

Life in Ireland (1821)

Life in Ireland by 'A Real Paddy' (1821) is social satire of the mores and morals of the Irish aristocracy, with other classes playing vibrant subsidiary roles and describes Ireland and its landscape in glowing terms. It is also a primer of how the ideal Irish loyal gentleman should behave. His concern was to show that Irishmen and Irishwomen, notwithstanding their history, had an unconditional loyalty to the English monarchy. Set during the 1821 visit of George IV, king of England, to Ireland it is intensely loyalist but not partisan to any political or religious position.

It describes the "roving, rambles, sprees, bulls, blunders, bodderation and blarney" of a baronet, rural squire and army officer in Dublin with tales from concerts, a coal porter's wedding, a duel, a holy well and debtor's prison with picturesque descriptions of city and county. He describes Irish people, tongue in cheek, in this way:

"The spirits of an Irishman are always ten degrees above proof, like the whiskey he delights to extol. His outside is as rough as the skin of an unwashed potatoe, and his heart within as warm as that vegetable when well boiled; he seldom considers, and he has not the patience to think; he never reflects, except on what mischief he can do; he has neither prudence nor discretion, and he deems himself a being sent into this world expressly to make merry. Providence has planted him on a spot rich with all the blessings of nature and art, and industry has embellished it most lavishly with bounties; he cannot have a finer field to plan his tricks in by night or day than his dear native soil affords."

A typical lyrical description of the landscape is

"The Pier at Balbriggan is a beautiful view, and I would do great injustice to Ireland if I did not attempt to say something in its favour. The hills of Wicklow are in great beauty spread before the left handed view of an Irishman, in more than decent pride. On the right the mountains of Mourne spread their shade all around, and the far-spreading shades shed a melancholy grandeur over the sombre scene. Nature laughs on every side; the falling rill, and the murmuring stream, shot up sprays that cooled the air. Every valley breathed health, every valley wafted perfume, and a few ever visited Balbriggan that did not part from it with regret, and return to it with pleasure."

The essay is divided into: Author, Characters (major, minor and cameo), Occupations, Locations and Author's Philosophies with a short note on the publishers and illustrators and original format.

The Author

The author is unknown but his personality can be deduced from the opinions either stated directly or through his characters. As to his origins, given that the three main characters Brian Boru, Shawn O'Dogherty, and Major T. Grammachree are Protestants of Gaelic descent, it is likely that he is as well. The claim that the author was Pierce Egan, author of *Life in London*, 1821-8 is incorrect; there is no connection between the London-born journalist and sportsman with this book.

He does not say where he comes from: "I have sound family reasons for keeping it a secret". However, he then relates a story concerning a Cahee family who lived nearby; this is a variant of Cahey, a surname found over much of Ulster. Co. Down is then the most likely county as there are many specific references to it. The family may have had a link with the Marquis of Downshire, which crops up occasionally, sometimes as a synonym for Co. Down, and Lord Luff (Luff is a probably a nickname from Lieutenant, i.e. Lufftenant), Viceroy of Ireland, who he praises, is the Earl of Talbot, whose mother was a daughter of the First Marquis of Downshire.

Belfast is a city he knows and is included in the book at the very beginning in a somewhat illogical way. Boru is going from Galway to Dublin but ends up in Belfast with no description of the journey

there or the subsequent journey to Dublin. The author doesn't have a very high opinion of the city or its elite; he describes an Orange-Green faction fight

"The battle lasted with great energy upwards of an hour, and the officers of justice did all they could to make them continue the fun, but in vain; the combatants were done up on both sides..."

He may have been educated in or near Limerick City; he mentions a boarding school nearby and involves Boru in various schoolboy adventures in the city. He knows the city and the infamous Garryowen well. The Garry Owen boys

"...inhabit a suburb of Limerick, much upon a par with the Liberty of Dublin, and if any one in debt flies there for protection, they grant it, and brave both the *swaddies* (soldiers) and the *ramskins* (bailiffs) often successfully. As the Mint in London was formerly, so was Garry Owen considered a privileged place for *whacks* and *schedoms* (pickpockets and rebels). The old song is still a great favourite:

Wrong or right we'll take them in,
To keep them out would be a sin,
My father did so before me:
Pay the reckoning on the nail,
No man for debt shall go to jail,
Says Garry Owen to glory.

If the supposition is correct than it may be that his family moved to there, or possibly Co. Clare since the only reliable place name mentioned from Connaught is Black Head; Gallopers may be another but is now defunct. All supposed Galway place names are fanciful inventions.

He spent a short time in London but did not like it much; in a cameo diatribe; the main complaint is how long it takes to get to the country side compared with Dublin, he concludes

"I care about as much for London, as the Archbishop of Canterbury does for the Pope's toe..."

He has an intimate knowledge of Dublin, city and suburbs; to a certain extent he is a forerunner to James Joyce's *Ulysses*.

The author was well-educated, has Latin and French, is well read but wears his learning lightly as an experienced author. He writes excellent prose, though his poetry is not the best. Authors he acknowledges are William Shakespeare, Mason and Robert Burns. Carolin and Thomas Moore are also mentioned indicating he had a taste for traditional Irish culture. He dislikes Dean Swift because "...no man had a more contemptible opinion of his countrymen" and for his lack of respect for women. He may have had some experience as a translator; speaking of Carolin he writes

"all translations must be erroneous – a sort of blind copy from a bright original."

He describes himself as a 'common occupationer' and it seems likely that he made a living from his literary talents. This may not have been always easy; he writes:

"My struggles through life have been very severe; I have struggled very hard for a dinner, and been disappointed after all; I have also more than three nights out of four supped with Duke Humphrey, a thing by no means agreeable to one who prefers low company and a full stomach to high life and hunger. Nevertheless, these heartrending things have qualified me to attempt this account of Life in Ireland, which, if I die I am certain I shall never live to finish, and the reader will have no cause to regret the circumstance."

His antipathy for the legal profession seems to be more pronounced than the usual cliché of dislike and it may be that he lost an inheritance or some similar financial disaster happened to him or his family through legal connivance or incompetence.

He also may have spent some time locked up in the Sheriff's Prison as a debtor since it and its residents are described in detail borne of experience. This may have been the consequence of his preference for Low Life and an overly fondness for whiskey.

He does not appear to have worked in the newspapers as they are rarely mentioned; and though he relates some anecdotes, he has little time for theatre

"where the asses go to see the horses dance, and the pigeons whistle"

One possibility is that he was employed by a maritime agency or company, as he is very familiar with ships in port, though not as a sailor. His account of Grammachree's promotion and subsequent celebrations was maritime-based; even though he is described as an army officer.

Another possibility is the Excise department; he is familiar with its workings and excise-men were regular visitors to shipping in port. With the exception of the sympathetic portrayal of Swan, he shares society's common attitude of dislike of them; they were a necessary evil, as was anybody with responsibility for law and order, such as Dublin's night-watchmen.

The Characters

Major Characters

Brian Boru, Shawn O'Dogherty, and Major T. Grammachree represent three different Protestants of Gaelic descent. In this the author is making a point of how people with these origins can be loyalists. They are models of how true Irish gentlemen should behave, though the author concedes that such ideals are very rare. His most scathing comment concerns the majority of aristocracy who were

"Too proud to be useful, and too indolent for enterprise, they dwindle on from day to day less and less, till they finally drop into contempt and oblivion."

Brian Boru

Brian Boru is a reputed descendant of the famed king of Clontarf who

"...was the greatest Irish King that ever made a blunder; he unluckily fought when he should have prayed, and when he should have fought he knelt to the crucifix. His descendants have continued much like their illustrious ancestors; they have blundered and prayed through generations down to the present day..."

It is stated that he comes from Co. Galway though no description of the city or country are included and all its place names are fictional. There are, in fact, more references to Limerick city and county with a few scattered details of transport connections between Dublin and Limerick. It may be that the author originally intended Limerick but later changed it to Galway.

Boru, whose parents are dead, is portrayed as a typical devil-may-care squire of a medium sized estate in his mid-twenties that dabbles in poetry.

"With all his faults, Brian had a warm heart; he was good-tempered, affable, and condescending; generous in the extreme; and every son of sorrow he considered as a brother: a more hearty honest, country squire never set out to see Life in Dublin."

He comes from

"a country where there's more meat than modesty, and more pigs than Protestants any day of the year..."

And his estate is described as

"...encumbered, not with debts, but bogs, rocks, barrenness, and private stills for brewing whiskey"

He came to Dublin to take up an invitation from a friend, Sir Shawn O'Dogherty, and to see George IV, whose arrival was supposed to be imminent but delayed due to the consequences of the death of Queen Caroline. Here he learns how to be a gentleman acceptable in High Society, while exploring Low Life.

He goes astray with a demirep (lady with a questionable reputation), ends up in Sheriff's goal as a debtor and is rescued, all in a matter of a few unrealistic weeks, He re-joins his friends, forms an alliance with a more socially acceptable demirep and reintegrates back into High Society.

He epitomises rural gentry where land was poor but smuggling rife; but as a class, they were the backbone of estate and village life.

Shawn O'Dogherty

Sir Shawn O'Dogherty is a Baronet and Knight of St. Patrick who has just graduated from Trinity College and is in his mid to late twenties. His origins are not given; he appears fully formed, as one of the leading lights of the Dublin aristocracy and a personal friend of the Viceroy.

He acts as mentor to Brian Boru, introduces him to High Society and Low Life and then rescues him from Sheriff's Goal by standing warranty for Boru's debts. He is very independently wealthy without encumbrances. He epitomises the perfect Irish gentleman, loyal, wise, generous, sociable with all classes, humble, and altogether too perfect to be true.

Major T. Grammachree

Captain Grammachree (possible translation is 'love of my heart'), of the Inniskillen Dragoons, who in the book is promoted to Major by the king, is an army veteran who has seen service during the 1798 Rebellion and various European military campaigns including the battles of Leipsic (*sic*) and Waterloo. He has lost a leg in battle and is a touch brain-damaged from a shell splinter that cracked his skull.

His origins are not given except that he was the fourth son of a poor peer and subservient government place man and lackey; who though an army officer, avoided conflict and

"could handle Spence's Hydrometer more easily than a sword, and was a better judge of the spirit of whiskey than the spirit of valour"

In contrast his son is a feature in High Society, popular and convivial, especially after a good meal and whiskey punch.

"The Captain, by his moderate way of living in private, always appeared genteel in public; he was admitted into the first societies; his rank and character entitled him to respect; and he received it, not as a compliment of favour bestowed, but as a tribute he knew to be justly due and which he had no cause to blush at receiving.

His manners were unpolished, but he was always in good humour with himself and all around

him; moreover he was an Irish wit, said many good things, at least his brogue and manner of delivery created a laugh, when there was really nothing in the story worth a smile. He often committed blunders, and his memory was none of the best..."

He is in his mid-fifties, unmarried, independently well-off though a pension and half pay, and has a half-pay corporal as servant; though lost an inheritance through some legality. He must be unique in the annals of medicine for having contracted rheumatism in his wooden leg.

He acts as a foil to the polished manners of O'Dogherty and plays a role in the rescue of Boru by visiting his Estate and sorting out the cheating middleman through military intimidation, who was then impressed into the navy with

"a slight recommendation that he should be well flogged every Saturday for the good of his health."

He is likely to have been modelled on a military friend with a certain amount of hero-worship by the author, who writes

"I have whiled away many an hour in thy company; may the laurels of thy youth never be plucked from thy forehead in age, when thou wilt most stand in need of their friendly shelter!"

Minor Characters

Patrick Mooney, Lady Demiquaver and Sally Jenkinson/Stevenson play subsidiary but important roles in the narrative.

Patrick Mooney

He represents the best of Catholic Irish servants; son of a tenant, he starts off in the stables and becomes Boru's personal servant. He is totally loyal to his master, always trying to do the best. He plays an essential role in organising his master, keeping him well-togged out and looks after the horses and hounds. He is intelligent, but not literate, shares his master's taste for whiskey, and is well rewarded for his service.

Lady Demiquaver

Lady Demiquaver is a high-born lady around 45 years old of unspecified origins. Once a beauty of the aristocratic circle; she still led society in terms of taste and fashion and though a demirep was accepted by all. She became the Boru's mistress after leaving Sheriff's Goal, which was seen as a good thing since she had no designs on his property. The author describes her as

"fat, fair, lively, elegant and expressive; she had long led the van of female fashionables, and still continued to be a star of the first magnitude in a hemisphere where a constellation was visible day and night. She introduced more beauty to the Castle than any one of her rank in Dublin..."

She was no boaster, and did good in *secret*, though she made love in *public*: of the *latter* she was not ashamed, of the *former* she was; and used to say, that she cared not what the world said of her *levities*, but as to her *charities*, she would take care they should never be found out."

While fictional she may easily represent a living person or some aspects of character. The demi- in the name may refer to her being a demirep, whilst quaver is, perhaps, a musical clue.

Sally Jenkinson/Stevenson

Both surnames are given for this character that came from Liverpool having been seduced by Buck Whaley and later became his mistress. After his death she formed alliances with various sugar-

daddies and took them to the cleaners. She then becomes Boru's mistress and though he saves her from drowning, she gets him into debt and moves to the Continent with £2,000 soon after he is arrested. The 'Downshire lass' from Strangford, is a similar type of mercenary manipulator.

Cameo Characters

The cameo characters play various subsidiary roles in the narrative and may be modelled on real people though with fictional names. There are two lengthy descriptions of people at a Rotunda concert and Sheriff's Goal that are often critical of their eccentricities, foibles and deficiencies.

Sheriff's Goal

"... most of the inmates are incarcerated for making too free with whiskey, and horses, and pretty women."

Others preferred life in prison where they were immune from the legal actions of their creditors and victims, while a few thought it better than to paying their debts to mere tradesmen. Many became institutionalised:

"A long residence in prison had made it agreeable...; use is second nature, and happy for mankind it is so in so many cases, or what set of miserable wretches would there be in this world, particularly amongst married people."

Timothy Swan, an exciseman, is given sympathetic treatment, even though outside the pale of genteel society and the bane of the peasantry's whiskey stills and smugglers carrying out their time-honoured, if illegal, activities. There is an implication that he is related to William Bellingham Swann but this is very unlikely as Timothy, a Catholic name, is not to be found in his genealogy.

One of the more amusing inmates was one Meglar, a German tailor, who taught Irish, of which he had no knowledge, to unsuspecting Englishmen but in fact taught them German. There was a black linen merchant from St. Domingo who had been duped and was currently negotiating his release, his opinion was that

"...the only gentlemen in Ireland are the *black* guards, because they are of his own colour."

Another was a one-eyed, one-armed Royal Navy Captain with small debts who chose to remain as President of a club for relieving poor debtors and to distribute charity, including tobacco, to the most needy and wrote letters for the illiterate.

Others include a squire whose pleasures and service to the country in 1798 overly encumbered him, a corrupt lawyer whose "conscience won't allow him to be honest", an ex-army officer psychopathic murderer, a wealthy major who preferred prison to paying debts, a charitable lady atheist who refused to honour the debts of her deceased fourth husband, a vegetarian former secretary of the Gaelic Society, an amateur antiquarian cleric, a forger who had been a clerk of the Bank of Ireland, a 'Hell-Fire dog', and a poet who was 'musical doctor to the Sheriff's Society'

Rotunda

At the Rotunda concert there are descriptions of a Lord and 'butcher of character', a foolish indigent Lord, a placeman who dispensed court favours for sexual favours, an ex-beauty attempting to re-enter society, a feisty rich young heiress who assaulted would be marriage proposers, and others whose foibles are less than interesting but would have been lively topics of gossip and rumour at the time.

Others

Other walk-on parts include the Earl Talbot, Lord Lieutenant, 1817-21, 'an honourable, high-

mindful gentleman'. He appears to have been very laid back and attempted to rule with the minimum of military force. However this was not successful due to growing rural resistance movements such as the Whiteboys, Threshers, Shanavests, Carders, Ribbonmen and Rockites, which seemed to contemporary observers to be some kind of continuation of the 1798 Rebellion.

The onset of the famine induced by a major potato failure in the autumn of 1821 then increased instability and insecurity. As a result he was replaced at the end of the year though not before he became a Knight of St. Patrick and granted the Freedom of Drogheda for his services to Irish agriculture.

Sally McLean was the Madame of a high-class brothel on Stafford Street; she

"never had less than a round dozen of beauties under her tuition; in truth, if they were not *first-rate* beauties they would not do, for Sally dealt only with *first-rate* customers."

She was a well-known character similar to the still-remembered Peg Plunket of 30-40 years previously. She is said to have died just before the arrival of George IV. The author wrote that

"Dublin could have spared a better woman; Tom Byrne wrote an ode to her memory, which every cherubim in Anglesea Street chaunted as a response to her departed soul."

Billy Biscuit, alias Billy Curtis, was Lord Mayor of Dublin and may represent Sir Abraham Bradley King, Sir John Kingston James, who were mayors in 1821, or another. An epicure, renowned for his love of turtle soup and claret; O'Dogherty says

"but as to his eating a turtle at a meal and drinking two dozen of claret, I don't believe above half the story".

He allegedly wanted to build a crane to hoist blubber and turtles from ships at the spot where George IV landed in Howth in his honour, of course. The king on hearing this, and other proposals, is said to have responded

"He thought a snug whiskey and punch-house, with the King's head over the door, would be as well, as he knew from experience, how thirsty a man felt when he first lands in Ireland."

Two hoteliers are Morrison of Dawson Street and D'Arcy (spelled Darey in the second half of the book) of Earl Street. According to the author

"Morrison declares himself that more than five hundred gentlemen have drank themselves to death with his wine, and not one of them ever afterwards complained of the quality of the liquor."

while Darcy was described as

"Darey at the door bowed his head as usual, just as if he was flinging it into your face, only his neck kept it fast to his ould shoulders."

King George IV is treated as beyond reproach with an uncritical effusion of love, loyalty and patriotism with the ability to bring peace to Ireland. For a more realistic perspective of the king's visit see http://www.turtlebunbury.com/history/history_irish/history_irish_georgeiv.htm .

Certainly the author was not part of the inner circle that welcomed and gave hospitality to the king and entourage and there is no mention of his mistress Lady Conyngham of Slane Castle or the

several days the king spent there. The narrative shifts suddenly from the king leaving Dublin for Powerscourt House to his departure from Dun Laoghaire (Dunleary).

His descriptions of the crowds, if accurate and allowing for some hyperbole; show a populace enthused with the king's arrival and treating it as a public holiday and excuse for major celebrations. It appears that the majority thought he would land at Dun Laoghaire, which resulted in huge crowds there on land and on sea, which included a

"cleboy in a butcher's tray, with two beef bones for sculls, rowing down to the Lighthouse, and a poulterer's bantum-cock in a wicker basket, with a goose wing spread for a sail, steering after him."

It is likely that the book was published in response to the royal visit to maximise sales. No doubt Egan's popular *Life in London* was an important influence in encouraging publication and sales.

In certain respects the book was unfinished. For instance it is not clear what happened to the Downshire Lass; she is introduced as a feature and possible danger but is then not mentioned again. He promises to tell of a French Count who escorted Sally Jenkinson/Stevenson to the continent but does not. There is an illustration of a row and fight in a theatre but nothing in the text.

It may be that this was a book being written at leisure when suddenly there was a good market and it became a rush job to finish it up, perhaps less than perfect, since the editing could be better, i.e. Grammachree is promoted to Major, but then the next few chapters he is called Captain, before being than correctly call Major.

Occupations

A hedge school teacher is: "a chap who, with a smattering of Latin and Greek, begs through the country, until he begs admittance into some respectable family, where he teaches the *gossoons* to disobey their parents, assists the servant girls in peopling the kitchen, creates a quarrel betwixt the master and mistress, and for his pains after a time is rewarded with a hearth-money collector's place or (if a drunken dog) that of an exciseman."

Middlemen: "are a sort of rapsallion placed betwixt landlord and tenant, on purpose to oppress the latter. When the landlord is an absentee, they are intolerable extortioners and tyrants, who stick at nothing to gain money; they keep hounds, and assume an authority far superior to the law, and the real landlord proprietor is very seldom near to be appealed to".

Sexton and Grave Digger to the Duelling Society of Dublin, Clontarf Sheds; his business card read

Graves dug upon the shortest notice, and gentlemen *accommodated* with excellent Sleeping Ground, upon moderate terms. Those who are particular as to their body's disposal, had better pay before hand, as most of the good places are occupied, and the Dog Days coming on, there will be little room to spare.

N.B. Fees: A gentleman, two shillings, and his clothes, purse, watch and pistols included. A blackguard, five shillings, and his friends may take all that belongs to him

As for lawyers: "to practise what you preach, is always wrong" and

"They live upon the Public Purse
As if it were their own;
But Lord, it matters not a curse,
To spur to death the willing horse
Is practised by the throne"

His description of the Four Courts, where a presiding judge is called Lord Dimwit, is

"A large turnip, or top of a haystack; and the courts appropriated to hear the causes of justice in are so narrow and confined, that a stranger would think they were cells of confinement for all the lawyers and liars in dear Dublin."

There is a description of the main characters fight with a group of night watchmen and subsequent court case; in general

They wake you forty times a night
With hoarse and hideous squalling,
They wake even children in a fright,
Like cats a caterwauling.
Now in the street, now in the yard,
A man can't to a girl go,
Without Watchmen's fond regard
He's always on the sly go.

Localities

Dublin

Dublin City High and Low are well explored; the geography is clear and evocative, from the detail of

"you must have seen the pump if you were ever at the customhouse, because, when you step out of the ferry-boat you run your head right against it."

to the shenanigans of a coal porter's wedding that started from Townsend Chapel passed La Louette's Riding school where they "doubled the corner, bilked the market, shyed the College Wall, and steered down Moss-street", passed Patrick Heney's pub, crossed the Liffey, passed Jacob's Hotel and ended up at Poll Katalane's pub where the party proper started. The procession

"...on the top of the pump a young gossoon sat straddle legs, holding a pole with a coal-sack depending from its end, in which were enclosed a fraternity of cats, who had just space sufficient to pop out their heads and *catterwawl* most gloriously. The bride and bridegroom rode cheek by jowl, and received the drops of *stalrinky* handed to them on every side most gracelessly. In the uniform of the coal-porters, two heroes rode on either side of the married pair, like supporters to the King's coat of arms; one suspended a huge pair of horns upon a wooden sceptre; the other bore a pair of worn-out leather breeches, with silken strings to the waistband.

Before all, as herald, or *avaunt courier*, a break-of-day boy rode on a piebald poney, blowing a bullock's horn with all his might and main; peacock's feathers hung over his brows, and a multitude of party coloured rags covered his figure. The band consisted of an Irish harp, three fiddles, a pair of bag-pipes, and a base drum. Everyone that had a voice joined the music, and drowned it in chorus."

An eatery near the Four Courts, run by Patrick Duignan, where

The manner of cooking is rather novel, the steaks being placed betwixt two plates of Queen's metal, which, when the steak was supposedly sufficiently done on one side was capsized to the other, as a fork was never made use of, and one hundred *dabs* have been on the *iron sideboard* at one time; this immense plate was heated from flues underneath, where turf was kept continually burning ... owing to its being cooked upon turf, which penetrated the pores of the iron and gave it a most delicious flavour.

Rotunda Gardens

For a concert "The Rotunda Gardens were very brilliantly illuminated; horn lanthorns were hung

in the trees, and the smell of lamp oil perfumed the air; bands of music played Irish airs with French accompaniments, and kettle drums shook the dust of the trees in clouds sufficient to smother any but an Irish company."

Blackrock

Black Rock was a favoured location for a day out. Weekends were full of day trippers from all classes of society, while the catering trade did well in supplying food and drink to the hungry and thirsty travellers.

"On every side of the path now could be seen parties having their *dejeunés* on the grass, buxom girls, rosy-cheeked children, all neatly clad, jolly looking fellows in emerald green coats, dashing belles and *petit maitres* were mingled *en masse*, and perfectly sociable; the smoke of pipes scented the air, and the smell of whiskey qualified its somnoric powers. The tavern doors were thronged with visitors, who *en passant* peeped into the arbours and paid tribute to the excise in a *roller of thunder and lightning*, alias shrub and whiskey, with a *Sally Lun* in it. The trees waved their green heads in the gale, the cowslip, primrose, and daisy embroidered the carpet of nature, every breeze wafted health, and every little valley breathed perfume."

Dalkey

Dalkey was site of the famed King of the Beggar's celebrations and a scene of riotous fun – if you survived.

"A glorious procession on water takes place; all the beggars, blackguards, and gentlemen in and out Dublin attend; and to see the fun of dancing, boxing, tripping, and drowning of the mob, och! it would do your heart good, and make you cry with laughing. No less than three brogue makers, two journeymen butchers, a stock-broker, a justice of the peace, and a watchman, were all swallowed up by the tide of Dalkey last coronation day".

Lambay Island

"...as sweet a little spot as ever mother nature gemmed the ocean with; wild celery, endiff, and goss lettuce, are in plenty; water cresses fill every little stream, and samphire hides the rocky sides of the island from a scorching sun.

The Norman house ... is only a small *castellated* mansion, with loop-holes for the use of bows and arrows, and arched below to prevent it being set on fire: an amazing quantity of sea-fowl haunt its shores, and form excellent amusement for the sportsmen. You have a fine view of Dublin and its environs from any eminence on the place; and you can have excellent curds and cream from the fishermen's wives who inhabit it."

Viceroy's Lodge

It was the most prestigious building in Dublin and home and reception to the Lord Lieutenant. It was where George IV stayed in Dublin admiring the scenery and the multiplicity of livestock he was gifted. The reception area, according to the author, was plainly furnished and decorated; more care seems to have gone into the immediate gardens. As for the surrounds

"The Phoenix stood upon the top of his perch, like a *Billy Duck* on a Mopstick, and the trees on every side waved their green heads in the gale like rotten cabbages turning blue for want of boiling"

Dublin Castle

The Castle was the centre of political power in Ireland, a place of high politics, policy, military security and business run by the usual bureaucrats.

"...there is no life in the Castle; all still puppets, moving automatons, dancing sharps and flats, enough to make a fellow eat his knuckles from ennui."

It was a magnet for those that sought government employment or favour. The highest aristocracy with significant financial and land interests in Ireland had the easiest access to the higher echelons of power. O'Dogherty visits occasionally by ancient right and current wealth and standing.

Canal

A scenic route to the countryside with refreshment areas at regular intervals, where a

"...light breeze that swept over Mill Dale, and bent the heads of the primrose, cowslip, and hallowed shamrock, lifted also the bonnet off as pretty a little tulip as ever walked upon to faultless legs to the grave."

Clontarf

The Shades of Clontarf was the main duelling site for Dublin where, under a birch tree, "the bones of *two hundred and fifty Irishmen rest in peace*, after being killed in *quietness* for being *troublesome*."

Balbriggan

A holy well situated nearby was a popular pilgrimage spot, the description of which will not be found in any straight-laced folklore. The village was a favourite spot of the author

"But there is something in the air of Balbriggan that renders a man lively, Aye and a woman also, though at many and often time a fellow does not want a woman to be in a state of jollification"

Author's Philosophies

Aspects of the author's world view can be reconstructed from the attitudes and opinions expressed in the book.

Politically, he is a neutral and not attached to any party position, a member of any lobby group, nor has any interest in the theory or practice of politics or governance. He is not involved in political administration, though may have had some access to the Vice Regal Lodge. While not commenting on government generally he knows how the system of propaganda works; concerning his condemnation of Richard Twiss's travelogue *A Tour in Ireland in 1775*.

"His book, though now 'down among the dead men,' had, under the auspices of government, a great circulation; for we well understand the circulating medium by which ministers set these things going in the political world."

He doesn't have much confidence in local government, Boru asks

"When did any one hear of an Irish Corporation doing a consistent action?"

He is also neutral in his references to Catholic Emancipation but it is obvious that the idea leaves him cold. He was not to know that in 100 years his world views as loyal Gaelic Protestant were to become irrelevant and completely disappear.

There are no references to either the American or French revolution; by this time Napoleon was incarcerated on St. Helena so there was (relative) peace in Europe. His stories concerning the 1798 French invasion are second-hand; he probably knew a military officer who served in Mayo.

His attitudes to the 1798 Rebellion (also called the Ruction) are not clear-cut though he supported the Government. He believes that Irish people were fundamentally loyal but led astray by extremist clerics and government mismanagement. He describes the Battle of Ross in most detail and praises

the Dublin Militia for their role in that engagement; it may be that he had some personal knowledge from having been or served there. He is fairly knowledgeable concerning the Rebellion in Co. Wexford with few references to it elsewhere.

There are references to agrarian resistance in the western half of the country, Grammachree has a confrontation in Galway, and it is interesting that he gives a very sympathetic poem about the death of a resistance leader named Carroll supposedly written by a Machenry in the *Limerick Advertiser*.

In religion he is a straightforward Protestant with no especial spiritual tendencies. He dislikes the Dissenters and such opinions

"of Gifford's, in which he had sworn that drinking green tea infused treason into the frame, and that orange was the colour with which our first parents dyed their fig leaves in Paradise."

Early in the book there is a description of Boru, leading a fox chase on horseback, riding through a barn where a dissenter service was being conducted; causing chaos, confusion and structural damage to the cleric's wig.

He is more respectful and sympathetic to Roman Catholics though he can't resist the temptation of giving priests extraordinary names. At various times the Parish Priest of Boru's estate parish is named Slimkem O'Slack O'Whack, Pheshelim Brock and John Swyllywhish; while a priest in Belfast is called Phelim O'Guffimo.

About sin and fault he writes

"These are sins that might be forgiven, but *eccentricities* become very serious evils, when use has made them necessary to a person's daily support"

and elsewhere that

"nor had they a single fault, but the fault that made them happy, and such faults are the only real blessings heaven bestows on us frail mortals."

There are opinions of punishment and Irish casual attitudes to death at the 'wooden suspender' and 'hempen twister'; he relates

Two brothers were hanged in Knockmanafaddy; the one being turned off, the other addressed the crowd "Behold," said he, "my brother, and take warning! see what a melancholy *spectacle* he appears; In a few minutes I will get the swing, and you'll see no more, for then there will be a *pair of spectacles*."

Meanwhile the ideal life was plentiful and elegant meals with the wittiest of high society where

"Songs, glees, and catches were sported in high style"

The essential skill of any gentleman was to know how to make whiskey punch. Whiskey, straight and flavoured with raspberry, was the favoured drink of all classes though beer was commonly found; porter was still seen as an English drink of recent import and not highly regarded. Excessive and competitive drinking was common, as were the consequences:

"Through whiskey I see double"

is the line of one poem, and

"Brian turned into his barrack bed all standing, for he was too mystified to unrig"

while concerning a doctor's diagnosis (molty is a synonym of drunk)

"this Grammachree disbelieved, he know the nature of his disorder, which originated in his going to bed molty with his clothes on, and sleeping with his wooden leg out from under the blankets, by which he got the rheumatism in it, that soon spread from the wood to the flesh and flesh to the bone."

The book ends with the reality of Life in Ireland with a reference to the coming Famine, which primarily affected the marginal lands of Munster and Connaught. It followed on from the latter years of the previous decade with the post-Napoleonic recession, which badly affected nascent industry, followed by bad weather that destroyed crops and epidemics of smallpox, typhus and cholera. In 1822 it is estimated that up to one million people depended on the government for direct food aid and public works (www.csorp.nationalarchives.ie/context/1822.html).

"By the powers," cried Gram, who had just received intelligence of the famine, "the Dance of Death has commenced – we must away, add our mite to the contributions raising in our sister kingdom, and our exertions to those of the noble fellows, who bury all distinctions, whether national, political or religious when Life in Ireland is at stake."

Publishers and Illustrators

The original publisher was J. Jones and Co., 3 Warwick Square, London for the first three editions. The fourth was by William Evans & Co., also of London. In 1904 the book was reprinted by Methuen and Co. based on the Evans edition. A full publishing history is not available. No comparison has been made between the three published versions.

The illustrators were 1) W. Heath who designed the front piece, 2) Marks Feet who illustrated Brian Boru's entry into Belfast, Departure of the King, Wetting an Irish Commission, Adventures in a whiskey parlour, and Squire Boru and Old Tarpaulin in a duel. 3) H. Alkin, Esq. who illustrated A night row with the Charlies in Dame Street and Captain Grammachree playing 'Paddy Whack.' 4) The rest are not signed.

Henry Thomas Alkin, 1785-1851, is the best known; he was a prolific illustrator and engraver with an entry in the Dictionary of National Biography. Biographical data on the others were not found.

Format Issues

One can imagine the author supplying the publisher with a hand-written copy of the manuscript who then gave it to two typesetters who had different protocols. Typesetter A, chapters 1-14, uses All Caps mostly for the main characters with some initialising to highlight a specific point. Typesetter B, chapters 15-25, was erratic and capitalised words with no real system; it is difficult to discern why some words are all-caps, then initialized and then normal type in the space of a few paragraphs.

Originally I transcribed the book with the plan to publish it as an e-book but on reflection decided it wasn't worth it as it is already available as a free download; though eventually decided to publish this essay as a stand-alone piece. The transcription was straightforward and its own entertainment, though at one point when he says that, after a long section of some awful poetry, "Here the muse of Brian fell asleep" my reaction was "Thank God for small mercies".

My two favourite stock phrases were 'in a pig's whisper' which evokes speed in silence and 'by the Holy Poker' as it stands to reason the God has a poker to keep the fires of Hell burning bright.