pre-famine years, such as the Rockite Insurrection 1821-4, the campaign for Catholic Emancipation 1824-9 and the Tithe War 1831-8, the religious differences between members of the Established Church and the Roman Catholic Church were reinforced. Previous unrest in the early nineteenth century in County Limerick (in the years 1808-10), while directed against tithes, had been much less aggressive towards the Protestant church as an institution. However, during the 1821-4 outbreak of unrest a strong anti-Protestant feeling increased among the Catholic lower orders, with sectarian aggression manifesting itself in attacks on Protestant church buildings and on the Palatine community. Sectarianism decreased in the following years, but was kept vibrant by unfolding events, many of which were framed in popular memory in sectarian terms.<sup>29</sup>

During the 1821-4 Rockite Insurrection in west Limerick, an anti-Protestant animus was a major part of the Rockite consciousness and as a consequence many of the outrages that occurred were sectarian in nature. The sectarian beliefs of the lower classes were fuelled in particular by the prophecies of Pastorini,



Postcard showing the interior of St Mary's Church, Newcastle West, posted in 1908

(Limerick Museum)

the popular interpretation of which forecast that God would punish heretics about fifty years after 1771. This assertion led some to believe that this meant the total destruction of Irish Protestantism by 1821, while others put the date at 1825. These beliefs had their source in the midlands and penetrated the Limerick area by 1817, having their widest circulation in the years of economic depression of the early 1820s.<sup>30</sup> The spread of these prophecies was fueled by the distribution of thousand of bibles by the Bible Societies and the evangelical ministers. In west Limerick in 1827, the missionaries at Askeaton printed and distributed a publication on the Book of Genesis, an edition specially adapted for family prayer. Such publications increased the interest in religion in society and provoked a response from the Roman Catholic community, who promoted their own religious literature.<sup>31</sup> During the early 1820s, eight-page printed pamphlets were particularly popular within the community. The British Library holding of such Limerick published pamphlets in 1820 had twenty-eight titles, of which five had a religious focus. The number of these pamphlets collected cannot be seen as a guide to their popularity, as many such pamphlets may not have been collected. However, what the presence of these publications confirms is that there was a ready market in County Limerick for booklets with a religious content. The audience for these pamphlets was almost entirely the lower classes and such was the demand for the printed word that there was a printing works at Shanagolden village with a population of 1,430.<sup>32</sup>

In particular during the early 1820s, resentment against Protestant farmers brought forth a strong sectarian feeling.

As with previous outbreaks of Whiteboyism since the 1760s, the disturbances began with the disaffected arming themselves. This poses the question: who were the holders of arms in the community? In west Limerick in 1832, a total of thirty-two farmers were granted licenses to bear arms. Therefore, as many farmers held arms to shoot vermin, they were obvious targets for attack. Of these farmers that held arms, twenty-three had Catholic surnames, with nine having Protestant surnames.<sup>33</sup> It may well be that a similar situation existed in the 1820s. What found expression in these attacks was a sectarian animus, as the evidence suggests that a farmer was particularly liable to be attacked for arms if he was a Protestant. A triangular area between Rathkeale, Adare and Pallaskenry contained the greatest numbers of Established Church members in the region.<sup>34</sup> During the first nine months of unrest in this district in the period June 1821-March 1822, of the nineteen farmers attacked for arms, thirteen were Protestant, a return out of all proportion to their strength in the population. This view of a sectarian focus against Protestant farmers is further supported by an attack by 'insurgents' on the night of 5 February 1822 on the Palatine hamlet at Ballingarrane, Rathkeale, an attack that was 'repulsed vigorously by the inhabitants.' No attack is recorded on the neighbouring Palatine hamlets of Killeheen and Courtmatrix during this period of unrest. The reason, it would seem, is that sizeable Palatine farmers were particularly obnoxious to the lower orders of society. Three quarters of the holdings at Ballingarrane were of more than fifteen acres, while in Courtmatrix and in Killeheen, only one quarter of holdings were of a similar size.<sup>35</sup>

Another factor which accentuated anti-Protestant feeling during 1821-4 in west Limerick was the deployment of three yeomanry corps at Pallaskenry, Adare and Rathkeale.<sup>36</sup> These forces were used against recurring agrarian unrest in west Limerick in the early 1800s and, as the force was penetrated by Orangeism and was largely Protestant, a strong sectarian passion was inflamed among the lower classes of the Catholic population. Members of the local yeomanry were therefore the focus of sectarian hatred. In August 1821, insurgents successfully raided houses belonging to members of the Palatine Yeomanry Corp at Askeaton for arms. An attack in a similar pattern occurred at Adare in February 1822, when the houses of John Piper, James Welsh, Richard White, George Piper and Michael Hifle were attacked while their sons, all members of the local yeomanry, were away on duty. The following month, Whiteboys gathered in the hills between Glin, Loughill and Shanagolden for the purpose of attacking the yeomanry stationed at Tarbert, County Kerry.<sup>37</sup> In October 1821 a figure particularly obnoxious to the Catholic lower orders, a piper in the Adare Yeomanry Corp named John Walsh, was murdered on the way home from purchasing candles in Adare. Here was a man seen as a symbol of Orange triumphalism, as it was very likely that Walsh had played loyalist tunes during Yeoman marches and Protestant celebrations.<sup>38</sup> In these years of high sectarian tensions attacks on the yeomanry at Adare continued. In the spring of 1823 the house of William Ball of Tuogh, Adare, a member of Adare Yeomanry, was attacked on two occasions. Arms were taken in the first instance from his house, while on the second occasion

all the furniture in his house was destroyed in consequence of Ball giving evidence in a court case that resulted in a transportation sentence for two insurgents. Due to continued attacks on the Adare Yeomanry, Major T.P. Vokes, head of the Peace Preservation Force and a local magistrate, in January 1824 ordered that two policemen be stationed at night in the area to keep guard against attacks of a similar nature.<sup>39</sup> Members of the Corps lived in great fear in their community, with regular attacks taking place, showing the sectarian animosity towards them from the surrounding Catholic population.

A strong anti-Protestant sentiment was also reflected in the popular attitude towards the police. The catalyst for this feeling was undoubtedly the involvement of the Peace Preservation Force in a tithe affray at Askeaton on Wednesday 15 August 1821. One policeman and a number of the attackers were killed in the action, while a number of prisoners were taken. These prisoners were compelled the following day at Rathkeale police barracks to bury the coffinless bodies of their dead comrades in a large hole in the yard without any religious service.<sup>40</sup> After these terrible events a rumour spread among the lower classes that one of those captured was buried before 'life was extinct.' The insurgents held Major Richard Going, the then chief of the police, responsible. Less than two months later, on Sunday 15 October 1821, Going was assassinated near Cappagh, being shot by armed men and his 'lifeless body' beaten on the roadway.<sup>41</sup> At this time the Orange Order had penetrated the Peace Preservation Force in west Limerick. Going, as chief of police, had permitted this and as a result the police were much disliked.<sup>42</sup> The new County Constabulary set up in the county in October 1822 found it difficult to rid itself of this association with Orangeism. In the early 1820s, constables were selected from among the local inhabitants and served in their local district. As the force was the focus of much popular hatred, it was reported from County Limerick that policemen were 'extremely difficult to procure.'<sup>43</sup> The constabulary force in Limerick found it very difficult to attract Catholics. By March 1824 the religious balance in the force in County Limerick was extremely lopsided, with 149 Protestants (80 per cent) and thirty-eight Catholics (20 per cent). This was the lowest return of Catholics in the force in Munster, with Tipperary returning 28 per cent, Cork 37 per cent, Waterford 63 per cent and Kerry 69 per cent. The reluctance of Catholics to serve resulted in Limerick being one of only three counties where the Peace Preservation Force continued to patrol. These seventy-four Peelers in County Limerick under the command of Thomas P. Vokes developed a reputation for violence.<sup>44</sup> Such an event occurred at Newcastle bridewell in October 1836, where five people were arrested for being drunk and disorderly. One of Vokes' police used 'rough and unnecessary



Postcard showing Rathkeale Church of Ireland church, posted in 1906

(Limerick Museum)

violence' in arresting one of the prisoners. Chief Constable Armstrong was unwilling to take action against the policeman, but instead favoured reporting the matter to Vokes, under whose authority he operated. The Chief Constable reported that 'such conduct is provoking to the bystanders and tends to bring the service into disrepute.' With the police force largely Protestant, such incidents also served to emphasize the divide between the two communities.<sup>45</sup>

The Rockite Insurrection was also marked by attacks on Protestant churches. Due to sectarian tensions in the community and to a large increase in the number of Protestant churches built in the previous decade, these buildings had become symbols of sectarian aggression. Between 1821-3 half a dozen Protestant churches in Kerry, Cork and Limerick were set on fire. On the night of 8 February 1822, a Rockite party set the Protestant Church at Killeedy alight. The same night the Protestant church at Abbeyfeale was attacked and badly damaged, resulting in the roof being taken off.<sup>46</sup> While the intensity of sectarian hatred declined somewhat in the years that followed, the places of worship of the Church of Ireland continued to be the focus of outrage. In June 1826, the church windows of the Protestant church at Loghill were broken. In May 1834, two women were convicted of defacing and breaking the Bath stone on the front of the same church. Glin church was the subject of a similar attack on 2 January 1842. Ministers of the Established Church were also the focus of personal attacks. In January 1832, the Rev. Samuel Jones was the victim of an attempted murder at Kildimo. The reason for the attack was reputedly hostility in the locality to the payment of tithes. On 5 February 1836, the Rev. Adamson of Loghill was assaulted while travelling on the public car from Limerick at Barrigone. The reason assigned by the police for this outrage was that 'Adamson is a Protestant clergyman.'<sup>47</sup>

The campaign for Catholic Emancipation also served to emphasize religious differences. Between 1824-9 the Catholic priests played a leading role in the

collection of the Catholic Rent. This helped to rally the population behind the cause, increasing the influence of the Catholic clergy in the process. In November 1824 at the first meeting to collect the Catholic rent at Rathkeale, the meeting took place in the Catholic chapel and was presided over by the parish priest. Francis Blackburne, reporting from Limerick some weeks later, stated: 'The collection of the Catholic Rent is conducted with system and vigour and is aided by the whole influence of the Roman Catholic Priesthood.'<sup>48</sup> This fact is confirmed in the increase in rent taken up in Limerick County in late 1824. The rent was collected at first on a voluntary basis. Due to the organizational ability of the Catholic Church, the rent increased from £10 in July 1824 to £182 in December 1824, the second highest total per head of population collected in Munster after County Tipperary.<sup>49</sup> The Catholic Church's influence in the campaign increased in the following years, for in March 1827, the Anglican Bishops petitioned parliament not to grant emancipation. This alienated the Protestant Church from the masses of Catholics who supported the cause. In 1828 during provincial meetings of the campaign in Connaught, the Catholic priests persuaded the movement not to invite liberal Protestants to emancipation meetings. This brought about an end to support from this section of society and therefore, nationwide by the end of 1828, the Emancipation campaign was an almost completely Catholic movement.<sup>50</sup> Events following Daniel O'Connell's Clare election victory in July 1828 served to enhance the power of the Catholic Church. In west Limerick Catholic priests played a leading role in ensuring that the celebrations passed peaceably and gave the whole campaign an orderly, respectable character. On Monday 7 July, the celebration of mass at the chapel at Shanagolden by Father Patrick McNamara marked the beginning of two days' celebrations of the Clare election victory. Visits followed to the local graveyards at Robertstown, Knockpatrick, Kilmoylan and Shanagolden by the people

assembled 'over the tombs of their fathers' and they swore 'an eternal friendship' to each other, such events serving to link Catholic religious observance with social order. The Catholic priests had found that they were among the few respected leaders in the community. Occasionally due to particular local circumstances other leaders emerged. In March 1822, the Protestant vicars of Rathkeale and Cappagh, Rev. Lee and Rev. Halfpenny, were influential in their Catholic parishioners giving up arms to the authorities. A respected landlord could also exert strong influence in the community. In February 1843, J.F. Fitzgerald, the Knight of Glin, boastfully claimed that during the past thirty years 'no record could be found' that any tenants of his estate were convicted of a capital offence.<sup>51</sup> But it was generally the priests who took the lead and, by giving the community direction and leadership, they maintained the Catholic Church's authority among the population to a degree that was not known in the early years of the nineteenth century. Two incidents in particular highlighted this earlier lack of authority. In 1819, John Mulqueen, the Catholic parish priest of Bulgaden, Kilmallock, was shot dead by a Whiteboy gang as he endeavoured to point out the error of their ways. Three years later in April 1822, at Ballyhahill, it was the local Protestant landlord, John Blennerhassett, that persuaded the congregation to give up arms after Sunday mass, the Catholic priests at the time seeming to have little influence. Very different was the situation the year following the granting of emancipation, when a famine hit west Limerick and the new-found influence of the Catholic clergy as social controllers in the locality was demonstrated during a food shortage at Shanagolden in July 1830. Four cart loads of potatoes were hijacked by 'a famished multitude' at Robertstown on their way to Tarbert and brought the three miles to Shanagolden. As they commenced weighing and distributing the potatoes, Patrick McNamara, the parish priest, arrived and persuaded the starving people to allow the consignment to go to its rightful owners.<sup>52</sup>

The issue of tithes did much to increase bitterness between Catholics and Protestants. Anti-Tithe agitation was a feature of unrest in west Limerick in 1821-4 and between 1832-7. During the 1820s, the agitation took two main forms: the posting of threatening notices and attacks on tithe proctors. In August 1821, such was the feeling within the Catholic community that over two hundred armed men, many on horseback, attacked the tithe proctor, John Ives, at Askeaton. The following month, two proctors were assaulted at Kildimo. Late in September 1821, John Corneal was murdered while collecting tithes at Pallaskenry. In October 1821, a notice was posted at the Ferry Bridge, Kildimo, commanding all adults under sixty years to attend a meeting next day 'on tithe business.' On Sunday 13 January



R. C. CHURCH. RATHKEALE.

Postcard showing Rathkeale RC church, published by D. Donovan, chemist, Rathkeale, c.1930

(Limerick Museum)

1822, a notice was posted on the door of the Catholic Church at Ballysteen, near Askeaton, signed by General Rock and giving instruction on the payment of tithes. At Tinnakilla, Ballyhahill, in October 1822, two tithe proctors were attacked by a gang of ten men with black faces and wearing white shirts. One man had his arms broken, while the other was stabbed with a pitchfork. At Creeves near Shanagolden, in September 1823, Stephen Fitzgerald, a tithe proctor, was attacked by a five-man armed gang. A few days later, proctors at Cloonahard, near Ballyhahill, made their escape when a large party all dressed in white approached. They received notice that if they went to value the tithes they would be murdered.<sup>53</sup>

In the following years, due to fatigue after four years of unrest and the efforts of the Catholic emancipation campaign, the tithe issue receded. However, during 1832 the westward movement of Anti-Tithe

meetings can be traced through County Limerick. The first such meetings had taken place in County Kilkenny in December 1831. These meetings spread westward in the months that followed. Their purpose was to bring political pressure for the abolition of tithes, as at that time parliament was in the process of conducting a Tithe Inquiry.<sup>54</sup> Meetings took place over a nine week period between May and July 1832 at Patrickswell, Crecora, New Kildimo, Kildimo and Newcastle West. Such was the interest of the masses that the meeting at Newcastle had a large attendance from the surrounding parishes of Monagay, Killeedy, Knockaderry, Grange and Abbeyfeale, each situated between two and fourteen miles distant. The potential influence of the Catholic clergy at such meetings can be seen by the presence of the local parish priest at the meetings at Crecora, Kildimo, New Kildimo and



Postcard showing Shanagolden memorial cross to Stephen Edward Rice with the Church of Ireland church behind, posted in 1909. (Limerick Museum)

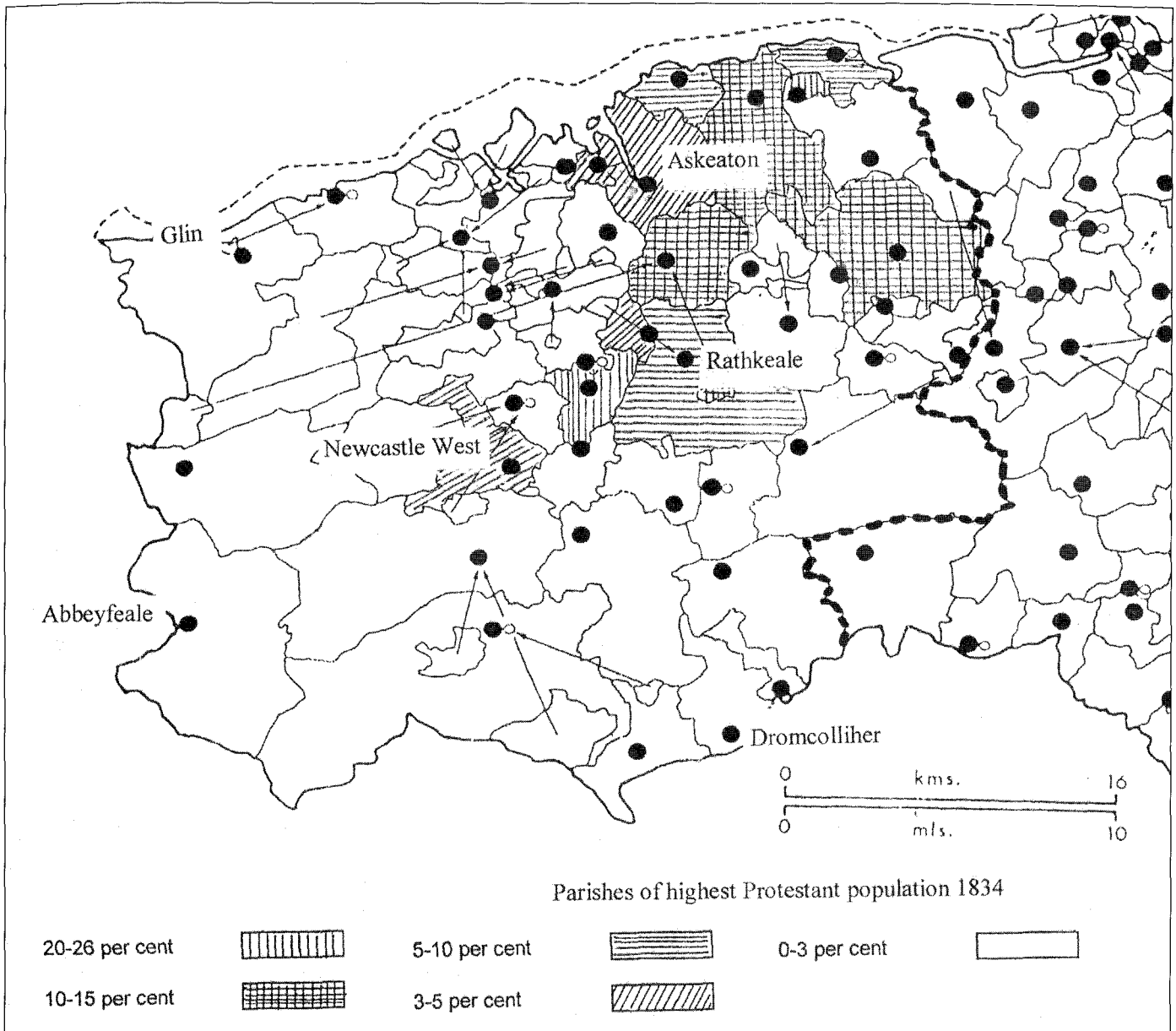
Newcastle West, while the meeting at Patrickswell was held in the Catholic church.<sup>55</sup> With such strong involvement it seems extremely likely, though it cannot be proven for certain, that the notification of these meetings was through the organization of the Catholic Church. These meetings served to bring to the surface community discussion on the payment of tithes, resulting in the tithe issue being presented as a religious as well as an economic one. On 9 August, the chairman of the Grand Jury at Rathkeale commented on what he described as 'passive resistance' to the payment of tithe in County Limerick. A month later a strong military display was required in Nantinan and Rathkeale to prevent intimidation at the sale of cattle under the Tithe Composition Act to Archdeacon Warburton.<sup>56</sup> In 1834 in west Limerick passive resistance gave way to violence. On 13 March, the courthouse at Rathkeale was the scene of a riot in an attempt to prevent the sale of tithes. Six men broke into the courthouse, assaulted a barrister and attempted to destroy evidence of tithe monies that they owed. In April 1834, the Rev. Thomas Locke, with military and police as an escort, endeavoured to collect tithes due in the village of Feohanagh. As bailiffs attempted to seize two cows in a field, the 'country people' immediately assaulted them. With over one thousand people assembled, the military opened fire after being pelted with stones. Three people were killed and over twenty injured.<sup>57</sup>

### III

Because of a combination of circumstances, such as difficulties of access to land, economic depression and a high population density in some districts, west Limerick was particularly volatile in the

years 1821-45. Sectarianism formed part of this unrest and did not replace the traditional socio-economic grievances, but fused with them, the precedence varying from place to place according to demographic and religious circumstances. As suggested by the events outlined, west Limerick was divided along religious divisions in the pre-famine years. During this era the majority of people were Catholic labourers and small farmers. What conditioned the response of these people to severe economic change was the shared assumptions and beliefs that they held. We have little historical evidence of these beliefs, but perhaps enough to give us a reasonable understanding of why sectarianism took such a foothold in west Limerick in the pre-famine years. The memory of historical events that took place in west Limerick in previous decades was coloured by sectarianism and came to the surface during the unrest. This suggests that sectarian sores festered for many years among the lower classes. A threatening notice posted on the chapel gate of Ballingarry in September 1835 warned against collecting tithes and that transgressors would 'be dealt with the same as Going was formerly.'<sup>58</sup> In 1843, at a repeal meeting at Castlemahon, the mention of the name of the Rev. Locke brought forth a 'dreadful groan' and 'the bloodstained name of Feohanagh was loudly repeated' by the estimated three thousand people present.<sup>59</sup> The intensity of religious passion was present in the community for some time. Donnelly has outlined that it was in Limerick that the sectarian prophecies of Pastorini enjoyed their 'greatest vogue' during the 1820s.<sup>60</sup> This statement speaks volumes about the nature of society in the county. This was a polarized society, a community willing to absorb such beliefs. Such was the anti-establishment (and therefore anti-

Protestant) feeling in the county that it was reported that of four hundred ballads popular in the county in 1821, over one-third were 'of a rebellious tendency.'<sup>61</sup> According to the authorities, schoolmasters were responsible for many of the threatening notices that gave impetus to the anti-Protestant feeling during these years.<sup>62</sup> Notices such as those posted at Adare in January and February 1822 were written with clear sectarian bitterness: 'the date of the Protestants is out'<sup>63</sup> and 'All to march to M'Croom or Mallow with speed, the fate of the Palantines (sic) will be the fate off (sic) all who stay at tome (sic) these bad times.'<sup>64</sup> Another notice in the Kerry border area of Tarbert called for the murder of Protestants and declared that it was 'no sin to kill heretics.'<sup>65</sup> These influences shaped the religious outlook of a generation. Pre-famine society was in the process of changing from a predominantly oral culture to a literate one. Ó Ciosáin is of the view that in this society schoolmasters and priests frequently acted as 'cultural intermediaries,' providing a link between the two cultures. This important position increased their influence in the community. Schoolmasters were, in fact, better placed, with more regular contact with the young and with a greater presence in the community, for in 1824 in west Limerick, there were only twenty-eight Catholic priests and 146 schoolmasters. Contemporary observers such as Crofton Croker were also convinced of the schoolmaster's strong involvement in disturbances and described them as the 'planner[s] of the nocturnal operations' and as writers of threatening letters. This view is supported by an article in the *Limerick Herald* on 12 January 1832, declaring that such was the schoolmaster's influence in society that these years could be called 'the age of the schoolmaster.' In the pre-famine era in

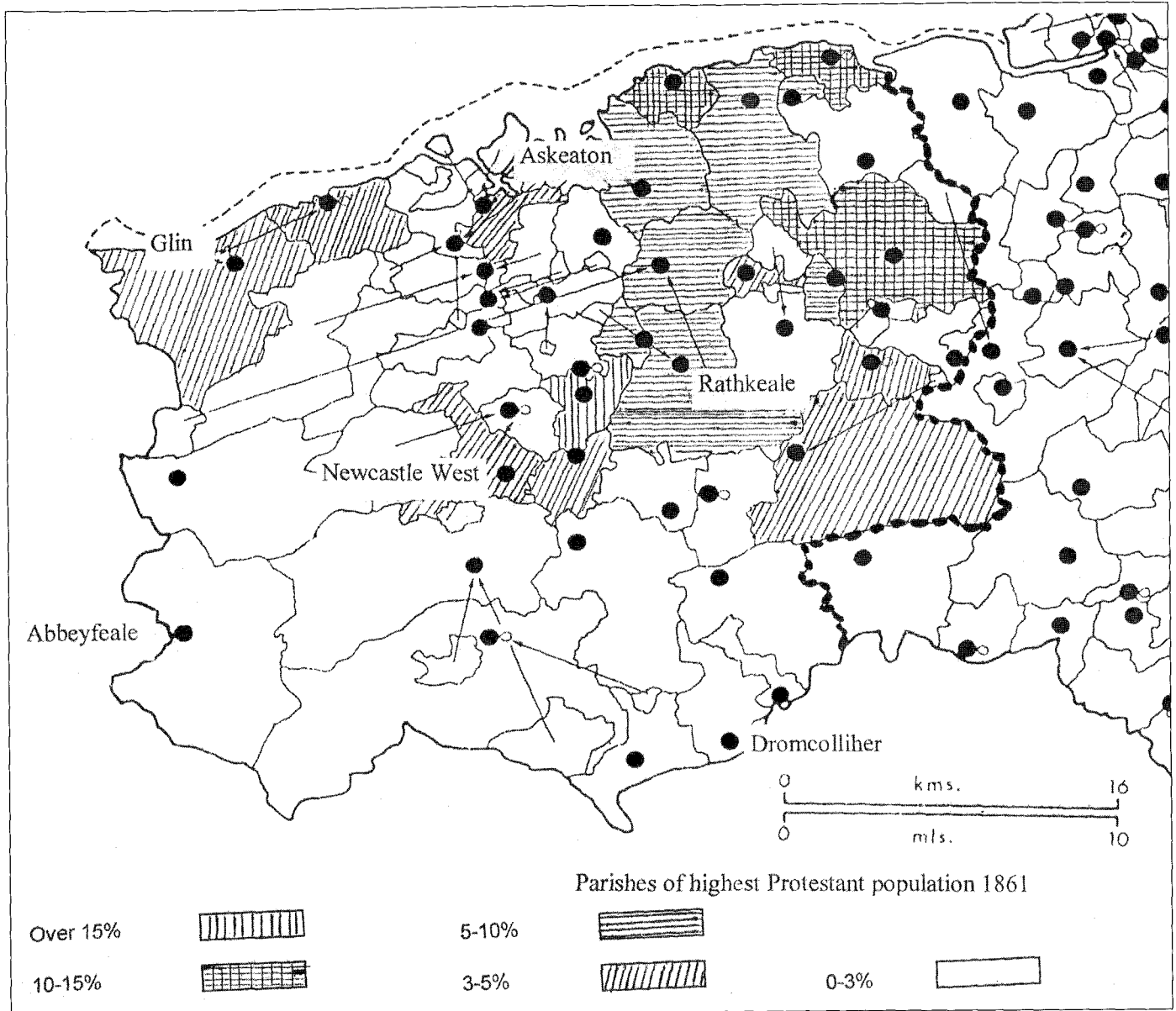


west Limerick, schoolteachers continued to play a leading role in popular protest. At Stonehall, in September 1832, James Reddan, a schoolmaster, was one of the leaders of the faction in an affray with the military.<sup>66</sup> In May 1840, at Ballysteen, police had suspicions of a local schoolmaster after a threatening notice was found.<sup>67</sup> The masters' leading role in the community had the potential for the inculcation of sectarian values in those they influenced. Schooling in the pre-famine era was demand-led, motivated by economic, political and religious reasons. By 1841, thirty-one per cent of the 6-10 age group in County Limerick were attending school. This return outstripped that of any other rural area in Munster and was the seventh highest county return in the country. However, in County Limerick this schooling was in a new language, English. The counties with a higher return than Limerick had an average Irish-speaking population of less than 2.5 per cent in the 1851 census. County Limerick had an Irish speaking population of 37.4 per cent and, according to Ó Madagáin, it is likely that in the pre-famine years this proportion was

more than 50 per cent. Secondly the numbers attending school in this age group island-wide generally declined as one moved westward across the country. This was not the case with County Limerick. To undertake schooling in a new language suggests that there was a very strong motivation within the community. Examining the sources available uncovers no local political reason that would indicate a high school attendance rate. This leads one to conclude that the high numbers attending school in County Limerick may have been due to two factors, the increased commercialization of the local economy and, in particular, the strong interest of the community in religion.<sup>68</sup>

The root cause of the disturbances in the pre-famine era lay more in the land than in religion and the outrages that occurred were by no means only directed against Protestants. Land issues were particularly volatile in west Limerick during these years. Francis Blackburne, giving evidence to the 1824 Parliamentary Inquiry into the unrest in Ireland, commented that the loss of the land for

tenants was the worst event that could occur and therefore the tenant 'clings to it with the utmost determination.' In pre-famine Ireland, land was life, a matter of survival and planning for the future. Matthew Barrington, a Limerick landlord, speaking before a Select Committee in 1839 and by that time Crown Solicitor on the Munster Circuit for twenty-five years, was of the opinion that of the disturbances during his term in office, 'I could trace almost every outrage to some dispute about land.'<sup>69</sup> Farmers, both Catholic and Protestant, who attempted to rent the vacated land from which a previous tenant was evicted, were the focus of much hostility in the community. In the case of Protestant farmers this was another factor that brought sectarian tensions to the surface. In October 1821, Christopher Sparling, a Palatine farmer who taken over a farm at Rooskagh, Newcastle, was killed by two assassins while riding the three-mile journey to Newcastle. At Kilbreedy, Kilcornan, in November 1838, the Rev. William Waller evicted some tenants. Waller intended that Palatines at Adare would rent this vacated land, but they



failed to take possession due to local unrest.<sup>70</sup> The growth of sectarian ill feeling was a distinct element of the unrest. Much evidence indicates that many Protestants feared for their lives in west Limerick during the pre-famine era. Indeed, in December 1822, a Protestant gentleman in west Limerick noted 'the panic is so great that scarcely anyone stirs out.'<sup>71</sup> The same feeling was present during the Catholic Emancipation campaign in 1828. Speaking of the large attendance at emancipation meetings in County Limerick, a military officer observed: 'I have reason to think that the Protestant population generally are alarmed at these meetings.'<sup>72</sup> In 1838, a Tithe Act was passed that reduced tithes by twenty-five per cent and converted them into a rent charge by the landlord.<sup>73</sup> With tithes no longer a major religious grievance, one would have envisaged that sectarian attacks would have ceased. However, this was not the case. Religious ill feeling was still deeply felt in the community. At Adare in July 1839, a Palatine named Miller had his skull fractured without provocation during an attack on his house for arms. In February 1840, at Kildimo, a Protestant clergyman

of eighty years of age was severely hurt without reason in a similar arms raid on his home. The following September at nearby Ballylongford, County Kerry, three soldiers on their return from Sunday service were attacked and injured by a mob. North of Rathkeale in November 1842, the house of the Rev. Coghlan at Nantinan and the houses of Palatines named Dobe and Baker at Ballingarrane were attacked for arms by a twelve-man armed gang, while their Catholic farming neighbours were left unmolested. Even during Repeal meetings in the vicinity of Newcastle in February 1843, sectarianism came to the surface. The Rev. John Locke was the target of 'the gravest abuse' by those organizing the meetings, the substantial Catholic shopkeepers of Newcastle.<sup>74</sup>

Against this background, in which sectarian tensions were inflamed on a regular basis, the only reliable assessment we can make of the Protestant Crusade in west Limerick comes from population returns in the *Commissioners of Public Instruction* in 1834 and the much later *Census of 1861*. In 1834, the Commissioners calculated that there were 4,199

members of the Established Church and 100,246 Roman Catholics in west Limerick. The members of the Established Church were not evenly distributed across the western part of the county, but were concentrated in a triangular area between Rathkeale, Adare and Pallaskeenry. Kilsannell had a return of twenty-six per cent Protestant, Chapelrussell twenty-two per cent, Nantinan fourteen per cent, Adare thirteen per cent, Kilcornan ten per cent, Ardcanney, Rathkeale and Iverus eight per cent each. Elsewhere throughout west Limerick the numbers of Church of Ireland members were few, with twenty-seven of the thirty-nine civil parishes returning less than three per cent Church of Ireland. In 1834, no major Protestant presence was to be found in the hill country of west Limerick nor in the parishes to the south of a line from Newcastle West through Rathkeale to Adare. In the pre-famine years, many Protestants made up their minds to emigrate. Life for many of them had become utterly insecure. In these years of poor economic prospects and faced with sectarian bitterness and outrage from their Catholic neighbours, the only option

for many was to migrate or emigrate. This was one of the major reasons why large numbers of Irish Protestants migrated in the pre-famine years. Just as Miller has shown this clearly to be the case in his study of Longford Protestant society before the famine, much evidence suggests a similar situation in west Limerick.<sup>75</sup> In 1824 Francis Blackburne, recalled meeting 'great numbers' of Palatines on their way to Limerick the previous year to emigrate.<sup>76</sup> It was reported from Limerick City in April 1832 that several Palatine families had arrived from Adare 'this week to embark for America.'<sup>77</sup> Three years later, numerous Palatine families from around Rathkeale and Adare set out for Canada, while in 1843, ten of the seventy-two member Yeomanry Corps at Rathkeale set off for America. During the famine years 1846-9, whole Palatine families from west Limerick emigrated to New York.<sup>78</sup>

The first true census of religion, taken in 1861, suggests that in west Limerick the number of Church of Ireland had fallen to 2,564 and the numbers of Catholics to 64,156. The Church of Ireland population declined by thirty-nine per cent in west Limerick between 1834-61, while the Catholic population declined by thirty-five per cent. Nationally the numbers of Church of Ireland members declined by nineteen per cent between 1834-61 and the number of Catholics by thirty per cent. These overall returns for west Limerick are unexpected. More Catholics were at the lower end of the social scale. These people suffered more severely from the effects of famine mortality and of famine and post-famine emigration. A recent study of the famine in two parishes in west Limerick has shown that of the 548 families that were unaccounted for between 1846-52, only nine were Protestant. Major Richard Willcocks, giving evidence as to the state of Limerick before the 1825 Select Committee, stated 'there are very few Protestants in ... the country of the lower class.' Protestants were more of a middle class socio-economic group, yet the hemorrhage of members of the Established Church from west Limerick between 1834-61 was greater in percentage terms than their Catholic neighbours.<sup>79</sup> When one examines the figures, one finds that the greatest haemorrhage of members of the Protestant church occurred in the parishes of Adare, Ardcanny, Chapelrussell, Iverus, Kilcornan, Kilscannell, Nantinan and Rathkeale. These parishes had the highest Protestant population and suffered a total population loss of 1,520, or 93 per cent of the loss in Protestant population in west Limerick between 1834-61.<sup>80</sup> The intensity of sectarian animosity and outrage, particularly in these parishes in west Limerick in the pre-famine decades, was such that the percentage loss of the Protestant population was twice the national average. Room for expansion of the Protestant farming community was not available, due to strong resistance from the local Catholic community. The

parishes of Ballingarry, Glin, Loughill and Robertstown that were situated outside the heartland of Protestantism in west Limerick showed a small percentage increase between 1834-61. The presence and patronage of resident local landlords such as the Knight of Glin, Captain Taylor at Loughill and Lord Monteagle at Shanagolden and Robertstown, was perhaps one reason for this increase. However, overall Protestant population decline was inevitable. Perhaps the best example of this unstoppable trend comes from the townland of Finnoo, Ballyhahill, in the west Limerick hill-country. This was land that had a Protestant presence for some time, as even in the Down Survey map of 1658 the land is held by Protestants. By 1824, four Protestant families continued to reside there. During the unrest in 1823-4, these Protestant families at Finnoo were the focus of much hostility in the local community, when on one occasion an outhouse was burnt down and later police were stationed in one of their homes to preserve the peace. Ten years later, only one of these Protestant families was left. On the gable wall of Joseph Smith's house hung a bell that was rung to bring the attention of the local constabulary in case of attack by their Catholic neighbours. Some fifty years later, in 1875, the last of the Smiths emigrated and their twenty-three acre farm passed to a local Catholic farmer named Cornelius Hanley. This was a trend that took place throughout the country. The Hanleys moved into Smith's house, as it was probably a better structure than their own. Over time they removed the bell from its wall mount. This bell, a symbol of the presence of a Protestant community, fell silent, the vacuum filled by the tolling of the bell at the new church at Ballyhahill and the sound of a Catholic Ireland. As a consequence of the loss of such prominent Protestant farmers, the island of Protestantism in west Limerick was fatally weakened. The main reason for this decline was the resistance Protestantism received from the Catholic clergy and local community, fuelled by the phases of popular unrest in the decades before the famine, all of which took on sectarian overtones. This resulted in an unstoppable pathway to decline.<sup>81</sup>

#### REFERENCES

- 1 D. McCartney, *The Dawning of Democracy: Ireland 1800-1870*, (Dublin 1987), p. 26; S. Connolly, *Religion and Society in Nineteenth-Century Ireland*, (Dundalk 1985), p. 25.
- 2 J.H. Murphy, 'The Role of Vincentian parish missions in the 'Irish counter-reformation' of the mid-nineteenth century' in *Irish Historical Studies*, Volume 24, (Dublin 1984), p. 159. Murphy in this essay gives a brief outline of the Protestant evangelical efforts in the country in the pre-famine years.
- 3 D. Bowen, *Souperism: Myth or Reality, A Study in Souperism*, (Cork 1970), p. 80; *Limerick Chronicle*, 1 August 1827 [cited hereafter as L.C.].
- 4 Connolly, *Religion and Society*, p. 8, 25-6; Official Papers 690, 1831, N.A.I.

- 5 S. Lewis, *A History and Topography of Limerick City and County*, (Dublin 1980); McCartney, *The Dawning of Democracy*, p. 97; S.J. Connolly, (editor), *The Oxford Companion to Irish History*, (Oxford 1998), pp. 195, 531. The Board of First Fruits was founded in 1707. Its role was to fund the building and repair of Protestant churches and glebes. Killalaithan is situated near Broadford.
- 6 L.C. 1 August 1827; Murphy, 'Vincentian parish missions', p. 159; British Parliamentary Papers, *Minutes of Evidence before Select Committee (session 1824) on the Disturbances in Ireland*, Volume VII, (20), 1825, p. 236 [cited hereafter as B.P.P.].
- 7 L.C. 16 May, 23 May 1827.
- 8 Bowen, *Souperism: Myth or Reality*, p. 83. In examining the *Kerry Evening Post* newspaper for 1839 there is no local evidence from the Dingle area of the reason why the missionaries wanted to establish a Protestant colony at Ballingarry at that time.
- 9 Rev. D. Foley, *A Missionary Tour through the South and west of Ireland undertaken for the Society*, (Dublin 1849), pp. 36-7.
- 10 *Commission of Public Instruction Ireland*, B.P.P., Volume 34, 1835, p. 173; Rev. D. Foley, *A Missionary Tour*, p. 36.
- 11 S.J. Connolly, *Priests and People in Pre-Famine Ireland, 1780-1845*, (Dublin 2001), p. 81; J. Begley, *The Diocese of Limerick from 1691 to the Present Time*, (Dublin 1938), p. 468.
- 12 Connolly, *Priests and People in Pre-Famine Ireland*, p. 60. The number of Catholic priest in the other dioceses in Munster were Cashel & Emly 2,747, Cork 4,164, Killaloe 2,947, Kerry 3,809, Waterford & Lismore 2,844 and Cloyne & Ross 3,608.
- 13 P.J. O'Connor, *Exploring Limerick's Past, An Historical Geography of Limerick City and County*, (Newcastle West 1987), pp. 114, 136. The accepted modern spelling of Templeglantan is Templeglantine.
- 14 Map of County Limerick showing new roads, found inside cover of *Disturbances in Ireland*, (B.P.P. Volume 7, (20), 1825).
- 15 L.C. 1 August 1827, 1 September 1827.
- 16 L.C. 30 June, 27 October 1827.
- 17 Lewis, *A History and Topography*, p. 89.
- 18 Begley, *A History of the Diocese of Limerick*, p. 602.
- 19 *Commission of Public Instruction Ireland*, (B.P.P. Volume XXXIV, 1835), p. 173; Rev. Foley, *A Missionary Tour*, p. 36. The 'relatively good land' between Rathkeale, Pallaskenry and Adare held the greatest proportions of Protestants in west Limerick. This was similar to the demographic situation of the majority of Protestants in County Cork as outlined by I. d'Alton, in *Protestant Society and Politics in Cork, 1812-1844*, (Cork 1980), p. 9.
- 20 Desmond Bowen, *The Protestant Crusade in Ireland 1800-70*, (Dublin 1978), p. 159.
- 21 L.C. 30 September 1829; P.J. Hamell, *Maynooth Students and Ordinands, Index 1795-1895*, Volume 1, (Maynooth 1982); Begley, *A History of the Diocese of Limerick*, pp. 598-639.
- 22 Bowen, *The Protestant Crusade*, p. 159.
- 23 *Limerick Evening Post and Clare Sentinel*, 21 March 1828 [Cited hereafter as L.E.P. & C.S.]; J. Begley, *A History of the Diocese of Limerick*, pp. 475, 480-1; Shanagolden Parish Baptism and Marriage register 1824-1900; P. Coleman, 'Rev. Patrick McNamara' in *North Munster Antiquarian Journal*, Volume 41, (Limerick 2001), p. 104.
- 24 L.E.P. & C.S. 21 March, 5 September 1828; Lewis, *A History and Topography*, p. 158;

- Begley, *A History of the Diocese of Limerick*, pp. 480-1; *L.E.P. & C.S.* 3 June, 30 September 1829. Thomas Spring Rice who was in 1839 created the First Lord Monteagle of Brandon, was a son of Stephen Edward Rice.
- 25 *L.E.P. & C.S.* 16 September 1828.
- 26 Connolly, *Priests and People*, p. 92; *L.E.P. & C.S.* 4 December 1832; I.d'Alton, *Protestant Society*, p.72.
- 27 T.C.Crocker, *Researches in the South of Ireland*, (London 1824), p. 329.
- 28 Smith, State of the Country Papers Series 1, 2619/48, 19 Nov. 1824, [cited hereafter as SOCP, 1].
- 29 K. Miller, *Emigrants and Exiles, Ireland and the Irish Exodus to North America*, (Oxford 1985), p.96; Bowen, *The Protestant Crusade*, pp. 127-8; *Disturbances in Ireland*, (B.P.P. Volume VII, 1825), p. 102; McCartney, *Dawning of Democracy*, p. 97. The Palatines were Protestants from Germany who settled in County Limerick in 1709.
- 30 Connolly, *Religion and Society*, p. 24; J. S. Donnelly Jr., 'Pastorini and Captain Rock: Millenarism and sectarianism in the Rockite Movement 1821-4', in S. Clark and J.S. Donnelly Jr. (editors), *Irish Peasants Violence & Political Unrest 1780-1914*, (Manchester 1983), pp. 110-111.
- 31 *L.C.* 1 August 1827; McCartney, *Dawning of Democracy*, p. 99.
- 32 *L.E.P. & C.S.*, 23 March 1830; N. Ó Ciosáin, *Print and Popular Culture in Ireland 1750-1850*, (London 1997), pp 7, 22; The British Library Website, Public Catalogue; *Census of 1821*.
- 33 *Arms (Ireland)*, (B.P.P. volume VIII, 417), 1836; F. Whooley, *The Rockite Movement in North Cork 1820-25*, unpublished M.A. thesis, UCC, 1986.
- 34 *Commission of Public Instruction*, (B.P.P. Volume XXXIII, 1835), pp. 184c-213c.
- 35 *L.C.* June 1821- March 1822; SOCP, 1, June 1821 to March 1822 ; *L.C.* 9 February 1822, *Griffiths Valuation*, County Limerick 1822. Four of fifteen holdings in Courtmatrix, three of eleven in Killeheen and eleven of fifteen in Ballingarrane were of more than fifteen acres.
- 36 Official Papers 482, N.A.I., 1817.
- 37 *L.C.* 6 February 1822; Brown, SOCP, 1, 2296/12, 10 Aug. 1821; Thornton, SOCP, 1,2350/38, 15 March 1822.
- 38 *L.C.* 17 October 1821; SOCP,1, 2296/25, 1821; Donnelly, 'Pastorini and Captain Rock', pp. 128-9.
- 39 *L.C.* 19 February, 29 March 1823; Vokes, SOCP,1, 2618/19, 29 Jan. 1824.
- 40 *L.C.* 18 August 1821.
- 41 *L.C.* 17 October 1821; Warburton, SOCP,1, 2296/21, 16 Oct. 1821.
- 42 Donnelly, 'Pastorini and Captain Rock', p. 131; *Disturbances in Ireland*, (B.P.P. Volume 7, (20), 1825), p. 107.
- 43 S. Palmer, *Police and Protest in England and Ireland 1780-1850*, (Cambridge 1988), p. 239.
- 44 *Returns Province of Munster 1 March 1824, Numbers of Catholics Appointed*, (B.P.P. Volume XXII, 1824); S. Palmer, *Police and Protest*, pp. 250, 257, 261. The other counties were Cork and Tipperary.
- 45 Outrage Papers 1836; Palmer, *Police and Protest*, p. 244.
- 46 *L.C.* 9 February 1822; Geraghty, SOCP,1, 2350/39, 9 Feb. 1822; Donnelly, 'Pastorini and Captain Rock', p. 125. Attacks on Protestant churches had been unknown in agrarian rebellion in Ireland since 1760.
- 47 *L.C.* 21 June 1826, 21 May 1834, 8 January 1842, 13 June 1835, 15 March 1843; *Limerick Herald*, 12 January 1832; Outrage Papers 1836. Regarding the incident involving the women damaging Loghill church, when examining all primary sources in the 1821-45 period for west Limerick, women's involvement in reported crimes is less than five percent. However 25 per cent of prisoners transported from Ireland were women, see A.G.L. Shaw, *Convicts and the Colonies, A Study of Penal Transportation from Great Britain and Ireland to Australia and other parts of the British Empire*, (Melbourne 1977), p.183. This suggests a massive underreporting of crimes involving women.
- 48 Blackburne, SOCP,1, 2619/47, 16 Nov. 1824; Blackburne, SOCP,1, 2731/2,14 Jan. 1825. In 1823, Francis Blackburne was sent by the government to administer the Insurrection Act in County Limerick.
- 49 *Dublin Evening Press*, 17 February 1825. When one examines the Catholic Rent collected in December 1824 per head of population using the 1821 Census, Limerick comes in second place with a return of £1 per 1,525 people. This compares to Tipperary with a return of £1 per 1,515 and Cork £1 per 2,120.
- 50 *L.C.* 2 March 1827; Bowen, *The Protestant Crusade*, p. 136; N. Higgins, *Tipperary's Tithe War 1830-1838*, (Tipperary 2002), p. 41. The bishop of Limerick did not sign this petition. The petition signers were the archbishops of Armagh and Dublin and the bishops of Clogher, Killala and Down and Connor.
- 51 Bowen, *The Protestant Crusade*, p. 136; *L.E.P. & C.S.* 11 July 1828; Lt. Colonel R. Hick, SOCP, 1, 2351/49, 18 March 1822; *L.C.* 11 February 1843. Examining the sources available in west Limerick between 1821-43 would seem to back up the Knight of Glin's claim.
- 52 Begley, *A History of the Diocese of Limerick*, pp. 464-5; *L.C.* 10 April 1822; *L.E.P. & C.S.* 9 July 1830.
- 53 *L.C.* 18 August, 8 September, 29 September, 17 October 1821, 19 January, 23 October 1822, 3 September, 6 September 1823.
- 54 Higgins, *Tipperary's Tithe War*, p.144; M. O'Hanrahan, 'The Tithe War in county Kilkenny-1830-1834', in W. Nolan and K. Whelan (editors), *Kilkenny: History and Society*, (Dublin 1990), p. 498.
- 55 *L.C.* 9 May, 13 June, 4 July, 7 July, 14 July 1832.
- 56 *L.C.* 15 August, 15 September 1832.
- 57 *L.C.* 5 April, 30 April, 3 May, 19 July 1834.
- 58 Outrage Papers 1835. See footnote 41 for assassination of Going.
- 59 *Limerick Reporter* 21 February 1843. See footnote 57 for the Feohanagh Tithe Affair.
- 60 L.M Geary, 'Introduction' in L.M. Geary, *Rebellion and remembrance in modern Ireland*, (Dublin 2001), pp. 9, 11; Donnelly, 'Pastorini and Captain Rock', p. 115.
- 61 Croften Croker, *Researches in the South of Ireland*, p. 329.
- 62 Donnelly, 'Pastorini and Captain Rock', p. 120.
- 63 Smith, SOCP,1, 2350/30, 29 Jan. 1822.
- 64 *L.C.* 13 February 1822.
- 65 McCartney, *Dawning of Democracy*, p. 100.
- 66 *Limerick Herald*, 12 January 1832; *Appendix to report from Select Committee on Survey and Valuation of Ireland*, (B.P.P. Volume VIII, (445), 1824), p. 79; M. Beames, *Peasants and Power, The Whiteboy Movements and Their Control in Pre-Famine Ireland*, (New York 1983), p. 61; Ó Ciosáin, *Print and Popular Culture*, p. 38; *L.C.* 26 September 1832.
- 67 Outrage Papers 1840.
- 68 Ó Ciosáin, *Print and Popular Culture*, pp. 30,33,46; Breandán Ó Madagáin, *An Ghaeilge I Luimneach, 1700-1900*, (Dublin 1974), p. 13. Counties Carlow, Wexford, Wicklow, Kildare, Dublin and Derry had a higher school attendance than County Limerick in this age group. One has to stress that these returns are for County Limerick. Limerick City is treated as a separate division.
- 69 *Disturbances in Ireland*, (B.P.P. Volume VII, (20), 1825), pp.8-9; *Minutes of Evidence before Select Committee on the State of Ireland in respect of Crime*, (B.P.P. Volume XI, (72.19), 1839), p. 577.
- 70 *L.C.* 20 October 1821; Outrage Papers 1838.
- 71 Lloyd, SOCP,1, 2354/45, 4 Dec. 1822.
- 72 Blakeney, SOCP,1, 2883/14, 30 Sept. 1828.
- 73 Hanrahan, *The Tithe War*, p. 505.
- 74 *L.C.* 24 July 1839, 12 February 1840, 5 September 1840, 3 November 1842, 18 February 1843; P.J. O'Connor, *Hometown, A Portrait of Newcastle West, Co. Limerick*, (Newcastle West 1998), pp. 12-3. The relative wealth of the shopkeepers at Newcastle West is shown in the Griffiths Valuation records of 1852, where it is recorded that over fifty per cent of the houses in The Square are valued at over £10.
- 75 K. A. Miller, 'The Lost World of Andrew Johnson: Sectarianism, Social Conflict, and Cultural Change in Southern Ireland during the Pre-Famine Era' in J.S. Donnelly and K.A. Miller (editors), *Irish Popular Culture 1650-1850*, (Dublin and Portland, 1999), p. 223.
- 76 *Disturbances in Ireland*, (B.P.P. Volume VII, 1825), p. 8.
- 77 *L.C.* 14 April 1832.
- 78 P. J. O'Connor, *People Make Places, The Story of the Irish Palatines*, (Newcastle West 1989), pp. 176, 178-9; M1031, List of Rathkeale or Palatine Yeomanry 1843, N.A.I.; I.A. Glazier (editor), *The Famine immigrants-lists of Irish immigrants arriving at the port of New York 1846-1851*, Volume 3, (Baltimore 1983), p. 341; M.R. Smeltzer, *The Smeltzers of Kilcooly and their Irish Palatine kissing cousins*, (Baltimore 1981), p. 47.
- 79 *Commission of Public Instruction*, (B.P.P. Volume XXXIII, 1835), pp. 184c-213c; *Census of 1861*; G. Curtin, *A Pauper Warren, West Limerick 1845-49*, (Ballyhahill 2000), pp. 138-152; Connolly, *Religion and Society*, p. 3; *Disturbances in Ireland*, (B.P.P. Volume VII, (20), 1825), p. 111; Connolly, *Priests and People*, p. 53. The Census of 1861 reveals the preponderance of Catholics at the lower end of the social scale. Of 39 per cent of the population returned as being unable to read or write, 92 per cent were Roman Catholic.
- 80 *Commission of Public Instruction*, (B.P.P. Volume XXXIII, 1835), pp. 184c-213c; *Census of 1861*.
- 81 Vokes, SOCP, 1, 2618, 30 January 1824; *L.C.* 31 January, 4 February 1824; Valuation Office Cancelled Books 1869-75, Finnou townland, parish of Kilmoylan; Tithe Applotment Books, Kilmoylan Parish 1833; Local Folklore collected by the author from Jimmy O'Sullivan, Lisready Cripps, Loghill, (1911- ) and Denis Nolan, Cloonty, Shanagolden, (1943-).

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