The position of Irish Catholics within the Officer Corps of the British Army: 1829-1899

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2018

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Abstract

The chief objective of this dissertation is to attempt to answer the question of whether or not Irish Catholics formed a disproportionately small element of the Officer Corps of the British Army, in the period following formal Catholic Emancipation in 1829. The wider issues arising from this question include whether or not such Irish Catholics were subject to continued discrimination despite the removal of formal restrictions on their advancement, the disposition of Irish Catholic officers by rank and regiment, and the extent to which the most successful Irish Catholic officers could advance.

These questions will be answered primarily through a quantitative analysis of the officer lists, regimental returns, and army returns of the period. This statistical approach will in turn be supplemented through a qualitative analysis of the individuals uncovered, seeking to ascertain their faith through careful examination of genealogical material. For those few Irish Catholics who achieved the greatest success in the officer corps, this has been augmented by a more thorough examination of their background, circumstances, economic position and personal history, in order to discern more clearly the facts which permitted their advancement, and concurrently the non-advancement of their peers.

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Acknowledgements

The completion of this PhD would not have been possible without the support, encouragement and expertise of several individuals and institutions I wish to express gratitude to here.

Foremost I owe thanks to my father, mother and brother, who have over the years of this work been endlessly patient and supportive in my pursuit of this work and who have since an early age fostered in me an interest in the study of history in all its forms.

In my supervisor, Dr. Padraig Lenihan, I count myself lucky to have found not only a scholar whose knowledge and expertise guided me through this endeavour, but also a polymath who served variously as historian, confidante, insightful intellect, and occasionally, drill sergeant.

I am also immensely grateful to the staff of the Department of History at NUI Galway, all of whom have served as fine examples of the Academic craft, and always gladly offered their experience and time and in particular, Dr Róisín Healy, Dr. Gearóid Barry and Dr. Niall Ó Ciosáin, my instructors since the undergraduate level.

I would also like to express my gratitude to the Military Heritage of Ireland Trust, both for their support and recognition of this developing work, as well as their assistance in disseminating its findings.

Finally, I offer my thanks to the staffs of the Hardiman Library Galway, the UK National Archives (Kew), and the National Archives of Ireland (Dublin) for their particular assistance in accessing the vital archival material of this study, as well as Damien Burke and all the staff of the Irish Jesuit Archives (Dublin).

Section 1: Introduction

1.1: Overview

In 1872, William Francis Butler, a Captain in the 69th Regiment of Foot, published *The Great Lone Land; a Narrative of Travel and Adventure in the North-West of America.* In the course of the text, Butler remarks upon 'that low brutality which has ever made the Anglo-Saxon deny its enemy the possession of one atom of generous sensibility, that dull enmity which prompted us to call the Maid of Orleans a harlot.'[1] In a later work, Butler ruminated further on the issue, concluding 'The truth is, the Anglo-Saxon race can spread itself, but cannot impart to others its Christianity or its civilisation. We can only do what the Dane, the Saxon, the Frank, or the Goth could do.'[2] Given such statements, one might be surprised to learn that Butler hailed from the class of the Irish lesser gentry, was a Catholic and in time, would establish a reputation for expressing criticisms of aspects of the British Imperial project. The chief object of this work is to locate other Irish Catholic officers in the service of the British Army from 1829 to 1899 and contextualize their experience of service, both individually and collectively.

The question of Irish Catholics in British military service is at the same time, a topic that has in some respects been quite well traversed, yet in other areas, sorely neglected. The origins of this study lie within an M.A. Dissertation dealing with the military memoirs of an Irish soldier in the early nineteenth century, William Grattan. Grattan, like many of his peers in the British officer corps, was a member of the Anglo-Irish Protestant gentry. By contrast, most of the men under his command in the 88th (Connaught Rangers) Regiment of Foot were Irish Catholics like Butler. From first appearances, this model of superior and subaltern appears reflective of a vision of Irish history which entailed an Anglo-Irish gentry (serving as officers) and a large mass of dispossessed and disadvantaged Irish Catholics (serving as the rank and file), albeit operating within the same space. However the existence of Butler and men like him, who did not fit this model, gave rise to the question as to what extent this model was a reliable representation of the contribution of Irish Catholics to the British Army during the nineteenth century. Although Irish Protestants are readily discoverable within the

[1] Butler, W.F. (1872) *The Great Lone Land; a Narrative of Travel and Adventure in the North-West of America*, London: Low, Low & Searle, p243
[2] Butler, W.F. (1880) *Far Out: Rovings Retold,* London: William Ibister, p384

rank and file of the armed forces during this period, Irish Catholics are scarcely encountered at the highest ranks of army service – namely as general officers (Major-General and higher). The number appears to be almost nil by the close of the Napoleonic Wars in 1815 and appears to remain largely the same until the promotion of Butler during the 1880s. It is this apparent paucity of successful Irish Catholic Generals, men whose very existence was counter-intuitive to the aforementioned model, and the search for examples of such men, which has underpinned this study.

The search for and examination of those Irish Catholics who would become senior army officers, cannot be separated from the wider question of the society to which they belonged. Ireland's position within the United Kingdom and more broadly, the British Empire, is a topic that has attracted a great deal of scholarly interest in recent years. By contrast, conventional narratives of Irish history have typically retained an adversarial view of British involvement (framed within a simple dichotomy of colonist and colonized) grounded inextricably in the knowledge of the emergence of a separate Irish state by violent means. Nor is this exclusively the realm of popular visions of Irish history; Volumes Five and Six of W.E. Vaughan's *A New History of Ireland* are tellingly entitled 'Ireland under the Union' rather than 'Within' or 'Part' of the Union.[3] However, such a vision of Irish history has consequently rendered the contribution of Irish Catholics to the various arms of the Imperial project in general (and the service of Irish Catholic officers to the British Army in particular) as a peripheral field of Irish history, traversed only occasionally by academics and enthusiasts.

However, to examine this topic purely from the confines of the institutions of the British Army would be to fail to appreciate the wider societal trends involved in the making of and advancement of, British Army officers. In much the same way as one cannot understand Irish enlistment in the forces of the American Civil War without references to the mass migration from Ireland following the Great Famine; one cannot understand the story of Irish Catholic officers without reference to the society from whence they hailed. As officers, these men tended to hail from the middling or aspirational classes in Ireland (either in the form of the urban middle class or the lesser landed families), rather than from the wider population.

[3] Vaughan, W.E. (1989), *A New History of Ireland: Volume V, Ireland under the Union, Part I, 1801-1870,* Oxford; Clarendon Press, 2005

Although previously hobbled under the Penal Laws, with the passage of the Repeal Acts and Catholic Emancipation, Irish Catholics were able to legally access previously closed professions such as the law. Similarly, the Industrial Revolution provided new prospects for professional employment in both private enterprise as well as state institutions.[4]

The story of this class, famously decried by W.B. Yeats for doing nothing but 'fumble in the greasy till',[5] has garnered increasing amounts of scholarly attention in recent years. Lawrence McBride in *The Greening of Dublin Castle*,[6] attempted to chart the interaction of the rising section of society with the institutions of the British government in Ireland; namely the Civil Service and the Judiciary. A more recent work by Fergus Campbell, *The Irish Establishment*, has latterly attempted to revise and elucidate McBride's argument by examining the limits of Irish Catholic penetration into these institutions. However, both works consciously avoid the question in terms of the British Army, perhaps owing to the considerably more diffuse structure of that organization. This work will attempt to remedy this historiographical gap and seek to offer a contextualization for the outcomes of Irish Catholics serving in the British officer corps, in a similar fashion as to what has been done by other scholars examining their civilian counterparts. Attempting to place the story of these men in context however, is a task which is rendered more difficult by the comparative lack of attention that they have received in historiography, let alone within the wider popular perceptions of Irish history. Even within the pages of the *Irish Sword*, the exploits of T. Kelly-Kenny, M. Dillon, C.F. Clery and W.F. Butler (the four most successful examples of their class), do not feature once. Indeed of the four men only the fantastical character of Butler has attracted some scholarly attention, being the subject of two biographies.[7] This absence of scholarly interest compares poorly with the interest shown in the diaspora of Irish military officers entering service in close neighbours such as France and Spain, as well as more remote prospects such as Austria and Russia.

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[4] Shaw-Taylor, L. and Wrigley, E.A. (2014) 'Occupational structure and population change' in Floud, R. Humphries, J. and Johnson, P. (eds.) *The Cambridge Economic History of Modern Britain*, Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, p64

[5] Yeats, W.B. *September 1913*

[6] McBride, L. (1991) *The Greening of Dublin Castle: The Transformation of Bureaucratic and Judicial Personnel in Ireland, 1892-1922*, Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America Press

[7] See McCourt, E. (1967) *Remember Butler: The Story of Sir William Butler,* London: Routledge & Keegan Paul and Ryan, M. (2003) *William Francis Butler, a life 1838-1910*, Dublin: The Lilliput Press

This focus may be a result of the tendency for conventional narratives of Irish history to place a considerable emphasis on viewing and indeed writing that history through the prism of the nation state,[8] and concerned primarily with the process of separation from the British state, at the expense of attention toward the relationship of Irish citizens in British service. One might traditionally expect the exploits of major military leaders to form part of a nation's military or political history, a history which in Ireland's case is complicated by the aforementioned impact of British Imperialism. Consequently, much of the political history of Ireland during the period of greatest service in the British Army is dominated by men involved in the national question, men such as Daniel O'Connell, Charles Stewart Parnell and Michael Davitt, who loom large in both academic as well as popular histories of the era. If one considers some of the more recent histories of Ireland this continues to be the case. For example, the (1990-2005) *New Gill History of Ireland* by D.G. Boyce only delves deeply into the sectarian divides within the British Army in the period of the First World War.[9] W.E. Vaughan's (1990-1995) *A New History of Ireland: Ireland under the Union* (Parts I & II),[10] Jonathan Bardon's (2008) *A History of Ireland in 250 Episodes*,[11] and Hilary Larkin's (2014) *A History of Ireland: 1800-1922*,[12] all display a similar lack of interest in the involvement of Irish Catholics in Britain's military undertakings in the later nineteenth century. Instead there remains a relative dearth of material concerning the period after the Wild Geese. The former phenomenon, arising from the defeat of the Jacobite forces during the Williamite War in Ireland, saw the employment of Irish Catholics primarily in the service of continental European Catholic powers, Bourbon France and Spain. This tradition persisted in some form until the outbreak of the French Revolution, but had largely disappeared by the conclusion of the Napoleonic Wars.

Yet the adoption of such a nation-dominated outlook belies the more complicated nature of the imperial relationship, and crucially, the relationship of Ireland and its people, with the other nations and peoples of empire. More recent scholarly efforts, such as those of Barry

[8] Crosbie, B. (2011) *Irish Imperial Networks: Migration, Social Communication and exchange in Nineteenth Century India,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p5
[9] Boyce, D.G. (1990) *New Gill History of Ireland Volume 5: Nineteenth Century Ireland – The Search for Stability,* Dublin: Gill & Macmillan
[10] Vaughan, *A New History of Ireland*
[11] Bardon, J. (2008) *A History of Ireland in 250 Episodes,* Dublin: Gill & Macmillan
[12] Larkin, H. (2014) *A History of Ireland: 1800-1922,* London: Anthem Press

Crosbie in *Irish Imperial Networks* have sought to remedy this deficiency with a more nuanced recognition of the complexities involved in Ireland's position during the Victorian era. More recent scholarship has set out to explore not just the participation but the active collaboration of Irishmen in the imperial sphere by exploring the trans-national connections that Ireland maintained whilst part of the empire. Increasingly, this involves a shifting away from a vision of the empire as comprising relationships between 'metropole' and 'colony', towards a more multi-faceted view which encompasses the interactions between the various 'nations' of the empire (English, Welsh, Irish and Scottish) and the various subject peoples and outposts of empire.[13] Indeed, much of the soldiery of that same British establishment in India was provided by recruitment from the Irish Catholic community since at least the 1770s.[14] Whatever its implications for the self-determination of other nations, the empire provided prospects for employment and advancement to countless Irish Catholics, even after the independence of the Irish Free State from the United Kingdom.

The role of the empire is plainly evident in Peter Costello's description of the potential employment prospects of Clongowes graduates, namely; 'good posts in the home and Indian civil service, in the banks and commerce, in the army and the traditional professions.'[15] One of the more notable examples of this is the part played by Irish Catholic physicians in British controlled India, and came to make up an increasing number of the medical student population toward the close of the nineteenth century.[16] Similarly, many civil servants for British India were furnished by Irish educational institutions which included a sizeable number of Irish Catholics. In fact, Scott B. Cook's study of Irish members of the Indian Civil Service during the period 1886 to 1914 suggests that even when the total number of Irish recruits was falling, the proportion supplied by Irish Catholics continued to increase from 8%

[13] Crosbie, *Irish Imperial Networks,* p6
[14] Mokyr, J., & Ó Gráda, C. (1989) 'The Height of Irishmen and Englishmen in the 1770s: Some Evidence from the East India Company Army Records' *Eighteenth-Century Ireland / Iris an Dá Chultúr*, 4, p84
[15] Costello, P. (1989) *Clongowes Wood: A History of Clongowes Wood College, 1814-1989),* Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, p61
[16] See Froggatt, P. (1999) 'Competing Philosophies: the "Preparatory" Medical Schools of the Royal Belfast Academical Institution and the Catholic University of Ireland, 1835-1909' in Jones G, and Malcolm, E. (eds.), *Medicine, Disease and the State in Ireland 1650-1940,* Cork: Cork University Press, p60 and Crosbie, *Irish Imperial Networks,* p71

to 30%.[17] Meanwhile, in the realm of policing, Ireland provided not only a recruitment ground for the various constabularies of the empire, but also served as the primary exemplar for the imposition of law and order in a colonial context, reflecting the ambiguously colonial functions of Irish police forces during this period.[18]

Given the extent of such deep participation it is difficult to sustain the conventional nationalist narrative centred upon a discrete vision of Ireland, somehow excluded from the business of empire building. Instead, the story of Ireland's people during this period is perhaps inextricably tied with the expansion of British power across the world. Nor was such participation delineated by religious affiliation or ethnic background. If we consider one of the most notorious chapters of British rule in India, the Amritsar massacre, which saw the deaths of as many as one thousand Indian subjects, this quickly becomes evident. The chief instigator of the massacre was Colonel Dyer, but his superior was Sir Michael O'Dwyer, the then Lieutenant governor of Punjab, a native of Tipperary and educated by the Jesuits at Tullabeg. O'Dwyer would later deem Dyer's performance a 'correct' action.[19] Indeed, the perception of Irish rank and file (or 'Rishti') by the Indian population appears to have been significantly more harsh than that of the English (or 'Angrese').[20]

Nevertheless, despite this level of involvement, scholars are quick to note that Ireland's position in the British Empire of the nineteenth century remained anomalous. Kevin Kelly writes; 'Ireland's defining peculiarity was that it stood at the world's metropolitan centre; but it was no less a British possession for that'. [21] Ireland retained many of the trappings of its former (explicitly) colonial past. The monarch was represented through the institution of the viceroy or Lord Lieutenant, typically an office held by a nobleman of British birth. The force

[17] Cook, Scott. B (1987) 'The Irish Raj: Social Origins and Careers of Irishmen in the Indian Civil Service, 1855-1914' in *Journal of Social History,* Vol. 20, No. 3 (Spring), p516
[18] Sinclair, G. (2008) 'The 'Irish' policeman and the Empire: influencing the policing of the British Empire - Commonwealth' in *Irish Historical Studies,* Vol 36, No. 42, (November), p174
[19] The quote in question is drawn from O'Dwyer's telegram to Dyer in the aftermath of the massacre which reads 'Your action correct. Lieutenant Governor approves'
[20] Homes, M. (2000) 'The Irish and India; Imperialism, Nationalism and Internationalism' in Bielenberg, A. (ed.) *The Irish Diaspora,* New York: Longman, p237
[21] Kenny, K. (2004) 'Ireland and the British Empire: An Introduction' in Kenny, K. (ed.) *Ireland and the British Empire,* Oxford: Oxford University Press, p3

responsible for upholding law and order for much of the period, the Royal Irish Constabulary, was an armed force, unlike its British counterpart. For the first three decades of the United Kingdom, what little electorate existed was unable to return to Parliament any candidate holding the faith of the majority of the population. Finally, the nature of land ownership, with its largely (but by no means exclusively) sectarian characterisation, involving a class of largely Catholic Irish tenant farmers and largely Protestant Anglo-Irish or British magnates, also evokes notions of colonial subjugation. When placed within such a context, the bifurcated nature of Irish Catholic service in the British Army, namely with Irish Catholics largely as soldiers and Irish Protestants as officers, has the appearances of yet another form of imperial subjugation, placing Ireland distinctly in a subordinate space.[22] In one assessment Ireland had served as the very first example of imperial endeavour, being a venue for conquest and colonization by the English Crown, particularly in the aftermath of the Tudor re-conquest of Ireland and the Reformation. Yet, as set forth previously, Ireland was also by dint of the empire connected to, and integral in the colonization of, a network of imperial territories.

The complexity and contradictions inherent in this question have produced a relative silence on the issue of Ireland's nineteenth century military leaders. More recent works on the topic, such as Tim Newark's (2012) *The Fighting Irish,*[23] Desmond & Jean Bowen's (2005) *Heroic Option: The Irish in the British Army,*[24] and Dan Harvey's (2015) *A Bloody Day: the Irish at Waterloo,*[25] largely repeat the conventional dichotomy of Irish Catholics as being members of the rank and file with their Anglo-Irish peers as officers. By contrast, Britons examining this period might think of recognized names such as Wellington, Cardigan, Chelmsford, Wolseley and Kitchener, yet Catholic Ireland can offer scarcely any. Even within the pages of *The Irish Sword,*[26] the published Journal of The Military History Society of Ireland, the names of

[22] For a more lengthy examination of this debate, see McDonough, T. (ed.) (2005) *Was Ireland a Colony? Economics Politics and Culture in Nineteenth-Century Ireland,* Dublin: Irish Academic Press

[23] Newark, T. (2012) *The Fighting Irish: The Story of the Extraordinary Irish Soldier,* London: Constable & Robinson

[24] Bowen D. & Bowen J. (2005) *Heroic Option: The Irish in the British Army,* Barnsley: Pen & Sword Books

[25] Harvey, D. (2017) *A Blood Day: The Irish at Waterloo,* Dublin: Merrion Press

[26] *The Irish Sword* was established in 1949 and included G.A. Hayes-McCoy and Kevin Danaher amongst its editors.

Butler and his fellows do not feature over the decades of publication. Whilst one might suppose that the contributions of such men simply became an impolitic aspect of Irish history in the years following independence, the most pressing question which presented itself was simply whether or not those men existed at all. The silence (until recent years) over Irish involvement in British service (especially in the nineteenth century) is perhaps rooted in a nationalist conception of Ireland as a victim (and perhaps the first victim) of Imperial aggression – a recalcitrant subject continually eyeing the ultimate objective of independence. The extent of Irish participation in the empire is rendered ever more complicated in the present day, with recent political developments demanding in Britain, a re-evaluation of the relationship of the United Kingdom with the wider world and a re-examination of its Imperial history from the perspective of establishing a sense of pride or guilt. This ongoing debate on the legacy of the British Empire is perhaps best expressed in the contrasting views of Linda Colley and Niall Ferguson. Ferguson in his book (2003) *Empire: How Britain Made the Modern World,* makes the case for a more positive view of Britain's impact on the world,[27] as a harbinger of commercial, technological and societal progress, ultimately attempting to provide an ebullient riposte to a vision of the empire as dominated by what Colley terms 'racism, violence and exploitation.' By contrast, Colley's own work (2003) *Captives*: *Empire, Britain and the World 1600-1850,*[28] in many respects serves as a counterpoint to Ferguson's, exploring the lives of those Britons who became prisoners (on the Imperial frontiers) in the course of Britain's pursuit of Empire.

Although it would be folly to attempt to offer a comprehensive answer to the question of Empire and how it is viewed, through the eyes of a single incident (nor will this work attempt to answer that question) the implications of wider attitudes towards the British Empire on examining the participation of Irish Catholics must be appreciated. Whereas most narratives of Irish history are written with the foreknowledge of Irish Independence, for those Irish Catholics living in the United Kingdom from Waterloo to the eve of the First World War, British rule remained the only likely state of affairs. Even the demands of constitutional nationalism such as Home Rule represented a modest set of demands, and specifically

[27] Ferguson, N. (2003) *Empire: How Britain Made the Modern World,* London: Allen Lane
See also Colley's review of Fergusons work in *The Guardian* - Saturday 18th January 2003
[28] Colley, L. (2003) *Captives: Empire, Britain and the World 1600-1850,* London: Random House

excluding the armed forces from control by a Dublin Parliament. For most of those Irish Catholics with a military inclination, employment in the British Armed forces was the only option available, and it is this genre of historiography that we shall turn to examine next.

1.2: Historiography

In an attempt to provide an answer to this under-examined historiographical question, this study will attempt to record and quantify the contributions of Irish Catholics to the officer corps of the British Army during the nineteenth century – as members of the officer corps we are compelled to view them not as mere dupes and unwitting victims as we might excuse the rank and file, but rather as individuals with considerable agency in their actions. The precise timeline chosen lasts from Catholic Emancipation in 1829 to the outbreak of the 2nd Anglo-Boer War in 1899. Although academic literature dealing with the contribution of Irishmen to the British Empire is by no means a rarity, existing works have displayed a persistent bifurcation between Anglo-Irish officers and largely Catholic Irish rank and file. This wider literature of Irishmen in British military service is a diverse field, comprising both academic works as well as works of popular appeal.

Although this topic in its narrowest sense is an exploration of service in the British Army, we must be careful to avoid viewing the issue purely through the lens of military affairs. The officer class was drawn from the civilian population, specifically from those sections able to undertake a career as a military officer; typically the middle classes and the lesser gentry. These classes, which had been at the forefront of the campaign to secure first the Repeal of the Penal Laws and Emancipation, now represented the more aspirational sections of Irish Catholic society, seeking social and economic advantage, potentially through employment in British institutions. Much of this scholarship pertaining to this ambitious class has its origins in the efforts of academics like Maureen Wall in the 1950s[29] and Gearóid Ó Tuathaigh in the 1970s.[30] In the latter case, O'Tuathaigh argues that it was this class which, upon obtaining their civil rights, were uninterested in further nationalist concerns, at least in the short term.

[29] See Wall, M. (1958) 'The Rise of a Catholic Middle Class in Eighteenth Century Ireland' in *Irish Historical Studies*, Vol. 11, No. 42 (September)
[30] See Ó Tuathaigh, G. (1990) *Ireland before the Famine: 1798-1848,* Dublin: Gill & Macmillan

This particularly body of scholarship, namely the study of the emergent Irish middle-class and its attempt to obtain economic and political preferment within the United Kingdom, is the primary genre which this work seeks to supplement. The genre in its modern form, owes much to Lawrence McBride's (1991) *The Greening of Dublin Castle*, which chronicles the gradual change of the civil service in late nineteenth early twentieth century Ireland from one dominated by the Anglo-Irish community, to one increasingly permeated by the Irish Catholic community on the eve of independence. Focusing on the upper tiers of the civil service and judiciary, McBride makes the case that an increasing role was being played by Irish Catholics within the structures of government, particularly so within the lower tier positions.

McBride's picture of a slow and steady increase in the presence and power of Irish Catholics within Ireland's administrative structures is one that has faced some revision in recent years, most crucially within Fergus Campbell's (2009) *The Irish Establishment*.[31] By employing a methodology similar to the one used in this study, Campbell attempts to offer a more detailed image of the state of Ireland's administrative class through careful biographic examination of more than a thousand individuals. The scope of Campbell's study includes the leadership of political, business, religious and judicial life, however his thesis contends that though there was an increase in Irish Catholic presence within these upper echelons of society, such increases were at best modest, out of proportion to the demographics of wider society and ultimately not representative of a 'greening' of Irish society.

Barry Crosbie has provided further addition to this body of literature in examining the interactions of this aspirant class and the British Empire in India, through a deliberately trans-national perspective in the form of the (2011) *Irish Imperial Networks*.[32] Although previously an under-examined element of Irish history, Crosbie's work is part of a recent bloom in literature pertaining to Irish-Indian connections.[33] Although Crosbie is not interested in delineating his study on the grounds of religion, instead encompassing Irish-Indian links of

[31] Campbell, F. (2009) *The Irish Establishment 1879-1914,* Oxford: Oxford University Press
[32] Crosbie, *Irish Imperial Networks*
[33] See also O'Connor, M. and Foley, T. (eds.) (2006) *Ireland and India : colonies, culture, and empire,* Dublin: Irish Academic Press and Silvestri, M. (2009) *Ireland and India: Nationalism, Empire and Memory,* New York: Palgrave Macmillan

all religious stripes, he nevertheless uncovers a rich tradition of Irish-Catholic links to the subcontinent. The pursuit of these networks through the connective tissue of imperial institutions such as the Indian Civil Service and the Indian Medical Service is one of the more fascinating developments in recent scholarship of middle class Irish Catholics. The service of such men in overseas institutions is readily comparable with the story of such men in the officer corps, whose duties and prospects for promotion were frequently connected with long periods on foreign stations.

Another, similarly trans-national, effort in the same vein is Ciaran O'Neill's 2014 *Catholics of Consequence: Transnational Education, Social Mobility, and the Irish Catholic Elite 1850-1900*.[34] Examining the issue of the Irish Catholic elite with specific reference to the various educational establishments of Ireland, Great Britain and the wider world, O'Neill masterfully charts the experiences of the small proportion of Irish Catholics (estimated at three percent of the total) who constituted the 'elites' of that demographic. Taking a deeper examination of the flowering in Irish educational institutions which arose following the Acts of Catholic emancipation, O'Neill places such institutions within a continuum of Irish education preceded by covert education on the European continent and succeeded by Catholic educational institutions in England proper. This exploration of the education of the Irish Catholic middle and upper classes has been an invaluable work in attempting to shed light on the wider experience of Irish Catholics in the British officer corps, with such men typically being drawn from those same upper and middle classes. These works largely avoid the question of Irish Catholics within the British Army officer corps, in Campbell's case by design commenting 'The absence of the officers of the British army in Ireland might also be considered a serious omission'.[35] However this is a thoroughly understandable position given the difficulty involved in assessing the contribution of Irish Catholics to an institution which far exceeds the island of Ireland in scope. It is this historiographical gap which this study aims to bridge.

[34] O'Neill, C. (2014) *Catholics of Consequence: Transnational Education, Social Mobility, and the Irish Catholic Elite 1850-1900,* New York: Oxford University Press
[35] Campbell, *The Irish Establishment,* p6

There exist several subsidiary historiographical spheres which bear some relevance to this work. The first of these is the genre of studies directed at the class of Irish soldiers (in its widest sense) in the Victorian period. Peter Karsten's (1983) 'Irish Soldiers in the British Army, 1792-1922: Suborned or Subordinate' is by this stage a rather dated work, yet still significant for the purposes of this study.[36] Surveying the trends in Irish service from 1792-1922, Karsten distinguishes between several different categories of Irish soldier, and makes the argument that by and large, Ireland's recruits to the British Army would remain mostly loyal and unaffected by attempted subversion. Velmo J.L. Fontana's exhaustive thesis on the service of Catholics in British service during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century provides the most important and detailed of examination of Catholics in the British Army during the both the early years of this study and the preceding period.[37] His work which builds upon earlier studies about the military significance of Catholic Repeal, details the earliest acts of service on the part of Irish Militia units as well as some of the earliest provisions for Catholic worship.

As regards the demographics and composition of the British officer corps during the nineteenth century, P.E. Razell's 'Social Origins of Officers in the Indian and British Home Army: 1758-1962' served as the first major attempt to offer a statistically grounded theory on the demographics of the officer corps.[38] Nicholas Perry's (2011) 'The Irish Landed Class and British Army' provides a worthy supplement to the efforts of Razzell in extending the methodology of statistical analysis to the specific question of the Irish Landed Class and the British officer corps.[39] Exploration of the demographics of the officer corps provides an analysis which unsurprisingly devotes much of its attention to the Irish Protestant population which provided the bulk of Ireland's military leadership, yet it is useful as a model for approaching Irish Catholic officers. The further significance of an officer's possession of landed wealth, with the implications for income and social capital that entailed is another extremely pertinent fact covered by Perry.

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[36] Karsten, P. (1983) 'Irish Soldiers in the British Army: Suborned or Subordinate?' in *Journal of Social History*, Vol. 17, No. 1, (Autumn) pp31-64

[37] Fontana, V. (2002) *Some Aspects of Roman Catholic Service in the Land Forces of the British Crown, c.1750 to c.1820,* Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Portsmouth

[38] Razzell, P.E. (1963) 'Social Origins of Officers in the Indian and British Home Army: 1758-1962' in *The British Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 14, No. 3 (September 1963) pp248-260

[39] Perry, N. 'The Irish Landed Class and British Army, 1850-1950' in *War in History*, Vol. 18, No.3, pp.304-332

Supplementing these, there are two works examining the Irish soldier in the earliest parts of the twentieth century which must be mentioned here, the first is Thomas P. Dooley's (1995) *Irishmen or English Soldiers* which details the story of Irishmen entering British service during the latter decades of the nineteenth century, at the period of the nationalist resurgence and the complications inherent in their service.[40] The work is an attempt to understand the motivations and interests which drove Irish Catholics to enlist in British service (as members of the rank and file), a choice which left them in Sir Roger Casement's view, 'not Irishmen but English soldiers.' Although primarily a work directed at Irish service in the First World War, one cannot help but wonder how many of Dooley's conclusions held true in previous decades. Secondly, Steven O'Connor's recent publication, (2014) *Irish Officers in the British Forces* is a work strikingly similar in objective to this study, but concerning itself with the experiences of those Irish officers who remained in British service following the creation of the Irish Free State in 1922. [41] As with Dooley, one is left to wonder how many of O'Connor's conclusions regarding the complicated motivations of individuals to enlist for military service, can be applied to previous decades, as his account of the family traditions and military style schooling ring true in the Victorian period as in later decades.

Secondly, we must examine a similar body of literature, pertaining to the more institutional questions surrounding the organizations of the British military within Ireland, and by extension their interaction with the Irish population. The most recent contribution in this vein is Neal Garnham's 2012 *The Militia in Eighteenth Century Ireland,* which charts the evolution of that institution from its embodiment in 1716 to 1793, when it became a vehicle for the mass mobilization of Irish Catholics.[42] The evolution of the militia, as charted by Garnham, is a peculiar story beginning with an underequipped and untested Protestant force in the earliest decades, changing into a vehicle of opposition politics in the 1760s and then ultimately concluding as an apparent Trojan Horse for the mass armament of Irish Catholics. Consequently, much of the martial animus of Protestant Ireland transferred to the Yeomanry, which is the subject of *An Ascendancy Army: The Irish Yeomanry, 1796-1834*, a 1998 work

[40] Dooley, T.P. (1995) *Irishmen or English Soldiers? The Times and World of a Southern Catholic Irish Man (1876-1916) Enlisting in the British Army during the First World War*, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press
[41] O'Connor, S. (2014) *Irish Officers in the British Forces,* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan
[42] Garnham, N. (2012) *The Militia in Eighteenth Century Ireland: In defence of the Protestant interest,* Woodbridge: The Boydell Press

by Allan Blackstock.[43] Raised predominately from the rural gentry and their retainers, this mounted corps existed within the long tradition of Anglo-Irish military volunteering and was subsequently associated with more militant loyalism in the form of societies such as the Orange Order. Blackstock is keenly aware of its role as agents of both militant loyalism and the established order symbolic role in shaping sectarian relations in the tumultuous 1790s, particularly in light of its near wholescale exclusion of Catholics.

Ivan Nelson's 2007 work on the militia supplements Blackstock, and describes the fully first legal attempt to enlist Irish Catholics in the British Army following the Penal Laws.[44] He maintains that the bulk of the Irish Catholic militiamen under arms fulfilled their duty loyally and records the path that many would take from the militia, into the regular service. Additionally, William A. Butler's recently published work, *The Irish Amateur Military Tradition in the British Army 1854-1992,* surveys the service of Irishmen in reservist units of the British Army, from the militia of the Victorian period, to the Ulster Defence Regiment of the twentieth century.[45]

Material on this matter pertaining to the period from the end of the Napoleonic Wars and the outbreak of the 2nd Anglo-Boer War is considerably more scant. The 1996 edited collection *A Military History of Ireland*, is worthy of mention for including contributions on the era from both Virginia Crossman and Edward Spiers.[46] Indeed much of the more recent work examining the British Army of the Napoleonic to Great War period has been undertaken by Edward Spiers, whose most recent authoritative book on the era, *The Late Victorian Army: 1868 – 1902,* remains required reading for any scholar of the British Army in that era.[47] Spiers' targeted and thematic view of the late Victorian Army during its period of greatest

[43] Blackstock, A. (1998) *An Ascendancy Army: The Irish Yeomanry, 1796-1834,* Dublin: Four Courts Press
[44] Nelson, I. (2007), *The Irish Militia, 1793-1802: Ireland's Forgotten Army,* Dublin: Four Courts Press
[45] Butler, W. (2016) *The Irish Amateur Military Tradition in the British Army, 1854-1992,* Manchester: Manchester University Press
[46] Bartlett, T. and Jeffery, K. (eds.) (1996) *A Military History of Ireland,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
[47] Spiers, E. (1992) The Late Victorian Army: 1868 – 1902, Manchester: Manchester University Press

reform and change provides not only a fascinating insight in its own right, but also traverses the relationship of the British Army to both Ireland and its Irish manpower. Also in this genre, David Murphy's (2002) *Ireland and the Crimean War* is a noteworthy work both in terms of exploring the contribution of Ireland to that conflict not just as soldiers, but also as labourers and members of religious orders.[48]

Thirdly, a final strand of relevant historiography is that of Anti-Catholicism in Victorian society. Two works remain foundational; Dennis G. Paz's (1992) *Popular anti-Catholicism in mid-Victorian* England and Frank H. Wallis' (1993) *Popular anti-Catholicism in mid-Victorian Britain*.[4950] The Paz work has attracted praise for his nuanced treatment of the topic in two key areas. Firstly in displaying the more complex nature of both sides in the sectarian divide; Catholics are portrayed as more than simply victims of an existing prejudice, but rather, like their Protestant counterparts on the far-side of the divide, as active individuals with their own networks, publications and even provocations. Secondly, Paz is eager to place the attitudes of Victorian anti-Catholicism in a firm base, both in history by appealing to notions of the Catholic 'Norman Yoke' and Saxon liberty, as well as by offering a lavish historiographical base for these attitudes through the examinations of published texts, periodicals, speeches and other output from anti-Catholic sources. By contrast, although dealing in very similar ways with the topic, Frank Wallis has sought to offer a more methodologically grounded explanation and account of Victorian anti-Catholicism. Wallis dwells particularly upon notions of the Victorian Catholic population as being an 'out-group' contrasted with the majority 'in group' and further as a target for 'scapegoating' of wider society. By investing Victorian prejudices against Catholics with a far more sophisticated and complicated set of sociological explanations, he notes the result appears to be an insinuation of anti-Catholic prejudices with anti-Irish. In tandem, both works provide a rich account of the bigotries faced by Irish Catholics in nineteenth century British society.

[48] Murphy D. (2002) *Ireland and the Crimean War,* Dublin: Four Courts Press
[49] Paz, D.G. (1992) *Popular anti-Catholicism in mid-Victorian England,* Stanford: Stanford University Press
[50] Wallis, F.H. (1993) *Popular anti-Catholicism in mid-Victorian Britain,* Lewiston NY : The Edwin Mellen Press

The most recent major contribution in this vein is Johnathan Bush's *Papists and Prejudice*, which seeks to examine the issue of anti-Catholic bigotry from a distinctly regional perspective, specifically the North-East of England.[51] Building upon the idea (previously considered by both Paz and Wallis) of regional differences playing an important role in the level of anti-Catholic sentiment espoused in a particular area, Bush uncovers several intriguing peculiarities surrounding the existence and persistence of anti-Catholic sentiment. For example, the presence of an existing English Catholic demographic in a region prior to any Irish mass migration may actually be a key factor in explaining the persistence of vocal anti-Catholic traditions, rather than indicating that same region might be predisposed to tolerating Catholic, native or migrant. Although a regional viewpoint makes wider generalizations about anti-Catholicism as a national phenomenon somewhat difficult, it also clearly underlines the stark variations in attitudes which could be occasioned by geography.

Lastly, a work which might not immediately be thought of as belonging to this strand of religious history which is nevertheless included here is Linda Colley's (1992) *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837*.[52] Her convincing case for the role of Protestantism (alongside commercial interests and the role of warfare) in binding together several disparate identities into a single 'British' one, also offers a strong argument for the defensiveness which that identity expressed when under threat (real or imagined). Also belonging with this strand of contributions to the historiography of Victorian religion is Michael Snape's (2005) *Redcoat and Religion.*[53] This serves as the most significant effort in recent years to gauge the religiosity of the British Army. Traversing more than the administrative evolution of the chaplaincy and the set piece struggles over the question of religion within the realm of officialdom, Snape delves into religious experiences amongst the rank and file and the individual soldier's relationship to worship. 'Redcoat and Religion' is a welcome addition to the literature of religiosity within the Victorian British Army and is relevant to this study given the frequent anti-Catholicism of mainstream Evangelicalism.

[51] Bush, J. (2014) *Papists and Prejudice: Popular Anti-Catholicism and Anglo-Irish Conflict,* Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing
[52] Colley, L. (1992) *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837,* Yale: Yale University Press
[53] Snape, M. (2005) *The Redcoat and Religion: The Forgotten History of the British Soldier from the Age of Marlborough to the Eve of the First World War,* Milton Park: Routledge

1.3: Objective

As evidenced by this review of recent historiography, there remains a void in research on the numbers and indeed qualitative experiences of those Irish Catholics who served as officers in Victoria's Army. This study will primarily seek to fill that void through a careful examination of the Irish Catholic element within the British officer corps during the period from 1829-99. This will be achieved through a multifaceted analysis outlined below. This process must be begun by an overview and assessment of the long period of Catholic exclusion which preceded our period of interest, as well as the gradual process by which exclusion evolved into inclusion. In order to achieve this Section Two contains a survey of the military aspects and implications of the notorious Penal Laws, from the period of William of Orange's rise to power in the British Isles, up to the most substantial Catholic 'Relief' Bills of the late 1700s. By virtue of exploring those factors which motivated both the introduction of the Penal Laws and ultimately their Repeal, we can hopefully obtain a richer understanding of the legacy of historical suspicion faced by Irish Catholic officers.

Section Three contains fundamental work of charting and measuring the presence of Irish Catholics within the officer corps, during the period 1829-1899. Although there is a selection of numerical data available for several points during this period, several difficulties remain in identifying precisely the total number of Irish Catholic officers within the army. In light of these complications this study includes a statistical sampling of several regiments of the army, an examination of those regiments at set intervals over the aforementioned period, and an identification of those officers (if any) who can be found to be both Irishmen and Catholic. The names and numbers uncovered by this process will then be compared against several aggregated figures in order to model a general picture of Irish Catholic membership of the officer corps.

Section Four is aimed at providing the statistical analysis outlined above, with a more qualitative view of the kinds of attitudes and perceptions which surrounded Irish Catholic officers. This has been achieved primarily through an examination of the leading military Journal of the period, the *United Service Magazine* or *United Service Journal*, and the contributions made to it by various military and non-military figures. As a forum for debate

and discussion rather than simply an outlet for official proclamations, *The United Service Journal* provides a rich vein of voluminous contributions, providing a multitude of opinions on contentious issues. Analysis of these texts with respect to the issue of Irish Catholic officers, as well as Catholicism and Irish identity as solitary issues has yielded a more nuanced understanding of the drivers behind the prejudice which such officers faced.

With the advantage of the information uncovered in previous sections, Section Five aims to locate the most successful men of this class (namely those Irish Catholics who became General officers during this period) and discern the common themes and experiences of their careers. In doing so, it is hoped that it will be possible to further embellish upon our model of Irish Catholic service, by identifying those unique circumstances or traits which enabled these men to rise so far and by contrast, what more general circumstances condemned the broader mass of Irish Catholic officers to remain comparatively junior in status. For the purpose of this section, a small number of such men have been identified; William Francis Butler, Thomas Kelly-Kenny, Cornelius Francis Clery and Martin Dillon – all of whom served within the period in question and had broadly coterminous career spans.

With these tasks completed, it is hoped that foremost, we shall be able to offer an accurate depiction of where Irish Catholics ended up within the officer corps. This shall permit us to return once more to our initial model of Irish service in the British Army, the notion of a Protestant officer corps and Catholic soldiery, and to see if this model maintains its relevance. Just as O'Neill and Campbell confronted the issue of Irish success (or lack thereof) in penetrating the civil institutions of the Empire, it will be the objective of this study to uncover whether the contribution made reflected fairly upon the place of Ireland within the Empire, or whether as with those civil institutions, circumstances conspired to produce an unrepresentative result. If that should prove to be the case, it is hoped that the body of this study will provide at least the beginnings of an answer to the question of why such a peculiarity persisted.

Section 2: The Exclusion and Emancipation of Catholics within Ireland and the British Realms

2.1: The Origin of Catholic Exclusion

The exclusion of Catholics from military and civic offices in the English and later British realms can be traced to the 1534 Act of Supremacy, which declared the King as head of matters 'spiritual or ecclesiastical.' Although the practice and popularity of Catholic exclusion from these offices proceeded unevenly until the (effective) conclusion of the policy in 1829, the essential formula of loyalty was established; faithfulness to the king demanded submission in matters spiritual as well as temporal, expressed by membership of the established church. Catholicism, with a spiritual head in Rome, attendant religious orders and an international hierarchy, was for much of this period conceived of as a political threat, engaged in sanctioning invasions, hosting pretenders and dispatching foreign agents to the realm.[54] However, this conception was complicated by several factors; firstly, the succession of two Catholic monarchs, Mary I from 1553-58 and James II from 1685-88, secondly, the Catholic spouses of several Protestant Kings, Henrietta Maria (Charles I), Catherine of Braganza (Charles II) and possibly Anne of Denmark (James I).[55] Additionally we must take heed of the concurrent internecine divisions between established Protestantism and various forms of dissent, such as Quakerism or Presbyterianism – divisions which could render dissenters, like Catholics, unable to furnish oaths of loyalty to the crown. The transition from a capricious and increasingly hamstrung royal tolerance of Catholics (and others) to a codified system of Penal Laws and a coherently Protestant monarchy, began only with the triumphs first of Parliament in the Wars of the Three Kingdoms and later with the deposition of James II in 1688 and the accession of Mary and Anne Stuart and later the Hanoverian dynasty.

The relationship of Catholics to the monarchy, prior to these events, would shape their treatment following the Revolution of 1688. During the Wars of the Three Kingdoms, Catholics formed a significant part of the 9,000 man strong force raised in 1640 for the use of

[54] Simms, J.G. (1986) 'Chapter 1: The Establishment of Protestant Ascendancy, 1691-1714' in Moody, T.W., Vaughan, W.E. (eds.) *A New History of Ireland IV*, New York: Oxford University Press, p4

[55] Lewalski, B.K. (1993) 'Anne of Denmark and the Subversions of Masquing' in *Criticism*, Vol. 35 (Summer), p342

the crown,[56] whilst arrangements were discussed by the Catholic Confederation to raise 10,000 men for the king in exchange for concessions to Catholic toleration.[57] Following the restoration of 1660, Charles II attempted to enact official toleration for Catholics (and dissenters) in 1672, but was compelled to rescind this only a year later.[58] A secret treaty with France in which Charles promised to convert to Catholicism and his deathbed conversion would indicate a measure of sympathy for Catholicism amongst the monarchy, out of step with popular and parliamentary opinion.[59] The zenith of this alignment was reached with the accession of James II to the throne in 1685, the first Catholic monarch of England since 1558 and Scotland since 1567. The policies of James II (in line with many centralising policies in Catholic Europe at the time) included Catholicisation of the army (in Ireland), admission of Catholics to many offices previously closed to them and the advancement of many Catholics to high office across the three kingdoms, at the expense of the wider Protestant population.[60] Opposition to James was stirred into rebellion following the birth of a son to James in 1688, provoking fears of a Catholic heir to the throne, and the arrival of the Protestant William of Orange and Mary Stuart (one of James' Protestant daughters) later that year. Following a loss of nerve in England and a failed campaign in Ireland, culminating in the 1690 Battle of the Boyne, James II entered into exile, whilst the remaining Jacobite forces fought on until the Treaty of Limerick in 1691. With this defeat of Catholic military power and an end to Catholic influence on the institution of the monarchy (at least domestically), the programme of comprehensive exclusion of Catholics from civic and military offices could begin.

The presence of a Catholic population, now under the rule of a firmly Protestant Parliament and Crown, posed a fundamental problem of loyalty; allegiance to the monarch in secular matters had to be accompanied by loyalty to the monarch as supreme governor of the national church. By now, Irish Catholics had become what James I termed 'half-subjects' entitled only to 'half-privileges'. Catholic loyalty to a foreign spiritual authority, heading an international church could not easily be reconciled. This was by no means an issue unique to Britain, but a

[56] Connolly S. (2008) *Divided Kingdom*: *Ireland 1630-1800,* Oxford: Oxford University, p29
[57] Wheeler, J.S. (2002) *The Irish and British Wars, 1637–1654: Triumph, Tragedy, and Failure,* London: Routledge, p153
[58] Gibson, W. (2008) 'The limits of the Confessional State: Electoral Religion in the reign of Charles II' in *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 51(1) p31
[59] Connolly, *Divided Kingdom*, p146
[60] Pincus, S. (2009) *1688: The First Modern Revolution*, New Haven: Yale University Press, p179

recurring problem across Europe; the Reformation, Kulturkampf and as recently as the United States election of 1960, all begged the question whether allegiance demanded spiritual as well as secular fidelity. This issue was further complicated by the negative connotations of Catholicism, especially within British identity, where Catholicism was associated with the absence of progress, a corrupt clergy, and intolerance of Protestantism.[61] Although the Enlightenment period had moderated confessional conflict in Europe and most legal prohibitions on Catholics had been ended by 1829, such ideas would persist beyond the 19th Century and were accentuated in Ireland, where it was accompanied by mass poverty and racial perceptions of the Irish as 'lazy, dishonest, irresponsible and potentially violent.'[62]

For the Protestant community in 18th Century Ireland, the Catholic population provided a manifold threat, in religious, economic and political terms. The first of these had been made readily apparent by the outbreak of rebellion in 1641, which was accompanied by an onslaught of sectarian violence directed against the Protestant inhabitants of the Irish kingdom.[63] This memory and its subsequent exaggeration (up to 300,000 purported casualties) played a key role in aligning Protestant interest in the kingdom with the maintenance of order, even initially, the order imposed by a Catholic monarch.[64] Next, the Catholic population also provided an economic threat to the Protestant population, with a significant portion of the former consisting of individuals and families displaced (or who thought themselves displaced) by the settler population during the various plantations of Ireland. This segment of the population had not only failed to secure the reversal of land confiscations during the Wars of the three Kingdoms, but had seen their lands reduced further and, during the Restoration, had seen these confiscations largely confirmed. This common dispossession played a key role in the declining distinction between 'Gaelic Irish' and 'Old English' Catholics,[65] as well as smoothing over differences within the Protestant Ascendancy, through the spectre of Catholic territorial restoration at their expense. It is crucial to recall at this point that the threat (perceived or otherwise) posed by Irish Catholics at this point in

[61] Connolly, *Divided Kingdom*, p48
[62] Ibid, p47
[63] McBride, I. (2009) *New Gill History of Ireland: Eighteenth Century Ireland – The Isle of Slaves,* Dublin: Gill & McMillan, p198
[64] Barnard, T. (2004) *The Kingdom of Ireland, 1641-1760,* New York: Palgrave Macmillan, p31
[65] Connolly, *Divided Kingdom*, p170

history was not that of a nascent separatist movement, but instead reflected support for the Stuart claimants to the thrones of all three kingdoms. Lastly, the political threat posed by Irish Catholics, namely their support (or more accurately, their imagined potential support) for a Catholic monarchy in lieu of a Protestant one, as during the Williamite War in Ireland. Although Jacobite risings would not recur in Ireland, risings in Scotland in 1715 and 1745 provided palpable reminders of the looming Jacobite threat, whilst abjuration of the 'Old Pretender' (son of James II) remained a key element in the earliest oaths of allegiance Catholics were permitted to take to the Hanoverian dynasty.[66]

The legislative corpus that was produced in order to deal with this potential Catholic threat, now dubbed the 'Penal Laws', in many ways reflected disunity and the complicated relationship between British and Irish Protestants, rather than a coherent policy with an identifiable objective and vigorous enforcement. Ian McBride has categorized the Penal Laws under four headings; religious, economic, political and military.[67] The first category involved the emasculation of the Catholic Church and its hierarchy, particularly in the Bishops Banishment Act of 1697 and the 1704 Act for Registering Popish Clergy which demanded priests swear the oath of abjuration. However, this assault on organized Catholic worship was not accompanied by any great missionary endeavour on the part of the Protestant clergy.[68] The second category of laws included some of the most infamous restrictions on Catholics and was aimed at destroying the residual landed wealth of Catholics. The most important restrictions included compulsory subdivision of Catholic lands (gavelkind inheritance), evaded only by the conversion to Protestantism of the eldest son, and their exclusion from the purchase (fee simple) of land or its leasing for longer than thirty one years.[69] The third group consisted of political restrictions on Catholics entering all but the lowest public offices, as well as the formal disenfranchisement of 1728 confirmed the exclusion which had been developed over the preceding forty years.[70]

[66] (13 & 14 Geo. 3 c. 35) *An Act to enable his Majesty's subjects of whatever persuasion to testify their allegiance to him* – Parliament of Ireland
[67] McBride, *Eighteenth Century Ireland*, p198
[68] Bartlett, T. (2010) *Ireland: A History*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, p164
[69] Barnard, *The Kingdom of Ireland*, p53
[70] McBride, *Eighteenth Century Ireland*, p199

The last category of Penal Laws, most relevant for present purposes, dealt with neutralizing the military threat posed by the Catholic population and included measures such as the prohibition on Catholics owning horses of military value (those worth more than five pounds) and the exemption of Catholics from the right to bear arms, otherwise extended to Protestant subjects.[71] However, legislative restraints imposed upon both Irishmen and Catholics in terms of military service had a longer history. In 1563, five years into the reign of Elizabeth I, Irishmen were limited to no more than 5 or 6 men per company, an ideal violated in times of war when units consisted of as a much as three quarters Irishmen.[72] Royal Instructions issued in 1628 further reduced this level to 3 or 4 Irishmen per hundred, otherwise instructing soldiers to be 'of two English parents and conformable in language, manners and religion.'[73] In 1606, following the Gunpowder Plot, 'recusants' had been excluded not only from officer ranks, but the ranks of non-commissioned officer (corporal, sergeant, ancient [standard] bearer) as well.[74] The continued disturbances of the 17th Century, Civil War, the Commonwealth, Restoration and Revolution, render it impossible to speak of a consistent policy regarding Catholic participation in the officer class during this period, for which we must look to the events of 1688 and beyond. The course of the Revolutionary campaigns, James' vacillating manoeuvres in England and the subsequent Williamite conquest of Ireland, have already been well covered by historians and need not be retold here. However the role of the Irish forces operating in England during the former campaign is significant for the reaction they elicited from the local population – particularly given the now assertively Catholic composition of that force as set forth in the contemporary poem 'Céad buidhe le dia' by Diarmuid MacCarthaigh.[75]

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[71] The 1688 Bill of Rights listed both a grievance of Protestant disarmament and Catholic armament under the reign of James II as well as enshrining the right of Protestants to bear arms.

- *By causing several good subjects being Protestants to be disarmed at the same time when Papists were both armed and employed contrary to law.*
- *That the subjects which are Protestants may have arms for their defence suitable to their conditions and as allowed by law.*

[72] Ferguson, K. (1981) The army in Ireland from the Restoration to the Act of Union, Unpublished Thesis, Trinity College Dublin, p7-8

[73] Ibid

[74] (3 Jac. I c. 5) *The Popish Recusants Act of 1605* – Parliament of England, Section III

[75] Privates 5,043 Catholic out of 7,485 (67%), Non Commissioned Officers 251 Catholic out of 765 (33%) and Officers 166 Catholic out of 414 (40%) or in total 5460 Catholic out of a total 8664 (63%) –

The service of this new force in England would be brief, but not without controversy. After several months spent in garrison at Portsmouth (much to the dismay of the local population) and a skirmish at Reading, the Irish Catholic forces in England were disbanded and the men released from service. The presence of a body of these men in the area around London subsequently provoked a mass hysteria which would in time spread across much of the country. [76] The detachments in question had campaigns of violence, pillage and slaughter attributed to them as an atmosphere of paranoia and fear spread across the towns and cities of England, in an episode that would become known as the 'Irish Fright.' The riotous behaviour accompanied a frenzied pillaging of Catholic places of worship, assaults upon Catholics of all social ranks and attempted conversions, all under the guise of legality and legitimate force.[77] In Wales the violence led to the death of a local tax collector who was purportedly mistaken for an Irish soldier. Steve Pincus has compared the 'Irish Fright' of 1688 with the 'Great Fear' of France in 1789,[78] but a more direct comparison might be drawn with the exaggeration of atrocities committed in Ireland in 1641.

The scale of popular antipathy toward Irish Catholic demonstrated in the events of late 1688 prefigured further restrictions on Catholic soldiers, both amongst the rank and file as well as the officers. Entry to the Williamite Army in the ensuing Civil War was largely predicated on faith – Catholics such as Henry Luttrell and James Purcell were precluded from serving in the British Army due to their faith,[79] in the case of Luttrell, William resorted to the exceptional step of naming him a general of the Dutch Army.[80] Meanwhile, amongst the rank and file, despite prohibition (include a purge of regiments at Dundalk) a steady stream of Catholics continued to be discovered within the Williamite ranks, totalling 700 by 1697.[81] Meanwhile, during the War of Spanish Succession, British regiments continued to provide a trickle of recruits to the units of the Wild Geese in French service, further betraying a continued, albeit

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Hainsworth, D.R. (1983) *Correspondence of Sir John Lowther* of Whitehaven, London: Oxford University Press, pp. xxxiv-xxxix, xli-xliii

[76] Haydon, C. (1993) *Anti-Catholicism in Eighteenth century England, c. 1714-1780,* Manchester: Manchester University Press, p98

[77] Harris, T. (2006) *Revolution: The Great Crisis of the British Monarchy 1685-1720,* London: Penguin, pp290-307

[78] Pincus, *1688: The First Modern Revolution*, p247

[79] Childs, J, (1987) *The British Army of William III,* Manchester: Manchester University Press, p24

[80] Connolly, *Divided Kingdom,* p471

[81] Childs, *The British Army of William III*, p135

covert presence of Irish Catholics within the ranks of the British forces.[82] Nevertheless, the failed attempts of certain Catholic Jacobite forces to enter the service of William following the Treaty of Limerick provided yet further signal of the looming policy of formal exclusion.

The 'Declaration' of the Earl of Rochester, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, on the 24th of November 1701 established the mechanisms of Catholic exclusion from the army. The second provision sets out the means by which regiments stationed in Ireland were to recruit; by sending of recruiting parties to England to enlist 'English born subjects that are known Protestants' or by the raising of the same English Protestants within Ireland. Through this article the rank and file of the Irish Army was closed to Irishmen of all religious persuasions, whilst the Officer class had remained shut to Catholics since the Test Act of 1673 (barring the reign of James II). The latter provision aimed to steady the bulwark of Catholic exclusion by meting out strict punishments to officers who harboured Catholics in their ranks. A discovery clause was also instituted, offering five pounds and a discharge if desired, to any individual who discovered a Catholic soldier within the ranks.[83] In 1715, following the accession of George the First, a Parliamentary Act further demanded that all secretly enlisted Catholics provide proof of conversion and that all Catholics intending to recruit identify themselves as such to recruiters.[84] As a result of these limits, for most of the next century, the torch of Irish martial endeavour would be carried by Anglo-Irish officers in the British army and Catholic officers and soldiers in the armies of France and Spain.

Despite this impressive body of legislative prohibitions (civil and military) and penalties directed toward Catholics, the level of actual enforcement varied considerably. The passing of such legislation was often impacted upon by the relationship of the Dublin Parliament to its Westminster counterpart, diplomatic considerations arising from Britain's Catholic allies and an insatiable desire for the funds which could be raised by an Irish Parliament.[85] Perhaps owing to the control of the Irish Parliament by the Ascendancy class, political strictures on

[82] For detail see Lenihan, P. (2016) 'The Irish Brigade' in *Eighteenth Century Ireland / Iris An Dá Chultúr*, Vol. 31 pp45-72
[83] Declaration of the Earl of Rochester, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, November 24th 1701, British Library, Add MSS 28945 0014 – 0025
[84] (2 Geo 1.c. 47) *Persuading Soldiers to Desert, etc. Act 1715* – Parliament of Great Britain
[85] Connolly, *Divided Kingdom*, p203, p197

Catholics remained the most strictly enforced and most enduring of the Penal Laws. The formal exclusion of Catholics from the Parliamentary franchise was only codified in 1727, when the rigours of land confiscation and subdivision had long since eroded the class of Catholic voters.[86] Whilst the franchise was restored in 1793 and Catholics were permitted to stand for Parliament in 1829, the political prominence of the Protestant Ascendancy remained the most enduring implication of the Penal laws, up until the 1880s.[87] The provisions surrounding landed holdings, especially the 'discovery clause', offered far greater opportunities for evasion and circumvention by the remaining Catholic estate holders, especially with the collusion of family members and friendly Protestants.[88] Furthermore, although Catholic land ownership fell from 14% in 1702 to less than 10% by 1752, the Catholic 'interest' in land remained strong with favourable lease length in comparison with their English and Scottish counterpart.[89] [90]In matters of religion, although economic pressure to conform did secure some converts to Protestantism amongst the landlord class,[91] Catholicism maintained both its predominance amongst the wider population, and, certain periods notwithstanding, its clerical hierarchy. The modus vivendi which developed between the Protestant Ascendancy class and the wider Catholic population, held in reserve the spectre of harsh anti-Catholic legislation enforceable in extremis, but increasingly ignored in exchange for Catholic docility.[92] Subsequently, as Catholics 'proved their loyalty, by the purest of all tests, their patience under sufferings' and impressed with their accomplishments in foreign armies,[93] the principle of Catholic exclusion from Britain's military forces faced challenges from new quarters.

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[86] For details of this process see Kelly, J. (2010) 'Sustaining a confessional state: The Irish Parliament and Catholicism' in Hayton, D.W. Kelly, J & Bergin, J. (eds.) *The Eighteenth Century Composite State: Representative institutions in Ireland and Europe, 1689 – 1800,* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, p59

[87] Connolly, *Divided Kingdom,* p258

[88] Stanbridge, K. (2003) *Toleration and state institutions: British policy toward Catholics in eighteenth century Ireland and Quebec,* Lanham: Lexington Books, p142

[89] Bartlett, *Ireland: A History,* p166

[90] Whelan, K. (1995) 'An Underground Gentry? Catholic Middlemen in Eighteenth-Century Ireland' in *Eighteenth Century Ireland / Iris an dá chultúr,* Vol. 10, p7

[91] Bartlett, *Ireland: A History,* p164

[92] McBride, *Eighteenth Century Ireland,* p239

[93] Letter from Sir John Dalrymple to Lord Vis. Barrington, *The Gentleman's and London Magazine: Or Monthly Chronologer,* 1779, April, p218

2.2: The Process of Emancipation

Thomas Bartlett has categorised the Catholic question during this period as a 'product of military expansion',[94] a plausible supposition that the desire to tap into Irish Catholic manpower, previously directed to service abroad (or discreetly into British service), lay behind the Catholic Relief Acts. Given the relatively small population of English and Scottish Catholics, a little over 100,000 out of 7,000,000, it is clear that Irish Catholics, perhaps 70-80% of a total population of 3,000,000 were the chief target of this process.[95] The class of Irish Catholic officers and Irish soldiers, being formally excluded from British service, had instead found new hosts in the courts of Europe,[96] often to the irritation of British authorities vacillating between tacit acceptance of the flow of men and condemnation of it.[97] In cases, these prospective officers would follow the same well-trodden paths by which their co-religionists would seek training as Catholic clergymen, amongst the established network of Irish Catholic religious institutions on the continent.[98] These Catholic courts, particularly Spain and Britain's erstwhile ally Austria, had in turn acted as advocates for the Catholic population and as moderating forces on the implementation of the Penal Laws.[99] Only with the 'diplomatic revolution' of 1756 and the outbreak of the Seven Years War, were the premier Catholic powers of France, Austria, and eventually Spain, united in war against Britain and without any moderating influencing on the treatment of Catholics.

However in order to secure this victory in this conflict (often seen as Britain's most severe military test) or rather the manpower required to obtain it, the prohibitions on Catholic military service slowly began to be weakened. In 1745, under the Lord Lieutenancy of the Earl of Chesterfield,[100] the first such concession was made by permitting the recruitment of

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[94] Bartlett, *Ireland: A History*, p169
[95] Ibid, p178 – numbers referring to the population levels circa 1780,
[96] Murtagh, H. (1996) 'Irish Soldiers Abroad, 1600-1800' in *A Military History of Ireland*, pp294-314
[97] Connolly, *Divided Kingdom*, p287
[98] For Spanish-Irish links see Morales, O.R. (2010) *Ireland and the Spanish Empire: 1600-1825*, Dublin: Four Courts Press
[99] See above for Spain, for Austria see Conway, S. (2009) 'Christians, Catholics, Protestants: The Religious Links of Britain and Ireland with Continental Europe, c.1689-1800' in *The English Historical Review*, Vol. CXXIV, No. 509, p840
[100] The Earl of Chesterfield was alleged to have been woken from bed by the false alarm 'the Papists in Ireland are all up (in rebellion)' to which he remarked 'I am not surprised at it,

'good Protestants' from the North of Ireland,[101] Catholics remained disbarred, and a short wave of anti-Catholic sentiment erupted with the uprising in Scotland and celebrated Jacobite victory at Fontenoy, although Catholic clansmen were later co-opted into British service as early as 1756.[102] The events of the 1760s gave further impetus for the drive to access Irish Catholic manpower, with the secretary of War approving the furtive recruitment of Irish Catholics 'with discretion' in 1761.[103]

The thawing of official hostility began with the decisive Anglo-Prussian triumph of the Seven Years War, which had seen the defeat of the premier Catholic powers, with significant concessions of territory obtained from both France and Spain in the New World. Moreover, the death of the Jacobite claimant to the British throne, James Stewart the 'Old Pretender', had been followed with Papal recognition of the Hanoverian dynasty. Meanwhile, British territorial expansion had brought large numbers of new subjects, in many cases Catholics. In some regions this new political situation accompanied a voluntary mass exodus, as in the case of Spanish Florida, or an involuntary expulsion, in the case of French Acadia's 'Great Upheaval.' However, the overwhelming French Catholic presence in Quebec provided Britain with a subject population, entitled to certain freedoms of religion in the 1763 Treaty of Paris,[104][105] yet entirely incapable of satisfying the demand for religious conformity which had hitherto characterised expressions of loyalty to the Hanoverian dynasty. Furthermore, the

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why, it is ten o'clock, I should have been up too, had I not overslept myself.' Urban, S. (1839) *The Gentleman's Magazine,* June 1839, London: William Pickering, p594

[101] See within the National Archives – State Papers (Ireland) SP63/408/2492 and SP63/408/2493 – The lifting of the ban lasted only two years and resumed in 1747

[102] Murtagh, 'Irish Soldiers Abroad 1600-1800', p314

[103] Hayter, T. (ed.) (1988*) An Eighteenth-Century Secretary at War: The Papers of William Viscount Barrington.* London: The Bodley Head, p64 – Barrington writes to the Duke of Newcastle [February 1761] 'in order to supply the Grenadiers, a sufficient number might be draughted from the Irish Soldiers of the Battalions in Ireland: And if this could be done with discretion, perhaps the Irish Army might not be the worse for it.'

[104] *His Britannick Majesty, on his side, agrees to grant the liberty of the Catholick religion to the inhabitants of Canada: he will, in consequence, give the most precise and most effectual orders, that his new Catholic subjects may profess the worship of their religion according to the rites of the Romish church, as far as the laws of Great Britain permit* – Article IV, Treaty of Paris 1763

[105] Hill, J. (1989) 'Religious Toleration and the Relaxation of the Penal Laws: An Imperial Perspective, 1763-1780' in *Archivium Hibernicum,* Vol. 44, p101

general decline in confessional persecution due to the spread of Enlightenment thinking removed another of the foundations upon which the Penal legislation was based.[106]

The earliest changes in policy toward Catholic recruits steered clear of any official declarations on the matter and still in theory adhered to the Penal Laws as established in the opening years of the century. The most significant change occurred in 1770, whereupon Regiments on the British establishment were authorized to 'beat up' for recruits in the provinces of Leinster, Munster and Connacht (the largely Catholic provinces of the island) on the basis of 'No enquiry' regarding religion.[107] Only in 1774 did accompanying changes in civil policy begin with two pieces of legislation; 'An act for the more effectual Provision for the Government for the Province of Quebec in North America'[108] and 'An act to enable his Majesty's subjects to whatever persuasion to testify their allegiance to him.'[109] The former Act established a new non-sectarian oath, allowing Catholics desiring to enter civil or military offices in Quebec a means to swear allegiance without compromising religious beliefs. The latter extended the oath established in the former to Ireland, permitting individuals to testify their allegiance to the monarch without being required to making declarations against Transubstantiation and worship of the Virgin Mary. Several of the clauses retained, pertaining to the Stuart succession, the power of the Pope within the realm and the legitimacy of killing heretics, offer a limited insight into the perception of Catholics by the Protestant establishment.[110]

The expedient desire to conciliate Catholics both at home and in Britain's overseas colonies was accompanied by several corresponding (and not unrelated) declines in Protestant unity. The ascendancy of the 'Protestant interest' within Europe (with the assistance of Catholic Portugal) and the visible decline of the Catholic had reduced the need for closed-rank unity

[106] Lock, A. (2016) *Catholicism, Identity and Politics in the Age of Enlightenment*, Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, p227
[107] Ferguson, *The Army in Ireland*, p123
[108] (14 Geo. 3, c. 83) *An Act for making more effectual Provision for the Government of the Province of Quebec in North America* – Parliament of Great Britain
[109] (13 & 14 Geo. 3 c. 35) *An Act to enable his Majesty's subjects of whatever persuasion to testify their allegiance to him* – Parliament of Ireland
[110] For more detail on the process of securing the earliest acts of Catholic Relief see Dickson, D. (2000) *New Foundations: Ireland 1660 – 1800*, Dublin: Irish Academic Press, p159

amongst all branches of Protestantism and divisions between established religion and various dissenter traditions resurfaced.[111] [112] Within the Thirteen Colonies, where religious conformity was far more prevalent than Ireland, discontent with British administration was growing. The provisions pertaining to Catholic worship, perceived weak provisions pertaining to the 'encouragement of the Protestant religion' and the expansion of Quebec's territory into much of what is now the American Mid-West provoked ire amongst the population of the Thirteen Colonies. Regarded as one of the 'Intolerable Acts' by the colonists,[113] including the extension of most rights to the Quebecois (religious orders excluded), the Act attracted wild charges from the colonial press, ranging from conspiracies for the destruction of Protestant Americans by Catholic Canadians, to a new Inquisition and St. Bartholomew's Day massacre.[114] The need for greater expressions of loyalty in the face of American separatism, and manpower to combat that same separatism with arms created an environment in which more formal Catholic relief could begin to take shape. The long and slow process of bartering Catholic inclusion in the British state in exchange for significant contributions to the Imperial project was about to commence.

In 1778, as the rebellion in the colonies expanded, the first significant Acts of Catholic relief were passed in the British and Irish parliament, with great pressure exerted on the latter by the former.[115] The provisions of the act reflect both a measure of caution amongst Irish Protestants regarding the rights of their Catholic brethren as well as an effort by Britain to remind Anglo-Irish would be 'patriots' not to support the Americans.[116] In place of the right to purchase land on the same terms as Protestants, Catholics were permitted leases of nine hundred and ninety nine years (by this point nominal Catholic land ownership had fallen to

[111] Conway, 'Christians, Catholics, Protestants', p852
[112] Fagan, P. (1998) *Catholics in a Protestant Country: The Papist Constituency in Eighteenth-century Dublin,* Dublin: Four Courts Press, p72
[113] Curran, R.E. (2014) *Papist Devils: Catholics in British America 1574-1783,* Washington D.C. : The Catholic University of America Press p242
[114] Casino, J. (1981) 'Anti Popery in Colonial Pennsylvania', in *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography,* No. 105 (July 1981) p307
[115] Lyons, C. (2013) 'Playing Catholic against Protestant: British intervention in Catholic Relief in Ireland, 1778' in *Eighteenth-Century Ireland / Iris an Dá Chultúr,* Vol. 28, p121
[116] For more detail see, McDowell, R.B. (1989) 'Colonial Nationalism and the Winning of Parliamentary Independence 1760-82' in Vaughan, *A New History of Ireland*: *IV* and Dickson, D. (1987) *New Foundations: Ireland 1660 – 1800,* Dublin: Helcion, p161

perhaps as low as 5%),[117] whilst the indulgences granted to Catholics did not apply to those who had converted to Protestantism and 'relapsed to popery' and those Protestants who instructed their children in Catholicism.[118] Several of the more outrageous clauses of the Penal Laws did face repeal, including the requirement for gavelling of land, the inheritance of all land on the part of a Protestant eldest son and the ability of a Protestant offspring to claim maintenance upon Catholic parents.[119]

If the desired effect of the Relief Act of 1778 was to win support from Irish Catholics it was successful, to judge from the outpouring of economic and moral support from leaders of opinion for British efforts in the Colonies, and condemnation of the 'Puritan, Calvinist, Republican' Americans.'[120] The unenthusiastic passage of the Relief Act through the Irish Parliament and the crisis across the Atlantic was to prove a catalyst for changes in the constitutional relationship between Ireland and Britain. Perturbed by the entry of France into the War of Independence, Protestant Ireland responded to the invasion threat by mobilizing as 'volunteers' (in cases alongside still technically disarmed Catholics). Resembling their Patriot counterparts across the Atlantic, the Volunteers complained of trade grievances and eventually expressed a desire for Irish self-government[121]. Whilst the British administration considered additional concessions to Catholics in 1781 to wean them away from volunteer sympathies, they were in the event overtaken by the declaration of the Volunteers at Dungannon, which endorsed further relief for Catholics in addition to a desire for constitutional independence.[122]

Energised by the fortuitous circumstances it now faced, a British government distracted overseas, a sympathetic militia, the cause of Irish Patriotism, championed by Henry Grattan,

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[117] The most commonly accepted figure of 5% is treated with some caution in, Connolly, S.J. *Religion, Law and Power: The making of Protestant Ireland 1660 – 1760*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, p147

[118] (17-18 Geo. 3 c. 49) *An Act for the Relief of His Majesties Subjects of this Kingdom (Ireland) Professing the Popish Religion* – Parliament of Ireland, see articles I, X & XI

[119] Ibid, Articles I, V, VI

[120] Bishop Thomas Troy as quoted from, Bartlett, *Ireland,* p178

[121] Higgins, P. (2007) 'Consumption, Gender, and the Politics of "Free Trade" in Eighteenth-Century Ireland' in *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, Vol. 41(1), p101

[122] Burns, R. (1959) 'The Belfast Letters, the Irish Volunteers 1778-79 and the Catholics' in *The Review of Politics,* Vol. *21* (4), p60

was now also able to count upon the support of the Catholic population still longing for relief, regardless of the continuing suspicion of Catholics by more conservative patriot elements such as Henry Flood and Lord Charlemont.[123] Faced with this united front in Ireland, and the end of Lord North's premiership in 1782, the British parliament was quick to concede an end to its nominal suzerainty over the Irish parliament with the repeal of the Declaratory (or Dependency) Act,[124] the passage of Yelverton's Act (which rendered Poyning's law irrelevant)[125] and the beginning of a 17 year period of theoretical legislative independence. In the event, this independence was a running struggle between the 'Patriot' faction and the 'Castle' Faction, which represented the interests of the British administration in Ireland.

Catholic Relief was similarly forthcoming with the 1782 Catholic Relief Act, which permitted the purchase of land outright in Fee Simple (exempting Parliamentary boroughs where Catholics might accrue dangerous political influence),[126] the ownership of horses worth in excess of £5 (previously restricted under a 'disarming' act) and most significantly, removal of most remaining penalties on Catholics in worship, education and property. However, as in 1778, these concessions were once more bounded by maintenance of penalties on those Protestants converting to Catholicism and those Catholics who encouraged such conversions.[127] With the combination of Protestant volunteering, Catholic support achieved through concession and the collapse of the North government in London, Grattan's prize, a parliament for Ireland nominally independent of Westminster, was won. Yet the adulation he had won, foundered upon the same issue that had been so masterfully exploited to secure the constitutional arrangement Ireland now held – Catholic Relief. Whilst Grattan was amenable to further involvement of Catholics, remarking 'I should be ashamed of giving freedom to 600,000 people, when I could extend it to 2 million more', prevailing ascendancy opinion still refused to countenance Catholic voters or Catholic members of the House.[128]

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[123] Connolly, *Divided Kingdom,* p419
[124] (6 Geo. 1 c. 5) *An Act for the better securing the dependency of the Kingdom of Ireland on the Crown of Great Britain* – Parliament of Great Britain
[125] (22. Geo 3 c. 53) *An Act for the better securing the Dependency of the Kingdom of Ireland upon the Crown of Great Britain* – Parliament of Great Britain
[126] Connolly, *Divided Kingdom,* p418
[127] (21 & 22 Geo. 3 c. 24) *An Act for the further relief of his majesty's subjects of this kingdom professing the Popish religion* – Parliament of Ireland, Article IX
[128] Hill, 'Religious Toleration and the Relaxation of the Penal Laws, p107

The issue of parliamentary reform would demand extraordinary circumstances before being considered, circumstances which were soon furnished. The outbreak of the French Revolution provided a radical new challenge to the old certainties of Europe in matters of warfare, government, and religion. In the case of the latter, the emergence of an atheistic regime justified the sinking of old sectarian divides, especially when Catholicism could be cast as a means of upholding the existing social order.[129] The radicalization of the French Revolution precipitated the 1793 Catholic Relief Act, an act only reluctantly passed through the Irish Parliament by a combination of Catholic agitation, a British desire for manpower and conversely reluctance on the part of the Westminster government to forcibly uphold existing policies to the contrary.[130] As a statement of the importance of Catholic manpower to the process of emancipation, the relief bill was accompanied by a militia bill, with instructions to raise a defensive force of twenty thousand, raised from the population and including Catholics.[131]

The terms of the Bill itself were largely dictated by Westminster with only minor changes within the Irish Parliament. These minor changes, primarily an exemption of Trinity College being required to admit Catholics, belie the reality that the bill was unpopular amongst the political establishment, but deemed sufficiently necessary by the government of William Pitt to be forced through, regardless of Ascendancy sentiment.[132] The terms of the bill are radically different from earlier acts of relief, resembling more of a collection of protections for the established faith that (perhaps to assuage Ascendancy fears) than a mere catalogue of indulgences for a proscribed faith, as with the earlier acts. The bill demanded the standard expressions of loyalty, as well as a new declaration of obedience to the Hanoverian dynasty, and support of the 'Protestant religion and Protestant government of this kingdom', but offered in exchange the near abolition of the Penal Laws. The vote was granted on the same property terms and many legal civic and military office were opened, however, Catholics

[129] Conway, 'Christians, Catholics, Protestants', p853
[130] Kennedy, D. (1992). The Irish Opposition, Parliamentary Reform and Public Opinion, 1793-1794. *Eighteenth-Century Ireland / Iris an Dá Chultúr,* Vol. 7, p106
[131] For more on the military motivations of Catholic Emancipation see Donovan, R.K. (1985) 'The Military Origins of the Catholic Relief Programme of 1778' in *The Historical Journal,* Vol. 28, No. 1, March, p96 and Bartlett, T. (1993) '"A Weapon of War Yet Untried": Irish Catholics and the Armed Forces of the Crown, 1760 – 1830' in Fraser, T.G. & Jeffery, K. (eds.) *Men, Women and War,* Dublin: Lilliput Press
[132] Connolly, *Divided Kingdom,* p347

remained barred from Parliament and more than 38 specific ranks and offices were similarly restricted, including, master and Lieutenant-General of his Majesty's ordnance, commander-in-chief of his Majesty's forces and generals on the staff. The right to bear arms, one of the enumerated rights of 1689 was similarly curtailed: Those Catholics with a yearly income of £100 or an estate of £1000 could bear arms on the same terms of Protestants, Catholics of more modest means could do so only upon swearing the aforementioned oaths of loyalty whilst poorer Catholics acquired no provision for bearing arms at all.

Yet the shortcomings of the 1793 Act are too easily overstated. It can be taken as the starting point for the official and recognised contribution of Irish Catholics to the British Army. The opening of most military offices and the creation of the Irish Militia in 1793 permitted what had eluded previous British ministries, the mobilisation of Ireland's largely untapped manpower. Directly or indirectly, this in turn concluded the transfer of Irish military expression from continental service (in decline since the early 18th century) toward British service. The concessions of 1793 also marked a high water mark for the cause of Catholic Emancipation, as subsequent efforts to include Catholics within the higher echelons of a new United Kingdom, foundered upon the unwillingness of George III to acquiesce to such a move, a view endorsed by many on both sides of the Irish Sea.[133] The inability to follow through political Union with reform to accommodate Catholics provoked the resignation of William Pitt, and the postponement of Catholic Emancipation for thirty years.

However the agitation of Catholics against the remaining prohibitions placed upon them were not extinguished immediately, instead the question of the 'veto' emerged. The proposal, sponsored by Henry Grattan, aimed to permit the government to have a veto over the appointment of senior Catholic officials within the realm, in order to disarm fears that those officials might proceed to mobilise Catholics against the Protestant establishment.[134] In the event, the desire amongst those figures hitherto leading the campaign for Catholic emancipation to further placate Protestant fears, served to trigger a period of unrest and

[133] Bartlett, *Ireland: A History,* p241
[134] Boyce, *Nineteenth Century Ireland,* p37
For more on the Ascendancy conception of Catholic Emancipation see Hill, J. (1993) '1641 and the Quest for Catholic Emancipation, 1691 – 1829' in MacCuarta, B. (ed.) *Ulster 1641: Aspects of the Rising,* Institute of Irish Studies QUB: Belfast, p159

dissension within the Catholic movement over the issue, and ultimately to the rise of Daniel O'Connell. The inability of the various institutions agitating for Catholic emancipation or the government to agree upon the passage of a bill even include the veto clause precipitated the further rise of O'Connell, and the emergence of a new more forceful Catholic constituency, eager to obtain emancipation on its own terms.[135]

The course of events from the formation of the Catholic Association in 1823 up to the achievement of Emancipation in 1829 has been covered more ably and in far more detail than is relevant here. Nonetheless one relatively underrated and important event begs exposition for our purposes, the election of Henry Villiers-Stuart. Although a Protestant himself, Villiers-Stuart's election in 1826 was predicated on two trends, one old, one new. Firstly, the resurgence of sectarian hatreds, including (amongst Catholics) the memories of 1798 and the loathed Orange order,[136] and secondly, the active voting of Freehold candidates against the interests of their landlords.[137] Although the first marked a disturbing departure from previous (nominally) ecumenical nature of Catholic agitation, the second marked an affront to the landed order in which tenants might reasonably be expected to vote in the interests of their landlords. The implication for the government was disturbing; Pitt himself bemoaned the decay of 'the friendly connection between landlord and tenant.'[138] What implications this could have when both parties were in uniform remains as yet, incalculable.

The practice of Catholics voting against their landed betters recurred in the famed elections of Daniel O'Connell to the seat of Clare, perhaps more disturbing for the authorities was the reciprocal sympathy which many soldiers dispatched to the monster meetings, displayed for the cause of O'Connell.[139] The final act of Catholic Emancipation passed in 1829, coincidentally with the Duke of Wellington as Prime Minister, removed most of the remaining restrictions faced by Catholics in civilian life and in the army. The upper echelons

[135] Boyce, *Nineteenth Century Ireland*, p41
[136] Ibid, p50
[137] Ibid, p51
[138] Parker, C.S. (1891) *Sir Robert Peel, From his Private Correspondence,* London: John Murray, p413
[139] McCaffrey, L.J. (1966) *Daniel O'Connell and the Repeal Year,* Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, p56

of military rank were opened as were all but the most senior of civic offices and those officers related to the governance of the various established Churches.[140] The price had been the raising of the freehold qualification to vote from 40s to £10, a move George Boyce attributed to the desire of the government to reinforce 'some of the influence which belonged to men of property.'[141] Although the passage of the last Emancipation Act had secured the nominal equality of Catholics in terms of religion, many of the unofficial and unspoken prejudices remained not only undisturbed, but energised.[142]

2.3: Early military forays of Irishmen and Catholics

Viewed in the context of earlier surreptitious Catholic service, and even in potential endeavours such as the 'Roman Legion' proposed for Portuguese service by Lord Trimlestown in 1762, [143] one might be forgiven for regarding the 1793 Act of Relief as an irrelevancy in the history of Irish Catholics serving within the British Army. Indeed more than a decade prior to the Act, in 1778, Sir John Dalrymple had conjectured calmly on the prospect of covertly making Catholic officers remarking 'if they clap in an ensign here and there of the Popish religion, without telling a minister of it, there is no great crime.'[144] Certainly, some enterprising Catholics, with the cooperation of their regimental fellows, could even go as far as to secure officers commissions.[145] Membership of the rank and file proceeded similarly, early as the 1740s demands for manpower had induced the illicit recruitment of Catholics into regiments stationed on the Irish establishment, colonial regiments and the Marines,[146] to such a degree that by the 1770s no less than 16% of the British Army's privates and NCO's were drawn from Ireland.[147]

Such service, whatever degree it extended to, whatever its contribution to British martial exploits during this period, was regardless, entirely illegal. By the 1673 Test Act, Catholics

[140] (10 Geo. 4 c. 7) *An Act for the Relief of His Majesty's Roman Catholic Subjects* – Parliament of the United Kingdom
[141] Boyce, *Nineteenth Century Ireland*, p58
[142] Ibid, p58
[143] Snape, *The Redcoat and Religion,* p30
[144] Donovan, 'The Military Origins of the Catholic Relief Programme of 1778', p96
[145] Ibid, p32
[146] Snape, *Redcoat and Religion,* p30
[147] Ibid, p26

had been excluded from military offices (that is to say the 'officer class') in addition to civil ones. The service of Richard Talbot in the Irish army of Charles II had been a particular source of disturbance in the opinion of the House of Commons, which insisted on the passage of the 1673 Act.[148] Although these restrictions were lifted upon the passage of the 1793 Act (certain senior offices notwithstanding), some doors remained closed to Irish Catholics, including certain branches of the military. The Royal Marines officially continued to prohibit the recruitment of Catholics for at least a decade after 1793. [149] This prohibition belies the fact that, as with the army, covert enlistment of Irish Catholics into the Marines had been ongoing since at least the 1750s. In 1758 a scheme recommended by Lord Lieutenant Bedford permitted Marine officers to recruit in Munster and Connacht with specific directions 'not to be over nice in their enquiries as to the religion of the persons they enlisted'.[150] As Britt Zerbe has observed in his recent history of the Royal Marines, this policy appeared to operate on a principle of 'don't ask, don't tell' – in the same year as Bedford's scheme, two Irish Marines at the Chatham depot declared themselves as Catholics and were subsequently removed from the service with a relatively mild punishment of two-hundred lashes being administered to one of the two men.[151] A similar, apparently contradictory position remained when it came to the question of commissions; for two decades after 1793, Irish Catholics holding commissions in Ireland who, in the course of their military service were stationed in Britain, were in-fact technically in breach of the law which enabled them to hold their commissions only in Ireland.[152] Nonetheless, 1793 proved the crucial year for Irish service, with the opening of military offices to self-professed Catholics (who provided the necessary oaths) and the creation of the Irish Militia, a force Irish and Catholic in rank and file. The Penal Laws had been largely (but not completely) repealed, and Irishmen could prove their loyalty on the battlefield.

The contribution of Irish Catholics to the forces of the British Empire during this period cannot easily be gauged primarily due to, firstly, the existence of separate Irish and British

[148] For more see Lenihan, P. (2014) *The Last Cavalier: Richard Talbot (1631-91),* Dublin: University College Dublin Press, p84
[149] Zerbe, B. (2013) *The Birth of the Royal Marines 1664-1802,* Woodbridge: Boydell Press, p83
[150] See McGrath, C.I. (2012) *Ireland and the Empire, 1692-1770,* London: Pickering and Chatto, p147
[151] Zerbe, *Birth of the Royal Marines,* p85
[152] Speech of Lord Howick, March 5th 1807 - HC Deb 05 March 1807 Vol 9 cc2-20

establishments until the Act of Union, the Irish equivalent to Horse Guards being found at the Kilmainham Royal Hospital, or simply 'Royal Hospital.' Units serving in Ireland found themselves subject to the commands of Royal Hospital, regardless of being Irish or English, a situation further complicated by the aforementioned distinctions of legality surrounding the holding of commissions by Catholics in England. Secondly, the disconnection between a regiment's nominal 'locality' and the necessity of securing recruits from wherever they were available, precludes us from making assumptions about the composition of a regiment based upon its professed title. As a result of these factors and other pressing concerns, the Irish presence within the British Army was not limited to a few 'all-Irish' units (although such units existed), but encompassed large proportions (in some cases majorities) in many Scottish and English units.

The first great conduit for the entry of Irish Catholics to the British Military establishment was the Militia. The Relief Act of 1793 had been accompanied in Ireland by a Militia Act,[153] which aimed to replace the Regular soldiers on the Irish establishment (a force of 8-15,000) with local levies. Raised by ballot, officered typically by English Protestant and led by notables acceptable to the castle administration,[154] the Irish Militia represented both existing social hierarchies as well as a cautious first step of involving Catholics in the defence of the realm. Yet, despite being largely Catholic in its composition, many militia units had a slight overrepresentation of Protestants in the ranks, occasionally aided by deliberate efforts on the part of regimental colonels.[155] Overall the composition was roughly one quarter Protestant and three quarters Catholic, with the officer class continuing to be a largely Protestant affair.[156]Despite worries about discipline and loyalty, including Abercrombie's scathing dismissal of them as 'formidable to everyone but the enemy'[157] (at a time when the militia constituted the bulk of British military manpower in Ireland) the militia nonetheless succeeded in allowing the release of more than half of the regular infantry and cavalry on the Irish

[153] (33. Geo 3 c. 22) An *Act for amending and reducing into one act of parliament the laws relating to the militia in Ireland* – Parliament of Ireland
[154] Nelson, *The Irish Militia*, p16
[155] Ibid, p125
[156] Fontana, V.J.L. (2006) ' The political and religious significance of the British/Irish militias interchange, 1811-1816' in *Journal for the Society for Army Historical Research*, Vol. 84, No. 338, Summer, p133
[157] Written by Abercrombie in an order issued on the 26th of February 1798 – Bew, J. (2012) *Castlereagh: A Life*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p73

establishment, in spite of the high rates of desertion at the outset. Although seen as liable to United Irishmen infiltration by both government and rebel forces, the militia still performed capably during the course of the 1798 Rebellion and provided the majority of the manpower on the Irish establishment in the four years prior, reaching a peak of 32,000, before declining to 20,000.[158] It even attracted praise from contemporary military figures such as Robert Craufurd.[159]

Yet regardless of the actual performance of the militia, perceptions of its unreliability and potential treachery proved sufficiently strong to stimulate the creation of a new force to handle domestic policing and security – the Yeomanry. Unlike the militia, the Yeomanry were effectively a part time force (indeed as the militia had been intended in time of peace), serving in their local communities, not venturing far beyond the local barony. Composed of what Earl Fitzwilliam termed, the 'better sorts of people', namely propertied individuals with some stake in their communities, the Yeomanry did not officially prohibit the entry of Catholics or Dissenters, even counting the 'The Liberator' Daniel O Connell amongst their ranks. Nonetheless, owing to economic disparities and some sectarian sentiments, the Yeomanry came to be dominated by Protestants (including dissenters). One estimate puts the percentage of Catholics in the force at no more than 10%, and that number was repeatedly subjected to purges and reduction for fear of infiltration by the United Irishmen.[160] This thoroughly Protestant character of the Yeomanry is also demonstrated by the number of recruits gathered from Ulster, roughly half of the total number.[161] Not exempted from the same fears of unreliability in combat that plagued the militia, the Yeomanry was subject to the further suspicion of being involved in the sectarian conflicts of the day, even against other military units. Lord Cornwallis, Commander in Chief Ireland and Lord Lieutenant of Ireland during the 1798 Rebellion, lamented the Yeomanry as being;

[158] Nelson, *The Irish Militia*, p247, Table 12.1
[159] Page, A. (2015) *Britain and the Seventy Years War, 1744-1815*, London: Palgrave Macmillan p122
[160] Blackstock, *An Ascendancy Army: The Irish Yeomanry*, pp132-134
[161] Ibid p116

> In the style of the loyalists of America, only more numerous and powerful, and a thousand times more ferocious; these men have saved the country, but they now take the lead in rapine and plunder.

Regardless of the complaints levelled against its conduct, the Yeomanry provided the largest single force of men in Ireland for the bulk of the Napoleonic Wars. Peaking at a size of 80,000 men in 1803, the Yeomanry may have involved as many as one in six of the Protestant male population[162]. The Yeomanry also permitted a greater drawing upon the militia as a source of men for the regular army, with the militia permitting transfer to regular service from 1800 onwards, typically 3,000 recruits annually[163]. The regulars represented perhaps the most insatiable of Britain's forces, second to perhaps the navy, being employed across the world on garrison duties as well as active campaigning. Amongst these forces, the number of Irish is difficult to ascertain. As mentioned previously, regional titles did not preclude regiments from recruiting men wherever they were available, elegantly shown in the case of the 68th Durham Light Infantry; only nine of the two hundred and fifty pensioners hailed were from the regiment's eponymous hometown.[164] Bounties and inducements were standard fare in the eternal quest for men, whilst the crimping trade reached fresh depths of depravity during this period, employing kidnapping, alcohol and trickery in order to profit from the military's insatiable demand for recruits.[165] If the army was purely representative of the United Kingdom's demographics, one might expect the Irish contingent to be roughly one third, yet more rigorous inquiry suggests this is an underrepresentation. A statistical analysis is revealing; the tabulation of the 1810 inspection reports by Steven Schwamenfeld,[166] gives an insight into the typical breakdown of English, Scottish and Irish soldiers across the British Army. The following table offers an ethnic breakdown of 16 Regiments and Battalions, nominally 'English', yet varying in actual composition from almost exclusively English (max 95%) to predominately Irish (max 79%).

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[162] Blackstock, *An Ascendancy Army: The Irish Yeomanry*, p271
[163] Nelson, *The Irish Militia,* p20, p259
[164] Haythornthwaite, P.J. (1994) *The Armies of Wellington,* London: Brockhampton Press, p75
[165] Ibid, p45
[166] Schwamenfeld, S. (2007) *The Foundation of British Strength: National Identity and the British Common Soldier,* Unpublished PhD Thesis, Florida State University, p16-18

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The average figures provide a rough indication of the Irish presence in English regiments of thirty per cent, some three per cent less than the Irish proportion of the total population, but this refers purely to regiments of English titles. A similar tabulation demonstrates the presence of Irishmen in six Regiments and Battalions of supposedly Scottish creation, and although less prevalent compared with the English Regiments, is still indicative of the omnipresence of Irish manpower across the British military establishment. An average of the English and Scottish units suggests that, as a whole, Irishmen constituted 26% of British Regimental manpower.

As for regiments of Irish creation, data is somewhat less abundant, although the presence of both Scottish and English recruits should not be excluded out of hand. William Grattan in his *Adventures with the Connaught Rangers*, categorised his unit as an 'Irish Regiment', noting how rare it was to find a non-Irishman in the ranks of the 88th, believing there to be no more than three or four[167]. Although most likely an exaggeration of an exceptional case (Charles Oman described the 88th as being the most 'Irish' of the Irish regiments'), the overwhelmingly Irish composition of nominally Irish Regiments is not easily contestable – Regiments on the Irish station had little call to recruit from Britain when abundant sources of recruits could be located nearby. However, this assessment, combined with the significant Irish presence in British Regiments, would suggest that Irishmen were present in the British Army in excess of their ratio of the population, perhaps representing as much as 40% of the total manpower from 1793 to 1815: Indeed the Duke Wellington estimated as much as half of the men under his command during the Peninsular campaign were Irishmen, whilst in 1830 official records revealed that Irishmen represented 42.2% of total manpower.[168] From a purely numerical point of view, Catholic Relief had achieved its aim of providing an enormous source of new manpower, and despite worries about rebellion and uprising amongst these Irishmen in British service they were by and large loyal and dutiful.

[167] Grattan, W. (1853) *Adventures with the Connaught Rangers*, (Charles Oman Edition), London: Edward Arnold, 1902, p85

[168] Spiers, E. (1996) 'Army Organisation and Society in the 19th Century' in Jeffery, K. & Bartlett, T. (1993) *A Military History of Ireland*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p337

2.4: Irishmen of the rank and file – the Nineteenth Century

> 'I say green boy, do you belong to the croppies? Damn me but I like your dress. What bounty do you give?' – Come then, tip us a shilling, I'm your man':[169]

Although somewhat fantastical and theatrical, Edward Costello's account of the manner in which he quickly attracted a recruit to the service of the 95th Rifles, is nonetheless a familiar theme of recruitment – Wellington had dismissed the idea that men volunteered for service due to 'fine military feeling', believing instead they enlisted for 'some have got bastard children, some for minor offenses, many more for drink.'[170] Yet presuming that an individual had a motivation for joining the army represents a failure to acknowledge that many did not join out of personal desire, but were forced to do so. Although not utilising the explicit system of conscription as in France, the British military was riddled with the forms if not the formalities of conscription. Yet these forms were as varied as the branches they aimed to service; the militia employed recruitment by ballot, drawing up lists of military age men in a parish and drawing names until a unit could be filled. The regulars offered generous bounties both to men who joined as civilians, and those who transferred into the service from other branches such as the militia and yeomanry. Naval impressment (effectively the conscription of sailors) continued until 1814 and was a factor in Britain's concurrent conflict with the United States. Fundamentally, military service remained an unattractive prospect, with the regular private earning only two shillings per day in 1800.[171] Unsurprisingly this precipitated the development of the 'crimping' trade in kidnapped men, but also the auctioning off of enterprising individuals by themselves to whichever regiment (or balloted individual seeking a replacement) offered the greatest reward.

However, the process of raising men was not exclusively one of compelling unwilling individuals. It would be reductionist to hold that recruits consisted only of those without other choices - their reasons were diverse. The process of recruitment was far from uniform, each branch of service entailed different requirements and practices, and even within each branch,

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[169] Costello, E. (1852) *The Adventures of a soldier of the 95th in the Peninsular & Waterloo Campaigns of the Napoleonic Wars,* London: Leonaur, 2005, p12
[170] Notes of Conversations with the Duke of Wellington 11 November 1831, Stanhope, 1886
[171] Haythornthwaite, *The Armies of Wellington,* p269

distinctions could be great. The Yeomanry, mentioned above, recruited exclusively from the bigger farmers of 'yeomen' and their urban equivalents, a class motivated not by economic necessity but by social pressures. Even Daniel O Connell could not exempt himself from the feelings of alarm and enthusiasm which abounded in 1797 and joined the Lawyer's Yeomanry Corps – social pressure not economic necessity was the driving force here. Yet the experience of the Yeomanry was necessarily aberrant, few individuals could engage in military service without some consideration of their economic wellbeing, their motivations residing with the maintenance of law and order (and their status) as well as the pride of being involved in the defence of the realm, at least in some capacity. By contrast, the militia was one of the few sections of the British military to employ compulsory service. Militiamen were recruited by ballot, often with very high rates of exemption; one case saw 2000 men balloted, but only 280 enlisted.[172] The element of compulsion ensured that the demand for substitutes was high, and parishes attempted to fill their quotas by offering bounties that could exceed those of the regular army and wealthy individuals desperate to secure a substitute could pay outrageous sums.[173] Recruits joining the militia could avail themselves of many of the perks of military life, a limited term of service, regular pay (at the same rate of regular infantry), possible promotion and (if reaching officer rank) pension, without the risk of dangerous service overseas. In the case of the Irish militia, this offer appears to have been most commonly taken up by townsmen[174] and 'mechanics' whose numbers composed as much as 2/3rds or 3/4ths of the force.[175] Additionally, the limitations placed on deployment enabled individuals with families to attend to them more easily than those who served overseas, with as many as 44% of militiamen being married, perhaps with some existing stake or a trade which rendered the risks of overseas service unattractive.[176] This favourable set of circumstances makes one wonder why militiamen chose regular service, with its inherent risks and poorer conditions.

[172] Nelson, *The Irish Militia,* p66
[173] Haythornthwaite, *The Armies of Wellington,* p175
[174] A significant debate remains as to whether these 'townsmen' comprised urban dwellers turned soldier, or simply reflected the proclivity of recruits to give the nearest town as their address.
[175] Nelson, *The Irish Militia,* p123
[176] Ibid, p129

While soldiering in Ireland could offer a steady pay rate and little chance of combat, the regulars provided a far greater sense of adventure and a more romantic notion of warfare involving foreign vistas and peoples. In cases this idea could be stirred by inventive recruitment tactics involving generous amounts of alcohol, tales of victory and bare faced lies – one regiment advertising no less than '5 shillings a day (five times the actual rate) and a black servant' to prospective recruits.[177] Moreover, whilst the militia could offer potential recruits regular pay and some means to support a family, especially for an individual who already had a trade or some means, it was with the regulars that a recruit could hope to have a chance at securing an improvement in economic fortunes. One such individual, a comrade of James Anton known only as 'Huntley' remarked;

> I serve at present secure of life and limb (in the militia), but with no prospect of future benefit in old age*, which I may attain; it is better to hazard both abroad in the regular service, than have poverty and hard labour accompanying me to a peaceful grave at home.[178]

The impact of this romantic notion of warfare should not be understated. Schwamenfeld studies the experiences of recruits to the British Regulars during this period, with many of these individuals forfeiting positions as farmers or apprentices for a soldier's life, either seduced by a fancy uniform, holding a fixation with soldiering, or just trying to escape their previous station in life. No doubt such motivation would have been just as pertinent if not more so, in Ireland, where a failure to industrialize and the slackening of emigration due to the war limited the prospects of individuals even further. Although tales of high pay and servants were not true, the reality remained that service in the regulars provided steady and guaranteed employment, all the perks of the militia with a greater chance of being retained in peacetime and obtaining a pension. It might well be maintained that Irishmen looked upon military service more as a choice of permanent career than as a source of adventures or a means of survival (if not both); of 566 Irish recruits who received enlistment bounties in

[177] Morris, T., Morris, W. Morris, W. Jr (1858) *The Three Serjeants or Phases of the Soldier's Life,* London: Effingham Wilson, p177
[178] Schwamenfeld, *The Foundation of British Strength,* p27

1813, only one opted for a 'limited' term of service, or a term of service less than the 'life' term of 21 years.[179]

The demographics of pre-Union Ireland offer possibly the greatest explanation for the desire of the British government to tap into Catholic manpower. The official estimate of the British population in John Rickman's 1801 census was placed at 8.2 million, with 1.4 million employed in agriculture, 1.6 million in 'trade manufacture or handicraft' and 4.5 million in all other forms of work. Rickman's estimates for the total number in military service are just under 200,000 for the Army and 126,000 for the Seaman and Marines,[180] the former total would peak to 250,000 in 1813.[181] Modern estimates and indeed various attestations within the census itself lend weight to the opinion that the population figures were too low with more recent scholarly estimates suggesting a total British population of 9.2 million.[182] By comparison, contemporary estimates for the total population of Ireland in 1800 are rarer, the official census not extending to Ireland until 1821, unofficial surveys did exist, the closest of which, that of Major Newenham in 1805, put the population at 5.3 million.[183] Henry Grattan estimated the 1782 population at 5.2 million, yet academic convention from the works of Kenneth Connell onwards would place the number at just over 5 million by 1800.[184] This population in turn was distributed most heavily in Ulster with 1.43 million in 1791, followed by Leinster and Munster with 1.18 and 1.20 respectively and least of all in Connacht with a mere 0.61 million.[185] The total figures would put Ireland's contribution to the Union at slightly over 35% of the total 14.2 million. Of this proportion, the divide between Catholic and Protestant could be estimated at anything from 23% as deduced from Henry Grattan's claim, to 20% as established by the 1831 Census of Ireland. The estimated number of

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[179] Schwamenfeld, *The Foundation of British Strength*, p9

[180] (41 Geo. III c.15) 'Abstract of the answers and returns made pursuant to the act passed in the forty-first year of his majesty King George the Third, intituled *An Act for taking an account of the population of Great Britain and of the Increase of Diminution thereof*' - Parliament of United Kingdom

[181] Gates, D. (1994) 'The Transformation of the Army 1783-1815' in Chandler, D (ed.) *The Oxford History of the British Army*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p132

[182] de Vries, J. (1984) *European Urbanisation, 1500-1800*, Cambridge: Taylor & Francis, p36

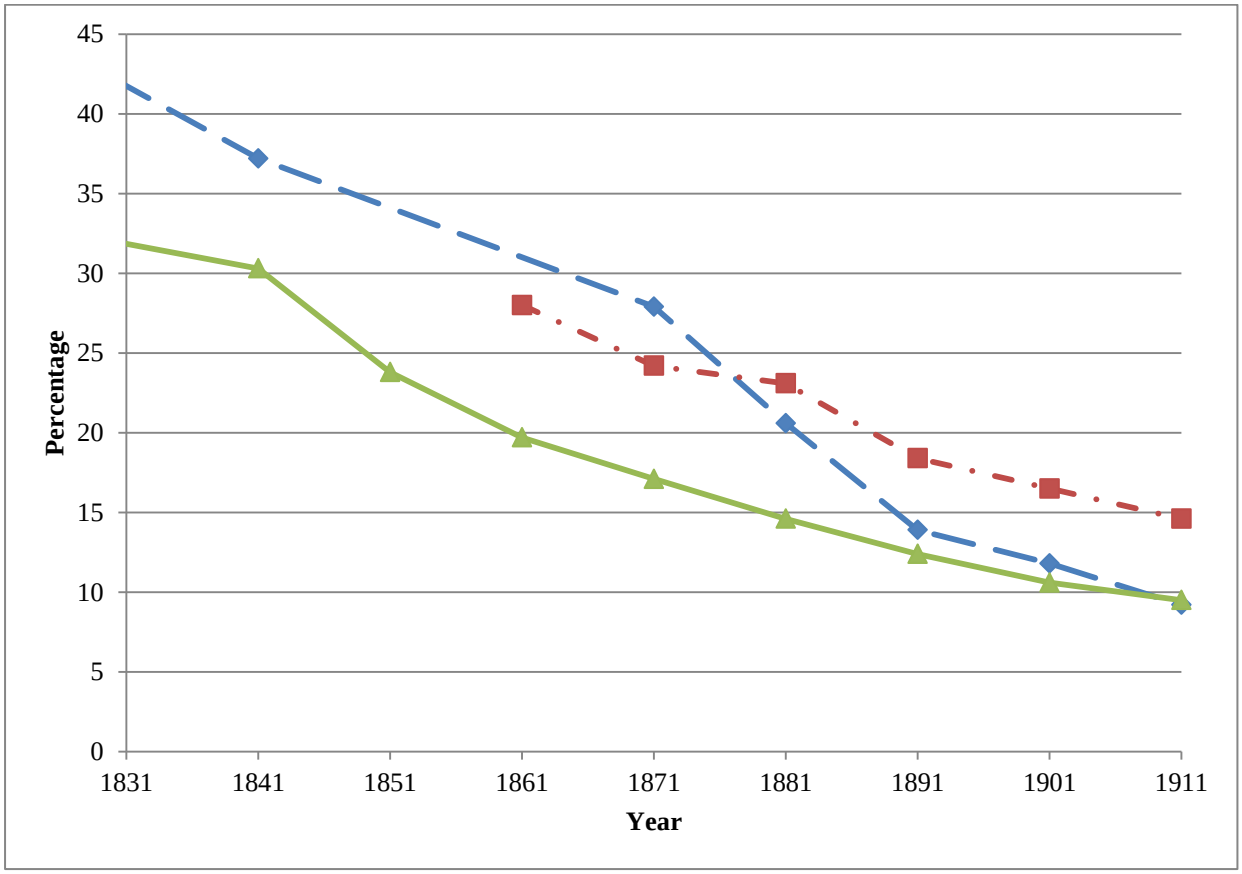
[183] Preliminary Observations, 1821 Census, VII

[184] McBride, *Eighteenth Century Ireland*, p107

[185] Clarkson, L.A & Kennedy, L. (1993), 'Birth, death and exile: Irish population history, 1700-1921, in Graham, B.J. & Proudfoot L.J. (eds.) *Historical Geography of Ireland*, London: Academic Press, p161

Protestants in Ireland by 1801 would thus be somewhere in the region of one million, with slightly more Anglicans than Dissenters. This would place a manpower pool of just under 4 million Catholics outside the reach of British recruitment on the eve of the removal of restrictions in 1791, a sum constituting no less than 28% of the entire population of what would be, after 1800, a United Kingdom. The relative richness of Ireland as a recruiting ground did to the great famine.[186]

Table 1: Decennial Breakdown of Irishmen in Army Service (Broken Line), Catholics in Army Service (Broken-Dot Line) and Ireland's proportion of the total UK population (Solid Line) [187]



[186] Macaulay, T.B. (1853) *Speeches of the Right Honourable T.B. Macaulay M.P.*, Vol II, Leipzig: Bernhard Tauchnitz, p26

[187] Figures for Nationality and Religious affiliation within the British Army derived from Hanham, H.J. (1973) 'Religion and Nationality in the mid-Victorian Army' in Foot, M.R.D. *War and Society*, London: Paul Elek – Figures for Irish proportion of total UK population derived from Census tabulations 1831-1911. Figures for religious profession begin only in 1861 and figures for nationality in 1851 and 1861 are unavailable.

2.5 – Irish Catholics and the Officer Class

Having established the disproportionate presence of Irish Catholics within the rank and file of the British Army, we may now begin to turn to the central question of this study, namely how Irish Catholics performed within the officer corps. Before we can turn to address this question statistically however, we must first ascertain the details and peculiarities of the nineteenth century British officer. The requirements for entrance to the British officer corps varied considerably over the course of the 1800s; at the start of the century those requirements included merely being of sixteen years age, acquiring the sponsorship of a person of stature (typically another army officer) and applying to the military secretary. However, prior to the abolition of purchase in 1871 and the re-establishment of the Royal Military College later in that decade, detailed military instruction was not required for obtaining commission as an officer within the infantry. By contrast, service in the Royal Artillery and Royal Engineers demanded technical education at the Royal Military Academy, Woolwich, and promoted officers on the basis of seniority.

However in the cavalry and line infantry of British Army service, officers required no formal military education for the bulk of the 19th Century. Only in 1849 would a candidate be expected to prove (by examination) that he possessed an elementary education as well as some familiarity with topics such as fortifications and military drawing – even still, it would appear not even these lax standards were rigorously enforced until after the Crimean War.[188] In addition to this formal requirement, for the bulk of the time period, officer candidates were expected to hold the 'education of a gentleman' [189] including such diverse topics as the history of the Ancient World, Logarithms and a European language. Expressions of preference for 'an officer and a gentleman' do not intrinsically suggest an antipathy toward Irish Catholic officers. Nevertheless, given the relative paucity of Irish Catholics amongst the traditional groups (aristocracy, landed gentry) providing officers, this class prejudice would appear to be yet another informal barrier for those officers to surmount.

[188] Barnard, H. (1872) *Military Schools and Courses of Instruction in the Science and Art of War*, New York: E. Stieger, p541
[189] Bond, B. (2015) *The Victorian Army and Staff College 1854-1914*, London: Routledge, p27

The importance of obtaining the 'right sort' of education, should not be understated; In the wider social context, the benefits accrued by a 'gentlemanly education' might well include access to the social networks of patronage and clientelism as perpetuated by the shared experience of a common education. Indications of concern over the development of the officer corps into something more representative of the wider population come across quite strongly in 'Our Schemes of Military Education and Reform' by an anonymous 'field officer of artillery.'[190] The essay itself is part of a wider genre, spawned from the great interest in reorganising the Army which had emerged following the scandals of the Crimean War and the Indian Mutiny. The conventional attitudes of the time put a limited value on education, with one writer from the Journal commenting; 'but it should be purely of an elementary character, so much to qualify for a commission, and nothing more.'[191] What ensues is much of the usual rhetoric employed in defending the status quo, namely the importance of ensuring the proper 'sort' of gentleman might enter the corps and the apparent absence of any improvement in performance amongst professionally educated officers. However there is a specific point surrounding the 'degradation' of the officer corps which holds some relevance. In his defence of the status quo, the author is keen to point out how rapidly the description 'officer *and* a gentleman' will become hollow, should the officer corps be opened even further to men of lower status.[192]

In some cases, a few of Britain's leading educational institutions were held in such high regard by the British army that they earned the right to directly nominate cadets from amongst their pupils. Notwithstanding the preparatory courses of certain public schools or the formal training offered by the Royal Military College at Sandhurst, potential officers of the British line units would not be disadvantaged by a lack of military education, but merely by a lack of what was increasingly to become identified with a 'Public School' education.[193] What limited data we have on the subject suggests that the Irish Catholic contribution to the Public School contingent was limited; of the 5,669 ex public schoolboys who fought in the South

[190] *Colburn's United Service Magazine and Naval and Military Journal,* 1858, Part 1, p333
[191] Ibid, p343
[192] Ibid, p344
[193] Worthingon, I. (1977) 'Antecedent Education and Officer Recruitment: the Origins and Early Development of the Public School - Army Relationship' published in *Military Affairs*, 41 (December), p183

African War, just 1% came from Catholic schools,[194] with public schools providing 61.7% of the total number of regular officers in that conflict.[195]

The experience of public schooling might well also aid the process of formal educational and admission to the corps on arrival at Sandhurst, for those individuals seeking entry to the British Army with some semblance of military training. However, the banner of wealth and class also loomed high; by the 1880s the cost of an education at Sandhurst might reach as high as £125 per annum. Added with the expense of a 'gentleman's education' a family might end up spending £1,100 in preparing a boy for entrance to the officer corps, a prohibitive sum for the vast majority of the population.[196] Alternatively, an individual seeking a line commission (post-purchase) might instead attempt to transfer into that service, following a period of active duty with the militia; however entry to that force largely relied on social capital within rural society from which the militia was embodied. More importantly, entrance to the units of the line from the militia could inspire the enmity of officers of the line who tended to look down on such 'blow ins' – Garnet Wolseley recalls his experiences with several militia officers who transferred into his regiment from the militia and their subsequent departure from the unit under the pressure of their fellow officers.[197]

Assuming an officer could satisfy the appropriate requirements and secure the approval of the military secretary, the prospective officer would then be enrolled to await his first commission. In the case of a Sandhurst cadet, the first commission was free, with preference given to those cadets who scored highest on examinations. For the gentleman obtaining his initial commission by purchase, he would firstly need to negotiate the fiscal transaction from the officer who was selling (typically by virtue of that officer's promotion or retirement). This latter phase would require that the prospective officer was considered acceptable to the regimental commander and in the case of purchase officers, be able to agree a bargain (involving both 'official' and 'unofficial' payments) with the seller of the commission. For

[194] MacLean, A.H.H. (1902) *Public Schools and the War in South Africa,* London: Edward Stanford, Spiers Appendix 3
[195] Reader, W.J. (1991) *At Duty's Call: A study in obsolete patriotism,* Manchester: Manchester University Press, p90
[196] O'Neill, *Catholics of Consequence,* p126
[197] Spiers, *Army and Society,* p106

the purchase of higher ranks, not only would an officer need to arrange the sale of his former commission, but he would need to ensure that he qualified to purchase the next 'step' by having served the required length of time in the junior ranks and by ensuring no officer senior to him (in length of service but of the same rank) wished to undertake that purchase themselves.

In contrast to the bounties and other inducements dangled before recruits to the rank and file, officers frequently bought their commissions. Yet this method did not constitute the only way for recruiting officers; individuals could (with a commander's permission) volunteer to serve with a regiment as a private soldier until a commission became available, other vacancies could be filled by promotion from the ranks of the enlisted (accounting for more than 1 in 20 officers),[198] whilst others still could earn commission (or promotion) by bringing a number of new recruits to the regiment.[199] Nonetheless, the purchase of a commission (or promotion through the purchase of a higher ranked commission) remained the most common means of appointing officers of the British army until reforms in 1871.[200] Purchased commissions varied as a proportion of the whole from as low as 20% in times of war as 75% in times of peace.[201] Although incompatible with modern conceptions of merit and equality, the purchase system was not without its uses; it provided a pensionable sum to retiring officers through sale, or transfer to half pay,[202] whilst also serving as an indirect property qualification, encouraging the preservation of the social hierarchy. [203] In theoretical terms, it echoed the Roman practice of ensuring those individuals with a stake in the country were those charged with its defence. The Duke of Wellington, having himself purchased his way to Lieutenant-Colonelcy (the highest rank purchasable) of the 33rd Regiment remarked;

[198] Haythornthwaite, *The Armies of Wellington,* p28
[199] Ibid, p30
[200] Allen, D.W. (1998) 'Compatible Incentives and the Purchase of Military Commissions', in *The Journal of Legal Studies Legal Studies,* Vol. 27 No. 1 (January 1998), p47, p50
[201] Ibid, p46
[202] Bartlett, K.J. (1998), *The development of the British army during the wars with France, 1793-1815,* Unpublished PhD, Durham University, p148
[203] Haythornthwaite, *The Armies of Wellington,* p22

> It brings into the service men of fortune and education—men who have some connection with the interests and fortune of the country besides the commissions which they hold from his Majesty.[204]

Nor was Wellington an outlier in his comments; by the early to mid-nineteenth century, the upper echelons of British military leadership, former commanders of the War in the Spanish Peninsula, Rowland Hill, Fitzroy Somerset and Henry Paget, all subscribed to the system by which they had themselves benefitted, and remained apparently vindicated by British triumphs in Iberia and Belgium.[205] Notwithstanding the potential incompetents being admitted to senior rank, it is pertinent to note that several of Britain's finest commanders rose by this exact process, including Henry Paget (British Cavalry Commander at Waterloo), Thomas Graham (Victor of Cadiz) and the Duke of Wellington himself. Yet their success within the system cannot be considered without us considering the opportunity cost – promotion purely by merit may have been a more difficult method to organize, yet by the same token it is difficult to imagine some of the worst excesses of the British Army in the nineteenth century, such as Lord Cardigan's purchase of the a Lieutenant-Colonelcy of the 11th Hussars, and his subsequent disastrous performance in the notorious 'Charge of the Light Brigade'.

The purchase system enabled officer ranks to be bought and sold for an official price, although in reality a black market developed in which commissions could command a far higher price, depending on a regiment's prestige and station. Despite being technically illegal, no official action against the process appears to have taken place.[206] The purchase system also technically enabled the crown to remove ineffective officers through a process of 'cashiering' or stripping an individual of their commission without reimbursement. The officer ranks which could be purchased ranged from Ensign/Cornet to Lieutenant Colonel, after which promotion by seniority began (and commissions could no longer be sold). Certain arms were excluded from the practice wholesale; the artillery did not allow the purchase of

[204] Allen, 'Compatible Incentives' p51
[205] Bruce, A. (1988) *The Purchase System in the British Army, 1660-1871*, London: Royal Historical Society, p99
[206] Corrigan, G. (2014) *Waterloo: A New History of the Battle and its Armies*, London: Atlantic Books, c4 p6

commissions, uniquely demanding a formal military education of their potential officers and engaging in promotion by seniority across the officer ranks. Additionally, certain ranks within the Infantry and Cavalry forces were gradually excluded from purchase, such as that of surgeon and quartermaster.[207] The educational institutions of the military reflected this peculiarity; the only formal institution for the training of officers at the outbreak of war in 1793 was the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich, established in 1741 for the training of artillery officers. Only in 1800 was the Royal Military College established, for the training of staff officers and later officers of the line, but its output of trained cadets remained numerically insignificant for the duration of the war.[208]

Despite the sustained and somewhat successful efforts of reform by the Duke of York during his tenure as Commander-in-Chief, a tenure briefly interrupted in 1809-11 by the scandal of his mistress, Mary Anne Clarke, selling army commissions, the requirements for an officer's rank were by no means taxing. An officer was now required to be 16 years of age (in 1803 one fifth of new officers were less than 15 years old),[209] hold a letter of recommendation from a Major or person of social standing, and if required, have the money necessary to purchase a commission.[210] In time, the term limits for promotion were also enforced, ensuring that subalterns could not rise to high ranks without several years of experience.[211] Nor was every commission a purchasable one, officers appointed by alternative means being unable to 'sell out' as their purchased companions might. Lastly, although most officer ranks were in high demand and could fetch far in excess of the regulation price, the entrance ranks of cornet and ensign tended to attract predominately appointees not purchasers, whilst those that did purchase seldom paid more than the regulation price.[212] Yet despite the importance of money in the purchase of promotion, it would be folly to reduce the process of commission and promotion to one of mere transaction. The purchase of promotion, more so than the purchase of a first commission, had the potential to arouse irritation;[213] it could cut across existing regimental agreements regarding seniority, and permitted individuals without even the most

[207] Bartlett, *The Development of the British Army*, p149
[208] Allen, 'Compatible Incentives', p34
[209] Haythornthwaite, *The Armies of Wellington*, p23
[210] Ibid, p25
[211] Ibid, p32
[212] Allen, 'Compatible Incentives', p50
[213] Harries-Jenkins, G. (1977) *The Army in Victorian Society*, New York: Routledge and K. Paul, p72

basic military experience to rise as high as battalion command. It should be no surprise that many of the confidential reports from the period,[214] deal not so much with any matter of technical competency, but in many cases with the social standing of an officer. In one example an officer is condemned not so much for any apparent incompetence, but for being 'despised by fellow officers'[215]

Nevertheless, this system of purchase admitted to the officer class, individuals of wealth and social standing, ostensibly without regard to their religion. However, some explicit restrictions continued to apply to Catholics attempting to reach the upper ranks - these included a plethora of civic offices, but also 'master and Lieutenant-General of his majesty's ordnance, commander in chief of his majesty's forces [and], generals on the staff.'[216] Moreover, it was the qualifications of wealth and social standing which Catholics would no doubt have struggled to surmount. The primary source of income in this period, land ownership, had been largely closed to Catholics since the late 17th Century, by the mid-18th century it had reached a nadir of roughly 5%. Yet the importance of 'land' in the conception of wealth during this period cannot be overstated, not only for its demonstration of social status, but also as the source of a regular income. Army pay had failed to increase in the eighteenth century, and with the introduction of income tax, officers found themselves taking home even less than their predecessors.[217] The response of Lord Palmerston (then secretary of war, later prime minister) was telling of contemporary notions regarding what made an officer;

> There was [is] a material distinction between the pay granted to the privates and that given to the officers; the former found their own subsistence, which far from

[214] The 'confidential report' was a regular assessment of an officer typically administered by one of his commanders within the unit, designed to aid in the selection of officers for advancement and further promotion.
[215] See National Library of Ireland - Kilmainham Papers, Vol 307, *Copies of confidential reports on staff and regimental officers of the British Army in Ireland, preceded by summary chronological indexes noting destinataries*, 1871-6, p32
[216] Curtis, E, McDowell, R. B. (eds.) (1943), *Irish Historical Documents 1172–1922*, London: Methuen & Co., p214
[217] Ibid

> being the case with the later, whose chief objects in entering the army were the honours and distinctions to which merit must in due course advance them.[218]

The necessity of a regular (non-military) income was yet another peculiar facet of the British officer corps during this period; if an officer could successfully navigate this labyrinthine system and obtain his commission, they would now be expected to sustain themselves while on service, a difficult task to achieve solely on the meagre army pay, especially in more prestigious units. [219] As a product of this, many officers of more limited income would seek commission in units of the East India Company, where living upon one's pay was more easily managed. Nonetheless, for most line officers, living required a considerable private income, estimated in a 1903 Commission of Inquiry on the subject, at reaching between £150 and £200 per year, with cavalry officers expected to provide between three and four times that sum. [220] In light of such expenses, the prospects for any individual who might by chance have obtained the 'education of a gentleman' but subsequently lacked the means to support himself and his social life were considerably weakened.

Aside from the potential inability to purchase advancements in rank, the isolation inherent in lacking the resources to socialize in the same circles as his peers might well hamper an officer's promotion even when advancement began to be decided purely upon merit. The leisure pursuits of a British officer, such as hunting, were expensive. In the peacetime army, officers could and were expected to undertake the social lives appropriate to gentlemen of their stature – certainly the demands of their respective offices did not entail any enormous labour, with most mundane matters of military organisation and training of men handled by non-commissioned officers and commissioned officers with administrative remit.[221] For many peacetime officers the challenging campaigns were fought either on the card table in, the mess or while riding to shows. By contrast, one particularly well known account of an

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[218] *The Gentleman's Magazine*, Volume 81 Part 1, p474
[219] Myerley, S.H. (1996) *British Military Spectacle: From the Napoleonic Wars through the Crimea, The Armies of Wellington,* London: Harvard University Press, p2
[220] HCPP: *Report of the committee appointed by the Secretary of State for War to enquire into the nature of the expenses incurred by officers of the army, and to suggest measures for bringing commissions within reach of men of moderate means, with appendices,* 1903, p7
[221] Spiers, *The Late Victorian Army,* p22

erstwhile sergeant's wife who, upon hearing word that her husband was nominated to become an officer responded 'I tell you what, lads, the King – God bless him! – may make my Jemmy a gentleman; but I'll be hanged if he can make Betty [the speaker] a lady; so put that in your pipe and smoke it.' [222]

The more expensive and exclusive regiments rendered such class divisions even more stark; the lavish nature of some mess membership could preclude promoted members of the rank and file from participating full, leaving them instead to take 'a mutton chop or cold meat in their room.'[223] Perhaps even more significant than this, was the perception of excessive strictness or meanness toward the rank and file, on the part of these ex-ranker officers. This may be ascribed it to the lost intimacy which promotion to officer rank obliges them to forgo, leading them to feel the need to 'to catch' or 'to have' the common soldier. One commentator, a former cavalry officer, remarks upon seeing an apparently fine Sergeant attract the ire of a former ranker over 'some most absurd trifle' as prelude to the 'coarsest abuses and curses,' presumably according to the author's rumination, as a means of demonstrating to his fellow officers how far removed he felt himself from his former peers in the rank and file.

By comparison the exploits of the 'gentleman' officers, of the correct birth and education, are related by the writer as perhaps the only means by which to furnish Britain with the military leadership. Speaking again from military experience, in this case an episode of British service in the Iberian Peninsula, the writer recounts the story of an assault on a French controlled mill by a company of British grenadiers. Owing to the ferocious defence, the British forces were rapidly deprived of their officers and a non-commission officer attempted to assume command to no avail. Recognising the difficulty, the sergeant quickly procured a young officer from a neighbouring company with the singular imperative; 'You must lead them, Sir' shortly after which, the British forces emerged victorious.[224] It is the advantage in status over his men which ostensibly, in the author's view, sets him both above the men he commands and naturally predisposes them to follow him. The sense of *noblesse oblige* and the duty of

[222] *Colburn's United Service Magazine and Naval and Military Journal,* 1871, Part 2, p367
[223] Ibid, p367
[224] Ibid, p368

the gentleman toward his family and country is chiefly what the writer sees as the makings of a superior officer over what he dubs 'an unknown man, the offspring of democracy.'[225] [226]

Poorer officers could not really afford to socialize and jockey for position amongst their fellows and might even incur the irritation of those same fellows. The absence of a sufficient supporting wealth may well have served as further indication of an officer's exclusion from either the landed or mercantile classes, both of whom were amongst the few groups capable of sustaining the costly appearance of gentlemanly soldiering. In the 4th Hussars Ensigns Bruce and Hodge quickly attracted the ire of their fellow officers because their annual private incomes were *only* £400 per annum. The hapless ensigns remained with their regiment for just three months enduring ostracism before being left with no choice but to leave.[227] Nor was bias towards wealthier officers exclusively the preserve of the officer corps; as Edward Spiers has pointed out, even in 1902 despite some concessions toward officers of lesser means, it was still not considered proper by a Parliamentary Select committee, that officers should be able to sustain themselves purely upon their pay.[228]

In practice, the subsequent abolition of the purchase system under Edward Cardwell was far less a revolutionary achievement than its opponents might have suspected, and did not entail a significant change in the composition of the officer corps, in the view of Jeremy Black.[229] At the outset, one of the principal opponents of abolition, the Duke of Cambridge, remained in his position as Commander in Chief and remained instrumental in the selection of officers for promotion. [230] As a result of the Duke's general antipathy toward the promotion of

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[225] *Colburn's United Service Magazine and Naval and Military Journal,* 1871, Part 2, p369

[226] Naturally we cannot ignore the biases evident in the writer's account, a natural product of his desire to set forth an argument against the practice of promotion from the ranks. Moreover, one must note the fact that the anecdotes recounted tend exclusively to refer to incidents over the course of the Napoleonic Wars, no less than six decades earlier by the time of this publication.

[227] *Colburn's United Service Magazine and Naval and Military Journal,* 1871, Part 2, p106

[228] Ibid p25

[229] Black, J. (2006) *A Military History of Britain: From 1775 to the Present*, London: Praeger Security International, p86

[230] Beckett, I.F.W. (2002) 'Selection by Disparagement: Lord Esher, the General Staff and the Politics of Command, 1904-1914' in French, D. & Reid, B.H. (eds.) *British General Staff: Reform and Innovation 1890-1939*, London: Frank Cass, p36

officers based on a military merit alone, rather than on social standing, promotion of officers tended to be strictly on grounds of seniority. Promotion by seniority, as practised by the Royal Artillery and the Royal Engineers, was riddled with problems of stagnation and a generally slow rate of progression up the ranks; as a result, those services remained dominated by officers typically of greater age and longer terms of service than their counterparts within the line infantry. The application of this mode of promotion (in practice if not by regulation) produced within the officer corps, a system of promotion which in many respects appeared to retain some of the vices of promotion by purchase (namely little attention to technical competence) whilst failing to meet the lofty expectations which abolitionists had mooted in previous debates.[231] Ultimately, the inability to raise a serious challenge to the socially exclusive or 'closed shop' officer selection goes some way to explaining the underwhelming numbers of Irish Catholic officer being found within the service in later decades.

The exacting economic demands placed on any individual looking to become an officer must have presented a significant difficulty, proportionately more to Irish Catholics than Irish Protestants, looking to purchase a commission. Given the significant Catholic presence within the rank and file, one might suspect that the promotion from the ranks would be a significant means for the admission of Irish Catholics to the officer corps: but was it? This situation may have been further compounded by the social expectations and perceptions of the rank and file; the preference amongst the rankers was for a gentlemanly leader. Benjamin Harris outlined the reasons for this preference; gentlemen officers benefitted from education and were inclined to be 'kind in manners' whilst the ex-ranker, without benefit of noble origin or learning was regarded as 'brutal and overbearing.'[232] Such a sentiment was not merely the preserve of rank and file serving under such officers, but amongst higher echelons also. Wellington was especially scathing about promoted ex-rankers, noting;

> In truth they do not make good officers; it does not answer. They are brought into society to the manners of which they are not accustomed; they cannot bear being

[231] Primarily the debates surrounding the abolition of the purchase system by Parliament during the early-mid 1860s

[232] Harris, B. (1848) *Recollections of Rifleman Harris*, London: H Hurst, p60

> at all heated with wine or liquor. I have known them when I was serving in the ranks of the army, and I think, in general, they are quarrelsome, they are addicted to quarrel a little in their cups, and they are not persons that can be borne in the society of the officers of the army; they are men of different manners altogether.[233]

More importantly, a preference for gentlemen was common amongst the officer class, who insisted that their peers maintain, what Spiers terms 'conformity with the manners and etiquette of polite society.'[234] Crucially, the group charged upholding this standard was also the group charged with selecting its members; it does not seem inconceivable that a largely un-landed Catholic population was regarded unfavourably by the officers who would decide their status. Protestants had little desire to see Catholics compete with them in legal and military employment within the officer corps of the army, whilst they had the status and powers required to enforce such discerning standards, and maintain a closed shop.[235] Such practices did not present much difficulty for the government and monarchy, and may well have reflected exactly how far the political establishment had developed vis-à-vis Catholic emancipation. As the nominal head of the army, and an active participant in the matter of promotion, George III opposed their admission to Parliament, which he regarded as a violation of his coronation oath to uphold the Church of England and by extension, the crucial 1689 settlement. [236]

Collectively, these circumstances suggest that, in contrast to their co-religionists present in the rank and file, Irish Catholics who were attempting to enter and rise in the officer corps were going to face a far greater challenge – though it may be the case that discrimination in promotion arose even at the level of non-commissioned officers. Whilst Britain during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars had experienced considerable difficulty in obtaining members of the rank and file, there is no evidence for a coterminous paucity of men willing to serve as officers. Instead, entry (let alone advancement) to the officer corps involved Irish

[233] House of Commons Papers, Volume 22, p329
[234] Spiers, E. (1980) *The Army and Society 1815-1914,* London: Longman, p1s
[235] Bartlett, T. (1992) *The Fall and Rise of the Irish Nation: The Catholic Question, 1690-1830*, Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, p29
[236] Haythornthwaite, *The Armies of Wellington,* p32

Catholics having to face all the same institutional hurdles outlined above as well as having to face religious prejudice. The fact that their employment outside Ireland remained legally anomalous for two decades following their initial admittance to the officer corps, as well as their exclusion from the very highest of officer ranks, underlines the apparent ambivalence towards the contribution of those officers on the part of the establishment. Given such attitudes and continued limitations, it is perhaps unsurprising that only one Irish Catholic officer rose to the rank of general officers during this period – Henry Sheehy Keating. Keating's success may have been the precipitating factor behind the Catholic Relief Act of 1813 which normalized the legal position of Irish Catholics holding commissions outside Ireland.[237] Certainly by this stage he had become something of a cause célèbre in Parliament with one MP speaking;

> What would be said to any fair claim to promotion that might be brought forward on behalf of colonel Keating, the gallant officer, who the other day was the chief instrument by which we obtained an addition to our territories of very considerable value? Why, the law would tell him, that if he continued to labour in his country's service, he must do so from a pure disinterested spirit of patriotism, for that the excitements by which that of others were aided, were not for him to contemplate. [238]

Despite the existing prohibition he attracted much Nevertheless, the earliest decades of Irish Catholic service in the officer corps remained largely tenuous and subject to some legal limitation. Only with the passage of Catholic Emancipation in 1829 can we speak of Irish Catholics being able to more or less hold an equal status as officers. With that proviso in mind, let us turn to examining in more detail, the dispersal of Irish Catholics within the officer corps, on the eve of that Act of Emancipation.

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[237] (53 Geo. 3 c. 128) *An Act to relieve from the Operation of the Statute of the Twenty fifth Year of the Reign of King Charles the Second, intituled An Act for preventing Dangers which may happen from Popish Recusants* – Parliament of the United Kingdom

[238] This address was given by (General) Montague James Mathew to the House of Commons in 1811, in reference to Keating's service in the seizure of the Isle of Bourbon, as well as the service of many Irish Catholics on that campaign - HC Deb 31 May 1811 Vol. 20 cc369-427

Section Three: Statistical Overview

3.1 Methodology

The chief objective of this study is to provide a breakdown of the relative participation of Irish Catholics within the officer corps of the British army and subsequently, to analyse the reasons for that level of representation. The first task presents considerable difficulties; for the period in question, the British Army left little record as to the faith of individual officers, whilst aggregated figures compiled from regimental returns can only be obtained for the earliest decades of this study.[239] Moreover, such figures fail to distinguish between Irish Catholics and Catholics of other backgrounds. The paucity of relevant data requires the assembly of a database capable of offering a representative sample of the line units of the British Army, whilst retaining in sight the objective of locating the Irish Catholic presence within the officer corps. Although an exhaustive study of the entirety of the officer corps unit by unit throughout the 19th century would no doubt offer a more accurate image of Irish Catholics holding commissions, such a gargantuan task remains beyond the remit of a study of this size. Instead, this study will focus upon establishing the broad trends of those men who sought to attain rank and recognition in the officer corps despite the following grim assessment from William Francis Butler:

> 'My father was not keen that his son should enter a profession in which the disadvantage of the absence of money could only be overcome by the surrender of one's religion – for that at least was the lesson which the cases of his relatives in the army had taught him'. [240]

The typical 19th century Regiment of the British Army had at its head a Colonel, normally an honorary rank held by a senior officer with some past association with the Regiment. In the case of the Connaught Rangers for much of the 1820s and 30s this was Colonel John Alexander Wallace, who had led the unit during its service under Wellington in the Peninsular War decades earlier and had at this stage in his career, reached the rank of Major-

[239] For a collection of these aggregated figures see, Fontana, *Some aspects of Roman Catholic Service*, which collates figures at a bi-decennial interval from 1850-65 and for the years 1827, 1830 and 1847

[240] Butler, *Sir William Butler: An Autobiography*, p13

General in the army.[241] Below the rank of Colonel stood Lieutenant-Colonel, typically numbering only one or two, who served as the routine leader of the regiment, commanding it on the battlefield and handling the routine business of administration and promotion, normally aided in this task by two officers holding the rank of Major – collectively these three ranks would comprise the 'Field Officers' of a unit. However, the bulk of a regiment's officers were 'Company officers' namely Captains and beneath them Lieutenants (of which there were typically a dozen of each serving in a regiment). At the most junior officer position stood the Ensigns, who were typically comprised of the youngest and most recently commissioned (be they graduates from the Royal Military Academy at Sandhurst or aspiring novices who had purchased their first commission) officers, who typically boasted less than two years of service and numbered perhaps half a dozen within the regiment.

In addition to what might be termed these 'Line' positions, or 'career track' commissions involving the command of troops and prospects for promotion, several 'support' officer ranks remained attached to each individual regiment for most of the century. These included a paymaster to handle the payment of soldiers' wages, an adjutant (typically a Lieutenant or Captain), a quarter-master in charge of the regiment's provisions, an Instructor of Musketry (also likely to be a Lieutenant or Captain) and a surgeon and several surgeons' assistants of whom only the former might be expected to hold a medical qualification. These support positions, although nominally ranked as officers, conveyed far less of the prestige and esteem ascribed to the command of troops and were not infrequently assigned to former members of the rank and file, especially those with long experience and service as well as the requisite literacy and numeracy.

As with the rest of society, the British Army and its regimental structure underwent substantial changes during the nineteenth century. By the 1850s the role of 'Instructor of Musketry' was introduced, providing yet another support role in the regiment to be filled by a captain or lieutenant.[242] In the 1873 the role of regimental surgeons and assistant surgeons

[241] Lloyd, E.M. & Stearn, R.T. (2004) 'Wallace, John Alexander Dunlop Agnew' in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford: Oxford University Press
[242] Strachan, H. (1985) *From Waterloo to Balaklava: Tactics, Technology and the British Army, 1815-1834*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p50

was phased out in favour of a unified Army Medical Service, later evolving into the Royal Army Medical Corps in 1898. Lastly, in 1871, the rank of 'ensign' was replaced in most parts of the British Army with the rank of 2nd Lieutenant, replacing in function the previous entry role of an ensigncy. In addition, the Childers reforms of 1881 involved the mass amalgamation of many previously separate pairs of regiments into new, larger and localized regiments, with the added effect of doubling the officer complement of the newly amalgamated regiments.[243]

In order to offer the best representative sample of the British Army (whose regimental officers belonged in nine out of ten cases to foot regiments) four foot regiments have been selected; two nominally 'English' and two nominally 'Irish' in composition (see table overleaf). Officially, no Regiment in the British Army held a specific national designation prior to the localisation reforms undertaken in 1871 by Secretary of War Edward Cardwell, and regimental 'nationality' was merely an indication of title and/or regional affiliation. By and large the mergers tended to reflect existing regional affinities, although it should be noted prior to the 1871 reforms there remained no direction for regiments to recruit from within regional catchment areas and as observed in chapter one, many units boasted a rank and file entirely at odds with their supposed territorial affiliation.

To best gauge the patterns of army composition a timescale of seventy years has been selected, lasting from 1829 (the year of the final act of Catholic Repeal) until 1899 (the outbreak of the Boer War) with intervals every 10 years. This system of intervals largely avoids the major wars with British involvement, although the swelling of the Army is plainly obvious from the size of the officer lists in 1859, in the aftermath of the Indian rebellion. At each of these ten years, the officer lists were taken from the aforementioned selection of regiments, potential Irish Catholics were identified and further study was undertaken to identify their actual religious affiliation where possible. To provide a sufficient number of officers for study, prior to 1881 the lists in question are drawn from both constituent units.

[243] For more on the reforms of the late Victorian period, see Spiers, E. (1994) 'The Late Victorian Army 1868-1914' in Chandler, D. & Beckett, I. (eds.) *The Oxford History of the British Army,* Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp187-191

Table 2: Units under examination

Regiment before amalgamation	Regiments following amalgamation (1881)
88th (Connaught Rangers) Regiment of Foot **94th Regiment of Foot**	The Connaught Rangers
The 102nd Regiment of Foot (Royal Madras Fusiliers)* **The 103rd Regiment of Foot (Royal Bombay Fusiliers)*[244]**	The Royal Dublin Fusiliers
The 44th (East Essex) Regiment of Foot **The 56th (West Essex) Regiment of Foot**	The Essex Regiment
The 39th (Dorsetshire) Regiment of Foot **The 54th (West Norfolk) Regiment of Foot**	The Dorsetshire Regiment

The primary source for officer names and ranks is the annually published 'Army List'[245] up until 1879 and 'Hart's List' for the subsequent period.[246] Hart, an Anglo-Irish officer who had served in both the Crimean and (first) Opium Wars, began a comparatively more detailed publication of the Army List in 1839, including as a matter of course details such as the dates upon which an officer had reached previous ranks, where currently stationed and any

[244] These two units had prior to the 1857 Indian Rebellion, formed part of the East India Company's military establishment. Following the establishment of the British Raj in 1858 they were taken onto the establishment of the British Army and numbered – in both cases receiving regimental numbers that had previously been held by Irish units.
[245] See the records of the UK National Archives, War Office (WO) 65 and 66
[246] *Hart's List,* existed from 1840 until 1915 under a variety of names and was known during the Nineteenth Century as; *The New Annual Army List* (from 1840-53) *The New Annual Army List, and Militia List* (1854-69), T*he New Annual Army List, Militia List, and Indian Civil Service List* (1870-1880) *The New Annual Army List, Militia List, Yeomanry Cavalry List, and Indian Civil Service List* (1881 – 1893) and *The New Annual Army List, Militia List, and Yeomanry Cavalry List* (1894-1901)

achievements of note. The unofficial list continued until 1915 when the enormous volume of officers and the potential for intelligence leaks spelled an ended to publication. With this timescale and source material (with 1890 substituted for 1899 due to a lack of data) obtained, it is possible to assemble the requisite database covering the broad trends in Irish Catholics presence amongst the officer corps during the mid to late Victorian period.

The selection of these parameters leaves at first glance, roughly two thousand officers of potential interest, a somewhat inflated number which does not account for individuals who are 'double counted', remaining in the same regiment over two or more decades. Of these names, it is then possible to select potential Irish Catholic officers through an etymological criterion, selecting names which are highly likely to reflect the correct ethno-religious affiliation. In broad terms, Irish society in the period following the Reformation, could be categorised into three groups; the first, the Gaelic Irish, consisting of that segment of the population which existed prior to the Norman Conquest and was largely Catholic in religion, with names such as Sullivan, MacCarthy, O'Conor, and O'Neill. The second group, the 'Old English', encompassed those pre-Reformation English settlers in Ireland who had, despite the change in religious affiliation in England, tended to retain the Catholic faith. Prominently family names included Butler, Fitzgerald, Nugent and Dillon, names which in previous generations, had been the most powerful families in the country. By the nineteenth century, if not earlier, the two groups had become indistinguishable, as previous markers of cultural difference eroded and shared experience of persecution rendered the division atavistic.

The last group of Irish society, the 'New English', was also the most distinctive; exclusively Protestant, consisting of administrators and settlers sent from England after the Tudor Re-conquest, this group by the 18th century furnished the Ascendancy elite of the country, dominating both political institutions and land ownership.[247] However, only in Ulster did this group constitute a majority of the population though Protestantism in Ulster would be divided on the fault line of English Anglicanism (as represented in the established 'Church of Ireland') and Scottish Presbyterianism. Despite the relatively small size of this community, its contribution to the officer corps of the British Army was both renowned and

[247] MacBride, *Eighteenth Century Ireland*, p240

disproportionately numerous,[248] and included the Duke of Wellington, George White and Viscount Gough. Such was the extent of their distinction in military service that one might make an analogy with the Prussian Junker class, in reference to their presence as a demographic group providing a disproportionate element of the officer corps. The family names of this group, mostly resembling those of England proper, must also include the names of those Gaelic Irish or Old English families who subsequently conformed to the Anglican faith, names such as Charles O'Hara or George O'Malley. Given these caveats, it is possible to begin to locate potential Irish Catholic officers by focusing upon names within the officer lists which belong to the first two groups mentioned.

In practice, this involves a process of selection drawing upon the army lists for each chosen regiment, at intervals of ten years beginning from 1829 and ending in 1899.[249] This process produces roughly fifty lists,[250] each one typically containing the names of between forty and sixty officers. With these lists, it becomes possible to locate potential Irish Catholics; beginning with the selection of officers whose surnames correlate with the groups identified previously; namely 'Gaelic Irish' and 'Old English'. Having assembled this subset of names, typically a number not in excess of 15-20% of the total number of officers, we are left with a preliminarily indication of how many potential Irish Catholics exist within a unit. This should not be conflated with an indication of how many Irish officers were in a unit, as this figure not only excludes the sizeable Anglo-Irish contingent, but also fails to reflect the mobility of the officer class who in many cases, despite names thoroughly 'Irish' or otherwise, hailed from different imperial territories. A brief aside at this point is necessary for the purposes of clarifying the definition of Irish officers; those officers in this study identified as Irish refer purely to those born on the island of Ireland. In many cases, there existed a body of officers who, though of Irish ancestry, were the progeny of family who had spent generations on the imperial frontiers. Nevertheless, it is interesting to note that even at the preliminary stage, even in the most 'Irish' of the regiments studied; the officer lists for 1899 are comprised

[248] O'Connor, *Irish Officers in the British Armed Forces,* p43
[249] Note that owing to some discrepancies in the available list for 1889, the list for that year has been substituted with its equivalent from 1890.
[250] The raw lists are extracted from the regularly published 'Army List' which as a single publication encompasses the names, dispositions, ranks and units of practically all officers in the British Army. Over time the list expands in scope to include units not initially covered, for examples those units on the establishment of the East India Company.

primarily of English and Scottish names. By contrast those 'Irish' names (which would include Catholic and Protestant) are perhaps just one quarter of the total.

The task of examining these officers individually with a view to ascertaining their religious affiliation was a painstaking and slow one, with several difficulties. Chief amongst these is the lack of official documentation pertaining to religious affiliation. Service records typically do not make direct reference to an officer's chosen faith; however, records of married officers do make reference to their spouse, their place of marriage and the officiating cleric, providing in a limited number of instances, an oblique declaration of an officer's religion. Nevertheless, most official sources remain mute on an individual's religion. Of these official sources, the census looms large as a potential treasure trove of information, however the realities are disappointing; in the case of census records across the UK, reliable and comprehensive census results begin only in 1841 (despite tentative attempts as early as 1801) and these do not include the vital detail of religious affiliation. Within Great Britain, there was no attempt to record religious affiliation on the primary census returns until 2001. By contrast, census records in Ireland recorded religious affiliation since 1861, however few of the records remain extant, chiefly the 1901 and 1911 collections, with the remainder being destroyed for various reasons. At the time of writing, census returns for later decades (1926 for the Republic of Ireland, 1921 for the UK) have yet to be released. Moreover, by virtue of the travel involved in military service, the value of census records for tracking down an officer during his period of service, frequently in the far flung reaches of the empire, is minor.[251]

However, in many instances, reference to past military employment may be found in the occupational references of the census. Several former officers even make reference to their previously held rank and regiment decades after their active service had ended, by persisting on the system of 'half pay', under which officers would remain within the army and continued to receive a half-pay but would not actively serve in the army. In such circumstances it is possible to locate several ex-officers amongst the census data of the early 20th century after their retirement, and, when such retirement is to Ireland, it is even conceivable to clearly identify their religious beliefs. A relatively simple example of this can

[251] For an overview of the evolution of the 19th century census see Levitan, K. (2011) *A Cultural History of the British Census: Envisioning the Multitude in the Nineteenth Century*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, pp15-38

be found in the case of Arthur Lorean Keogh, a Captain with the Connaught Rangers, found serving in the sample list for 1899, who is also located a decade later in the 1911 Irish census, helpfully described under occupation as 'Captain on Retired list – Connaught Rangers' as well as being Catholic.[252] Unfortunately, for many of the officers examined, identifying religious affiliation has been a lengthy and complicated process.

In additional to military and census records, it is possible to locate officers, with varying degrees of success, under records of birth, marriage and death as collected by the General Register Office - although the office itself was only founded in 1837 and registration of births only became compulsory some four decades later.[253] Naturally, the same caveats and limitations of census data still apply; birth and death records provide scant details whilst births in the imperial peripheries often remain unrecorded, a particularly germane point given the not infrequent birth of many army officers in India during their father's tour of service. Nonetheless the religious affiliation of a significant number of officers can be discerned through close examination of their parishes of birth, especially in sparsely populated parishes with a single religious establishment during this time period – such is the case with Heathcote Campion, born and baptised in the village of Westmeston in Sussex, a village which boasts only a Anglican Church – and as such being both Protestant as well as English and of little relevance for our purposes. However such projections are impossible in the case of larger cities and more cosmopolitan districts, particularly in the case of those with a large Irish community during this period. As with their military counterparts, civic marriage records provide the precious details of religious affiliation, typically with far more detail than what is provided in officer records. Parish records of marriage, when available, generally display the names and occupations of the persons to be married in addition to the minister who performed the marriage (important for identifying denomination) as well as the institution where or rites under which the marriage was solemnized. Such utility is sadly tempered by the unevenness of coverage and, as before, the lack of records for such marriages undertaken on far off stations.

[252] Census of Ireland – 1911, Dublin, North City, Sackville Street Lower, Arthur Lorean Keogh

[253] Nissel, M. (1987) *People count. A History of the General Register Office*, London: Stationery Office Books

In the case of a select few number of officers, it is viable to deduce religious faith from family histories, particularly those of the pre-eminent landed families in nineteenth century Ireland; Maurice George Moore, boasted a lineage that had made its name in Spanish and French service and subsequently established a stately seat in the form of Moore Hall in Co. Mayo. Maurice Moore himself would command the Connaught Rangers during the Boer War and later served as a Senator in the Irish Free State.[254] Although scarce, and typically limited to the families of those officers who were best placed to advance through the officer ranks (as we shall see in subsequent chapters), family histories remain a useful method for identifying men who tested the very limits of advancement for Irish Catholics.

Notwithstanding the various sources outlined above, several limitations remain in attempting to assemble the planned database of Irish Catholic officers. Chiefly, regardless of those sources which have been located, the coverage of source material is patchy. Whilst the rough details of an officer's career can be obtained with relative ease through the use of the Gazette and Army List, more substantial details remain available only erratically. However two key qualifiers apply; firstly, the tendency is towards greater coverage toward the latter years of the study, resulting in the bulk of 'unknown' officers being located in the first three decades of the database. Secondly, where there is no information, it is more likely to affect more junior officers, especially those officers raised from the ranks. For example, we might readily discover the religious affiliation of Charles Butler, Major of the 94th Regiment in 1879 and brother to Major-General Sir Henry Butler. However, the religious affiliation of Quarter-master Patrick Lacey, raised to that position from the rank of Quarter-master Sergeant (a non-commissioned rank) in the same unit and period, is sadly lost to us.

Although great care and painstaking effort has been taken to limit the number of such 'unknown' individuals, it is an unfortunate reality of any historical study that not all questions can be answered. Nonetheless, despite these limitations, one preliminary objective of this research remains clear – to set forth a database detailing the number and disposition of Irish Catholic officers within the British Army over a set same of units and decades. Although the compelling detail of individual cases may not always be available, the statistical trends may prove far more useful. In the pursuit of this objective and in light of the difficulties besetting it, it has on occasion been necessary to infer an officer's religious

[254] Hone, J.M. (1939) *The Moores of Moore Hall*, London: Jonathan Cape, p256

affiliation when reasonable indication of faith can be located (details such as the faith of an officer's parents, siblings or children, their place of birth, etc) – a necessary compromise. Furthermore, although official declarations of faith may well reflect an outward façade of conformity masking a different faith, it has proven unsustainable to attempt to subject such facades to more rigorous assessment.

If we wish to compare the individuals identified under this methodology with what limited figures are available from official records, we must consult the regimental returns. Although as emphasized previously, these returns do not list the religion of individual officers, aggregated figures are available for certain time periods. The periods in which the army does record these figures include the period from 1827-1830 and the period of 1847 to 1865. Cross referencing these figures with the established methodology of decennial intervals, starting from 1829, it is possible to compile a graphical representation of the religious demographic of the army for 1829, 1849 and 1859. The data contained within the regimental returns further breaks down the dispersal of religious affiliation by rank, firstly between officers and various positions within the rank and file (for the figures of 1829), then just between officers and the rank and file as a whole. Additionally, and perhaps reflecting the religious evolutions of the period, the categories of 'Protestant' and 'Catholic' (or 'RC') in 1829 are replaced with 'Episcopalian', 'Presbyterian' and 'Catholic' for 1849 and 1859. Although not printed on the forms themselves, additional categorizations such as 'Unknown' (in the case of officers in transit between regiment) or 'Pagan' (as in the case of certain African recruits) can also be found inserted by hand. Another distinction between the returns for 1829 as compared with those of 1849 and 1859 is in the categorization of rank and file. Whilst earlier returns provide religious detail broken down under the terms sub-categorizations of 'Sergeant' 'Corporal' 'Drummer' and 'Private', in later returns this is replaced with an aggregate figure for the entirety of the rank and file – whilst maintaining the level of detail for the purposes of identifying nationality. Thus, while it is possible to observe the religious distinctions present not only between officers and rankers, but between senior and junior rankers in 1829, such observations are not available (at least under religious terms) for later periods. In a small number of cases where the returns were incomplete or damaged the returns for subsequent months were used in lieu of the returns for January.

Despite its value, some difficulties can also be identified from the material itself; although the numbers of Englishmen, Irishmen and Scotsmen (and occasionally 'others') should tally with the total numbers of various religious denominations, in many cases the figures vary slightly. These variations typically do not exceed a dozen, however in certain circumstances the variation runs into the hundreds. In other instances, one might be led to question how much effort the officer responsible undertook when collecting the numbers for religious affiliation, with one unit returning a number of Catholics equivalent to the total number of rank and file within the unit. Given the inherent difficulties of keeping accurate numbers of the total of men whilst on foreign station, when wastage and movement due to illness, desertion and transfers keep adjusting the strength of a unit, such inaccuracies are understandable.

Regardless, such instances constitute the minority of cases and most regimental figures tally correctly. The bulk of the units examined are subdivided into two groups – the 'service companies' of the Regiment and the 'depot.' The former group (occasionally groups) would typically contain the bulk of a regiment's officers and rankers and be stationed at some garrison posting among the various far flung reaches of the Empire. The depot of the regiment, in contrast, was typically far smaller in number (usually one or two officers and two dozen men) and stationed at a regional town within the United Kingdom. At the start of this period, regiments were rarely stationed at purpose built barracks as such facilities had in many cases yet to be built. Aldershot, despite its long army history, was only established as a training camp in 1854, whilst the Curragh Camp was founded a year later. Typically the depot of a regiment would handle the logistical duties of sending out recruitment parties, receiving newly transferred officers and supplying the service companies with additional men whilst the service companies performed garrison duties and campaigned abroad. In addition to the depot, the regiment would also have several recruiting stations further afield. For example, in 1829 the 94th Regiment had its depot in Plymouth, and yet its recruiting stations included Rochdale, Glasgow and Belfast. When an entire unit was stationed within the United Kingdom, it would provide a single return, encompassing depot and service companies. It should be emphasized once more that the position of neither these recruiting stations nor indeed the depot itself, serves as any indication of the territorial composition of a unit. In the post 1815 period, recruits typically served a period of twenty-one years within the army, meaning most regiments would only see significant shifts in their regional or nation composition in the long term, after a prolonged change in their recruitment stations.

In addition to these regimental totals, the number and percentage of both Irishmen and of Catholics, serving amongst either the officer corps or the rank and file, has been taken from aggregated numbers collected by Velmo Fontana.[255] These figures, unlike those extracted directly from the regimental returns refer to the subsequent year. As an example; whilst the percentages obtained for the numbers of Irish officers within individual regiments refers to the year 1849, the total percentage for officers actually refers to the year 1850. Despite these limitations, the availability of these figures provides a useful means of illuminating the numbers of Irish Catholics serving as officers during the earlier decades of this study, when wider qualitative sources are lacking. In the absence of many easily identifiable Irish Catholic officers, it is the marginal but constant presence of this demographic within the official records which provide the best evidence for the existence of this class and some explanation of why it took so long for Irish Catholics to reach the most senior ranks.

3.2: The 88th and 94th – The Connaught Rangers

Of the units available the first and arguably the most 'Irish' of the units studied is the Connaught Rangers. Of its two constituted units, the 88th Regiment of Foot (Connaught Rangers) was established in 1793 as part of the rapid expansion of the British Army during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars. The Regiment, under the leadership of Lt. Colonel John Alexander Wallace, first gained distinction as part of General Thomas Picton's 3rd Division, during the Peninsular War, playing a key role at the battle of Buscsao and the siege of Ciudad Rodrigo. Commended by Wellington during its years of service in the Peninsula, the 88th was later the subject of an unflattering description by Picton's biographer,[256] Heaton Robinson, a description which promoted the publication of one of the most famous accounts of the Peninsular War, *Adventures with the Connaught Rangers,* by former Lieutenant William Grattan.[257] The other constituent unit of the Connaught Rangers, the 94th Regiment of Foot, was disbanded in 1818 following the conclusion of the Napoleonic Wars, before being recreated in 1823. The two units would later merge as part of the Childers Reforms, into a single unit, 'The Connaught Rangers' in 1881.

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[255] Fontana, *Some Aspects of Roman Catholic Service,* A. 41 – A. 60

[256] Robinson, H.B (1836) *Memoirs of Lieutenant General Sir Thomas Picton*, London: Richard Bentley

[257] Grattan, *Adventures with the Connaught Rangers* – Originally published as extracts in the United Service Journal during the 1840s.

Regimental returns indicate that in 1829 the 94th, perhaps due to its 'Downshire' (County Down) affiliation, had an unusually large number of Irish Protestant rank and file, with 453 of 716 men (63.2%) being Irish as compared with just 335 of its 625 (46.7%) men being Catholic.[258] A potential Catholic officer may be found in the form of Thomas Fitzgerald, Quartermaster in 1849, promoted from the ranks of a unit which by this stage appears to have lost a significant number of its Irish and Catholic rank and file. Of the entire regiment of 1,178 men, 434 are Irishmen (36.8%) and 374 are Catholics (31.7%) - this may be in part due to its station in Cawnpore India.[259] Of the officers, regimental returns indicate two Catholic officers, one of whom is likely to be Thomas Fitzgerald.

By 1859 it is possible to locate a definite Catholic in the form of Charles Butler,[260] serving at this stage as Ensign within the 94th, and a highly likely Catholic in the form of Edmund McGrath then serving as Assistant Surgeon with the unit. Regimental returns show the unit, at this point stationed in Peshawar, appears again to have lost much of its Irish element, with only 222 of 811 being identified as Irish (27.3%).[261] Religious figures remain incomplete with only 611 of 811 men accounted for, of whom 174 are identified as Catholic (28.4%). By comparison the Depot of the 94th lists 148 men of whom 42 are said to be Irish (28.3%) but only 24 are marked as Catholics (16.2%).[262]

By 1869 the 94th counted two Irish Catholics amongst its Captains, the aforementioned Charles Butler and one George James Teevan.[263] By 1879 the relative size of the Irish contingent had once more declined, yet Charles Butler, serving at this stage as Major, had reached a relatively senior post, whilst a possible Catholic, James Browne, was serving as Captain. As with Thomas Fitzgerald in 1849, Quartermaster Patrick Lacey in 1879 serves as a potential example of Irish Catholics from the rank and file being promoted to serve in the most junior of officer positions; although the declining numbers would mitigate against the

[258] WO 17/429 – 94th Regiment of Foot
[259] WO 17/617 – 94th Regiment of Foot
[260] Census of Ireland - 1901, Tipperary, Ballycarron, Ballycarron, House 3, Charles Butler
[261] WO 17/711 – 94th Regiment of Foot
[262] Ibid
[263] Census of England – 1851, Middlesex, Marylebone, St. Mary, 17, George J. Teevan – Teevan is recorded as the son of William Teevan who died whilst in Bohemia, before being interred at the Catholic chapel of Chelsea, *Anglo-Celt*, 28th of August, 1851

suggestion, it must be recalled that promotions to the position of Quartermaster would typically involve only the most senior members of the rank and file, frequently with decades of service with the colours.

By contrast, the Irish Catholic officer element of the 88th Regiment of Foot (Connaught Rangers) is more consistent than many other regiments, if still quite minor. Regimental Returns for the unit further illustrate this point; in 1829, the 88th Regiment, stationed in the Ionian Islands, counted no less than 753 men within the ranks; of these, 726 were Irishmen (96.4%), whilst 563 were Catholics (74.7%).[264] However, as with other regiments studied, this profusion of Catholic manpower does not reach high into the chain of command; of the regiment's Sergeants, 24 were Protestant and only 18 Catholic (43%), though this is a higher ratio than other units.[265] The only example of a Catholic officer we can find at this point is (at the junior rank of Ensign) one Peter Martyn, member of the Catholic Martyn family of Galway and uncle to the first President of the Sinn Féin party, Edward Martyn.[266] The returns of the regiment suggest a second Catholic officer present at this point, plausibly Francis Baynes, who was also serving as an ensign in 1829. By 1839 Martyn, now Captain, was joined by ensign Joseph De Courcy Laffan; Laffan boasted a distinguished lineage, with one uncle (of the same name) serving as Royal Physician and another (Robert Laffan) serving as Catholic Archbishop of Cashel and Emly.[267]

The list for 1849 provides further evidence of an emerging Irish Catholic presence. Amongst the Catholics for that year we can count Lieutenant Charles O'Donel (later to become family head as 'The O'Donel')[268] and Ensign John Edward Riley.[269] For the 88th Regiment as a whole, the regimental returns for 1849 (when the service companies were stationed in

[264] WO 17/429 – 88th Regiment of Foot
[265] Ibid
[266] For more on Edward Martyn's literary and political activities see Humphreys, M. (2007) *The Life and Times of Edward Martyn: An Aristocratic Bohemian*, Dublin: Irish Academic Press
[267] Burke, J. (1845) *A Genealogical and Heraldic Dictionary of the Peerage and Baronetage of the British Empire*, 8th Edition, London: Henry Colburn, p583
[268] The marriage of Charles' father and mother is recorded in the Catholic Parish Registers, The National Library of Ireland; Dublin, Ireland; Microfilm Number: *Microfilm 09492 / 05*
[269] John Edward Riley's marriage is listed in his officers record as conducted by two members of the Catholic Clergy - WO 25/3242/241

Trinidad) present a troubling issue of veracity on the part of reporting officers. The Regiment's service companies total 479 rank and file in 1849, which is also the number of reported Catholic rank and file.[270] However, the religious report also lists 52 Episcopalian rank and file as well as one Presbyterian, suggesting either 53 recruits had their nationality unaccounted for, or the religious affiliation of the men was recorded carelessly and in error. Reports for the depot of the 88th do however agree, suggesting a force of 623 rank and file, of whom 612 (98.2%) were Irish and 574 were Catholic (92.1%).[271]

By 1859, the presence of Irish Catholic officers within the 88th has slightly increased, with Captain John Edward Riley and Ensign Patrick Dwyer[272] whilst a third Irish Catholic is recorded and highly likely to have been one of the regimental surgeons. Regimental returns indicate that even by 1859 the 88th Regiment appears to have undergone only modest changes in composition. Of 970 rank and file within the unit, 855 (88.1%) were Irishmen whilst 750 were Catholic (77.3%).[273] Although there appears to be a drop off in the total proportion of Irishmen, and Irish Catholics within the unit from 1849, the NCO ranks continue to be overwhelmingly Irish in contrast to other units in this study; amongst Sergeants, 61 Irishmen can be identified to 5 Englishmen, whereas corporals number 10 English and Scots as compared with 48 Irish.[274] By 1869 however the Catholic presence amongst the officers of the unit appears to have largely evaporated with only Assistant Surgeon William Curran standing as a likely Irish Catholic. In 1879 we can speak of a single but important Irish Catholic officer in the unit; Lieutenant and future Battalion commander of the (merged) Connaught Rangers, Maurice George Moore, of Moorehall Co. Mayo. With the merger of the 94th and 88th Regiments as part of the Childers Reforms in 1881, the structure of the new combined regiment, hereafter referred to as 'The Connaught Rangers' is broadly speaking a duplication of the previous system, merely doubled up. Typically the regiments post-Childers Reform include two Lieutenant Colonels, eight Majors, twenty-four Captains and thirty-six Lieutenant and Second-Lieutenants. Perhaps owing to the localisation envisaged as part of

[270] WO 17/618 – 88th Regiment of Foot
[271] Ibid
[272] Patrick Dwyer was somewhat unusual for an officer in having been promoted from the ranks during the Crimean War. He was later the subject of an appeal by one of his daughters, a Sister Mary Lucy Dwyer of Anarkall Convent India - see *New Zealand Tablet*, Volume 10, Issue 23, 10 June 1909, p35 (915)
[273] WO 17/711 – 88th Regiment of Foot
[274] Ibid

the Childers Reforms, the collective Irish presence within the officer corps of the Connaught Rangers is now more apparent from preliminary examination. Captain Maurice George Moore, 1st Lieutenant George Cuthbert Digan[275] and 2nd Lieutenant Edward William Keily[276] make up the new units Catholic officer contingent. By 1899, this figure had increased with Irish Catholics providing one Major (Moore), one Captain (Digan), one Lieutenant (Arthur Lorean Keogh) and one Second-Lieutenant (John Charles MacSwiney).[277] In addition to these, of the two quartermasters listed in 1899, one Michael James Kenny,[278] is verifiably Catholic, whilst Thomas McClelland remains unknown, although given the increasing localisation of recruitment from within the province of Connaught, is highly likely to have been Catholic.

Yet even when considering the last year of this study, one cannot help but be struck by the relative absence of Irish officers of all denominations from this, ostensibly, one of the most 'Irish' of the Irish units within the British Army. The Colonels of both the 94th and 88th are drawn exclusively from the ranks of the British (English and Scottish) elites with the sole exception of the Anglo-Irish Colonel Sir Thomas MacMahon in the early years of the 94th Regiment's existence. Nor do Irishmen rank as Lieutenant Colonels (the effective commanders of the unit on the field) with the exceptions of George O'Malley at the outset of the study and (eventually) Maurice Moore shortly after the end of the period under review. Even at the rank of Major, in only three instances across the eight decades surveyed do Irishmen of any religious denomination qualify, although two of those three are Catholics. In the middling ranks of Captain and Lieutenant however, it is possible to argue for a gradual increase in the number of Catholics, both as a proportion of all Irishmen serving and as a proportion of all officers. The near absence of any Irish Catholic presence in 1829 is replaced

[275] Digan is recorded as marrying his wife Hannah Turner in 1900 at the Dominican Holy Cross Priory in Leicester - 1900, Dec, Leicester, 7a 663. Digan is also an exception to the rule of only including those born in Ireland as Irishmen; this is due to his parents both being Irish and one of their children (George Cuthbert's sister) being born in Ireland.

[276] Keily was a graduate of Stoneyhurst and his obituary featured in *Stonyhurst Magazine*, March 1900, No. 108, p385

[277] John Charles MacSwiney is recorded in the 1911 census as being a Roman Catholic – Census of Ireland, 1911, Roscommon, Boyle Urban, Sligo Road, House 5, John Charles MacSwiney

[278] Michael James Kenny was, like Patrick Dwyer, a former member of the rank and file who was promoted to officer and retired at the rank of captain – Census of Ireland, 1911, Tipperary, Kilvemnon, Poulacapple West, House 18, Michael James Kenny

by the middle of the Nineteenth century with a largely irregular pattern scattered across the officer ranks, yet only with the very last decades is it possible to identify a regular presence traversing most officer ranks, which is nevertheless, small.

3.3: The 102nd and 103rd – The Royal Dublin Fusiliers

The second of the 'Irish' units taken under observation is rendered peculiar by virtue of its formation. The Royal Dublin Fusiliers, upon its creation in 1881, was formed from the merger of two Regiments which had formerly been part of the East India Company's military forces and had only come under crown control in 1858 in the wake of the Indian Mutiny and were only enumerated as part of the British Army establishment in 1862. As a result, the officer lists for the Royal Bombay and Royal Madras Fusiliers are studied from 1869 onwards. In order to gain some sense of the officer presence in previous years, lists have been drawn from the 1855 'East India Register and Army List.' It should be noted that the units in question were 'European' regiments of the East India Company, and so recruited their rank and file from amongst the white population of the British Empire, as distinct from the many other company troops which recruited rank and file from the Indian population. Of the two units, the 102nd Regiment of Foot (Royal Madras Fusiliers), formerly known as the 'Honourable East India Company 1st Madras European Fusiliers,' was formed in 1742 and counted amongst its honours the battles of Arcot, Plassey and Lucknow. When taken onto the British establishment in the 1860s it was enumerated as the 102nd, a number which had previously been held from 1794-5 by the 102nd Regiment of Foot (Irish Rangers), raised by Eyre Power Trench, a Connaught landowner.[279] The 103rd Regiment, created from the '1st Bombay (Fusiliers) European' fought at the battles of Plassey and Multan, whilst being able to claim an ancestry of some two hundred years, having been formed in 1662 to garrison Bombay; at that point a newly gifted territory given as dowry in the marriage of Charles II to Catherine of Braganza. Both units would remain on the British establishment under their formal Indian designations until their merger and the assignment of catchment areas for recruitment in Counties Dublin, Carlow, Wicklow and Kildare.

[279] *London Gazette,* 7th January 1794, p24

The names contained in the 'East India Register and Army List' for 1855 for the 1st Bombay (Fusiliers) European Regiment are almost exclusively British, with one possible Irish Catholic in the form of Surgeon D. Costello. There is a similar disposition present in the 1st Madras (Fusiliers) European Regiment, with no evidence for even a potential Irish Catholic amongst the officers. The officer list for 1869 also betrays nothing of the future purported Irish credentials for the unit, including no evident Irish Catholics amongst the 'line' officers of the unit. However, Quartermaster Thomas Moore is an Irish Catholic,[280] and was promoted from the rank and file,[281] perhaps in no small part due to his extensive services in the Burmese War of 1852-53 and the Indian Mutiny.[282] Moore's presence may well be a reflection of a substantial Irish presence remaining within the rank and file of the Regiment,[283] which had in fact produced two Irish winners of the Victoria Cross (Private John Ryan and Private Thomas Duffy) during the Indian Mutiny. Similarly, the 103rd Regiment shows little evidence of an Irish Catholic presence in 1869, with the rather plausible exception of Quartermaster William Daly, who like Moore, was a veteran of extensive years and promoted from the ranks.[284] Records from 1879 show no new Irish Catholic officers joining the regiment, and there appears to be a diminution in their presence with the retirement of Moore.

By 1890, perhaps owing to the reorganisation of the unit as the Royal Dublin Fusiliers, there is apparently a far stronger Anglo-Irish contingent amongst the officers of the unit. Most surprising is the presence of Major Maurice Charles O'Connell, a kinsman of Daniel O'Connell[285] but nevertheless Anglican and of Australian extraction. Even in 1899, the composition of the Fusiliers' officer corps is without any Irish Catholic presence and with the Anglo-Irish presence similarly limited. This weak presence of Anglo-Irish officers, to say nothing of the almost universal absence of Irish Catholic officers, throughout the decades

[280] See Catholic Parish Registers, The National Library of Ireland; Dublin, Ireland; Microfilm Number: *Microfilm 09492 / 06* and British India Office Ecclesiastical Returns - Marriages Transcription, Archive N-2-38, Folio 125
[281] *London Gazette,* 21st October 1862, p4990
[282] *Harts List*, 1870, p344
[283] Regimental Returns for 1863 give the unit 259 Irishmen and 283 Catholics out of a total strength of 723 men – a significant Scottish Catholic presence likely making up much of the difference between the two figures.
[284] *Harts List*, 1879, p349
[285] The Grand-father of Major O'Connell was cousin to the father of Daniel O'Connell

under study renders it very difficult to sustain the argument that one could reasonably expect to locate a significant body of Irish officers (of any religion) in a regiment, simply by virtue of an Irish regional association. Even the contention that as a regiment based on the city of Dublin and the surrounding counties, heartland of the Anglo-Irish elite, a greater number of that group might be present cannot be sustained. On the contrary, the mostly English and Scottish composition of that force remains largely unchanged, and the few avenues by which one might expect members of the rank and file to rise to officer status, that of Quartermaster remains dominated (with aforementioned exceptions) by English and Scottish names.

One possible explanation for this particular paucity of Irish Catholics amongst both the Irish Fusiliers and its antecedent units is the function those units served in India prior to the Mutiny of 1857. Although the units of the East India Company (and subsequently the British Indian Army) had a well established reputation for providing opportunities to officers lacking the pecuniary or social capital required to advance in the units of the British Army, social hierarchies could function just as strongly within the differing units of that force as between the Foot Guards and the Militia units serving in Great Britain. The units in question, the Bombay and Madras Fusiliers, although colonial units, were distinguished from many other colonial units in being 'European' units, which is to say recruited not from the native population but from the European and white émigré populations in India. Consequently, it is not difficult to imagine that the exclusivity of such units rendered them difficult prospects for Irish Catholic officers to enter into, a difficulty which could quite easily persist after the consolidation of those units into the Royal Dublin Fusiliers.

3.4: The 44th and 56th – The Essex Regiment

As a consequence of this intriguing under-representation, we are compelled to look elsewhere for potential concentrations of Irish Catholics as officers, namely, to units which are formally English in composition. The first of these units, The Essex Regiment, was formed from the merger of two regiments which had shared regional affiliation; the 44th (East Essex) Regiment of Foot and the 56th (West Essex) Regiment of Foot. The former unit served during the Napoleonic Wars in both the Peninsular Campaign under the Duke of Wellington and in the disastrous North American Campaign, which culminated in the notorious defeat at New Orleans (1815). In the decades before its merger with the 56th, the 44th fought in Burma and

India, before being annihilated during the withdrawal of British forces from Kabul at the close of the First Anglo Afghan War (1839-42). Subsequently reformed from scratch, the 44th then served at the siege of Sevastopol during the Crimean War (1853-56) before being redeployed to fight in China during the Second Opium War (1857-1862). The 56th served most of the Napoleonic Wars in relatively quiet theatres of conflict. During the Crimean War, the 56th accompanied the 44th at the siege of Sevastopol before being deployed to India, arriving following the cessation of most conflict. Following the merger of 1881, the newly formed 'Essex Regiment' was established to recruit from the county of the same name, and would be deployed in 1899 to fight in the South African War.

For the 44th (East Essex) Regiment of Foot, the army lists of 1829 and 1839 include no names which might plausibly be Irish Catholic, with the exception of Paymaster Thomas Bourke. Bourke, who undertook a long period of service starting in the latter years of the Napoleonic Wars,[286] had been promoted from the ranks. However the regimental returns show no Catholic officers at that point in the regiment's history,[287] leaving us to conclude Bourke had either conformed or was simply an Irish Protestant. The returns for the unit, stationed in Cawnpore in 1829, do much to bear out the likelihood of the latter hypothesis. Of the 1050 rank and file, no less than 818 (80.4%) were Irish, although religious figures shows a split of 346 Protestants to 704 Catholics (67%).[288] However, in contrast to the 54th and 39th, the 44th Regiment shows a considerably higher number of Catholics at the rank of Sergeant, counting thirty Catholics to twenty nine Protestants. Bourke would later die on active service during the ill-fated retreat from Kabul.

By 1849, some seven years after the almost total destruction of the regiment in Afghanistan, there are (according to regimental returns) no fewer than 6 Catholics within the regiment.[289] One can find the first verified Catholic officer in Captain Andrew Browne.[290] Quartermaster Thomas Walsh may have been Catholic, though Walsh's counterpart Quartermaster Daniel

[286] *London Gazette*, October 16-20, 1804, p1295
[287] WO 17/426 – 44th Regiment of Foot
[288] Ibid
[289] WO 17/615 – 44th Regiment of Foot
[290] Browne is recorded as being married by the Roman Catholic Dean Moyler in Dublin, 1862 – WO 76/389/2

Doherty (another ex-ranker), though Irish, was not Catholic.[291] Captains Gardiner and Massey as well as Ensign John Dunne were potential (if unlikely) Irish Catholics. But given the total number listed on the regimental return, it seems highly likely that a number of British Catholics were also serving in the regiment at this point in time. By 1849, the 44th displays several significant shifts in composition, however it must be recalled that the Battalion (along with most officers and men) had been wiped out in 1842 during the infamous 'Retreat from Kabul', immortalized in William Barnes Wollen's painting 'Last Stand of the 44th.' Of the newly reconstituted 44th, at this point on garrison duty on Malta, 738 of 1298 rank and file were Irishmen (56.8%) yet little more than a third of the unit are recorded as Catholics (37.2%).[292]

By 1859 the 44th boasted 1,227 men in total whilst stationed in Northern Madras. Of these, 516 were Irishmen (42.0%) as compared with 375 Catholics (30.5%).[293] Amongst the officers, Irish Catholic Andrew Browne can be found at relatively senior rank of Major and would in the event, assume command of the 44th during its service in China as part of the Second Opium War. A single Irish Catholic can be identified amongst the other officers during this period, Francis O'Neill as Ensign and adjutant.[294] In 1869 Browne would continue to retain his Majority of the 44th and would remain the only identifiable Catholic with the exception of Lieutenant Constantine (an Anglicisation of the traditional Maguire name Cú Connachta) Maguire.[295] By 1879, Maguire was serving as Major with the 44th, and appears to be the only Irish Catholic present.

In contrast to the limited but recognizable presence of Irish Catholic officers within the 44th, the 56th 'West Essex' Regiment of Foot is entirely shorn of any Irish Catholic presence. Regimental returns show that, despite being stationed in Newry in 1829, the 56th boasted a

[291] WO 25/632/92
[292] WO 17/615 – 44th Regiment of Foot
[293] WO 17/708 – 44th Regiment of Foot
[294] O'Neill's Irish Catholic credentials are predicated upon his previous promotion from the rank and file, *London Gazette*, 7th December 1855, p4260, and his subsequent retirement to a largely Catholic area of Colchester, England & Wales, National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills and Administrations), 1858-1966, 1973-1995 - Francis O'Neill, Death 8th October 1869, Essex, England, Probate 23rd October 1869
[295] Burnand, F.C. (1908) *The Catholic Who's Who,* London: Burns and Oates, p55

predominately British composition with 556 Englishmen and Scots to 178 Irishmen (24.1%).[296] The religious composition displays the expected distribution with 589 Protestants to 149 Catholics (20.1%), the lowest ratio seen in this study[297]. In 1829, we can identify two Irish Protestant officers who had both been drawn from Catholic stock; Captain Thomas Shuldham O'Halloran, a grandson of the Limerick born Catholic Antiquarian and advocate for Relief, Sylvester O'Halloran, and Lieutenant Roger Keating youngest son of General Sir Henry Sheehy Keating, the first Irish Catholic to rise to the rank of General officer. Sir Henry Sheehy Keating had previously led the 56th to great success whilst campaigning in the Indian Ocean. Regimental returns suggest a single Catholic officer, most likely Charles O'Connor Higgins.[298] In 1839 the unidentified Thomas G.B. McNeill, serving as Lieutenant, may be potentially an Irish Catholic, yet in the absence of any corroborating data and the equally plausible possibility of the name being Scottish, he has been discarded. By 1849, of 1,264 men just 282 are Irishmen (22.3%) and this number appears to be broadly congruent with the number of Catholics within the Regiment (21.7%).[299]

By 1859 the 56th Regiment was stationed across the Ghats Mountains in Belgaum and numbered 1081 men, of whom 377 were Irish (34.8%) yet 381 were Catholic (35.2%).[300] As with the 39th, the emergence of a class of non-Irish Catholics is readily apparent, particularly so for the Depot of the 56th which boasted 26 Catholics but only 22 Irishmen. Allowing for a continued Irish Protestant presence within the rank and file, the new, albeit small contingent appears more pronounced amongst the fresh recruits of the depot, rather than the long-serving men in India and may reflect the emergence of the second generation of Irish migrants to Britain. The lists for 1859 and 1869 reveal no further Irish Catholic officers within the regiment, with the potential exception of James McGrath, quartermaster in 1859, who must be considered highly likely to be an Irish Catholic owing to the record of two Catholic officers within the unit, and the absence of any other likely candidates.[301]

[296] WO 17/427 – 56th Regiment of Foot
[297] Ibid
[298] Ibid
[299] WO 17/616 – 56th Regiment of Foot
[300] WO 17/719 – 56th Regiment of Foot
[301] Ibid

Upon the merger of the two units in the 1880s one can clearly observe the attenuation in the already tentative Irish Catholic presence among the officers of the newly created 'Essex Regiment.' Of 74 officers in total, we can find only one Irish Catholic, Quartermaster Edward Kelly.[302] By 1899 this presence is slightly improved upon, with Irish Catholic Clement Ignatius Ryan ranking as 2nd Lieutenant;[303] however Ryan is like Kelly before him, the sole example of his class. This decline in both the number and status of Irish Catholics as well as Irish officers of all religious affiliations may well be indicative of the impact had by territorialisation of units to specific parts of the United Kingdom or of the frequently ephemeral nature of Irish Catholic presence within any single unit.

3.5: 39th and 54th – The Dorsetshire Regiment

The second of the ostensibly 'English' Regiments is The Dorsetshire Regiment, which was formed from the 39th (Dorsetshire) Regiment of Foot and the 54th (West Norfolk) Regiment of Foot. The 54th Regiment's combat experience was limited to skirmishes during the American Revolutionary War and General Abercrombie's expedition to Egypt in 1801. Long service in the Mediterranean garrisons of Malta and Gibraltar followed. The 39th (Dorsetshire) Regiment of Foot, formed in 1702, could trace a measure of Irish lineage, being formed by Richard Coote of Bellomont. Following service in South American during the Napoleonic Wars, the 39th would spend the next several decades garrisoning the Imperial frontiers. Following the merger of 1881, the newly formed 'Dorsetshire Regiment' would fight in the South African War.

The first of the two constituent units, the 39th 'Dorsetshire' Regiment of Foot, is distinguished for its near absence of any apparent Irish Catholic element within the officer corps, even more so than the regiments discussed above. The contrast with the state of the rank and file however is striking; in 1829 418 of the unit's 787 soldiers were Irishmen

[302] Census of Ireland, 1901, Dublin, Pembroke East and Donnybrook, Irishtown Cranfield Place, House 74
[303] Census of Ireland, 1911, Kildare, Morristownbiller, Ballymany, House 2

(53.1%) and 339 (43%) were Catholics. Despite their relative numerousness however, Catholics make up only 6 of the 41 Sergeants within the unit (14%).[304]

By 1839 only Quartermaster John O'Brien appears as a plausible candidate to be an Irish Catholic; he was certainly an experienced former ranker who had served for more than three decades.[305] However, the majority of non-commissioned officers (as well as other rank and file) in that unit were Protestants,[306] rendering a conclusive judgement on O'Brien's likely faith impossible. By 1849, the composition of the 39th had changed only marginally; Irishmen at this point made up a larger portion of the total, 492 out of 857 (57.4%), closely relating to the number of Catholics within the unit, some 479 out of 857 (55.8%).[307] Although the regimental returns for the 1840s do not detail religious affiliation amongst Sergeants, the numbers of Irishmen of all stripes serving in such capacities is greater than in 1829, with 58 Irishmen as compared with 45 Englishmen and Scots. In 1859, the 39th continued to demonstrate a strong showing of Irish and Catholic rank and file. Of the 1058 men, 573 counted Ireland as their place of birth (54.1%), whilst 589 professed the Catholic faith (54.8%).[308] The fact that the number of Catholics is in excess of the number of Irishmen is indicative of both the resurgence of English Catholicism and significantly, the impact of continued Irish Catholic migration to England, in creating a new demographic of Catholic English and Scottish soldiers. This trend is applicable to the officer class also, as the unit records one Catholic officer amongst its service companies, but also one Catholic amongst the depot which boasted only English and Scottish officers. Although it is possible that William Blennerhassett (itself a common Anglo-Irish name) and J.B. Corballis, could be an Irish Catholic officer, it may be more likely that the two Catholics listed are British Catholic officers.

The 54th displays a similar paucity in 1829, with records listing only a single Catholic office.[309] As examination has not revealed any of the regiment's Irish officers being Catholic,

[304] WO17/425 – 39th Regiment of Foot
[305] *Harts List*, 1844, p185
[306] WO 17/425 – 39th Regiment of Foot
[307] WO 17/614 – 39th Regiment of Foot
[308] WO 17/708 – 39th Regiment of Foot
[309] WO 17/427 – 54th Regiment of Foot

we are forced to conclude that the officer in question was British or one of the small number of foreign-born officers who are listed in the regiment. In 1829 the unit was stationed in Cawnpore with 947 men, boasting a strong English contingent of 474 rankers compared with 66 Scots and 408 Irishmen (42.1%).[310] However, within this unit, the disparity of religious affiliation is greater, with 576 Protestants to 285 Catholics (33.1%), whereas amongst Sergeants, we can count 53 Protestants to just 9 Catholics (14.5%).[311] By 1849, the rank and file continue to display many of the statistical hallmarks of 1829; of 573 men serving, 277 are Irishmen (48.3%) and 214 are Catholic (37.3%).[312] By 1859, we can note the presence of Ensign Dudley B. Coppinger, an Irish Catholic.[313] This Irish Catholic presence further strengthens in 1879 with William Walter Patrick Joyce ranking as a captain.[314] This apparent increase in officers is paradoxically coincident with a decline in Irish soldiers serving in the rank and file; of 1059 men in 1859, just 394 (37.2%) are of Irish birth, whilst just 267 are Catholic (25.2%).[315] In the newly combined Dorsetshire Regiment there remains little evidence of a significant Irish presence; in 1890 we can find no such officer, whilst by 1899 the only example of an Irish Catholic is Quartermaster John Kearney.[316]

3.6: The West India Regiment

In an attempt to further elaborate upon the dispersal of Irish Catholic officers in the British Army, a cursory examination of the 1st and 2nd West Indian Regiments (later to become just the 'West India Regiment') was conducted over the decades of 1859 and 1890. The motivations behind this examination were multiple. West India units for most of the nineteenth century (having been established formally in 1795) remained undesirable postings (as reflected in the price of commissions) largely limited to performing for garrison duty in an inhospitable climate and being comprised predominately of free black soldiers (seen as more resistant to the environment). What little deployment overseas existed was predominately to newly established British African colonies in Sierra Leone and Ghana,

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[310] Ibid
[311] Ibid
[312] Excluding Depot Reference for 54th 1849 – WO 17/615 – 54th Regiment of Foot
[313] Census of Ireland, 1901, Cork, Blackrock, Mahon, House 34
[314] *Freeman's Journal*, 1893, October 23rd, p1 - Joyce would end up marrying Josephine Wybault, daughter of Commissary-General Joseph William Wybault
[315] WO 17/709 – 54th Regiment of Foot
[316] Kearney is recorded as marrying in the Roman Catholic Church, Enniskillen, in 1899 – WO 76/39/7

where the 1st West India Regiment would earn distinction fighting during the various Anglo-Ashanti Wars. Furthermore, initial examination revealed a significant number of potential Irish names and recent historiography has elucidated the previously unknown story of the Irish Catholic presence within the Islands of the British West Indies.[317] Thus by examining this less prestigious assignment, it may be possible to verify the thesis that Irish Catholic officers remained underperformers due to a bias which saw them directed towards unattractive postings.

Nevertheless, a one off examination of the 1st West India Regiment's officer list in 1859 reveals a surprisingly sizeable Irish contingent including the Anglo-Irish Luke Smyth O'Connor and Henry D. O'Halloran both serving as Lieutenant Colonels, Edward Trevor Dunn, C. Lionel J. FitzGerald and Arthur W. Crombie Nowlan serving as Lieutenants and Cornelius O'Callaghan as Ensign. However, only a single Irish Catholic can be found in the person of John Richard O'Meara Lawlor, serving as Lieutenant.[318] By contrast 2nd West India Regiment displays an even larger (in relative terms) Irish Catholic contingent with Lieutenants James Lambert Byrne[319] and Martin Lynch.[320] Two further officers, Michael John Macnamara and Quartermaster Thomas Kelly are also recorded, but is has not been possible to identify their religious affiliation. By 1890 however, as with other units, this presence is considerably reduced; in the combined 'West India Regiment' we can count only one confirmed Irish Catholic, 2nd Lieutenant John Henry Francis Hutchison Cloran.[321] A further Catholic may exist in the form of Quartermaster Patrick Kelly, but it has not been possible to confirm this.

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[317] Rogers, N. (2007) 'The Irish in the Caribbean 1641-1837' in *Irish Migration Studies in Latin America*, Vol. 5 No. 3, November

[318] Institut Généalogique Drouin; Montreal, Quebec, Canada - Baptême (Baptism), 1834, Quebec (Quebec City), Québec (Quebec), Notre-Dame - John Richard O'Meara Lawlor

[319] The clergyman officiating Byrne's marriage in Demerara was the Catholic Reverend Dr. Hynes, who had previously provided ministrations in the British Ionian Islands, see White, C.I. (1843) *The United States Catholic Magazine*, Baltimore: J. Murphy, pp754-755. See also records of officers marriages WO 25/3241/951

[320] See the record of officers marriages WO 25/3242/395, Lynch's marriage was conducted by Fr Joseph Howell, part of the Catholic mission established on Jamaica in the first half of the nineteenth century. For more see Osborne, F.J. (1977) *History of the Catholic Church in Jamaica*, Chicago: Loyola University Press, p226

[321] Census of Ireland, 1901, Dublin, Pembroke West, Pembroke Road (Part of), House 521

3.7: Overarching Trends

With the collection of these findings it is possible to assemble evidence for three over-arching trends. The first of these is the overwhelming under-representation of Irish Catholics as officers in the British Army both as a proportion of all officers and as a proportion of all Irish officers. The results of this process of analysis have demonstrated that in most instances the total number of Irish Catholic officers is only a small proportion of the total number of prospective names, typically between five and ten per cent, with the remainder being exclusively Anglican or Presbyterian. Statistical findings suggest the over-representation of the Anglo-Irish population in the British officer corps, but the numbers of Irish Catholic officers when taken in terms of the total number of officers serving within a regiment at any one point, suggests a significant under-representation. The question of under or over representation is predicated at first upon the population totals for Ireland and Great Britain during this period and secondly on the relative proportions of Catholics and Protestants. Later in this study, the question of refining this methodology to locate more specifically the sources of potential officers for a nineteenth century European Army, be that one of social class or material wealth, will be examined in more detail. Graphical representation of the numbers set out previously is included below. Each table lists the total number of a specific group as expressed as a percentage of the total sum within the British Army, punctuated by ten year intervals, covering the statistical data for the forty year period for which we have both regimental and total returns.

Table 3: Irishmen as a percentage of all rank and file

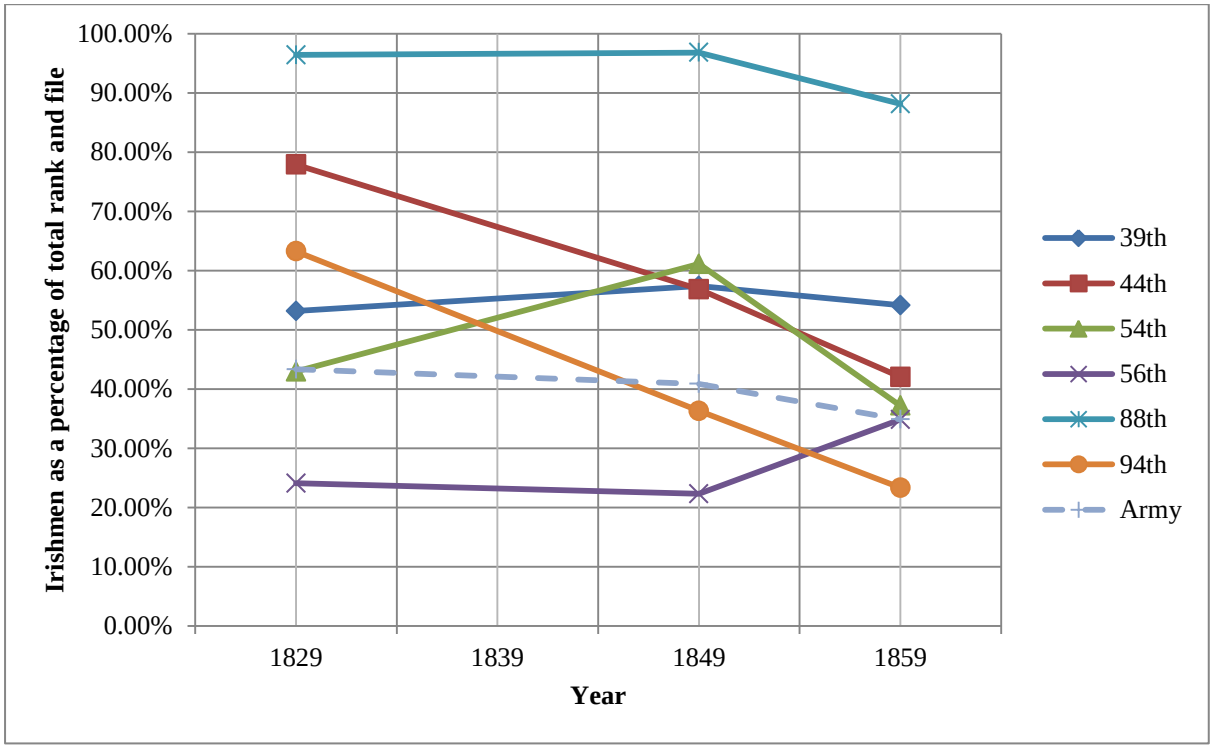
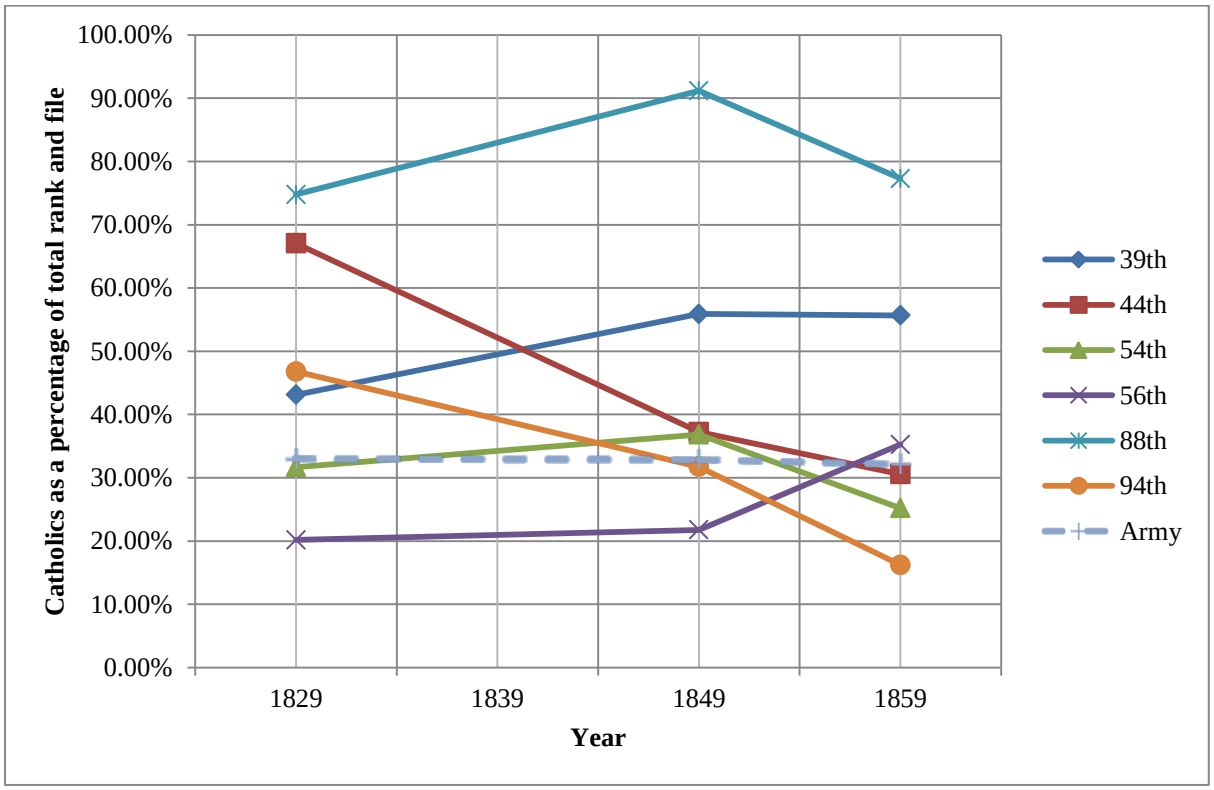
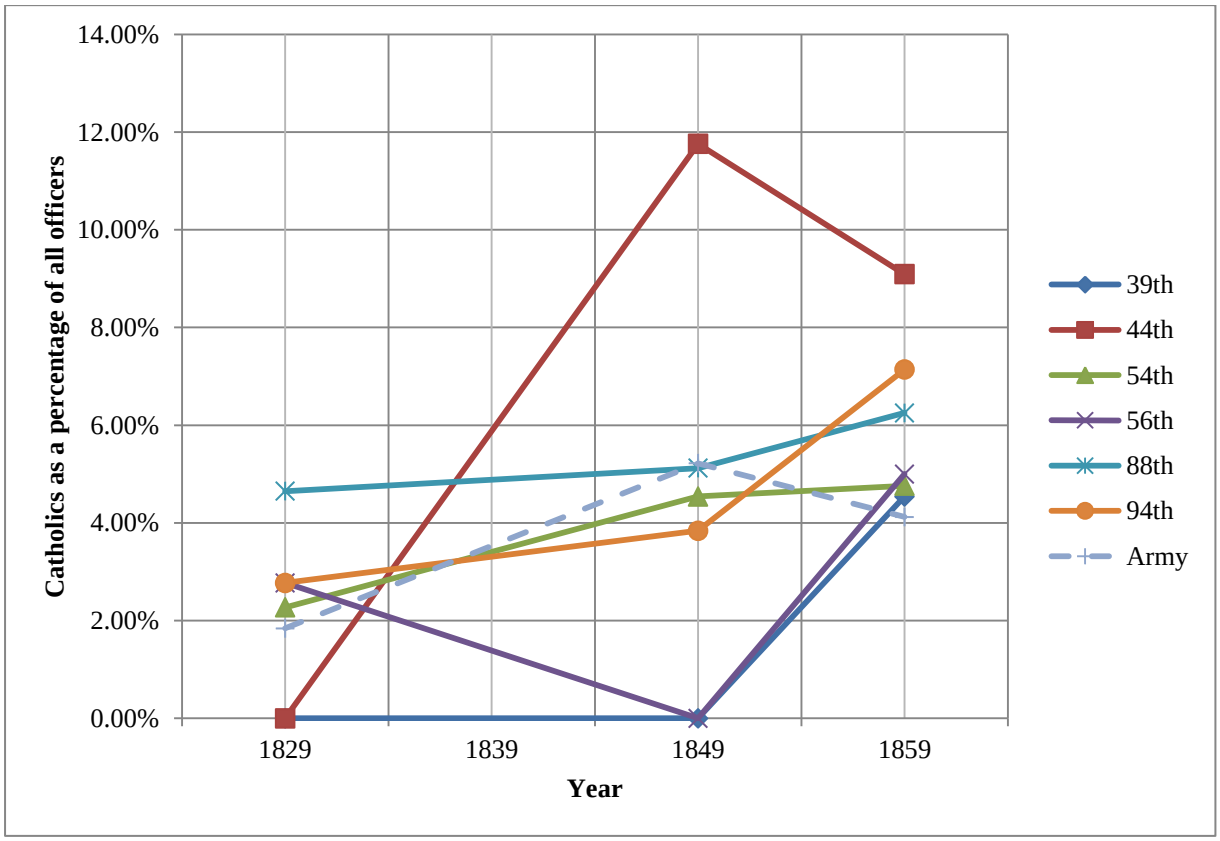


Table 4: Catholics as a percentage of all rank and file



In the absence of published figures detailing the religious breakdown of the officer corps post 1865, rough projections arising from the figures compiled previously will be provided here. Taking the six regiments for which we have figures available for the years 1829, 1849 and 1859 and comparing that figure with the figures for the aggregated army reveals the following. In 1829 the mean of our six regiments was 2.08% whilst the army as a whole was 1.84%, in 1849 those figures were 4.21% and 5.22% and in 1859 they were 6.13% and 4.12% respectively. The average of the three army figures and the three regimental mean figures stand at 3.73% and 4.14% respectively (a variation of roughly ten per cent) but nonetheless in the absence of alternative figures, a decent estimation of the total number of Catholic officers within the British Army.

Table 5: Catholics as a percentage of all officers



Applying the same methodology to the latter four decades but instead counting the individuals uncovered in this research (and including those identified as likely to be Catholic) rather than all the Catholics of the army, suggests a peculiar new trend. In 1869 the mean figure stands at 2.75%, followed by 3.74% in 1879, 1.2% in 1890 and 3.85% in 1899. Although the figures provided could not match the accuracy of a rigorous project of quantification, they are not without some corroboration. As stated earlier, only one per cent of the great public schools which provided the army three-fifths of its officers were Catholic establishments.[322] Although the figure for 1890 is perhaps reflective of the limitations of the data rather than a substantial downturn in the number of Irish Catholic officers, there may have been a decline in such men owing to the outbreak of the Land War. If we set aside that figure as anomalous, it is apparent that by the latter decades of the period there is a small but growing Irish Catholic presence in the officer corps, although it is remarkable that their presence within the officer corps should remain relatively low. Nevertheless, it is difficult to draw detailed conclusions from such provisional figures, and the issue suffers for want of a significant project of tabulation.

In order to specifically identify and measure the extent of under-representation it is necessary to examine the raw demographic data concerning the totals of population for England (and Wales), Scotland and Ireland. Census data (a not entirely unproblematic source) from 1831 puts the total Irish population at 7,767 (thousands), the total English (and Welsh) population at 13,897 (thousands) and the total Scottish population at 2,364 (thousands) for a total Great British population of 16,261 and a total United Kingdom population at 24,028.[323] Such numbers would place the total Irish population at 32.3% of the total for the United Kingdom and the percentage of Irish Catholics at perhaps 24.22.[324] By the midpoint of this study, 1871, those figures are for England (and Wales) 22,712, Ireland, 5,412 and Scotland 3,360, reaching some 31,484 thousands in total. Such numbers place Ireland's total population at almost half the 1831 figure, 17.1% with Irish Catholics making up perhaps 12.9% of the total. At this point it must be recalled that significant migration from Ireland to Great Britain following the Great Famine would result in the emergence of a new class, British Catholic of

[322] Reader, At *Duty's Call*, p90
[323] Woods, R. (1995) *The Population of Britain in the Nineteenth Century,* Cambridge University Press
[324] Calculation drawn from 1911 Census percentages for religious breakdown in Ireland

Irish descent, a demographic grouping immaterial to our purposes. In 1901, significant demographic shifts meant Ireland provided just 10.7% of the entire UK population, with the number of Catholics living in Ireland being roughly 7.81%.

By comparison, figures for the total numbers of non-commissioned officers and men show a different story; in 1830 42,897 Irishmen were enlisted in the British army, a full 42.2% of the total for the rank and file, roughly 10% in excess of its proportion of the total population. Even if we reduce this number to exclude Irish Protestants,[325] this would still suggest a full 33.7% of the British Army consisted of Irish Catholic soldiery. By 1872, army figures suggest Irishmen made up just under a quarter of the British Army's manpower, being 24.4% of the total – still a significant over-representation for the 17% of the total population Ireland provided to the United Kingdom at that point – whilst the proportion of the army's manpower supplied by Catholic is some 24.2%, a number clearly indicative of the rising role of non-Irish Catholics under arms. In 1899, on the eve of the South African War, the percentage of Irishmen in British service had roughly halved once more to 13.2%, still over-representative of the 10.7% of the UK population that Ireland provided, yet clearly no longer able to account for the totality of Catholics in British service, which stood at 18.1% at this point in time. Across this period it can be observed that Ireland's representation within the rank and file is roughly one third greater than would be expected from its proportion of the total population. The transition away from this over-representation to an under-representation begins in earnest only after the South African War, culminating in 1911 when Ireland's demographic contribution to the United Kingdom is a 9.7% and its contribution to army manpower is lower at just 9.2%. By comparison, at this same point in time, the number of Catholics within the Army stood at 14.7%, suggesting as many as half the number of Catholics under arms was provided by England, Wales and Scotland - the beneficiaries of a constant stream of Irish migration throughout the period under examination. The second trend which can be observed from the statistical detail provided thus far is the growth in the overall numbers of Irish Catholic officers in the latter decades of the study. From a single officer in 1829 to eight in 1899 across the total of the regiments studied, it is readily apparent that although the Catholic

[325] This is based on a calculation of Commissioners for Public Instruction in 1834 which maintained that Catholics made up just over 80% of the total population of Ireland and with Census data from 1901 suggesting the total Catholic population of Ireland at 73% of the total, suggesting a total in 1871 of 76%.

presence in both cases is marginal, the trend is for an increase over the decades. This increase is also marked by a concomitant advance through the ranks by Irish Catholic officers, from a single Ensigncy in 1829 to include a Majority and a Captaincy by 1899. Additionally, by the conclusion of this study and in spite of the small numbers, no less than two of the officers identified had risen to commander their Regiments on the battlefield – Andrew Browne during the Opium Wars and Maurice George Moore during the South African War.

Thirdly, we can note the shift of Irish Catholic officers from being dispersed across multiple regiments toward being concentrated in those Regiments in later years with a territorially Irish affiliation. Of the aforementioned eight Irish Catholic officers recorded in 1899, no less than five are present within the Connaught Rangers. Of the remaining three, one is quarter-master John Kearney of the Dorsetshire Regiment, an Irish emigrant to England promoted from the ranks. The shift away from a disparate Irish Catholic presence spread across the Regiments of the Army (often only by virtue of familial connection to that regiment) toward a more regularized and uniform concentration within certain regiments is representative of the increasing professionalization of the armed forces. Specifically, in reference to the continual move away from more socially selective methods of advancement such as the purchase system and the importance of family ties. In light of this development, it is clearly possible to identify Irish Catholics as beneficiaries of the shift away from the more traditional practices in officer selection.

Section Four: Perceptions of Irish Catholics within the officer class

4.1: The United Service Journal

As evidenced by the previous section, within the line units of the British Army, there was only a very marginal presence of Irish Catholics amongst the officer ranks. This is, by the most basic metric of population, a significant under-representation, spanning a low level of typically 1-5 per cent, at a time when Irish Catholics proportion of the total UK population ranged from between 28 per cent at the start of the 1800s to roughly 9% by 1901. Moreover, where those Irish Catholic officers have been identified within nominally Irish or non-Irish units, they tend to occupy the junior officer ranks of ensign (later second lieutenant) and lieutenant, as well as the positions of Quartermaster. In most cases, the number of Irish Catholics within a unit is exceeded by the total of Irish Protestant officers, indicative of the very strong and very durable Anglo-Irish martial tradition. We should be careful to recall however, that in all cases examined the numbers of Irish officers of any religious stripe is far outweighed by the number of British officers. Given the stark under-representation of Irish Catholic officers could the explanation be in prejudices emanating from the officer body?

Given the significant presence of Irish Catholics within the soldiery of the British Army, one might be tempted to ignore the argument that Catholicism or Irish-ness was seen as an intrinsically dangerous element which must be guarded against – as had been the theory behind the exclusionary legislation of the eighteenth century. Just as no officer could expect to escape scrutiny in regards his credentials as a gentleman, an officer's religious faith or even merely his attitudes towards questions of faith could prove a point of contention. As explored in Section Two, admission of Catholics to the Army had only transpired after a prolonged period of dispute and even during the period of study the British Army did not remain inert in religious matters; the rise of Methodism is closely associated with a newfound interest in the well-being and conditions of private soldiers, whilst officers like Henry Havelock and Charles Gordon embodied newfound Evangelical and Baptist sentiments.[326] As

[326] Havelock was dubbed the 'Hero of Lucknow' and recalled primarily for his role in the seizure of Cawnpore during the Indian Mutiny. Gordon is most notorious for his ill-fated leadership of the defense of Khartoum; he also befriended Irish Catholic journalist for the London Times – Frank Power – who was delighted by Gordon's apparent lack of Anti-

this study concerns itself with the story of British Army officers both Irish and Catholic, it is necessary to consider not only the vastly different set of circumstances that any potential officer would be expected to navigate, but also the specific and unique challenges that those officers of both the Catholic faith and an Irish birth would be required to surmount moreover. The often rapid evolution of requirements and perceptions placed upon British Army officers was mirrored in the new and evolving attitudes found in British society toward its Irish and Catholic citizens respectively. Although a myriad of attitudes and prejudices had evolved in the long period of English/British rule in Ireland, the circumstances of the nineteenth century are unique in both the significant movement of Irish persons to England and Scotland, and the concurrent resurgence of England's Catholic community, largely (but not exclusively) a product of that same movement as well as a home grown interest in Catholicism in Anglican circles. The persistence of these prejudices long after the end of official exclusion is a promising means by which to explain the apparent failure of Irish Catholics as a class to permeate into the officer corps in the numbers that their percentage of the population would suggest.

As evidenced earlier, successive British governments were eager to tap the reserve of Irish manpower when circumstances presented themselves. However there existed manifold distinctions between the duties of a private soldier (typically under the close supervision of his officers) and the considerably more responsible and independent role of leading those same men as an officer and a gentleman. One can readily discern the difficulties under which an individual operating under commonly held conceptions of Irish passions and Catholic subservience (the same set of virtues which were ideally suited to the image of a member of the rank and file) would find great difficulty in serving as an officer. Attitudes towards Catholics as officers could not be extricated from wider preconceptions surrounding Catholics under other terms; Catholics as non-conforming subjects of the King, Catholics as worshippers of a 'foreign' faith, Catholics as agents of a regressive and backward religious movement.

Catholic prejudice. See also, Berenson, E. (2012) *Heroes of Empire: Five Charismatic Men and the Conquest of Africa,* Berkeley: UCLA Press, p107

To answer this question we'll be consulting those men who were themselves officers and specifically the material that they submitted for publication, not simply in the public sphere, but ideally within the realms of military literature. For this, we must turn to the premier institution of British military authorship during this period, the *United Service Magazine.* The journal in question, founded in 1827 as the *Naval and Military Magazine*, endured until 1920 under various names, being known primarily as (from 1829) the *United Service Journal & Naval and Military Magazine*, (from 1843) *Colburn's United Service Magazine & Naval and Military Journal* and ultimately (from 1890) *The United Service Magazine.* This journal served as a forum for the discussion of military matters, in keeping with the increasing professionalization of the era. A separate organization, formed in 1831 from a cadre of subscribers to *Colburn's United Service Journal*, was named the 'Naval and Military Museum' before being redubbed the 'United Services Institution' in 1839 (with no formal connection to Colburn's publication) and then eventually in 1860 becoming under royal patronage the 'Royal United Services Institution' or RUSI which endures today. The formal publication of a journal on the part of the Institution began only in 1857, just prior to royal patronage and like the Institution continues today. Through an exhaustive process of examination of the United Service Magazine (whose output traverses the length of our period) it is possible to assembly a thematic evaluation of the leading issues pertaining to Irish Catholics serving as British Army officers. These themes, specifically the questions surrounding the presence of anti-Catholic bigotry in the Army, practical policies which detracted from such bigotry and the appearance of a 'Celtic Archetype', all hold significance in attempting to explain the relative lack of success amongst Irish Catholics in rising through the officer corps.

Although the *Journal* is of great value as a catalogue of officer's attitudes and opinions, and serves as a useful framing device for many of the issues which were of concerns to British officers (and wider British society) during this period, we must be careful not to be bound by the prism it presents. As a published work, the *Journal* possessed its own character and evolved over time from a hodgepodge attempt by well-meaning novices, to a polished and sophisticated military publication. Thus, whilst much of the material of early years includes officers' reflections and ruminations about many of the crucial issues of the day, by later decades this tendency largely gives way to more technical works regarding the military craft.

In order to better assess the material of the *Journal* we should first consider the status Irish Catholics held in nineteenth century British society.

4.2: The position of Irish Catholicism in Victorian Britain

As stated in the introduction to this work, Ireland occupied a thoroughly liminal space within the British Empire – it existed as both part of the Imperial metropole as well as the very first colony; as both a supplier of men and material as well as a territory requiring garrisoning and hosting insurgent efforts; as being both on the correct side of the 'colour divide' on the imperial frontier, but being the subject of racialized prejudice and parody at home. However, British identity was, in the view of Linda Colley, one that was perhaps most intimately identified with the Protestant religion;

> Protestantism was the dominant component of British religious life. Protestantism coloured the way that Britons approached and interpreted their material life. Protestantism determined how most Britons viewed their politics. And uncompromising Protestantism was the foundation on which their state was explicitly and unapologetically based.[327]

Despite any doctrinal differences, the most important gulf was between Protestant and Catholic.[328] As we have seen in Section Two, it would take the unprecedented threat of the French Revolution in order to uproot the stale corpus of Penal Laws and make 'de jure' what had been 'de facto' for some time. By contrast, attitudes towards Catholics had historically been rooted in a tradition of mutual antipathy, which by 1829, was almost three hundred years in length. We should however, be careful not to presume this vision of Protestantism was strictly defined along denominational lines. Prior to the repeal of the Penal Laws, even non-conformist Protestants could count on many of the same rights and privileges as those belonging to the established church, in a way that Roman Catholics could not. We must recall that although Victorian Britain did experience a surge in Evangelical religious beliefs, this

[327] Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation,* p18
[328] Ibid, p19

was not congruent with an enormous shift towards Evangelical denominations. For most Protestants, any upsurge in Evangelical and devotional feeling continued to be expressed along the traditional denominational lines (Church of England, Scottish Kirk). A measure of difficulty remains in assessing with any accuracy the numbers of Anglican, Presbyterian and other Protestant denominations in Victorian Britain owing to the aforementioned reluctance of governments to inquire on the basis of religion (outside of Ireland). One estimate for the change in denomination demographics would put the number of non-Anglican Protestants in England and Wales at 20% in 1840, with that number rising by 1914 to 28% - though the latter is a figure for the entirety of Great Britain and is distorted by the incorporation of Scotland's large Presbyterian population.[329] Although the proportion of the population adhering to the Church of England does decline from 77% in 1840 (in England and Wales) to just 61% by 1914 (for all Great Britain), it remains by far the largest Christian denomination within the country, with much of the decline attributable in part to the rise of Catholicism on the island, from just 3% in 1840 to 10% in 1914.

Notwithstanding this largely static pattern of denominational affiliation, the Victorian period was underlined by the significant spectre of religious fervour and evangelical animus which transcended the mundane doctrinal differences between various Protestant groupings.[330] What emerged from the 1830s onwards was a new focus on public euergetism, philanthropy, missionary efforts and the performance of 'good works' that were for the Evangelical element of a society, necessary demonstrations of moral rectitude, piety and personal salvation.[331] In the public sphere, this new attitude of charity and philanthropy provided much of the ethical basis for state intervention and legal pursuit of new moral campaigns such as educating the poor and prosecuting public vice. The most famous example of such campaigning, namely the abolition of the slave trade, had its germination in the Quaker movement during the early 1780s.[332] Parliamentary forays into the realm of private industry furnished Britain with much of its earliest social protection legislation during the 1830s and

[329] Field, Clive. C (2014) *Measuring religious affiliation in Great Britain: the 2011 census in historical and methodological context,* Published Online in Religion, Volume 44 Issue 3
[330] Wallis, *Popular Anti-Catholicism in Mid-Victorian Britain,* p2
[331] Humphreys, R. (1995) *Sin, Organized Charity and the Poor Law in Victorian England,* London: Macmillan Press p4
[332] Frost, J.W. (2014) 'Why Quakers and Slavery, Why not more Quakers?' in Carey, B. & Plank, G. (eds.) (2014) *Quakers and Abolition,* Champaign: University of Illinois Press

40s in the form of various 'Mine' and 'Factory' Acts, instituting limits on working hours, requiring basic conditions and providing for a minimum age of employment. Comparison can readily be drawn between these attempts at improving the lot of the average worker and concurrent attempts to improve the material lot of the private soldier occurring during the same period. Across British society, a new sense of public improvement and reform was taking root. In one view, this religious spirit was an essential part of the lived experience of the era, Dennis Paz writes;

> 'Anti-Catholicism was an integral part of what it meant to be a Victorian. Anti-Catholicism ultimately rested on the Black Legend: the hoary myths of Bloody Mary, the Armada, the Gunpowder Plot, and the Glorious Revolution, but the developments of the first half of the nineteenth century created a distinct climate especially conducive to anti-Catholicism.'[333]

In light of these attitudes and spirit of moral crisis it becomes possible to identify the base from which historical anti-Catholic prejudices acquired a new relevance in the Victorian era. Although the Evangelical movement remained a minority in terms of followers, its outsized influence permitted it to become what Frank Wallis has termed the 'dominant social and religious ethos of the age.'[334] The significance of this ethos is in its provision, to what Wallis terms 'Ultra-Protestants',[335] a means by which to engage in a spectrum of Anti-Catholic activities. These activities included anything from the writing of pamphlets and petitioning parliament to acts of violence and rioting. Parliament itself also served as the venue for prolonged and often fiery debate about the return of Catholicism to Britain as well as surrounding the treatment of the faith in Ireland, where it continued to constitute the majority belief. The intrusion of the state into the public sphere for the purposes of protecting the physical health and well-being of its citizens implicitly raised the question as to whether the state should undertake a campaign for their moral well-being. Throughout The *Journal* a recurrent theme is the moral well-being of troops. Such moral concerns, combined with the

[333] Paz, *Popular Anti-Catholicism in Mid-Victorian England,* pp 299-300
[334] Wallis, *Popular Anti-Catholicism in Mid-Victorian Britain,* p4
[335] Wallis defines 'Ultra-Protestant' as a Protestant of any number of denominations (though largely Evangelical) involved in campaigning against Catholic institutions or Catholics as a group.

simultaneous arrival of a new visible Catholic community, the return of Papal Hierarchy in Great Britain and growing consumption of print media, provided the necessary perquisites (and perhaps rendered inevitable) of the religious maelstrom and anti-Catholic sentiments of the period.

This new Evangelical ethos manifested itself in a number of anti-Catholic endeavours. In Parliament, there remained vociferous opposition (particularly amongst Conservatives) to the dangers of Catholicism and sustained legislative efforts to impede the expansion of Catholic life within the United Kingdom. These included opposition to measures such as the Catholic Emancipation Act (1829), earlier attempts to normalize the position of Irish Catholic officers (1813 Catholic Relief Act),[336] removal of the Anglican Church as the official church of Ireland (1869) as well as broader resistance to concessions to the Catholic population in Ireland.[337] Outside the realm of officialdom in popular society, and especially within the voluminous productions of religious periodicals during the period,[338] anti-Catholic sentiment was levelled at developments such as the return of Catholic Episcopy in 1851,[339] the funding of St. Patricks College Maynooth (one of the few Catholic Seminaries in the United Kingdom) and even opposition to the presence of cloistered life in the form of Convents and Nunneries.

Yet consideration of the range of anti-Catholic sentiments and measures undertaken provides an incomplete picture of the position of Irish Catholicism in Britain during this period, and particularly its change over time. More than a simple sectarian division, Protestantism was key to the articulation of a vision of Britain which saw itself both as a Protestant Israel, peculiarly 'twinned with liberty', and a bastion of reason.[340] Across British society, the public perception of the Catholic Church and especially certain subgroups of the Church (most noticeably the Society of Jesus or 'Jesuits') continued to be with the forces of repressiveness

[336] (53 Geo. 3, c. 128) *An Act to relieve from the Operation of the Statute of the Twenty fifth Year of the Reign of King Charles the Second, intituled An Act for preventing Dangers which may happen from Popish Recusants* – Parliament of the United Kingdom
[337] This remains de-emphasized given the potential for confusion between anti-Catholic sentiment and opposition to Irish nationalism
[338] Wallis, *Popular Anti-Catholicism in Mid-Victorian Britain*, p11
[339] As promulgated by Pope Pius XI in the Papal Bull *Universalis Ecclesia*
[340] Colley, *Britons Forging a Nation*, pXXI

and obscurantism. As we shall see, repeatedly in the *Journal,* Catholic priests and prelates were objects of scorn as potential instigators of dissent whilst the wider institution of the Catholic Church was regarded as a key cause for the backwardness of much of Europe. Despite the initial period of civic indulgence and principled toleration, which had occurred in the United Kingdom during and after the Napoleonic Wars, by the 1820s and 30s this had given way to a sense of suspicion and contempt. Though it could be argued that Catholics in the United Kingdom were entitled to the same civil protections as their fellow citizens, this did by no means necessitate any enthusiasm or warmth on the part of wider society for this small and potentially dangerous faith. On the contrary, the expanding role of Catholicism and attempts to equalize its status under the law provided an opportunity for more zealous Protestants to defend the status quo and 'their constitution, or at least the concept of one.' [341]

The 'return' of Catholicism to Britain was related in no small part with the mass migration of Irish Catholics into the various urban centres of the country. Indeed, the persistent nature of this mass movement appears to have been significant in sustaining anti-Catholic sentiments.[342] [343] Yet some debate remains as to just how tightly correlated Irish Catholic migration was with the presence of anti-Catholic bigotry.[344] Anti-Catholic prejudice was also complicated by regional differences, as well as differences in class. Whereas the intelligentsia of Glasgow, Birmingham and Bristol might have taken more easily to anti-Catholic sentiment, those of Leicester, Norwich, Edinburgh and London appear to have adopted a more relaxed attitude.[345] Yet in general, the views of the middle class and their publications tended to be more nuanced than those of the working class.[346] Nevertheless, within wider society, the period in question involved a new visibility of Catholicism in Great Britain, owed also to the re-establishment of Episcopacy and the Oxford Anglo-Catholic movement. Combined with the conclusion of a long history of Anglo-French conflicts, it was now

[341] Wallis, *Popular Anti-Catholicism in Mid-Victorian Britain,* p157
[342] O'Gorman, F. & Blackstock, A (2014) ' Loyalism and the British World: Overviews, Themes and Linkages' in O'Gorman, F. & Blackstock, A (eds.) *Loyalism and the Formation of the British World*, London: Boydell Press, p9
[343] Colley, *Britons,* p335
[344] Paz, *Popular Anti-Catholicism in Mid-Victorian England,* p300
[345] Colley, *Britons,* p338
[346] Paz, *Popular Anti-Catholicism in Mid-Victorian England,* p59

possible for the Irishman to replace the Frenchman as the model of Catholic barbarity.[347] The pointed return of Catholics to not just a presence within British society, but increasingly a visible and powerful presence (relative to their former exclusion if not relative to the rest of society) is not an entirely unique process, but instead accompanied by similar liberalising trends towards other religious minorities such as Jews and non-believers. The large scale migration of Irish Catholics to Britain during the nineteenth century tended to be concentrated in the poorer quarters of larger cities which occasioned further intermixing of the ideas of Catholicism, poverty and 'foreignness' in additional to the usual negative stereotypes which accrue following a mass movement of deprived persons. The contemporary commentator, Thomas Carlyle, went so far as to enunciate the condition of 1840s Britain as one of a diseased body and the body of Irish migration being its 'pestilence.'[348]

This visceral and palpable fear of a regressive Catholic presence within Britain provided a nexus where traditional forms of anti-Catholic bigotry could persist even in liberal minded citizens. William Ewart Gladstone, four-time Prime Minister of the UK and leader of the Liberal Party for nearly three decades, delivered several stinging rebukes to the doctrine of Papal Infallibility in 1874 and 1875, lamenting intrusiveness on the part of Rome in stating 'But it is the peculiarity of Roman theology that by thrusting itself into the temporal domain, it naturally, and even necessarily, comes to be a frequent theme of political discussion.'[349] In-fact Gladstone had been at pains in this pamphlet to rein in much of the fiery rhetoric he had used when discussing the matter in an earlier piece in the 'Contemporary Review'[350] which had provoked some disquiet amongst his Catholic countrymen. Much was made of this matter in John Henry Newman's *Letter to the Duke of Norfolk* written in 1875, which sought to repudiate much of Gladstone's arguments, including a claim that Catholics were given to surrender both 'moral and mental freedom' in service to the Pope.[351] Even English aristocrats converting from Anglicanism were not immune from the hostile feelings which Catholicism

[347] Hughes, K. & McRaild, D. (2014) 'Anti-Catholicism and Orange Loyalism in 19th century Britain' in *Loyalism and the Formation of the British World*, Woodbridge: Boydell, p61
[348] Martin, A.E. (2004) 'Blood Transfusions: Constructions of Irish Racial Difference, the English Working Class, and Revolutionary Possibility in the Work of Carlyle and Engels' in *Victorian Literature and Culture*, Vol. 32, No. 1, p84
[349] Gladstone, W.E. (1874) *The Vatican decrees in their bearing on civil allegiance: a political expostulation*, London: John Murray, p8
[350] *Contemporary Review*, October 1874, p674
[351] W.E. Gladstone, *The Vatican Decrees*, p24

continued to arouse. Upon learning of the conversion of Lord Ripon in 1874, Queen Victoria remarked 'How dreadful this perversion of Lord Ripon's…I knew him so well and thought him so sensible'[352] – Ripon's affront was perhaps not simply his spiritual divergence, much as the conversion to a faith not readily associated with being reasonable and 'sensible'. Certainly, as with much of the British public, Victoria's attitudes toward her Catholic subjects vacillated over time.[353]

4.3: Anti-Catholic prejudice within the Army

Having established broadly the position of Irish Catholics in wider British society, we must now turn to examine how such processes specifically affected the Army, and in turn, the Army's Irish Catholic contingent. William Francis Butler of Tipperary recalled his father's nervousness upon the entrance of his son to the service, relating the experience of several relatives who had to 'surrender [their] religion' in the pursuit of promotion.[354] The collective memory of the Butlers appears to have provided some resistance to this assimilatory trend. William Francis himself recalls with some scorn the experiences of family neighbours the O'Doghertys; Lt. Colonel Richard O'Dogherty, a Catholic who rose to command of the 69th (South Lincolnshire) Regiment of Foot during the opening years of the 19th Century, was uncle to two nephews, Richard and Theobald. The former, subsequently entered British service in the latter years of the Napoleonic War as the Anglicised 'Richard Doherty' and subsequently dropped 'his faith as well as the obnoxious O', seeing service in Guadeloupe and Martinique.[355] By contrast, brother Theobald served with Wellington's Peninsular Army from the initial landing in 1808 to the conclusion of the campaign, having been present at ten of the major engagements of that theatre, and had despite 69 months continuous campaigning, did not obtain promotion.[356] Of the two brothers, Theobald, was compelled to depart military service at the relatively low rank of Captain on the grounds of, what Butler terms, 'very gross provocation on the score of his religion' whilst the conforming Richard

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[352] Fulford, R. (1975) *Darling child: private correspondence of Queen Victoria and the Crown Princess of Prussia, 1871-1878,* Evans Brothers: London, p151
[353] Arnstein, W.L. (1996) 'Queen Victoria and the challenge of Roman Catholicism' in *Historian,* Vol. 58, Issue 2, p297
[354] Butler, *An Autobiography,* p13
[355] Ibid, p14
[356] Burnham, B. & McGuigan, R. (2010) *The British Army against Napoleon: Facts, Lists and Trivia,* Pen & Sword Books: Barnsley, p182

performed considerably better, gaining the rank of Lieutenant Colonel of the Royal African Colonial, holding successive governorships and ultimately being knighted in 1841.[357]

One can draw parallels between the experiences of the O'Dogherty (and Doherty) and the case of the O'Halloran's of Limerick. Family patriarch Michael O'Halloran, a wealthy Catholic merchant and landowner had three sons; Joseph, who would enter the priesthood, George, who would become a jeweller and silversmith and Sylvester who trained as a physician and amateur historian. It is intriguing to note that all three sons undertook professional training, perhaps best underlining the strictures placed on Catholic land ownership by the Penal Laws. Sylvester O'Halloran, although primarily known in his lifetime as the author of nearly a dozen works on both medical and historical topics and as one of the leading figures in the development of Limerick's medical establishment, spent much of the latter decades of his life engaged in the campaign for repeal of the Penal Laws. The primary venue for this political outlet was the outwardly benign and apolitical genre of Antiquarian writing,[358] through which Sylvester mustered the argument (amongst others) that Irish Catholics could provide the British Empire with fine soldiers and imperial agents,[359] if only indulged by the provision of Catholic Relief. Despite this passionate line of argument, of O'Halloran's three sons, Joseph (father to the Lieutenant O'Halloran studied in the previous chapter) and John entered military service and both conformed to Anglicanism, with the former achieving much distinction following more than thirty years uninterrupted service in British India. The only remaining Catholic son, Michael, died young and without issue, [360] perhaps having not yet reached a point in his career where conformity and the social benefits it brought, was apparent.

One can trace further still this tendency of conversion in the case of the Sheehy family – Henry Sheehy Keating, like Butler, a native of Tipperary, had enlisted in British service in

[357] *The United Service Journal and Naval and Military Magazine,* 1840, Part 3, p583
[358] Lyons, C. (2011) *Sylvester O'Halloran's General History: Irish Historiography and the Late Eighteenth-Century British Empire,* Unpublished PhD, National University of Ireland: Galway, p108
[359] Ibid p192
[360] Lyons, J.B. (1963) 'Sylvester O'Halloran (1728-1807)' in *Irish Journal of Medical Science,* May, p217

1793 on the outbreak of the Revolutionary Wars and fought in the West Indies before purchasing a majority in the 56th (West Essex) Regiment of Foot, becoming Lieutenant Colonel of that unit in 1804.[361] After a brief period as the *cause celebre* of Catholics unable to reach the higher ranks of the British Army, Keating rose to become the first Catholic General Officer in 1813, following the Catholic Relief Act of the same year which had sought to normalize the status of Catholics in Ireland and England.[362] Regardless of this adulation and the continuing commitment to Catholicism shown by his brother Roger, Keating's own son, Henry Singer Keating, conformed to the Anglican Church, plausibly as a result of his mother's Protestant heritage and her connection with the Reverend Joseph Singer D.D. of Trinity College Dublin, which would later become Henry Singer Keating's alma mater. Singer Keating would later rise through the political and legal systems of British Empire, serving as Member of Parliament for Reading, Solicitor General for England and Wales, and as a member of the Privy Council.

The consideration of these cases in many ways underlines the contradictions inherent in the pursuit of higher officer rank by Irish Catholics. By one reading, some Catholics had managed to achieve considerable success in reaching the highest levels available to them (those of battalion level command or lieutenant colonelcy) in just a few short years after those positions were initially opened. Yet several counter-indications underline the illusory nature of this progress; at all points the majority of Irish officers (even up to the conclusion of this study) were drawn from the Protestant community, those Irish Catholics who could achieve military success were not guaranteed by any means to receive rank and recognition whereas those few officers who could achieve both were not necessarily the progenitors of a long Irish Catholic military tradition, with many of their offspring subsequently conforming to the established church in order to secure their prospects. Lastly, the striking fact that these acts of conversion/conformity all occurred *after* the formal repeal of both Penal prohibitions and (most) exclusionary policies on the grounds of faith, suggest a striking level of latent

[361] *Colburn's United Service Magazine and Naval and Military Journal, 1847*, Part 3, p319
[362] (53 Geo. 3 c. 128) *An Act to relieve from the Operation of the Statute of the Twenty fifth Year of the Reign of King Charles the Second, intituled An Act for preventing Dangers which may happen from Popish Recusants* – Parliament of the United Kingdom. This act sought to normalize the legally ambiguous problem of Catholics who had taken offices and commissions in Ireland under the terms of the 1793 Irish Catholic Relief Act, but who subsequently were deployed in England and Wales, technically in violation of the law.

anti-Catholic prejudice remaining within the Officer Corps of the Army, as contrasted with civilian life which had begun the process of lifting restrictions on Irish Catholics in the early 1770s. At the very least one might consider that such expedient conversions represented a strain of prejudice in military service which was not so easily circumvented as in other professions.

Much of what Paz describes as being prevalent within the popular press we can find within the reams of the *United Service Journal*.[363] Ideas of Roman Catholicism as a particular danger to the constitutional order, passing throwaway observations regarding the backwardness of Catholic states and worship, the notion of the mischievous and manipulative clergy, all of these themes are woven into both the popular literature of the mid-Victorian period as they are within the *United Service Journal* during the same period.[364] One might observe only that *The United Service Journal*'s content is (unsurprisingly) far more similar to the middlebrow genre of popular literature than that of the gutter press, though one can still occasionally find elements of the latter amongst the contributors of *The United Service Journal*. In answer to the argument of 'changeless racism' against the Irish on the part of L.P. Curtis,[365] Paz retorts that over the course of the nineteenth century official condemnation of the Irish underwent an evolution, beginning as a pure expression of anti-Catholic sentiment, gradually evolving by the middle of the century to include both anti-Catholic sentiment and a lack of 'Englishness' in culture amongst the Irish, finally becoming on the eve of Home Rule a purely cultural affair, with the absence of English virtues such as industry, peacefulness and loyalty seen as the explanation for antipathy toward the Irish.[366]

Such attitudes, ranging from naked-anti Catholic bigotry to more nuanced antipathies (and a concurrent reluctance to make changes to the structure of the forces) are in evidence from the initial publication of Colburn's magazine. The 1827 death of the Duke of York and Albany is recorded in a lengthy obituary by the author Walter Scott. It must be recalled that the Duke of

[363] Paz, *Popular Anti-Catholicism in mid-Victorian England*, pp60-80
[364] de Nie, M. (2004) *The Eternal Paddy: Irish identity and the British Press, 1798-1882*, Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, p11
[365] Articulated in Curtis, L.P. (1971) *Apes and Angels: The Irishman in Victorian Caricature*, Newton Abbot: David and Charles Publishers
[366] Paz, *Popular Anti-Catholicism in mid-Victorian England*, p80

York had from 1795 until his death in 1827 spent thirty years as 'Commander in Chief of the forces' with only a brief interruption in the years 1809 to 1811. The Duke remained 'particularly attached' to the Church of England and like his father before him (George III) felt unable to endorse further relaxation of laws towards Catholics out of a sense of duty to his coronation oath.[367] Perhaps owing to the sensitivity of the issue and the looming matter of the 1829 Catholic Emancipation Act, the author is eager to make clear the neutrality of *The United Service Journal* on this issue writing 'we pronounce no opinion on the justice of His Highness's sentiments on this important point.'[368] This declaration appears to neatly presage many of the attitudes put to paper within *The United Service Journal* in subsequent decades. In a further account of the life of the Duke written by one H. Taylor, the writer is clear to set out once more the 'firm and decided' nature of his adherence to the established church[369] – the fact that the declaration had been made in the course of a political discussion of the 'Catholic question' should not, the author insists, lead writers to presume that they were 'professed in a political sense, and from prejudice and party feeling.'[370]

Such notions of upholding the established order were by no means limited to the Duke and were taken sufficiently seriously to affect the early efforts of the Royal Military College at Sandhurst. In 1828, the Supreme Board of the College cancelled three payments from its Contingent Fund to several individuals; one of those mentioned, Abbot Buffet, is recorded as having been paid to provide religious instructions to Catholic cadets, in the amount of three pounds three shillings. [371] The reaction of the board of governors makes clear their 'they were very desirous that every facility should be afforded to those gentlemen cadets who might be of the Catholic persuasion to hear the doctrines of their own church,' but owing to the lack of a direction to such end on the part of the public, they could not uphold such provision.

Volume three, published in 1828, does not see the issue of Catholicism addressed directly by the authors but reviews favourably a work by William Alexander Mackinnon; *On the Rise,*

[367] *Naval and Military Magazine*, 1827, Part 1, p8
[368] Ibid p8
[369] Ibid p100
[370] Ibid p100
[371] *The United Service Journal and Naval and Military Magazine*, Vol CXXIX (Vol VIII new series), 1894, p573

Progress and Present State of Public Opinion in Great Britain and Other Parts of the World.[372] The work, reviewed favourably by *The United Service Journal*, devotes considerable attention to the retrogressive impact of Catholic priests on the minds of their flock 'to keep them in their former state.' The writer emphasizes the importance of the middle class in those Catholic countries of Europe, neatly encapsulating the tensions between those elements in society responsible for 'extending civilization' (the middle class) and their rivals (the priestly classes). This notion of the Catholic Church and clergy as not simply 'others' but regressive elements with a malevolent impact on the societies they inhabit, is one of the most common attitudes expressed towards Catholicism within *The United Service Journal*.

Notwithstanding such interpretation, it remain difficult for any reader of the *United Service Journal* to escape the fundamental and almost unchallenged image of the Catholic Church as a predatory institution, preying upon the ignorant or (at best) upon a peasantry endowed with almost child-like naiveté. In a piece in 1833 on the phenomenon of the 'Terry Alts' (an agrarian secret society found in pre-Famine Ireland), the author describes the power supposedly held by the Catholic clergy in the county, what he terms a 'natural consequence of their ignorance.'[373] Going beyond this generic assertion, the author goes deeper and asserts the initiation to 'Terry Alts' was undertaken by a sign of the cross and an invocation to the holy trinity, a curious syncretism of 'religion and immorality.' The author's scorn for the Catholic clergy is further elaborated in his crediting of Daniel O'Connell's success, and the success of his agitation, to their support. [374]

For a more deliberate and detailed insight into the exact opinions of officers on the subject of the loyalty of the Catholic soldiery, we must turn to 1833 Volume 11 for a discussion upon 'Discipline in the Army.'[375] The author, "W" notes the gallantry of such men, writing:

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[372] *Naval and Military Magazine,* 1827, Part 3, Page 521

[373] *The United Service Journal and Naval and Military Magazine,* 1831, Part 3, p322 see also Donnelly, J.S. Jr (1994) 'The Terry Alt Movement 1829-31' in *History Ireland,* Issue 4, Vol. 2

[374] The author dubs O'Connell 'The Agitator' and lays blame for much of the regions discontent at his feet

[375] *The United Service Journal and Naval and Military Magazine,* 1833, Part 1, p456

> And while upon this part of the subject, let the Irish Catholic soldier receive his due meed[376] of praise - never did brave and true men endure temptations with such constancy and devotion to their colours and their country, as those gallant Irishmen.

However this does not stand as a solitary salutation of such men, it is qualified instantly with reference to the malign and apparently mischievous Catholic clergy, clearly (in the author's view) set against the interests of the crown as a class. He writes;

> The exertions of their priests have been have been most unremitting and incessant to shake them of their fidelity, and every most ingenious means of getting round them, through their religion, has been attempted.[377]

This apparent enthusiasm for the Catholic soldiery appears to arise primarily from their resistance to the entreaties of their faith, rather than because of them. This ideal of the soldier's primary qualification being the ability to obey and subordinate himself toward his superiors is alluded to in the writer's appeal to the common soldiers 'sense of duty' and concurrent ambivalence to 'imaginary rights and revolutionary theories.' This conception of an idealized soldiery, faithfully respecting hierarchies of social order and faith, largely tallies with the notion of the Irish soldier discussed in earlier chapters, however it holds additional implications for the role of faith within the army. Specifically, it is readily apparent from this article and others that the primary antagonist (real or imagined) within the military is the prospect of disruption imposed by external factors; be those factors religious activism or political manoeuvrings (the case being inferred here is the activism of Daniel O'Connell). This is in many ways comparable to what Heather Streets identifies as a means to undermine Irish Nationalists in later decades, by identifying them with unreliability or 'inconstancy' of spirit,[378] in this case by distinguishing these nationalists from their countrymen under arms.

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[376] An archaic term equivalent to 'wage' or 'reward'

[377] *The United Service Journal and Naval and Military Magazine*, 1833, Part 1, p456

[378] Streets, H. (2004) *Martial Races*: *The Military, Race and Masculinity in British Imperial Culture, 1875-1914*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, p168

Although this might initially be interpreted as a problematic issue for any devoted Catholic seeking advancement in the officer corps, the inherently conservative outlook evident from pieces such as this might indicate that those Catholics who shared the social origin, political demeanour and the same state in upholding the status quo, might be better placed to bypass what naked anti-Catholic prejudices did remain within the corps. Some of these interests are made clear in another piece from the same volume; concerns about the dispossession of the Church of Ireland, about the possible seizure of lands from Protestant owners, about the corrupting effects of Catholicism on society,[379] and about transfers of power to the Catholic clergy.[380] These concerns, however likely we might view them, betray much of the motivation behind ostensibly religious concerns; a need to maintain the status quo – which in turn explains much of the desire to side-step turbulent religious issues. This apparent preference among the authorship for a more pragmatic attitude toward religious issues is made even more apparent in a further piece by the editor;

> The Catholic religion is considered the great bane of Ireland; but give a man (professing any faith) labour, where he can freely obtain sufficient wages to support himself and family, and free permission to worship the almighty as his conscience dictates, and he will become a deserving and usual subject, whether Catholic or Protestant. Starve a human being, and persecute him, and you render him a dangerous enemy. The priests have at present great influence over their flocks, because the latter have no other persons to look up to for advice and assistance in the time of need. [381]

As in the cases listed above, the primary objective of grievance for the author is not the wider community of Catholics but remains specifically and pointedly 'the priests.' In comparison, the depiction of the average 'subject' remains largely secular, veering on occasion towards naïve or easily led. Notwithstanding this sense of equanimity surrounding an individual's

[379] Bailey, C. (2006) 'Microcredit, misappropriation and morality: British responses to Irish distress, 1822, 1831' in *Continuity and Change,* Vol. 23 (3), pp456-457
[380] *The United Service Journal and Naval and Military Magazine,* 1833, Part 1, p466
[381] *The United Service Journal and Naval and Military Magazine,* 1835, Part 1, p216

denominational affiliation, it should however be recalled that the perception of the Catholic clergy remains hostile.

Occasionally, the issues of conformity and the conversion of Catholics to the Protestant faith emerge openly. One review of the myriad of 'Soldiers reminisces' published during this period, covers the work of an Anonymous Sergeant of the 43rd Infantry writing on his experiences of war and pointedly of his conversion (being born an Irish Catholic) to the established faith.[382] Avoiding any lengthy foray into the topic, the writer merely salutes the 'spirit' of the work.[383] His use of the phrase 'convert from conviction' implies that even after Catholic Emancipation, many conformed for reasons other than conviction.

Occasionally, one can find glimpses into the depth of religious division and sectarianism in the discussions of *The United Service Journal*. In an account of the 'Defensive force of Great Britain' by one Lieutenant Colonel Wilkie, the reader (and writer) is left in shock at the account of the behaviour of the Yeomanry in Ireland during the 1798 rebellion.[384] Wilkie recalls his encounter with a former member of the Yeomanry some three years after the events of the rebellion; the Yeoman in question is alleged to have been boasting about his part in burning down a Catholic chapel. Wilkie, being taken aback by the remark, responds that if the Yeoman had tried the same act in England he may well have been hanged, leading the Yeoman to express a sense of astonishment that he would be rebuked let alone punished for carrying out what he would have considered 'a meritorious act.' In the view of Wilkie this is clearly an example of the dangers of 'the most fiery religious zeal' and Ireland's problem of 'party spirit', which thankfully has since led to the dissolution of the Yeomanry in Ireland.

Further detail on the problem of 'party spirit' can be found in an extract from 'Shots of an Old Six Pounder' by Peter Portfire. [385] Portfire was himself a former Gunner in the Royal

[382] Anonymous, (1835) *Memoirs of a Sergeant Late in the Forty-third Light Infantry Regiment, Previously to and During the Peninsular War: Including an Account of His Conversion from Popery to the Protestant Religion,* London: Trotman
[383] *The United Service Journal and Naval and Military Magazine,* 1835, Part 3, p548
[384] *Colburn's United Service Magazine and Naval and Military Journal, 1845,* Part 2, p369
[385] Bentley, R. (1847) *Bentley's Miscellany Vol. XXII,* London: Richard Bentley, p53

Artillery and latterly promoted from the ranks to become an officer. Portfire was formerly a comrade of Lieutenant Dawson and Captain Atchison of the Maltese garrison and gave a favourable account of the two men's 'martyrdom' which expressed many of the same sentiments as the men themselves. In one extract published in *The United Service Journal*, Portfire recounts a visit to Ireland and remarks upon the local proclivities of drunkenness and belief in the healing power of local spring waters. He glibly remarks that such beliefs were 'proof I was in a Catholic country.'[386]

More pertinent to the question of 'Party Spirit', Portfire also provides insight into the relationship of the Irish Catholic population with the Anglo Irish gentry, in a subsequent instalment of 'Shots from an Old Six Pounder.' During this station in Kerry as an officer of the militia artillery, Portfire remarks upon the ease with which he and his fellow officers were about to percolate amongst the peasantry 'mingling familiarly.'[387] As an Englishman in particular, he notes how easily the local population would confide and accommodate him regardless of his faith, noting '[The locals] could understand a stranger's being a heretic, but not one of their own countrymen. By comparison, the Anglo-Irish officers amongst his group remained the targets of a level of mistrust by the local population, which could not be overcome. One might be inclined to conclude this was the product of a conflicting vision of Irish-ness which could reconcile 'outsiders' of a different faith more easily than fellow Irishman of that same different faith.[388]Ultimately, whether this is reflective of a purposeful deception of the English officers on the part of the local peasantry, or a more contemptuous view of that peasantry on the part of the native Anglo-Irish officers, the presence of a considerably animosity between rival groups of Irishmen is indicated.

One can find a continuing sense of anti-Catholic sentiment even in the offhand remarks of writers on other subjects. One account of 'Abd El-Kader' includes a reference to a miracle believed by the Muslim population of Algeria.[389] Not satisfied with his own scepticism, the writer indulges in a minor aside remarking about the supposed miracle:

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[386] *United Service Journal*, 1847, Part 3, p238
[387] *United Service Journal*, 1848, Part 1, p58
[388] Boyce, *Nineteenth Century Ireland*, p226
[389] *United Service Journal*, 1848, Part 2, p180

> It is certainly far less absurd than many others that have been, within a few years, invented by the Catholic clergy, and printed with the approbation of their bishops.

Following the disturbances within Ireland as a result of the Young Irelander rebellion of 1848, there appears in *The United Service Journal* a surge in articles devoted to the problems within Ireland and the relationship of religious differences to those problems. One contribution on the part of the editor is to suggest that the Catholic clergy were 'deeply implicated in the projected rebellion.'[390] However, a new piece in the subsequent edition of *The United Service Journal* offers a considerably more nuanced insight into the problems of religious sectarianism;

> Even at this day, with many of the Irish Protestants, Protestantism consists principally in hating the Catholics. It would be difficult to make one who had not visited Ireland, understand how small the progress of liberalism and charity in religious matters has been. The Catholic responds to the intolerance of the Protestant, by a bigotry which nowhere else characterises that religion. The Protestant will allege this as one reason for hostility – but which is the cause, which the effect? [391]

This sort of English impatience with the Anglo-Irish class for their excessive 'party feeling' is not a new. Its implication for Irish Catholics attempting to rise through the officer corps poses an important question? Could the persistence of anti-Catholic feeling in the traditional source of officers for Irish Regiments (the Anglo-Irish gentry) have precluded the advancement of Irish Catholic officers within those units and consequentially, demanded that their advancement occur in other parts of the British Army? Certainly this might tally with the paucity of Irish Catholic officers in the Royal Dublin Fusiliers and to a lesser extent the West Indian Regiment, but the question remains. Certainly, as Gywn Harries-Jenkins makes clear, the officers' mess could be a venue for excesses, not just drunkenness, gambling and

[390] *The United Service Journal and Naval and Military Magazine*, 1848, Part 3, p465
[391] *The United Service Journal and Naval and Military Magazine*, 1849, Part 1, p261

gluttony, but also hazing, bullying and duelling.[392] One need not struggle to imagine how such vices might easily be turned on a religious minority, an example is furnished for us in the case of Ensign Sarsfield of "Her Majesty's 173rd Light Infantry" – we must note the names of both the officers and unit involved are deliberate changed.[393] The account in question from 1842 recounts the story of a junior Irish Catholic officer serving with a regiment 'which was chiefly composed of Orangemen,' to which he was immediately made unwelcome. Being unable to make good the difference in faith with some ability at sport or social charm, and unwilling to exchange to a different unit, he subsequently become a pariah amongst his fellow officers. In due course he was challenged to a duel, ostensibly related to an offence in the mess hall, and shot dead the following day, with his death being recorded as 'suddenly of cholera'.[394] Despite subsequent inquiry into his death on the part of his brother, no further information about Sarsfield's fate could be discovered by his family, his regimental 'brethren' presumably being bound by a code of silence. Though this case is perhaps the most extreme example of the challenges which Irish Catholic officers could face whilst attempting to progress within the officer corps, it also neatly underlines just how precarious advancement could be in light of a liability related to religion or class, particularly in as exacting an institution as the officers' mess in this period. [395]

By contrast, perhaps reflecting the 'Evangelical' ethos of the period, and the newfound spirit of interest in the well-being of the common soldier, one can observe on occasion, the interest of some writers in the spiritual needs of the soldiery, even when those spiritual needs traverse the lines of religion. In a tract titled 'The Army Movement', one writer laments the general state of religious instruction within the army, especially for Catholic soldiery remarking; 'that there is not an example on record, of the priests of that persuasion (Catholic) ever entering a barracks-room.'[396] Another piece from the same edition entitled 'The Army Movement' further elaborates on the issue, making the case for providing clergy to religious minorities within the army, as an assistant to the active chaplains of the established church.[397] Only

[392] Harries-Jenkins, *The Army in Victorian Society*, p19
[393] Colburn's United Service Magazine and Naval and Military Journal, 1879, Part 3, p27
[394] Ibid, p30
[395] Mansfield, N. *Soldiers as Workers: Class, Employment, Conflict and the Nineteenth Century Military*, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, p47
[396] *The United Service Journal and Naval and Military Magazine*, 1849, Part 1, p539
[397] Ibid, p214

where Catholics are a majority however, does he consider that the chaplain should be Catholic. Clearly kept in mind is the author's eagerness to reconcile the multitude of faiths with the single institution of the British Army, to avoid treating Catholic priests as 'opponents of the government.'[398] Clearly aware of the unpopular prospect of such toleration, the writer is keen to emphasize that Presbyterian or Catholic chaplains would be exclusively in the few Regiments in the Army that did possess the respective clear denominational majority.

The disdain for the Catholic clergy and particularly the upper hierarchy in the form of the Pope and the Papal States is made readily apparent in a piece titled 'Republicanism in Italy' by Lieutenant Colonel Wilkie.[399] Reacting to the outbreak of Republicanism in Italy during 1849[400] and the subsequent 'flight to Gaeta' of Pope Pius the ninth, Wilkie sardonically proposes that Pope, being unable to return to a Rome which could no longer tolerate 'the government of priests', should relocate to the Island of Elba, where the Roman Pontiff might be permitted to preoccupy himself with 'spiritual affairs.'[401] The issue of returning the structures of Catholic hierarchy to England provides an occasion for examining in more depth the attitudes of *The United Service Journal* towards the Catholic clergy.[402] Indeed, the unusual nature of this involvement is made clear in the opening of the piece itself, in which the editor remarks upon the typical practice of *The United Service Journal* to avoid 'the turmoil of politics', although not on this occasion.[403] The relevance of the debate on this issue is significant, prima facia as a demonstration of the general disquiet involved in having *The United Service Journal* (and military professionals as a wider body) take part in a discussion upon ostensibly theological matters, except for issues that might 'menace' the 'loyalty' of the troops.

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[398] Ibid, p214
[399] Ibid, p395
[400] In February 1849 a Roman Republic was proclaimed under the 'Triumvirs' Giuseppe Mazzini, Carlo Armellini and Aurelio Saffi. The Republic was one of many ephemeral creations of the 1848-49 'Year of Revolutions.'
[401] *The United Service Journal and Naval and Military Magazine,* 1849, Part 1, p409
[402] The process of establishing English Catholic Episcopacy was set forth in the 1850 Papal Bull 'Universalis Ecclesiae' and involved several new Catholic diocese to replace older (now Anglican) structures, led by the Archbishop of Westminster - Irishman Nicholas Wiseman.
[403] *Colburn's United Service Magazine and Naval and Military Journal,* 1851, Part 1, p143

One of the most striking points raised in *The United Service Journal*'s discussion of the return of Papal Hierarchy is the call to beware the dangerous activities of priests and demagogues eager to sway 'unsuspecting sailor and unthinking soldier' from their allegiance to a banner 'that has not the sanction and consecration of the "true" church.'[404] This call is itself an echo of one of the oldest themes underpinning Penal legislation and even the earliest acts re-admitting Catholics to public and military office – the fear (imagined or real) of Catholics breaking faith and betraying their superiors either in military or civil society. Yet if we look beyond this lingering fear of betrayal, we can find perhaps an even more sinister view of the Catholic Church; namely that of a hostile army. The perception of the Church as a military force does not immediately become obvious to modern eyes yet the comparison can be furnished without much difficulty; the Catholic hierarchy bears closest resemblance to military command, its bishops and cardinals being colonels and generals, priests and Jesuits resembling soldiers and sergeants (what Maureen Moran has termed the 'aggressive arm' of the Church),[405] habits and vestments standing as uniforms. It is this perception which appears to inform the editor's comments on the danger of this new force and its arrival in England. From his viewpoint the business of ministration to a community lacking in spiritual guidance is no more than 'bold' and 'arrogant' pretence.[406] Those ministrations themselves appear in the writers view to be little more than a policy of Jesuit deception, a cloak over a zealous need to spread the Catholic faith to others.

This significance of this point in informing the attitude of Protestants to the wider Catholic community merits a brief digression. Although much of the material we have observed previously has dealt with the purported deleterious effects of the Catholic clergy and the Pope on British society, this extract provides an important example of that same suspicion extending to mere practitioners of the Catholic faith. The wider portrayal of Catholicism as consisting of either malicious schemers or as unwitting dupes easily misled by a conniving clergy looks appealing to both Victorian social divisions as well as some of the more fevered Evangelical fears about the Catholic clergy. Certainly this is apparent in further extracts from the writer's text which beg rhetorically the question of what would transpire in the event that

[404] Ibid, p143
[405] Moran, M. (2007) *Catholic Sensationalism and Victorian Literature*, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, p31
[406] *Colburn's United Service Magazine and Naval and Military Journal,* 1851, Part 1, p143

'so great a calamity as the conversion of the defenders of the country into Catholics' should occur. It is from this perspective that we can begin to note how Irish Catholic officers, not exhibiting the docility of the Catholic peasant, and resembling more closely their clergymen, could be regarded quite easily as a 'suspect class.' The piece continues with a simple answer to the prospect of this newly assertive Catholic clergy undermining the religious faith of the soldiers and sailors; 'the spiritual miner must be encountered in his own gallery.'[407] As for the means of doing this, the editor prescribes 'opposing religious and moral teaching of a Protestant complexion to the dissemination of the dangerous doctrines of the Papist' and campaign against vices such as swearing and drunkenness. In general terms we might categorize these movements as simply part of the Victorian era's enthusiasm for the doctrine of 'improvement' and concern with public welfare. Examination of the text reveals the justification outlined by the writer to be directed specifically against the 'wily effects of Papistry.'[408]

In addition to these measures, the spectre of conversion, or rather the employment of pressure to obtain a conversion, continued to hold some currency, at least in elements of the Catholic press. Dennis Paz makes reference to the efforts of Catholics to defend their faith on more immediate terms, pointing to a literature of heroic piety (both real and fictional) reproduced amongst denominational publications.[409] One such account referred to is that of "The Catholic Soldier" a piece published in the 1846 edition of the Catholic Weekly Instructor.[410] The story related is one of an Irish Catholic soldier, Patrick Fitzgerald, stationed in Carolina during the American War of Independence. Rapidly rising to the rank of Corporal, the man in question is proposed for a promotion to the rank of officer, much to the consternation of the other subaltern officers. The Regimental commander, a kindly depicted lord, questions the young man 'how can you be so foolish as to continue a Roman Catholic?' After a deft defence of his faith, his commander reminds him once more 'you might attain the highest rank in the army if you would change your religion'. Fitzgerald declines once more, assuring his commander that he is content to remain a common soldier with his faith. After a

[407] The phrase itself is a reference to military tactics, the 'spiritual miner' refers to the miner digging beneath the walls of a besieged city; the 'gallery' is an archaic term for the entrance to the aforementioned mine.
[408] *Colburn's United Service Magazine and Naval and Military Journal,* 1851, Part 1, p146
[409] Paz, *Anti-Catholicism in mid-Victorian England,* p87
[410] *Catholic Weekly Instructor,* 1846, Volume 3, p157

prestigious mission (offered by way of commiseration) becomes the site of Fitzgerald's death, we are informed that the young soldier's commander was so deeply affected by the sight that he himself converted on his deathbed.

Naturally elements of the story are apocryphal, particularly the notion of an Irish Catholic being promoted from the rank and file during the 1770s, when what few Irish Catholics who were officers would have been so covertly,[411] and perhaps only by virtue of the collusion of their fellow officers. Indeed the notion of a senior officer undertaking such a conversion, having been so deeply affected by the loss of the gallant young corporal, has the appearance of a literary device of the most romantic nature. We must however recall that such material was published in a Catholic periodical, most likely with the intent of encouraging piety and devotion among its readership as well as providing a type of model devotee to be imitated. Such material may well have been aimed at attempting to stem the flow of Irish Catholics who when faced with the prospect of further advancement through conversion, readily conformed. Nevertheless, the theme of contempt amongst the other ranks for the advancement of a Catholic certainly appears to be far better grounded in reality, and does appear cognizant with the statistical data obtained previously. Of the 88th Regiment in 1829, less than twenty per cent of the Regiment's strength was made up by Protestants yet they constituted more than half of the Sergeants in the unit. One can find some further example of contempt for Catholicism and discontent at the Emancipation of its adherents in the United Kingdom during one colourful account of the native tribes of South Africa, furnished by Captain Locke Lewis of the Royal Engineers.[412] The Kat River settlement, established in the author's view as a 'to test the capacity of the coloured natives for enjoying the privileges of free men,[413] was deemed a failure and the disappointment itself comparable 'like the measure that took place […] for the Emancipation of Catholics.'

Glimpses of attitudes towards faith in other counties also occasionally emerge in the course of *The United Service Journal*'s publication. In the aftermath of the 1849 Hungarian

[411] Dunne-Lynch, N. (2007) 'Humour and Defiance: Irish Troops and their humour in the Peninsular War' in *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research,* Vol. 85, p64
[412] *Colburn's United Service Magazine and Naval and Military Journal,* 1851, Part 3, p65
[413] Ibid, p71

Revolution and the subsequent re-assertion of Austrian power, a Journal report comments candidly only about the expulsion of British missionaries from Hungary.[414] Despite being well behaved and free from any accusation of wrongdoing, *The United Service Journal* comments on how the position of the missionaries ultimately became untenable in the aftermath of the revolution, owing to the return of the Catholic clergy to its position of 'ancient power.' Taken as an article of faith by *The United Service Journal*, is the unchallenged view that religious liberty has in and of itself long been 'an eyesore to the Catholic priesthood of the Austrian Empire.' By contrast, missionary activity had become to be seen not just as an act of proselytization, but of a desire to bring 'progress' to other parts of the world.[415] Conversely, such a depiction of the Catholic clergy appears to supplement notions of divided loyalties amongst Catholics and the potential danger they posed to religious liberty. Further illustration of the theme of 'divided loyalty' and of the both oppressive and malignant influence of the Catholic Church in Ireland can be found in a section entitled 'Suppression of Crime,' written by a medical staff officer, evidently the same author of 'Some Ephemeral Remarks' discussed previously.[416] In it, the writer makes reference to several 'sensible suggestions' made by the *Morning Herald* regarding the state of law and order in Ireland, namely their ascription of the outbreak of Secret Society violence in Ireland to the presence of the Catholic Church and the apparent ease with which they could end such violence by forbidding the granting of absolution to the guilty parties.

That the author is able to adopt such a hard line on the role of the Catholic clergy, specifically 'the insatiable intriguing character of the priests, and the state of ignorance and dependence in which the great body of people is held by them',[417] whilst at the same time having previously spoken of the need for making certain concessions to Catholic worshippers in the army, underlines once again the gulf between toleration for private religious belief and attitudes towards the Catholic clergy. The reference in question is itself originally made by an acquaintance of the medical staff officer, one "A.", in a piece written in 1847.[418] The text in question seeks to provide an all-encompassing description and explanation for the state of Ireland as well as the difference in plight of its inhabitants – itself a not uncommon theme in

[414] *Colburn's United Service Magazine and Naval and Military Journal,* 1852, Part 2, p374
[415] Bush, *Papists and Prejudice,* p132
[416] *Colburn's United Service Magazine and Naval and Military Journal,* 1852, Part 1, p 379
[417] *Colburn's United Service Magazine and Naval and Military Journal,* 1852, Part 1, p 379
[418] *Colburn's United Service Magazine and Naval and Military Journal, 1847*, Part 3, p598

anti-Catholic tracts.[419] Misgovernment of the country is, in the estimation of the writer, an insufficient explanation for the state of Ireland, merely a popular one. Instead, the 'wretchedness and misery' of the land is explicable primarily by the presence of Catholic Church, which the writer compares poorly to the influence of the Protestant Churches and inhabitants found in the north of the island. 'That the difference, in reality, arises from the error and faults of the Roman Religion, and its priesthood, no unbiased individual who has had sufficient opportunity and experience to form a correct judgement, will deny.'[420] As with other cases examined above, one of the chief causes for Ireland's misery is in the author's view, the 'wily and worthless agitators', a description typically ascribed to the O'Connell movement and the support of the Catholic clergy (real or imagined).

Deeper examination of the text shows perhaps the clearest articulation of Ireland as part of the British Imperial mission, a wild land in need of civilization and order, by nature a rude and savage land. In this case, the law being advocated is martial law, a military means to achieve a military mission; not merely 'retaining possession of the country by means of garrisons' but fully returning law and order to the country.[421] The significance of this quest upon those officers of both Irish birth and Catholic faith almost immediately reveals itself. The writer makes reference to the practice of Catholic soldiers in Ireland making regular attendance at a Chapel on Sundays, under the supervision of an officer; ostensibly with directions to return the men to the barracks should the religious service begin to adopt a political tone. Yet despite this apparent stricture, such measures were not taken, thus 'the privilege of making the chapel an arena for such highly improper conduct on the part of the priests was tacitly conceded to them.' The prospect of such collusion, particularly the implicit assumption that those officers accompanying the men, who were highly likely to be Catholic themselves in the event that the Regiment had such an officer, were abetting such collusion, is an appreciable example of the attitudes of suspicion regarding the Catholic clergy being extended directly to Irish Catholic officers. Whether such accusation were rooted in any truth remains difficult to ascertain, but this is superfluous – the salient point is that the existence and percolation of such views amongst *The United Service Journal*'s military audience shows

[419] Wolffe, J. (1991) *The Protestant Crusade in Great-Britain: 1829-1860*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, p121
[420] *Colburn's United Service Magazine and Naval and Military Journal, 1847*, Part 3, p598
[421] Ibid, p599

they were in the very least, considered acceptable for publication, and at the very worst, indicative of widespread suspicions toward Irish Catholic officers. This is by no means the sole example of the military's Irish Catholic contingent being seen as potentially susceptible to foreign agents, or even domestic ones, such as the Fenians.

Returning to the issue of the malevolent influence of Catholicism, it is clear that by the 1850's such sentiments continue to hold sway. Captain Spencer's 'The Political and Social State of the Continent' seeks to explore the reason for Britain's success in providing asylum for 'every class of political exile'[422] and lambasts the Catholic Church as a chief cause of Europe's many failings, and conversely its absence as reason for Britain's success. Spencer deems the Papal Hierarchy the source 'whence all the reactionary measures and systems of arbitrary rule have emanated'. Spencer's contention draws upon some of the previously examined motifs of Catholics as being servile and easily misled - he expands upon this line of reasoning in arguing that it is the collaboration of the Catholic clergy (as well as 'monied interests') with local despots which accounts for much of Europe's authoritarian and backwards state, and conversely, for Britain's liberality and progress. It is this very spirit of 'progress' which Spencer regards as the chief target of the Catholic Church; in seeking to return themselves to the position of moral and political primacy which they previously held, it is his supposition that Catholicism has 'no choice left to them but to oppose intellectual and political progress' wherever they are able to.[423] Later extracts from 1854 see Spencer reiterate the blame of the Catholic Church as a chief cause of continental Europe's many failings and Britain's success. It is 'progress' which Spencer regards as the chief target of the Catholic Church and its members have 'no choice left to them but to oppose intellectual and political progress' wherever they are able to.[424]

Spencer simultaneously looks to England as the model of what he dubs 'rational liberty', particularly its 'Pure and Evangelical' Christianity.[425] Comparing the plight of Britain and France in recent decades, Spencer holds the presence of the Catholic hierarchy in France as

[422] *Colburn's United Service Magazine and Naval and Military Journal,* 1853, Part 2, p45
[423] *Colburn's United Service Magazine and Naval and Military Journal,* 1853, Part 2, p46
[424] Ibid, p46
[425] Ibid, p46

the primary cause for its comparative failures. Protestant Prussia, long an ally of Britain is seen as yet another bastion of progress when compared with Catholic Austria.[426] Consequently, Spencer holds a vision of 'permanent war' between liberated citizens and those still in hock to the Catholic clergy. It is the return of Catholicism to England during this period which provides his source of greatest concern, but further to this is his fear of the rise of Catholicism *within* the Church of England, in the form of 'Puseyism.'[427] The writer views this as nothing other than 'an attempt of our own clergy to return to the old system of Popish priestcraft' and 'to prepare us for returning to the fold of the Shepherd of Rome' whilst worrying further still that such movements within the Church might well 'increase the ranks of the dissenters.'[428] Spencer continues his line of argument, offering a similarly dark view of the Catholic faith in a later piece entitled 'What is to be done with the Crimea' to which he ascribes blame for the decline of Poland to the 'bigoted clergy.'[429]

A further example of the pointedly anti-Catholic sentiments surrounding the maintenance of the status quo can be seen in the peculiar case of Major Powys and the 'Royal Patriotic Fund' and the 'Central Association in Aid of Soldiers' Wives and Families' of which Major H.L. Powys was honorary secretary. Powys' conduct soon incurred the wrath of publications such as *The Times* and *The Spectator* which condemned him, writing:

> In distributing the public bounty, Major Powys has assumed an aspect of official constraint, refusing to "recognize" various widows or wives un-provided with regimental forms, or Roman Catholic clergymen, Established clergymen if they differ with him, or even the Times newspaper.[430]

Powys' explanation for the distinction in treatment was supposedly the rules established by the Central Association. However, his behaviour and apparently zealous enforcement of rules

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[426] Ibid, p49
[427] Puseyism entered common parlance at the time as a synonym for the 'Oxford Movement' named after one of the movements leading proponents, Edward Bouverie Pusey.
[428] *Colburn's United Service Magazine and Naval and Military Journal,* 1853, Part 2, p53
[429] Ibid, p54
[430] *The Spectator*, 25th November, 1854, Page 13

without any apparent attempt to ameliorate the situation (as written in the Spectator 'to soften such a manifest mistake') presaged further tensions. Powys would later accuse Cardinal Paul Cullen (who had levied charges of proselytization against Major Powys and Rev. Josiah Hort) and the Catholic clergy for not providing 'one farthing' toward the Central Association's relief efforts.[431] The substance of the conflict belies the quite openly hostile attitudes between the two groups – the position of *The United Service Journal*, defending the Major and repeating the assertion of the Catholic Church's non contribution, does much to suggest a continual adversarial attitude between the Church and sources which reflect the views of military authorities.[432]

We can find yet another example of a subtle but guarded suspicion toward Catholics and organized Catholicism in an account of the services rendered by religious orders during the Crimean War. An account of the French 'Sisters of Charity' appeared in *The United Service Journal*'s first volume for 1855.[433] Both accounts are largely enthusiastic about their work but the latter expresses a measure of disdain for the mingling of medical care and what the author terms 'the consolations of the priest.' Their efforts are compared disapprovingly to the forthcoming participation of British nurses under the direction of one 'Mrs. Nightingale', who it is purported will 'act as watchful nurses of the sick' whilst at the same time 'leaving religion to its proper teachers.'[434] This carefully and gently worded rebuke conveys suspicion of Catholic clergy in ministering to British troops.

One of the less well known chapters of British Army's history in North America was its involvement in the suppression of the Gavazzi riots in Montreal during the summer of 1853. Although of little significance in the history of Canada or Italy, the attitudes expressed by officers toward the riot reveal impressions of Irish Catholics. The account of one military witness to the events, Lieutenant Colonel James Edward Alexander, entitled 'The Gavazzi tragedy in Canada', [435] provides just such insight. Gavazzi, an Italian nationalist and formerly

[431] Huddie, P. *The Rev. Charles Josiah Hort: A forgotten hero of the Crimean War*, Accessed online at Academia.edu/6502621, p8
[432] *Colburn's United Service Magazine and Naval and Military Journal,* 1854, Part 3, p588
[433] *Colburn's United Service Magazine and Naval and Military Journal,* 1855, Part 1, p68
[434] *Colburn's United Service Magazine and Naval and Military Journal,* 1855, Part 1, p69
[435] Ibid, p587

Catholic, had in the aftermath of the failed Italian Revolution of 1848 become estranged with the Church hierarchy and subsequently campaigned against the power of the Pontiff. Having been received favourably during a speaking tour in America, Gavazzi was subsequently invited to Canada in order lecture further on that topic. Colonel Alexander speaks highly of Gavazzi's beliefs, specifically their 'simplicity' and 'purity', but hoped that his beliefs could be tempered by discretion. A riot was only averted by the arrival of troops from the 66th Regiment.

The behaviour of these men in upholding law and order, as well as guaranteeing the safety of the speaker, is contrasted with the apparent inability of the Catholic population to reciprocate. The Colonel draws a comparison to the previous lectures given by Orestes Brownson, a noted convert to Catholicism from Presbyterianism at that time, and the privilege he enjoyed in being able to lecture 'uninterruptedly', with the failure of Irish Catholics to tolerate the corresponding lectures of Gavazzi. This inability to, as Alexander terms it 'maintain a principle – freedom of speech for Protestants as well as Catholics'[436] is a somewhat damming indictment of the mob's behaviour. However the broader categorization of Irish Catholics as being incapable of upholding the state's commitment to religious liberty indicates yet another ground for suspicion under which Irish Catholic officers would have laboured. Even more than this, Colonel Alexander seems to have little faith in the calls for peace issued by the local Catholic Institute, expecting that the Irish Catholics of Montreal would pay little attention to it, an aspersion not extended to the Canadian Catholic population.[437] Yet this piece does not comprise exclusively and uninterrupted criticism of the Irish Catholic populace; the Colonel cannot help but remark upon the incendiary and inflammatory nature of Gavazzi's lecture, dubbing it 'dangerous in the extreme' for being held in the presence of a 'mixed' audience.[438] Despite Alexander's apparently guarded suspicions, he remains cognizant of the Catholic element within the 26th Regiment, remarking that one third of the men were themselves Catholic.

[436] Ibid, p591
[437] *Colburn's United Service Magazine and Naval and Military Journal,* 1855, Part 1, p593
[438] Ibid, p594

We can occasionally find incidental but revealing reference to Catholicism as a whole, indicative particularly of widely held attitudes. In a piece on the freedom of religion in Belgium, [439] the writer remarks nonchalantly on the achievement of Belgium in guaranteeing a superior version of that freedom of the press even than Britain itself, in spite of the apparent disadvantage of being 'a Catholic country. 'In Lieutenant Colonel G.G. Alexander's (Royal Marines) account of his experiences in China, entitled 'Reminisces of a Visit to the Celestial Empire, and rough notes on China and the Chinese',[440] we find yet more examples of the casual disdain for the Catholic faith, on this occasion compared with the multitude of Chinese beliefs. Lieutenant Colonel (G.G) Alexander writes about the difficulties encountered in spreading Christianity to the Chinese, owing to their 'ancient and mystic material superstition,' [441] a system of faith which is compared quite overtly with Catholic worship. He continues; 'As with the Catholics, imagination was called in to take the place of reason, and the senses were appealed to through the agencies of outward manifestations.'[442]

One can find persistent demonstration of anti-Catholic bigotry in the reams of *The United Service Journal*'s pieces regarding foreign affairs. Englishman George Ballentine's memoirs of serving in the United States Army during the Mexican-American War provide one such example of this undercurrent.[443] [444] Published in *The United Service Journal* before its later publication as a separate work, one extract approves of the burning of a 'tawdry and vulgar looking' Catholic Church, especially the destruction of images. Ballentine himself had served for five years in the British Army prior to departing for the United States.

Yet despite the presence of a potent body of anti-Catholic sentiment within *The United Service Journal*, there remains a keen appreciation for historical context. Reacting to the new implementation of anti-Catholic laws in Germany (specifically the 'May Laws' of Minister Falk) *The United Service Journal*'s Foreign Summary section rebuts that if carried out, they

[439] *Colburn's United Service Magazine and Naval and Military Journal,* 1855, Part 3, p406
[440] *Colburn's United Service Magazine and Naval and Military Journal,* 1858, Part 2, p45
[441] Ibid, p51
[442] Ibid, p52
[443] *Colburn's United Service Magazine and Naval and Military Journal,* 1852, Part 1, p532
[444] Ballentine, G. (1853) *Autobiography of an English soldier in the United States Army. Comprising observations and adventures in the States and Mexico,* London: Hurst and Blackett

would boast of doing what two centuries of Penal Laws in Ireland had failed to accomplish.[445] Despite this, the new provisions regarding the compulsory education of young men seeking to enter the priesthood, limitations on the power of Bishops and new mechanisms for abjuring the Catholic faith, all attract the guarded approbation of *The United Service Journal* whilst conversely the Catholic Church elicits little sympathy.[446]

Similarly, the fall of the Papal States and the reduction of the Pope's temporal power provoked some discussion among the contributors of *The United Service Journal* as to what would become of the Roman Pontiff including jocular notions such as relocating the Papacy to the island of Elba. Unsurprisingly, news of Franco-Sardinian victory in 1860 would provoke yet another wave of interest in Catholicism and the Papal hierarchy within *The United Service Journal*. A text entitled 'the Patrimony of St. Peter'[447] from *The United Service Journal'*s 3rd Volume of 1860[448] is perhaps the most impassioned example of anti-Catholic sentiment within *The United Service Journal*. The piece dedicates a lengthy section setting forth the various charges against the Church, such as blocking the forward march of progress, the slaughter of free thinkers, spinning conspiracies, propagation of superstitions and ultimately 'the enslavement and degradation of the human race.'[449]

The writer sets out a path by which states are infiltrated, first by missionaries and then by apostolic vicars (typically bishops). The similarities with the state of Britain at that time are clearly mirrored, first in the influx of large numbers of Irish migrants and the Anglo-Catholic revival, secondly by the restoration of Catholic hierarchical structures over the 1840s and culminating in the 1850 Papal Bull *Universalis Ecclesiae*. In light of such an interpretation it is difficult to conceive of the author's writing as not merely a problematic history and appraisal of the Papal States, but more pressingly as a piece attempting to set out a vision of the dangers of Catholicism within the British state.

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[445] *Colburn's United Service Magazine and Naval and Military Journal,* 1873, Part 1, p238
[446] Ibid, p239
[447] An archaic term for the territory of the Papal States
[448] *The United Service Journal and Naval and Military Magazine*, 1860, Part 3, p415
[449] *The United Service Journal and Naval and Military Magazine*, 1860, Part 3, p415

The implications of various supposedly progressive pieces of legislation in making arrangements for private worship or in excusing non-Anglicans from attending services of the established faith is neatly encapsulated in a Journal Article from 1860, written by an unknown 'Theseus' late of the Royal Navy.[450] Most pertinent to our purposes, namely in regards the prospects of Catholic officers, is the presence of such commanding officers holding 'very religious' or 'extreme' views on the matter of public worship.[451] "Theseus" remarks upon the religious practices of certain officers of the naval service, most of whom apparently contented themselves with chaplains doing no more than 'reading prayers and preaching a short sermon on Sunday' morning. But by contrast, there appear to remain a smaller number of officers, holding stronger religious views who 'believe it their duty to try and reform some of the ship's company by holding prayer-meetings.'[452] The presence of such a strongly Evangelical element in the higher ranks of the navy's officer corps, suggests an environment in which already sparse numbers of Catholic officers would find further difficulties in both socializing and advancement.[453]

The question of officer's attitudes toward Catholic loyalty, or rather potential disloyalty, is one that appears to be most clearly crystallized not in internal discussions regarding the British Army, but in reference to conflicts overseas to which Britain stood as a neutral party. A very striking example of this reveals itself in a report from *The United Service Journal* on the developments toward Civil War in the United States by 1861 titled 'The American Army and Militia.'[454] Much of the text is devoted to the apparently grievous incompetence of the US military and to a lesser degree the wider structures of American government. However it is one of the Regiments of this militia force, the 69th, which is the subject of much interest on the part of the writer (and us), being composed almost exclusively of Irish emigrants, and stands almost entirely Catholic save for a single Protestant. In his view it is this demographic composition and the 'bitterest hostility to the crown of Great Britain […] on account of

[450] Ibid, p487
[451] Ibid, p488
[452] Ibid, p488
[453] For more on the Evangelical trends within the Royal Navy see Blake, R. (2008) *Evangelicals in the Royal Navy, 1775-1815: Blue Lights and Psalm-Singers*, Woodbridge; Boydell & Brewer and Blake, R. (2014) *Religion in the British Navy, 1815–1879: piety and professionalism,* Woodbridge: Boydell
[454] *The United Service Journal and Naval and Military Magazine,* 1861, Part 1, p180

national grievances belonging to another age' [455] which explains the problems of the regiment. Specifically, he condemns the refusal of the unit to parade itself before the visiting Prince of Wales, perhaps most gallingly, not a product of the colonel's decision but a result of the men 'notifying' their officer of their refusal.

Although primarily a report of affairs in a United States rapidly descending into Civil War, one cannot help but note how the piece appears to confirm perhaps the worst fears of British officers in regards the Irish Catholic soldiery. Not only do the men in question fulfil a model of religious sectarianism, being almost uniform in religion, but they also evidently display an ample animosity towards the British state, being in thrall to what the writer politely terms 'angry feeling.'[456] Even more than these significant affronts to British sensibility, there also stands the naked contempt for the visiting Prince of Wales and by extension the British Monarchy, as well as the almost ritually inverted chain of command, with rank and file issuing orders and 'notifications' to their superior officers. The correlation of such fears about the reliability of Irish-American Catholics in Federal Service, with fears about the reliability of Irish Catholics within the British service render themselves immediately obvious, with both American and British counterparts (in the view of their officers) liable to be influenced by groups such as the Fenians for the purposes of recruitment and pursuing nationalist cause

Another example of this casual disdain for Catholicism, in this case within the context of British contact with China, can be located in a lengthy report detailing the relative success of Catholic missionaries [457] who appear to be having greater success in winning converts in China, mainly because;

> 'A Chinese may become a Catholic and yet remain an Oriental in all except technical points of belief, while to be a Protestant, he must first understand somewhat of the free thought of the West, and be, so to say, Occidentalised. […] I fear the new religion taught [to] them is often more narrow and less humanity-

[455] Ibid, p181
[456] Ibid, p181
[457] *Colburn's United Service Magazine and Naval and Military Journal,* 1866, Part 1, p263

> embracing than they have learned from Confucius; only broad, enlightened and liberal Christianity can wean men from the Catholicism of Buddhistical view or the lofty public spirit of the Confucians.' [458]

One cannot but note the still unyielding association of Britain's (and perhaps wider Europe's) success and liberality with the Protestant faith and the concurrent association of Catholicism with the traditional charges of repressiveness and backwardness. The presence of these connotations throughout the century, in this case 1866, displays the remarkable persistence and depth of such views in society long after the legal Emancipation of Catholics. Such attitudes are not uniquely expressed within the context of China. In yet another example of the casual disdain for Catholics we have an extract from 'A Traveller's Life in Western Africa' discussing the structure of Mandinka society. One particular underclass identified 'who are in the habit of getting drunk and leading dissolute lives' - As a means of trying to explain such behaviour the writer notes 'they are converts to the Catholic Church.'[459]

Another microcosm of attitudes towards Catholicism lending itself to observation by the fellows of the *United Service Journal* can be found in 'Reflections on recent events in Jamaica' – a response to the outbreak of violence in that colony late in 1865, known more commonly as the 'Morant Bay Rebellion.'[460] Relevant for our purposes is the supposedly weakened state of the Church, purportedly weaker in stature in Jamaica than in any other British colony, owing to the diverse presence of various dissenting faiths.[461] Regardless of this, the writer is without recourse but to offer some words of tribute to the Catholic Church, eschewing notions held by some of it being 'dangerous to a Protestant government,' lauding it as a product of the 'genius of conservatism', refusing to deviate from established doctrine either as a result of complaint by the 'profane mob' or by its priests who remain 'uninfluenced by domestic ties'.[462] Even more than this, and in a tone reminiscent of earlier fears of 'low church' influences, the writer offers barbed praise for the Catholic Church for its avoidance of such 'disturbing doctrines' in favour of promulgating 'oligarchical

[458] Ibid, p277
[459] *The United Service Journal and Naval and Military Magazine,* 1861, Part 1, p218
[460] *Colburn's United Service Magazine and Naval and Military Journal,* 1866, Part 2, p196
[461] Ibid, p198
[462] Ibid, p199

principles.' Although such a vision of the Catholic Church is entirely harmonious with many of the views expressed already (views preferring regularity of an established Church over a multitude of dangerous sects), the presentation of the Church as a welcome bastion of 'Conservativism' is a novel one from the view of *The United Service Journal*.

An example of a softening of attitudes can even be observed on the Imperial frontier, with the shared frontier experience evidently serving some purpose in assuaging religious differences and binding British subjects together under a sense of common Christianity. In 'Leaves from Western Africa'[463] Anglo-Irish Lieutenant Colonel Luke Smythe O'Connor (not to be confused with the Irish Catholic officer Luke O'Connor) speaks favourably of the efforts of the 'Sisters of Mercy' in Gambia.[464] Despite contemporary suspicions of such religious orders,[465] their apparently tireless efforts in combatting illness and hunger is matched only in their willingness to provide such care without regard for creed or condition, including more than one British Army officer. A further extract from 'Leaves from Western Africa' describes the precarious pursuits of Catholic missionaries in seeking converts amongst the locals, 'in the noble effort to stem the tide of the Mohammedan creed.' Smythe lauds them for doing no less than 'doing their duty, to God and towards their neighbour.'[466]

Understanding the attitudes of contempt present amongst some British officers toward the institution of the Catholic Church can perhaps be best understood not simply in reference to comments on British society, but in observations of that Church in other countries.[467] An account of the 'Glorious Revolution' of Spain in 1868 and the deposition of Queen Isabella II still identifies the notion of religious liberty as vexatious to the Catholic Church. At first observation one might remark that such an extract is no more revealing than the previous more explicit declarations of Protestant progressivism and the retrogressive influence of the Catholic Church, made by writers in *The United Service Journal* decades previously. Yet this would be a failure to recognize the salient issue, namely that the continued presence of such

[463] *Colburn's United Service Magazine and Naval and Military Journal,* 1856, Part 1, p352
[464] A predominately Irish order of Catholic Nuns
[465] Kollar, R. (2011) *A Foreign and Wicked Institution? The Campaign against Convents in Victorian England*, Cambridge: James Clark & Co, p215
[466] *Colburn's United Service Magazine and Naval and Military Journal,* 1856, Part 1, p264
[467] *Colburn's United Service Magazine and Naval and Military Journal,* 1869, Part 2, p68

writing suggests this point of view continued to hold sway amongst at least some military officers in the late 1860s. Further to this, one cannot help but be struck by the fact that whilst earlier pieces regarding the influence of the Catholic Church did not ignore the case of Ireland, by this time references to Ireland's Catholic population largely evaporate. Given the continued overwhelming predominance of the Catholic faith in Ireland, even post Famine, the fading of Irish Catholics as a target for 'Evangelical' military officers suggests that their 'otherness' had begun to abate, with perhaps congruent advantage for members of that group who sought to become officers.

Nonetheless, amongst certain British officers, there remains an apparent awareness of a duty to uphold 'the Protestant cause' in the course of their military duty. This is certainly the case with William Assheton Eardley-Wilmot,[468] who in 1862 served as part of a special mission to Madagascar in his capacity as an Ensign of the 5th (Northumberland Fusiliers) Regiment of Foot. The mission, dispatched in 1862, accompanied the opening up of Madagascar to the rest of the world, following the accession of Radama II. Eardley-Wilmot recounts his experiences in the newly opened Madagascar in a series of articles published in the *United Service Journal* from 1869. One passage relates the young Ensign's near miss with a diplomatic faux pas.[469] Having received notification that the French mission would be celebrating the fete day of Emperor Napoleon III, Eardley-Smith and his companion noted the invitation included a scheduled Mass, to which they presumed they were invited and agreed to attend 'out of civility.' By sheer coincidence the young officers encountered the (Anglican) Bishop of Mauritius, to whom they mentioned their intentions. The Bishop retorted that if the men would attend the mass he would not attend the dinner for the reason 'that the Catholics would tell the people that Protestants and Catholics were the same.'[470] Eschewing the opportunity of meeting the King at the mass in question, Eardley-Wilmot remarks that he and his fellow officers 'were unwilling to […] injure the Protestant cause.'[471] The actions of Eardley-Wilmot and his peers suggest an enthusiasm for the 'Protestant cause' which can only have alienated Irish Catholics officers.

[468] William Assheton Eardley-Wilmot, 3rd Baronet, 1841-1896
[469] *Colburn's United Service Magazine and Naval and Military Journal,* 1869, Part 3, p23
[470] Ibid, p35
[471] Ibid, p35

By the 1870s, the question of the established Church of Ireland and proposals for its disestablishment begin to emerge in the leaves of *The United Service Journal*.[472] In a Journal piece from 1871, shock at the apparently 'revolutionary' change in circumstances for the (formerly) established Church and the creation of 'a new law for landlord and tenant' is rapidly overtaken by disbelief at the 'letting loose [of] no less than twenty-six Fenian desperadoes.'[473] Disapproval at this course of action is readily apparent with the writer lambasting the released prisoners for 'spouting rabid treason directly' upon their return to Ireland, and predicting yet further unrest to arise due to the decision. Underpinning this dismay at government policy is a keen awareness of the increasing significance of Irish MP's in deciding the composition of the government in Westminster.'[474]As with Catholic Emancipation, the looming issue of legislative reform for Ireland, and in time, the question of Home Rule, provides an important mechanism by which it is possible to gauge more accurately the political predilections of the officer corps. Whilst Catholic Emancipation had inspired a medley of multifaceted responses in the pages of *The United Service Journal*, attitudes toward the spectrum of Irish Nationalist movements from Daniel O'Connell onwards are broadly hostile.

The Franco-Prussian War and the consequent upset to the balance of power is, for the contributors to *The United Service Journal*, serves as yet another occasion for various contributors to *The United Service Journal* to set out several quite forceful anti-Catholic sentiments. Captain Spencer in his account of the conflicted entitled 'The War of 1870-71'[475] identifies several failures within French society as responsible for the defeat and prescribes a comprehensive programme of religious reform;

> First of all the people must be taught to act and think like men; but in order to accomplish this, the old monastic system with its dogmas and miracles, its legends of saints and angels must be entirely swept away … What are we to think of the superstitions of a soldier, who at the very moment that the enemy was

[472] *Colburn's United Service Magazine and Naval and Military Journal,* 1870, Part 1, p125
[473] *Colburn's United Service Magazine and Naval and Military Journal,* 1871, Part 1, p121
[474] Ibid, p121
[475] *Colburn's United Service Magazine and Naval and Military Journal,* 1871, Part 1, p401

> advancing in full force upon them … would not move an inch in their own defence, and that of their country's honour until they had confessed to a priest and received absolution.[476]

A fine account of detail on the matter of non-commissioned officers rising from the ranks is to be found in the second Volume of *The United Service Journal*'s 1871 edition, suitably titled; 'Promotion of Non Commissioned Officers of the British Army.'[477] The account covers many of the pressing points of this study, including the preponderance of the aristocratic element within the army, not just in terms of officer, but in the ethos of the army itself; 'in comparison with their own class in civil life, the Army is almost to a man aristocratic, of superior moral and physical standing, even to the small drummer boy.' The preference for rural recruits,[478] over what the writer dubs 'the kindred produced of the dunghill and the gutter, the low town blackguard' is also in evidence. The writer has no shortage of targets for his ire, including 'not only the priest beridden, priest trampled Catholic', but Dissenters, Deists, 'The Infidel' and even just 'Civilians' who are now described as being in the business of making political decisions and schemes for their own advancement not, as the writer terms it 'England's Welfare.'

This lamentation for the loss of many of the army's traditional recruiting districts in Ireland and Scotland, underlines the shift in the portrayal of Irish Catholicism within *The United Service Journal*, from the period of its initial publication to the 1870s. Although the expressions toward Irish Catholics within the publication are largely prejudicial and negative, the subsequent diminution of the Irish Catholic demographic within the army appears to correlate quite strongly with a diminution in prejudicial material being circulated in *The United Service Journal*. Thus, whilst we can speak of such material being relatively abundant in the 1830s, 1840s and 1850s, we can also speak of a significant decrease in the 1860s and 1870s and the near absence of any such material in the final two decades of the nineteenth century. Whilst this material diminishes, it is certainly not entirely absent. One can find an

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[476] Ibid, p403
[477] *Colburn's United Service Magazine and Naval and Military Journal,* 1871, Part 2, p365
[478] Spiers, *The Late Victorian Army,* p21

exception to this general decline in the occasional commentary arising within the *Journal* in one of the great issues of late nineteenth-century Ireland; Fenianism.

> 'To call a man a Whabi' says Sterndale, 'is to nine tenths of Englishmen in India, to call him a fanatic, a rebel, a sort of Mahometan Fenian, one whom the police should take under special surveillance, and whose every action is open to suspicion.[479]

This quotation is taken from a *Journal* article from the mid-1880s, and in attempt to characterise the position of Wahhabi fundamentalist in India, it also betrays how the Fenian movement was envisaged by military officers to say nothing of the wider British populace. The Fenian is framed as an inveterate rebel, fanatical in the pursuit of a violent Irish nationalist agenda and well justified as a target of all the state's powers of prosecution, and is a construction which is quite clearly a threat to the institution of the British Empire both in Ireland and in the colonies. The Fenian movement emerged from the failed Young Irelander Rebellion of 1848, with the eponymous Fenian Brotherhood being founded in the United States in 1858 by former Young Irelanders John O'Mahony and Michael Doheny. A related Irish organization was founded in the same year by James Stephens, named the Irish Republican Brotherhood. Collectively, these two groups formed the Fenian movement, yet the term Fenian soon acquired currency as a pejorative in British circles for any manner of Irish malcontent. Despite this, for the first decade of these movements' existence and emergence onto the public stage,[480] little attention appears to have been paid to them by the corps of *Journal* contributors, perhaps in part owing to the ongoing civil war in the United States. The eventual attention that is paid to the Fenians within the *Journal*, suggests that British Army officers viewed the Fenians in two related frameworks; firstly as a military threat in the sense of a conventional armed force seeking to challenge the British Army on the field and secondly as a potential source for internal dissension within the army itself.[481]

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[479] *Colburn's United Service Magazine and Journal of the Army, Navy and Auxiliary Forces*, v.164 (Jan.-June 1885), p597

[480] Whelehan, N. (2012) *The Dynamiters: Irish Nationalism and Political Violence in the Wider World, 1867-1900*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p34

[481] Streets, *Martial Races*, p171

The first conception is occasioned unsurprisingly by the emergence of the Fenian movement as a conventional military threat in Canada. This unusual episode in the history of Irish nationalism emerged in the aftermath of the American Civil War and the demobilization of a large number of Irish emigrants who had gained combat training and experience (often under the command of emigre nationalists such as Thomas Meagher and Michael Corcoran). From this large body of men was drawn a military force which attempted several abortive and unsuccessful raids into British Canada.[482] Early comments from the editorial section show disbelief at the prospect of a 'liberating army' arriving in Ireland and dismay at the continued agitation of the Irish peasantry.[483] Following the first Fenian raids into Canada in 1866, one can observe a stark about face in the attitudes found in the *Journal*, which now devote some attention to the matter, largely contemptuous of both the rebels and subsequently of the miserable failures that their military endeavours devolved into. Even before the conclusion of the raids, the so called invasions appear to have become a subject of mockery and derision, made ridiculous as early as 1867 by virtue of a large number of informants from inside the Fenian ranks.[484] With the conclusion of the raids and the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War in 1871, attention paid to the military endeavours of the Fenian movement naturally abates, falling into the realms of criminal prosecution.

At this point it would be wise to consider the context of Fenianism, specifically its traversal of both military and civilian sphere. Although Fenianism has commonly been regarded as simply another link in the chain of Irish violent-nationalism, recent scholarship suggests it was perhaps quite a distinct phenomenon in its own right.[485] One cannot help but notice the large distinction between the most significant Fenian raids during the late 1860s and early 1870s on the Imperial frontier, as compared with the subsequent campaigns of domestic violence resistance within the United Kingdom, most notably the Fenian dynamite campaign of the 1880s. Whereas the former attracted a modest sum of attention within the *Journal*, the latter's distinctly civilian dimensions appear to have precluded much aside from occasional condemnation. Indeed, one *Journal* piece pertaining to the congruent debate on Home Rule

[482] See Senior, H. (1991) *The Last Invasion of Canada: The Fenian Raids, 1866-1870,* Toronto: Dundurn Press.
[483] *Colburn's United Service Magazine and Naval and Military Journal* , 1865, Part 3, p269
[484] *Colburn's United Service Magazine and Naval and Military Journal* , 1867, Part 2, p113
[485] Whelehan, *The Dynamiters*, p1

(which likewise attracted only modest attention) from the 1880s decried the attention being paid to 'Irish affairs' at the expense of military matters. [486]

Yet one issue clearly recurs, and it is one which is reflective of both deliberate Fenian aims as well as a conscious expression of fear on the part of British authorities; the fear of Fenian infiltration. Infiltration of the still significant contingent of Irish-Catholic rank and file had long been an objective of the Fenian movement.[487] Early attempts at infiltration began not long after the foundation of the Fenian movement; take for example the case of Patrick Lennon – Fenian 'drill master'- who enlisted in the 12th Lancers and subsequently deserted after helping himself to an officer's horse in 1860.[488] Lennon was later captured by the army in the course of his Fenian activities and was branded with a large letter D, the punishment for a military deserter.[489] Nevertheless, by 1866 the fear of Fenian infiltration was sufficiently strong as to trigger an official response. Several memoranda circulated in 1866 by Sir Hugh Rose seek to both clarify and alert the wider readership of the potential risk posed by Fenian provocateurs, listing several examples of such infiltration in the both the infantry and artillery.[490] By the same token, another circular from the same publication seeks to assuage fears of wider infiltration, proclaiming the continued loyalty of most soldiery, and making specific reference to the danger posed by various agent provocateurs targeting the youngest and most vulnerable soldiers of the army. Ultimately, and in the same manner as had beset the Fenian raids, the failure of any serious threat to materialize meant less and less attention from *Journal* contributors.

Indeed, as early as the mid-1870s, references to the Fenian movement in the *Journal* already exhibit a historical hue, assimilating into history the events of the 1860s and 70s as simply the latest examples of successful British campaigns abroad. This apparent lack of interest is particularly stark in light of the ongoing campaign of bombings, which would cause some

[486] *Colburn's United Service Magazine and Journal of the Army, Navy and Auxiliary Forces,* v.167 (July-Dec. 1886), p343
[487] Jenkins, B. (2008) *Fenian Problem: Insurgency and Terrorism in a Liberal State, 1858-1874,* London: McGill & Queen's University Press, p328
[488] O'Cathaoir, E. (1990) 'Patrick Lennon (1841-1901): Dublin Fenian Leader' in *Dublin Historical Record,* Vol. 44, No. 2 (Autumn), p38
[489] O'Cathaoir, 'Patrick Lennon', p38
[490] *Colburn's United Service Magazine and Naval and Military Journal,* 1866, Part 1, p608

casualties in Great Britain, and precipitated the formation of the 'Special Branch' of the London Metropolitan Police. Whereas *Journal* contributors had been perfectly happy to comment on how captured Fenian rebels should be treated, there is little to be said about their civilian operatives in the 1880s. By contrast the anti-Fenian campaigns of the 1860s and early 1870s the 1860s appear to quite quickly enter the wider corpus of former campaigns being regaled by regimental histories and personal memoirs.[491] [492] The sense of a potential lingering threat remain, with one commentator opining that in the event of a military emergency, forces positioned in Ireland should be all regular infantry for 'obvious reasons', yet such comments are the exception.[493] By the 1890s the Fenians had become something of a joke within the *Journal,* with M.H. Grant remarking of an isolated piece of countryside;

> 'is this perchance, the lonely meeting place of the Fenian brotherhood, with whom a certain Irish member once assured us the ranks of her Majesty's Army were full, awaiting the day of revolt?'[494]

One possible interpretation of the role of the Fenian movement in the *Journal* is its crystallization of previously generalized attitudes surrounding Irish disloyalty into a more specific class of individual; Irish nationalists, a body of disloyal individuals, keen to lead others astray. This is particularly evident in Sir Hugh Rose's appeal to the vast body of Irish Catholic soldiers, but it is also apparent in a reference to the political activities of constitutional Irish nationalists. In a comment surrounding the visit of the Duke of Edinburgh to Ireland, one editorial is keen to distinguish the wider Irish population who enthusiastically received the Duke, from a problematic group in the form of 'Messrs. Parnell, Biggar and Co.'[495]

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[491] *The United Service Magazine and Naval and Military Journal,* 1874, Part 3, p210
[492] *The United Service Magazine and Naval and Military Journal*: 1875, Part 1, p159
[493] *Colburn's United Service Magazine and Journal of the Army, Navy and Auxiliary Forces,* v.167 (July-Dec. 1886), p204
[494] *The United Service Magazine,* 1898, Vol. 17, p55
[495] *Colburn's United Service Magazine and Naval and Military Journal,* 1880, Part 2, p225

4.4: Policies of Pragmatism

The selections from the Journal demonstrate a suspicion of Catholicism and Irish Catholics by many (perhaps most) offices, but in practice such hostility was moderated by pragmatic considerations. Over the course of the eighteenth century, the formal ban on Catholics as either members of the rank and file or the officer corps was punctuated by the tacit recruitment of men for the former, and the occasional commissioning of Catholics surreptitiously in certain regiments.[496] Further to this, the first attempts to enlist Irish Catholics in the rank and file were predicated not upon repudiation of the formal ban, but rather by a process of enlistment on the basis of 'no inquiry' as to a recruit's faith. These practices of tacit toleration for Catholic recruitment to an army still ostensibly in service to uphold the Protestant faith can be viewed as antecedents to religious policy in the British Army during the nineteenth century.

Early elucidation of the attitudes surrounding religion can be found in the case of Captain Atchison and Lieutenant Dawson in 1823. Thomas Atchison and George Francis Dawson, then serving with the Royal Artillery as part of the British garrison at Fort St. Angelo, Malta, received orders to ring a bell and fire from patteraroes[497] during the course of a mass and procession of saintly images, all apparently under the direction of the priest conducting the procession. Atchison objected to being asked to render the salutes, citing his faith and seeking 'For a simple request to have those principles respected.'[498] Further to this, Captain Atchison also wrote a letter to his commanding officer stating his objections to being asked to participate in such ceremonies, referring to the oath he had taken upon his commission to 'serve his majesty under the obligations of a Protestant oath',[499] an oath which implied the services he was being asked to undertake were idolatrous. Dawson in a letter to his superior officer wrote:

[496] Donovan, 'The Military Origins of the Catholic Relief Programme of 1778', p96
[497] A non-military form of explosive signal, possibly akin to a firework
[498] Atchison, T. (1825) *Trial of Captain Thomas Atchison Royal Artillery by a general court martial at Malta; In consequence of having requesting to be exonerated from firing patteraro salutes and tolling a Catholic bell for the Church and image rites of Catholic priests,* London: Hatchard and Son, VI
[499] *The United Service Journal and Naval and Military Magazine,* 1834, Part 1 p413

> '….I beg leave respectfully to state that I feel myself placed in a difficulty in issuing orders to that effect to the men under my command conceiving as I do that I should thereby become a party to an idolatrous act of worship committed by these assembled to pay honour to the above Saint and thus violate my principles as a Christian and Protestant.'

Having failed to issue orders for the salutes, the two officers were placed under arrest on the orders of the Master General of Ordnance.[500] Subsequent to this arrest, the two men were subject to court martial under the chairmanship of Count Francis Rivarola, Colonel of the Royal Malta Fencibles[501] and himself a Catholic. The proceedings of the court martial do much to reveal the motivations of the men; Dawson's attempt to offer a defence came to a rapid end after he was accused of bringing in religious matters 'unconnected with the charges', whilst Atchison was permitted to offer a defence only after removing lengthy religious extracts from his statement. Regardless, both men were found guilty, cashiered from the service and forbidden from serving again. This rather severe punishment of cashiering precluded the officers from a means of supporting themselves upon half pay, or upon retiring on full pay later in the service.[502] However, following submission of the ruling to the Judge Advocate General Sir John Beckett (A Tory appointed by Lord Liverpool), the court martial was set to be revised as the men were denied in the opinion of Sir John a 'full, fair and legal trial'. Subsequent hearings for both men permitted them to read their full defence statements but the reconvened court martial reached the same conclusion and the sentence of cashiering was confirmed October 1824. Both men continued to protest their treatment after returning to Britain; Atchison pled his case in the public sphere, writing several pamphlets protesting that he had not disobeyed a military order.[503] [504] Dawson subsequently became a clergyman in the Church of England, serving as a Rector in Kent.

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[500] At the point of the trial, the Master General of Ordnance was the Duke of Wellington.
[501] 'Fencible' units refer to raised militia regiments raised by the British Army, primarily for garrison duty
[502] It must be recalled that a severe punishment, as the two men were members of the Royal Artillery, they were not part of the 'purchase' system by which retiring officers could sell their commissions for a lump sum.
[503] Atchison, T. (1824) *Statement of Mr. Atchison late Captain in the Royal Artillery, in the defence of his military integrity resting on the facts in evidence, the military laws, principles*

The Maltese case is revealing in setting out the broadest themes of religion within the British Army, which recur across the period under study. Firstly, the willingness of army officialdom and senior officers to make accommodations with the Catholic clergy and population,[505] even so far as to place military assets at the disposal of the local Church for the purpose of conducting services. Evidently, and without regard to the oath to uphold the Protestant faith which Atchison refers to, British Army policy involved a considerable measure of concession to local religious beliefs, even surmounting the practices mentioned above: Atchison testifies that subsequent to the affair which saw him dismissed, unofficial orders not passed through the proper channels saw the practice continue without the involvement of British officers, but with the granting of gun-powder and free passage to the local clergy.[506] One is also left to wonder at the significance of the court-martial being chaired by one of the few senior Catholic officers – whether this was yet another concession to local religious feelings, a conscious attempt to influence the outcome of the case or simply a reflection of the officers available on Malta at that time.

Secondly, we must consider the aversion and even hostile attitude of senior officers toward any excess of religious devotion or scriptural indulgence: despite the protestations of both men, the officers assembled at the court-martial refused their attempts to defend their actions as simply being an attempt to uphold the oath to defend the Protestant faith that they had taken upon being commissioned. Even more than this, the court clearly had little patience for the long-winded scriptural arguments employed by the defendants, with the court transcripts showing large tracts of such text expunged from the official record. Indeed many of these expunged tracts explore and demonstrate the nature of Atchison's particular hostility to the Catholic Church, namely elements he regarded as pageantry or superstition. Whatever utility these extracts have in understanding wider contemporary attitudes is largely immaterial here; what remains crucial is although Atchison firmly held these beliefs – his fellow officers and superiors recoiled at them.

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and precedents, belonging to the case tried by general court martial at Malta in the year 1824, London: Hatchard and Son

[504] Atchison, T. (1825) *Trial of Captain Thomas Atchison of the Royal Artillery by a General Court Martial at Malta,* London: Hatchard and Son

[505] Malta being almost exclusively Catholic during this period, formerly serving as Headquarters to the Knights of St. John

[506] Atchison, *The trial of Thomas Atchison,* VI

A very similar case to that of Malta, with a congruent similarity of attitudes, presents itself in 1849 with a harsh criticism on the part of *The United Service Journal*, on the refusal of one British citizen, Mr. Summers, to lower his head at the passage of a Catholic procession, whilst serving as a teacher in the Portuguese colony of Macau.[507] Summers, who had been detained following his refusal to lower his head in the presence of that procession, was subsequently arrested following his refusal to remove his hat in the presence of the Portuguese governor. Unsatisfied with the Governor's response, a minor diplomatic incident ensued as a detachment of British forces stationed on nearby naval vessels forcibly retrieved Mr. Summers from his imprisonment.[508] The incident itself is largely irrelevant in wider history, however the reaction of the writer to the entire incident is quite telling. As with Dawson and Atchison's "principled opposition" on Malta, the editor eschews Mr. Summer's apparently principled objection, labelling it something to be 'regretted.' Although by no means enthused by an act of Catholic devotion, which he dubs 'over-clouded with superstition'; it is Mr. Summer's inability to accommodate even the most basic differences of Christian faith that remains the primary target of the editor's scorn.[509]

These twin themes of pragmatic accommodation with prevailing circumstances and a concurrent disdain for any excesses in religious feeling amongst officers persist across the period. Although the treatment of Atchison and Dawson attracted considerable outcry in certain circles of British society, as well as a lengthy campaign to see the men pardoned, neither public petition nor parliamentary intervention produced any results.[510] On the contrary, the religion of pragmatism appears to have largely dominated religious affairs within the Army. MacMullen similarly recounts that notwithstanding such flashpoints it was typical practice for commanders to provide the last rites for their dying men (typically military service did not permit the performance of last rites by a cleric) according to whatever religious faith the dying professed. Indeed, more critical assessment of the rank and file, long associated with the worst vices of British society (alcoholism, gambling, and violence) to

[507] *The United Service Journal and Naval and Military Magazine,* 1849, Part 3, p289
[508] Hao, Z. (2011) *Macau: History and Society,* Hong Kong: Kings Times Printing Press, p129
[509] *The United Service Journal and Naval and Military Magazine,* 1849, Part 3, p289
[510] It should be noted that one such intervention was made by Daniel O'Connell (July 17th 1833) who concurred with the petitioner, nothing several occasions of Catholic soldiery in similar circumstances being given appropriate redress.

such an extent as to earn the moniker ‘mere scum of the earth’ from the Duke of Wellington, does much to suggest the apparent paucity or even fraudulence of religious devotion. By comparison, the purported religiosity of an officer must be taken as diffused behind the numerous social requirements which most were expected to obtain; a public school education, sufficient wealth to support oneself whilst in the service and the hallmarks of a gentleman. This applies even amongst those officers under inspection in this study, a significant number of which were drawn from either the middle class, lower gentry, or from a family with a tradition of military service.

On occasion there even appears to be openly expressed contempt for the treatment of Catholic soldiery by the government. In an address to the editor concerning ‘The Last War in Canada’,[511] the author laments the inequity of treatment of Catholics in Canada, specifically the Glengarry Light Infantry Fencible Regiment under the Catholic Major George Richard MacDonnell.[512] The exploits of that unit and its contribution to the war effort are beyond the remit of this study. However, the treatment of MacDonnell, who was most famous primarily for his role in the successful Battle of Ogdensburg, is quite telling. Despite his role, it is alleged in *The United Service Journal* that an attempt to recognize the feats of the Major and reward him with a sword of one hundred guineas value, was stopped in the House of the Upper Canadian Assembly by the declaration of the speaker, Allan McLean. The reason for this denial purportedly being the demonstration on the part of the speaker that MacDonnell was ‘a Papist’ and as a product of this fact, ’ought not to receive from a Protestant government any reward for any victory.’[513] Further to this, the writer refers to two Anglo-Irish officers who did receive such a reward despite not holding any independent commands like MacDonnell. Clearly outraged by this treatment and asserting fervently ‘Catholic loyalty has long been cruelly rewarded on many occasions in boasting England.’ Going even beyond this point, the writer lays a serious charge in asserting ‘long after 1813, this *miserable fanaticism* reigned supreme in high places in England – the so-called land of liberty.’[514]

[511] Referring to what is now known as the War of 1812 between the United States and Great Britain, which lasted from 1812 to late 1814
[512] It has been alleged by Carol M. Whitfield that the anonymous letter written to *The United Service Journal* was in-fact written by MacDonnell himself, see *Canadian Dictionary of National Biography,* Volume IX (1976) Entry: MacDonnell, George Richard
[513] *The United Service Journal and Naval and Military Magazine*, 1848, Part 1, p439
[514] Ibid, p440

MacDonnell's sense of grievance at this treatment following the war and lack of public recognition have lead us to question the extent to which his lack of preferment was a by-product purely of religious bigotry or whether other factors were at play. Nonetheless, confining ourselves to the mere facts of his treatment and the willingness of *The United Service Journal* to publish his complaints several decades after the event, we must take MacDonnell's case as being well grounded and yet another example of lingering anti-Catholic bigotries, in this case at the Imperial frontier.

Indeed, in spite of the material discussed in the previous section, there remain several indications of a spirit of impartiality and balance within the officer corps of the army. A letter to *The United Service Journal* written by one "W.W.", in response to a piece entitled 'A Voice from the Army' (discussing the merits of half pay officers being permitted to hold civil positions) includes the following extract:

> The writer has alluded to the Constabulary in Ireland: connected with this subject it may be remarked, that during the distraction in that country in 1820, &c. as appears from the evidence given before the Committee of the House of Commons, whilst many of the magistrates were considered by the people as partial and unjust in their decisions, and cases were adduced where they were accused of a bias in favouring the Orange side against the Catholics, the latter always considered and testified, that when officers who had served in the Navy and Army were acting in the magistracy, impartial justice was invariably administered by them, without any reference whatever to their party feuds. [515]

This positive attestation to the ability of Army and Navy officers to administer unbiased justice does much to indicate the author's belief that they could and should act impartially. Certainly, accusations of anti-Catholic bias continue to hold currency when in regards the Royal Irish Constabulary.[516] Yet in the very same volume, the spectre of troubling sectarian

[515] *The United Service Journal and Naval and Military Magazine*, 1831, Part 3, p91
[516] Campbell, F. (2009) 'The social composition of the senior officers of the Royal Irish Constabulary' in *Irish Historical Studies,* Vol. 36, No. 14, *p539*

developments within the Yeomanry is noted in the 'abstract of parliamentary proceedings connected with the navy and army.'[517] The exchanges between parliamentarians on the necessity of employing the Yeomanry, on the one hand as 'an impregnable barrier against the repeal of the Union' but on the other as 'a party corps', correlate with the description of the Yeomanry as a highly partisan force, as discussed earlier. The most striking facet of this exchange however, is the preference expressed by Daniel O'Connell for the employment of either 'regular troops of English militia' in the event of further disturbances within Ireland.[518] This endorsement lends much weight to the notion of the military as either an impartial force, or more likely, as a force far less bound to sectarian interest than the local Yeomanry employed in Ireland. If we examine once more the anonymous 'Memoirs of a Sergeant',[519] we find fascinating insight into the mind of an Irish Catholic soldier, although we must consider his reminiscences as being coloured somewhat by subsequent conversion to Methodism. He relates the spirit of equanimity prevailing in regards Catholic worship:

> I recollect that, one wet Sunday morning, it was my turn to march the Catholic party to Stonehouse Chapel. The piety of the others was about equal to mine. Finding ourselves rather damp from the rain, it was proposed, that instead of going to mass, we should adjourn to the next public house. This was agreed without a division; and there we remained until nightfall.[520]

Although the encounter pertains to men of the rank and file, not officers, and occurs a full two decades before the period of our study, the presence of a similar attitude of religious apathy in spite of nominal affiliation within the officer corps should not be precluded – the author was not of the landless labouring classes that made up so much of Britain's fighting men. His father was a steward to a landed gentleman of Portarlington,[521] and when we consider also his position as adjutant and assistant to several officers prior to his promotion to sergeant, as well as his literacy, one cannot help but conclude that the author was a man who, (but for the loss of his father at a young age) might otherwise have served as a junior officer.

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[517] *The United Service Journal and Naval and Military Magazine,* 1831, Part 3, p27
[518] Ibid, p271
[519] Anonymous, *Memoirs of a Sergeant Late in the Forty-third*
[520] Anonymous, *Memoirs of a Sergeant*, p181
[521] Ibid, p2

Depictions of the Irish and Catholic soldiery do not occur exclusively within the context of an ideological or theological battlefield. Despite a body of evidence for an atmosphere of suspicion and scorn towards the Catholic faith (and especially clergy), we can also observe many recorded accounts of simple respect and toleration exchanged between Catholic soldiers and their Protestant counterparts, which had slowly evolved.[522] Perhaps the most striking of these surrounds the execution of Michael Kinnelly, a private of the 36th Regiment serving as a garrison force on Barbados.[523] Kinnelly, having being sentence to death for attempting to kill an officer while intoxicated, was both Irish and a Catholic. Nonetheless, perhaps indicative of the lack of formal support for religious worship amongst the troops at this point, no clergyman of the Catholic faith could be found in Barbados. Unwilling to see the execution take place without religious consolation for the condemned, the Lieutenant-General of the island sent for a priest from St. Lucia, at his own expense, to provide last rites.

Some evidence can be found of a practical toleration for religious differences, in spite of existing prejudices. In a *Journal* piece from 1838,[524] one former officer recounts his efforts to secure for a wounded Catholic soldier named Kavanagh, the use of the local Catholic clergy during his convalescence, an indulgence achieved only by the extension of the officer's own period of leave and the cooperation of yet another officer. The effects of this atmosphere of religious respect do even, on occasion, appear to transcend the divisions of class which naturally permeate the British Army of this period. In an account of the British Auxiliary Legion in Spain,[525] one writer identified only as 'Miles',[526] we can find one example of this *modus vivendi*. Upon the death of one British soldier of the Catholic faith and Scottish birth, the writer noted warmly the subsequent assembly of a group of Irishmen and several

[522] Kennedy, C. (2013) *Narratives of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars*, Houndmills Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, p55
[523] *The United Service Journal and Naval and Military Magazine*, 1839, Part 1, p70
[524] *The United Service Journal and Naval and Military Magazine*, 1838, Part 1, p217
[525] The British Auxiliary Legion was a British volunteer force established under General De Lacy Evans (of Moig, County Limerick) from 1835 to 1837, in order to assist the forces of Queen Isabella II of Spain against the Carlist forces during what became known as 'The First Carlist War' (1833-1839)
[526] Miles is a Latin term for soldier

Englishmen from nearby units, in an ad-hoc service of remembrance around the unknown deceased, led in prayer by a Catholic sergeant. He writes; [527]

> 'It was an effecting, if not edifying sight, to behold men, rude by nature, and stern in disposition, brought by a sense of religion to discharge the last office of humanity to a total stranger, with a delicacy and kindness that would have done credit to more civilized persons.'

Disregarding the patronising tone about 'rude' men the comments note the prevalence of a pragmatic respect for religious differences. A commensurate respect of feeling can also be found from what glimpses exist of Catholic sentiment toward Protestant officers. One such officer to attract the approbation of his Catholic counterparts is Lieutenant Colonel John Hastings Mair, a Lieutenant governor of the island of Grenada. The death of Mair, a native of Limerick and according to *The United Service Journal* a 'strict Protestant', is announced in *The United Service Journal*, which includes further reference to both a fast and a mass in his memory which were to be undertaken by the island's Catholic authorities. This is to be performed, in the words of those authorities; 'for the repose of the soul of their late lamented, esteemed, and ever to be valued Governor.'[528] In some cases we can even find some regret at the existence of any religious distinction between members of the British Army. In a piece titled 'British and Foreign Arms' one writer laments the 'bad effects sometimes produced by the schism' between Catholics and Protestants.[529] For him, the theological root of such differences is immaterial in face of the overwhelming need to ensure soldiers are provided with all the attendant religious rites at death, in his words 'when all dissension should cease.' Once again, the hope is for practical comradeship to overpower religious distinctions.

These alternating attitudes of practical toleration and public advocacy of discrimination are demonstrated clearly in the evolution of the Catholic chaplaincy in the British Army during this period. For devout Irish Catholic officers, the provisions for Catholic worship as a part of

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[527] *The United Service Journal and Naval and Military Magazine*, 1836, Part 1, p498
[528] *The United Service Journal and Naval and Military Magazine*, 1836, Part 2, p388
[529] *The United Service Magazine and Naval and Military Journal*, 1843, Part 2, p258

the army's religious services, like the provisions of so many other army services in the 19th Century, evolved haphazardly and largely without any long term vision. Although formally admitted from 1793, Catholics in British service could potentially be called to observe and parade for Anglican Church services, an anomaly that persisted until a formal declaration from the Duke of York (Commander in Chief of the Army) in 1811.[530] For Catholic officers and men, access to religious services was subsequently dependent on whatever facilities the local Catholic community could provide, subsidized by the office of the Chaplain General.[531] Only in 1836 were the first Catholics appointed as officiating chaplains in the British Army[532] and these men served part time (not as members of the British Army), assigned irregularly wherever Irish Catholic troops were concentrated, depending in large part on the willingness of the War Office and Treasury to sanction payment for individual Catholic priests.[533] Some measure of the acceptance (however guarded it was) given to the provision of Catholic chaplains and accommodations for worship can be found in a rather boldly worded quote from the Secretary of War (Thomas Babington Macaulay) in 1841, given to Parliament and quoted in *The United Service Journal* as follows:[534]

> To the principle that, whatever opinions they might hold with regard to religious establishments, there can be no doubt that if we would beat up for recruits in Catholic countries, and place men strongly attached to the Church in which they had been brought up to fight our battles in the midst of Pagans and barbarians, and get wounded and killed in our service, it was our duty, as far as we could, to provide them with the comforts of their religion.

The quotation attracted sufficient approbation on the part of the writer, Henry Marshall,[535] to lead him to proclaim that the army now enjoyed 'full religious liberty' or at least the same

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[530] Fontana, *Some Aspects of Catholic Service,* p89
[531] Ibid, p263
[532] Snape, *Redcoats and Religion,* p92
[533] The Chaplaincy itself was also a product of relative novelty (as with formal army education) – the Army Chaplains Department was established only in 1796, whereas prior to that point, the position of Chaplain was a Regimental commission like any other, open to purchase and sale: Snape, *Redcoats and Religion,* p89
[534] *The United Service Journal and Naval and Military Magazine*, 1841, Part 2, p475
[535] Serving at this point as Deputy Inspector-General of Army Hospitals

religious liberty that extended to civil society. Nonetheless, for Irish Catholic officers, this irregular policy could make spiritual ministration random, dependent primarily upon one's military station. Only in 1858, following the Crimean War (which saw an enormous number of Irish Catholics amongst the soldiery) and the concerted efforts of Cardinal Paul Cullen, [536] did the army begin to commission full time Catholic Chaplains, operating on the same basis as their Established Church counterparts. In that same conflict, one writer was led to laud the apparently ecumenical quality of the military hospitals; the article from 1856 entitled 'Romance of the Hospitals' proudly extolls the work of the female volunteers during the Crimean War. In addition to the noble behaviour of the patients, it is the conduct of the nurses of all faiths which impressed the writer, who comments; 'Protestants, Catholics, Dissenters, it matters not; for these holy women, whatever their sect, were all Christians.'[537]

However, even at this juncture, lingering attitudes of resistance to the Catholic presence is evidenced by a Horse Guards circular issued September 23rd 1854, in respect of the payment and accommodation of clergymen 'officiating to the troops' of the Established, Presbyterian and Catholic faiths.[538] Indicative of relative prestige are different pay scales; a clergyman of the Church of England providing spiritual services for more than three hundred of his co-religionists on a military station could expect two shillings per man, per year, his Presbyterian counterpart could expect one shilling and four pence and his Catholic counterpart just one shilling. The comparative valuation of Catholic services at just half that of the Anglican provides a clear demonstration of the lesser regard in which Catholic (and Presbyterian) services were held by the military hierarchy. However, it must be also be recalled that despite the discriminatory levels of pay provided, this development remained an improvement of previous conditions of Catholic worship within the British Army and the measures would in time be superseded by more equitable arrangements, implemented in 1862.[539]

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[536] Steele, E.D. (1975) 'Cardinal Cullen and Irish nationality' in *Irish Historical Studies*, Vol. 19, Issue 75 (March), pp239-260

[537] *Colburn's United Service Magazine and Naval and Military Journal,* 1856, Part 2, p30

[538] *Colburn's United Service Magazine and Naval and Military Journal,* 1854, Part 2, p430

[539] Naval and Military Circular for the Royal Marines, Officiating Clergy to be paid at same rate provided 25 men per station – located in *Colburn's United Service Magazine and Naval and Military Journal*, 1862, Part 1, p603

It remains important not to overstate the peculiarity of Catholics in regards the insufficient provision of religious services; non-Conformist Protestants only had their religious rights within the army recognized in 1862.[540] Notwithstanding this, it also remains difficult for observers to properly gauge the extent of religiosity within the army forces behind the veil of mandatory attendance at services and officially sanctioned chaplaincy.[541] John MacMullen, a staff sergeant of the 13th Regiment, recalls in his memoirs the incident of a Catholic private within the corps objecting to Catholic prayers being read by a lay officer, also a Catholic, the only such officer in the unit. The protest of the private soldier soon ended when he was set to parade alone between the two companies of soldiers during Sunday services instead of being permitted to escape attendance at services as he had initially hoped.

By the close of the century, further evidence for the flowering of a pragmatic attitude towards religious differences can be found in an account of 'Miss Daniell's Soldiers Homes' contributed unusually by a Miss E.L. Debutts in 1893-94.[542] The soldiers' homes were founded in the 1860s as an attempt to provide 'dry' recreational facilities for soldier. Despite the religious ethos of the homes, DeButts records the more ecumenical attitude which pervades, noting;

> While Miss Daniell and all her lady workers are themselves members of the Church of England, it stands among the unwritten rules of the soldiers home that none whom come in shall hear anything said against the church or denomination to which they belong. Those who attend are Church (of England) members), Presbyterians, Baptists, Wesleyans, Roman Catholics. The Soldiers home welcomes all.

While one cannot infer from a single account a complete transition in attitudes or the utter evaporation of anti-Catholic prejudice, DeButts' account neatly underlines the change by the

[540] Snape, *Redcoats and Religion*, p70
[541] Ibid, p71
[542] *The United Service Journal and Naval and Military Magazine*, Volume 8, October 1893-April 1894, p263

end of the nineteenth century from the circumstances of 1829. Whereas at the start of our period of inquiry, naked anti-Catholic sentiment had common currency in *The United Service Journal*, reflecting both the 'otherness' of Irish Catholics and the potential malice caused by their religious observance, this account at the close of the period suggests that the Catholic faith had been assimilated into the pantheon of British religious worship, seen as one among many different Christian faiths, if not quite the 'prima inter pares' of the established Church.

By means of attempting to offer an overall characterisation of this material, we should perhaps recall also the content of the previous section, which included a considerable body of prejudicial writing against Irish Catholics. One must concede that even if the existence of many examples of pragmatic toleration do not surmount many of the prejudices (and indeed official discrimination which persisted for the first few decades under study) expressed, they at the very least imply the existence of a body within the army which was more reconciled to Irish Catholics soldiers, and to a lesser extent Irish Catholic officers. This last point is of particular importance as one cannot ignore the fact that many of the pragmatic considerations detailed above, appear to hold more relevance to the body of the rank and file rather than members of the officer class. Thus we are left to consider the possibility that toleration for Irish Catholics was far more easily granted when they occupied a subservient space as soldiers, rather than an equal space as fellow officers.

4.5: The Celtic Archetype

In his 1993 work, Frank Wallis refers to the competing 'Curtis' and 'Gilley' theses of anti-Catholicism. The Curtis thesis contends that the anti-Catholicism of the mid-Victorian period remained intertwined with racial theories and specifically the notion of Celtic inferiority when compared with the Anglo-Saxon race – and that in practice Irish Catholicism was simply a reflection of the inability of the Irish race to display 'love of freedom, respect for law, and distrust of enthusiasm.'[543] By contrast, the Gilley thesis contends that English attitudes toward the Irish population were bifurcated into positive and negative, and that fundamentally ethnicity was just one factor in determining attitudes, paling in comparison to questions surrounding politics and the Catholic faith. Although a conclusive resolution to this debate remains elusive, it is worth considering those aspects of prejudice against Irish Catholics which proceeded from largely racial lines. To answer this we must look to the

[543] Wallis, *Anti-Catholicism in Mid-Victorian Britain,* p228

Celtic archetype, an imagined set of characteristics and traits, is frequently applied to the Irish Catholics (and to a lesser degree, the Anglo-Irish) in the Army. Certainly, the Victorian period saw many examples of the Irishman being caricatured in print form, with certain recurring characteristics.[544] [545] This archetype is broadly categorized as emotional, irrational, possessed of a low cunning but good spirit, amiability and loyalty to superiors, and a contentedness with serving as a ranker. However, certain elements of this idealized 'Celtic' archetype are present where other factors were at play; such as social class. Despite these, a clear construction of 'Irishness' can be identified and is set forth frequently in Journal articles. Indeed, one can find a strikingly direct reference to notions of deep racial differences between "Celts" and Englishmen located (unusually) in a piece entitled 'The Egyptian Revolution' dealing with the history of that country in the five decades following the destruction of the French expeditionary force. [546]

> 'The aboriginal race of the kingdom (of England) was Celtic, an element excellent, when mingled with others, but alone weak and fragile, as has been proved in all its collisions with the northern and eastern races; and history records no full grown Celtic literature, or full grown political state in which the main element could exist by itself. The Celts have certainly a lyrical turn, and in the modern British character the Celtic element may have contributed something of that exquisite sensibility without which there can be no true poetry.'

Although couched in language that is more evocative of the Volkerwanderung[547] than nineteenth century Anglo-Irish relations, the allusion to the state of Ireland at that time are redolent. The 'weak' and 'fragile' nature of the "pure" Celtic element immediately lends itself to notions of class-based superiority – a historical underpinning for the Anglo-Irish

[544] Forker, M. (2012) 'The use of the 'cartoonist's armoury' in manipulating public opinion: anti-Irish imagery in 19th century British and American periodicals' in *Journal of Irish Studies,* Vol. 27, p58

[545] McNees, E. (2004) '"Punch" and the Pope: Three Decades of Anti-Catholic Caricature' in *Victorian Periodicals Review,* Vol. 37, No. 1, p18

[546] *Colburn's United Service Magazine and Naval and Military Journal, 1858*, Part 1, p411

[547] The Volkerwanderung or 'Migration Period' refers to the mass population movements of Europe following the fall of the Western Roman Empire – more specifically in this instance it is in reference to the arrival of the Anglo-Saxons to then Romano-Celtic Britain.

landed ascendancy. Similarly, the lack of a 'grown political state' serves to provide further justification for Ireland's place within the wider United Kingdom and perhaps even the subordinate state of its officers within the wider corps. By comparison, the author points to France as an example of a state rendered chaotic by its Celtic component, writing; 'the large proportion of the Celtic race in the population of France is the cause of their characteristic impatience, inconstancy, and susceptibility to the approbation of others.'[548] Though these notions appear utterly unfounded and contradictory to modern eyes, one must recall their value not just as indications of prejudices held at the time, but as explanations for the state of affairs that Victorian officers observed.

Naturally, these preconceptions did not consist purely of prejudice and disdain for the 'Celtic Races.' One article dealing with the Army Sanitary Commission,[549] spends a considerable length of time lamenting the decline of the Army's Highland and Irish Regiments, being in his words 'no longer of pure descent' now that 'a large proportion of heterogeneous elements enters into their constitution' particularly the highly despised urban proletariat recruited from 'the workshops, the factories, the stable and the [shop] counter.' [550] More relevant to our purposes however is the description of those men drawn to the army as being from 'half made ministers, doctors and lawyers, impracticable sons of old families, improvident characters in dread of the parish beadle or the constable' whilst the 'best men of their class' are to be found pursuing some manner of civilian employment. This passage is both revealing and problematic in dealing with recruitment to the rank and file whilst at the same time evoking that professional class from whence nearly half the officer corps came to be drawn from.

The comingling of 'Irishness' with their religious faith is made explicit in the following extract, recommending them for service abroad:

> The Irish are particularly adapted for foreign service in a Catholic country; they go to mass with the muleteer, join the national past-times of the peasantry, and

[548] *Colburn's United Service Magazine and Naval and Military Journal,* 1858, Part 1, p412
[549] Ibid, p382
[550] Ibid, p388

> intermingle more generally with the majority of the inhabitants. The Irish are good linguists, and soon acquire the language of the country in which they may be quartered, but they are too fond of ardent spirits, the effect of which renders them reckless and ungovernable during which delusion they are apt to commit the greatest excess! [551]

Certainly the exploits of Irishmen whilst on service abroad are not unknown in the vast literature of post-Napoleonic memoirs. These impressions at one end of the spectrum be entirely banal, as in the case of one writer, identified only as 'a private soldier' who recollects heartily 'that noisy gaiety so characteristic of Irish soldiers.'[552] At the other end of a spectrum we can find depictions of the Irish soldier and his apparent possession of either a low cunning or a pragmatic sense of realism, occasionally venturing into the absurd. Such is the case with Robert Ridge's 'Recollection in Quarters'[553] which includes a brief digression entitled 'Forethought of an Irish soldier.' In the course of the story, Ridge recounts one Irish soldier's encounter with a coffin bearer and his subsequent requisitioning of the coffin. Shortly after this procurement, the regimental Colonel is found to be badly wounded and in need of transportation off the battlefield, leading the soldier in question (identified as Pat) to quickly return with the recently obtained coffin. The colonel was subsequently conveyed from the battlefield in the coffin-turned-ambulance whilst the Irishman, identified as 'Pat', is left to quietly remark 'didn't I tell ye there'd be use for it before long.'

Another, considerably less flattering depiction of the Irish soldier is related in an encounter from the Peninsular War as part of William Grattan's 'Reminisces of a Subaltern.'[554] Grattan, himself a member of the Anglo-Irish gentry and a kinsman of Henry Grattan, recounts how an Irish soldier of his unit (the 88th (Connacht Rangers) Regiment of Foot) interposed himself in a dispute between a Portuguese shoemaker and one of Grattan's fellow officers. The soldier, one 'Larracy', proceeds to furnish assurances that he can speak Portuguese 'nately'

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[551] *The United Service Journal and Naval and Military Magazine,* 1845, Part 3, p517
[552] *The United Service Journal and Naval and Military Magazine,* 1830, Part 1, p420
[553] *The United Service Journal and Naval and Military Magazine,* 1829, Part 2, p354
[554] *The United Service Journal and Naval and Military Magazine,* 1830, Part 2, p828 – Prior to releasing his memoirs as a full volume, William Grattan had extracts printed in the *The United Service Journal and Naval and Military Magazine*.

and being possessed of what Grattan dubs 'that happy talent for invention, for which the Irish most undeniably stand unrivalled.' In the course of their conversation, 'Larracy' is depicted as being plainly unable to speak the language, yet ultimately coming away having swindled two shillings from the officer and earned plaudits for his honesty. Although Grattan does not identify whether his fellow officer was also Anglo-Irish, his apparent ability to discern the deceptive activities of the Irish soldier in a manner that appears to elude his fellow officer, is entirely congruent with the notion set forth elsewhere, of the Anglo-Irish gentry being more attuned to and having a greater animosity towards, the wider Irish Catholic peasantry.

Such views remain reasonably constant from the post-Napoleonic period to the mid-century. If we turn to George Ballentine's memoirs of service with the US Army again, one cannot help but recall the above observation when considering Ballentine's account of the 'San Patricios.' Acknowledging the conventional wisdom that the majority of the deserters, being Irish Catholics, 'imagined they were fighting against their religion in fighting the Mexicans',[555] Ballentine tries to offer a fuller picture, not being satisfied with that explanation alone. In his view and according to his experiences, the motive for the desertion of these men is 'harsh and unjust treatment by their officers' above all others. This line of reasoning for the desertion, laying the blame not just at 'the fiery, untamed spirit of the sons of the Green Isle' [556] remains somewhat at odds with the conception of Catholic disloyalty typically mustered in the account of *The United Service Journal*, which lay a greater emphasis on the 'masses' being misled by 'agitators' rather than conspiring by their own volition. Nonetheless, the similarities remain; both viewpoints do place a greater or lesser emphasis on the role played by the men's superiors (in social standing as well as rank) and both show strong undercurrents of anti-Catholic sentiment.

The depths of these sentiments, even in lands far removed from Ireland, is another feature of Ballentine's account. One exchange between 'Orangeman' and 'Catholic' displays the depths of visceral hatred even amongst soldiers campaigning together, what he dubs 'a diabolical sort of spirit.'[557] The former, an Orderly Sergeant [558] by the name of Armstrong, received a

[555] *Colburn's United Service Magazine and Naval and Military Journal,* 1852, Part 3, p552
[556] Ibid
[557] *Colburn's United Service Magazine and Naval and Military Journal,* 1852, Part 2, p93

wound whilst on service and was left in agony. Upon lying down to rest, he was approached by a Catholic soldier enquiring as to the severity of his wound. Learning that the wound was grievous, the soldier cruelly re-joined 'then may the devil cure ye, you black hearted rascal.' The sergeants death later that night, which saw his watch and purse stolen and his body freshly wounded, was generally attributed to the Mexican forces, yet Ballentine notes the suspicion held by many that the man was a victim of his supposed comrades-in-arms.

As before, it remains immaterial whether the sergeant was indeed robbed by his own men or by the Mexican forces which is of relevance to our purposes. Rather it is the depth of animosity conveyed by the writer which we must attend to, which is highly indicative of the trans-Atlantic scope of anti-Catholicism.[559]Although this study has focused predominantly upon the attitudes of officers toward admitting Irish Catholics into their ranks, the importance of the attitudes of the rank and file is also significant. Firstly, it must be recalled that typically only the few senior members of the rank and file rarely rise to the rank of full officer – sectarian animosities within a unit could easily render such a method of advancement closed to Irish Catholics. Secondly, the presence of these religious antipathies amongst soldiers under the command of an Irish Catholic officer seeking preferment and advancement might easily have impacted upon that officer's performance and service, with obvious implications for his career prospects.

One of Colonel James Edward Alexander's works, 'Passages in the life of a soldier' from the third volume of the 1857 Journal, includes a significant number of digressions on the issue of Irish-ness as well as Catholicism.[560] Colonel Alexander, in writing about the aforementioned Gavazzi riots, is quick to ascribe blame to the presence of French and Irish persons in the Canadian population. He continues;

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[558] An archaic form of First Sergeant, itself a senior non-commissioned officer, below rank of Staff Sergeant

[559] Wolffe, J. (2013) 'North Atlantic anti-Catholicism in the Nineteenth Century: A comparative overview' in *European Studies*, Issue 13, p27

[560] *Colburn's United Service Magazine and Naval and Military Journal,* 1857, Part 3, p37

> The Irish, most quarrelsome of races, carry their religious, as well as political animosities across the Atlantic, and the cities of the West are, at times, made a field of battle in the interests of Popery or Orangeism […] If the Irish Roman Catholics were rational beings, they would at once see that their exasperation at any discussion of the Popish system only excites an impression among all classes and sects, that the said system must be false and corrupt.

On the other hand, the Irish Protestant community is favourably contrasted with this model of 'Celtic irascibility', depicted as dutifully enduring 'attack […] revile, belie and slander' upon their beliefs, but 'never trouble their heads.'[561] The description of Irish persons as 'quarrelsome' is by no means a novelty, rather it is entirely congruent with the stock image of Irish soldiers during this period as wild, uncontrollable and mischievous 'noble savages.' Yet the specific cry of Irish Catholics as lacking 'rationality' and an ability to perceive the effects of their actions is more of a direct affront to the notion of Irish Catholics serving within the officer corps. Once more we must recall the distinction between serving as members of the rank and file, a position where 'wildness' and 'savagery' might have some utility, and the task of serving as an officer, which demands the disciplined conduct of a gentleman.

Here a brief digression is in order; the presence of such suspicions regarding the potential nationalist sympathies amongst Irish Catholic officers is one factor in their promotion which can be said to have increased in intensity over the course of this study, rather than atrophied. By the time of Catholic Emancipation, more than three decades had passed since the rebellion of 1798 and qualms about the loyalty of Catholic soldiers had been rendered moot by the loyalty of the militia at home, and the dutiful service of Irishmen on campaign in Europe. Similarly, what 'Nationalist' sentiment manifested itself at the time was largely confined in scope to civil or constitutional means, rather than violent ones.[562] By the end of the century, Britain could look to the examples of Irish service with Boer forces as well as the failed invasion of Canada in the aftermath of the American Civil War as demonstrative of new dangers from the wider Catholic population. Similarly, nationalist sentiment began to assume a new more assertive form, involving greater confrontation with the political establishment.

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[561] *Colburn's United Service Magazine and Naval and Military Journal, 1857*, Part 3, p38
[562] McCaffrey, *Daniel O'Connell and the Repeal Year,* p77

Another writer's account of time spent in Ireland, residing with the local landowner in a remote part of the South Irish coastline, provides an illustrative depiction of the development of social relations and attitudes between local landed elites and the wider Irish population. The article itself, entitled 'A Wreck among the Fenians' purports to relate a true story of the wreck of a vessel on the coast and the subsequent clash between the population and the local authorities,[563] and is notable for one rejoinder on the part of a local landlord; 'Remove the strong arm, and in twenty-four hours, Ireland relapses into the barbarism of four centuries ago.'[564]

By the latter decades of the nineteenth century, the literature on the exploits of the 'warrior Celt' appears to have largely yielded to a new mournful genre arising from the decline of the 'old soldiery' of Celtic and rural and its consequent increasing replacement by the new urban proletariat. The ever present disconnect between ostensibly regimental nationalities and the realities of their demographic composition, serves as one example of this. One piece from the *United Service Journal* recounted; 'As may be imagined, it does not follow now-a-days for a Scotch corps to be composed entirely of Scotchmen, or an Irish one of Irishmen, any more than that the 28th Foot need not all hail from Gloucestershire.'[565] In-fact as *The United Service Journal* article continued, totals for the numbers of men by nationality in the various arms of service showed a preponderance of Irishmen in nominally Irish regiments, a measure of overrepresentation could still be found in the total numbers for the 'Infantry of the Line.'[566] By contrast a severe underrepresentation could be identified in units such as the Foot Guards, which counted 5,604 Englishmen, 604 Scotsmen and just 108 Irishmen and amongst the Royal Engineers, which counted 3,024 Englishmen, 1,108 Scotsmen and a mere 630 Irishmen. The article itself is a disapproving challenge to the upcoming Cardwell reforms which would in the event do away with systems of regimental numbering and attempt to reassert regional identities.[567]

[563] *Colburn's United Service Magazine and Naval and Military Journal, 1869*, Part 2, p49
[564] Ibid, p56
[565] *Colburn's United Service Magazine and Naval and Military Journal, 1873*, Par1, p211
[566] The 'Infantry of the Line' refers to those regiments of the British Army consisting of infantrymen and not belonging to specialized groups such as the Foot Guards or Artillery.
[567] Harries-Jenkins, *The Army in Victorian Society*, p93

An adversarial attitude to the cause of Irish nationalism is easily discerned from *The United Service Journal*'s pieces, even in ostensibly unrelated material. In offering a summary of foreign affairs *The United Service Journal* covers a faction within the German political system it dubs 'non-centralists', an apparently atavistic group eager to achieve no more than protecting the peculiarities of their respective provinces or at least frustrating any further attempts at centralising the German state. Such attitudes lead the writer to quip scathingly 'perhaps I may without any great impropriety compare them to your Irish Home Rulers.'[568] In a journal extract from 1876 regarding the rule of the Austrian Emperor Franz Josef, Captain Spencer continues his barbed remarks on the Catholic faith. He notes favourably that under the Emperor, the number of Saints Days and Holidays have been reduced, as have the numbers of processions and pilgrimages, 'which tend only to foster immorality and create a taste for idleness – that bane of every Roman Catholic country.'[569] Spencer at a later stage deals with the issues of German unification and the Franco-Prussian War, claiming that it has been a desire amongst the French government and the Papacy to trigger religious strife within Germany. Being convinced of Catholicism inherent danger, he writes;

> Popery is the same now as it has been, it must have all or nothing, and this has been its policy in every country where its army of priests have gained the ascendant.[570]

Although broadly considered to be a waning influence over time, and minor in comparison[571] to bygone eras, the anti-Irish and anti-Catholic sentiments of 'British popular nationalism', as M. Busteed has written, remained capable of 'vicious dying spasms.' One such example offered by Busteed is the case of Dr. James Philip Kay's 1832 monograph on the influence of Irish migration in damaging the material and social condition of the native working class, promoting vices such as drinking and crime. Very significant for our purposes is another

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[568] *Colburn's United Service Magazine and Naval and Military Journal, 1873*, Part 3, p580
[569] *Colburn's United Service Magazine and Naval and Military Journal, 1876*, Part 1 p205
[570] Ibid, p204
[571] Busteed, M. (2009) 'Resistance and Respectability: Dilemmas of Irish Migrant Politics in Victorian Britain' in *Immigrants & Minorities: Historical Studies in Ethnicity, Migration and Diaspora,* Vol. 29 Issue 2-3, p181

anonymous account published in 1889, relating a dark sense of suspicion directed at outwardly assimilated and 'respectable' Irish Catholic members of British society.[572]

> His good-humoured and intelligent face is well known... He settle [sic] the rent of his comfortable and well-appointed rooms with exemplary regularity, as also the bills of the tradesmen... He has friendly chats with W.H.Smith's railway book-stall-keeper... Often pats children on the head... exchanges morning greetings with the local police superintendent, to whose division of the force he, as a special constable, was attached... Altogether he is a good, easy, pleasant body, as far as his day is concerned. Following him, however, to his night, the perusal of certain confidential and secret memoranda discloses the fact that his 'double' holds... the position of 'honorary member of the Supreme Council of the Province of the South of England' [of the Irish Republican Brotherhood]

Though perhaps representative of the most extreme attitudes of suspicion and fear, this text locates Irish Catholics within a category of potentially disloyal or 'suspect' classes, within wider British society. Although by all outward appearances such figures could be models of respectability and domesticity, the lingering prospect of covert Republican sympathies appears to surround even the most assimilated Irish Catholic. In either case, it remains evident that 'resistance and differentiation' remained significant forces within the Irish Catholic community, partly in response to the denigration of both the Catholicism and Irish-ness of that community, as well as to their later political aspirations. [573]

Taken separately these extracts might appear to be little more than the idiosyncratic visions of individuals on the nature of the Irish or 'Celtic' race – but when considered as a part of the whole there remains several unavoidable themes. Of paramount importance is the simple existence of a conscious racial distinction between Irish and English (or British) which is of itself important. This is particularly so in a Victorian society where new scientific visions of racial distinction (particularly as a means of explaining the ascendancy or segregation of

[572] Busteed, 'Resistance and Respectability', p182
[573] Ibid, p190

different peoples) were beginning to develop.[574] Moreover, such views were by no means anathema to army officers; indeed of the 638 subscribers to the Anthropological Institute in 1879-81, 43 were army officers.[575] Nor were such visions the preserve of selected societies, with the crude caricatures of Irishmen in *Punch* enjoying wide circulation. If we turn to look at the specific themes we can find a medley of attitudes, the Irishman of *The United Service Journal* is by one token seen as reliable, suited for soldering and capable of loyalty and service to his superiors – views which are positive but not necessarily were he to be an officer. There are many faults attributed to Irishmen, namely a quarrelsome disposition, a lack of high achievement and the presence of 'party feeling' (previously expressed as anti-Protestantism but latterly conflated with nationalism). In addition to providing a very grim assessment of the potential for Irishmen to serve as Army officers, such attitudes also appear to serve as reinforcement for the status quo of Anglo-Irish Ascendancy. One might observe that the only mitigating factor behind such prejudicial attitudes is their increasing remission in later decades.

4.6: Conclusion

In summation, from a long examination of the material of *The United Service Journal* across the period 1829-99, it is possible to identify three distinct periods, each reflecting a different and evolving set of attitudes within the corps of contributors to *The United Service Journal*. The first period, from the foundation of *The United Service Journal* in 1828 to the outbreak of Famine in the mid-late 1840s, shows anti-Catholicism at its most bitter levels, with writers regularly referring to the vices of the Church, its clergy and its devotees, either as the subject of their works or as incidental displays of anti-Catholic bigotry within the context of other topics. From the mid-late 1840s to the mid-late 1860s we can observe a second distinct period, one in which attitudes expressed by contributors tend to reflect both the increased visibility of the Irish Catholic population and Catholic Church in Great Britain. Contributions in this period largely tend to focus more tightly upon specific offences and grievances attributed to the machinations of the Catholic Church. What broader generalizations that do exist and are applied to Catholics as a whole, tend to be expressed through the prism of

[574] Swift, R. (1987) 'The Outcast Irish in the British Victorian City: Problems and Perspectives' in *Irish Historical Studies,* Vol. 25, No. 99, pp271-272
[575] Lorimer, D. (1988) 'Theoretical Racism in Late-Victorian Anthropology' in *Victorian Studies,* Vol. 31 No. 3, p409

international affairs rather than particular focus on the United Kingdom's Irish Catholic population. The final or third stage which emerges reflects the genre of contributions from the mid-late 1860s onwards; particularly post the 1867 Fenian Raids into British Canada. By this stage, contributions largely tend to avoid the issue of Catholicism, as well as Irish nationalism, what few observations can be found being purely within the remit of 'Foreign Affairs'. From the late 1870s onwards such observations are largely ephemeral and inconsequential, indicating a considerable softening of attitudes amongst both the contributors and the readership, reflecting congruent trends in wider society.[576]

The notion of a 'softening' of attitudes towards Irish Catholics amongst military officers appears to be broadly congruent with ongoing trends in wider British society. Drawing from the historical inheritance of 1588 and 1688, notions of traditional British antipathy toward the Catholic Church can be said to have undergone a dramatic change over the period under study. The broad trend however, was punctuated by occasional backlashes against the perceived encroachment of the Church on civil society, most notably in the form of the return of Catholic hierarchy in 1850 and in the promulgation of the doctrine of Papal infallibility in 1870.[577] The sharp contrast in attitudes is made readily apparent by the different treatment of the two events; whereas the events of 1850 had inspired repeated comment and contribution in the tomes of *The United Service Journal*, the events of 1870 were barely recorded at all, with only passing mention that a Papal Council was to be hosted at all. One should not take such a reading to be completely in line with attitudes in wider society however, with anti-Catholic bigotry remaining a potent force in certain circles.

By the end of the 1860s, the topic of Catholic perfidy and treason had largely disappeared from *The United Service Journal*, even as the new issue of Irish nationalism and violent separatism began to appear. One of the few venues remaining for outward expressions of anti-Catholic bigotries was the regular 'foreign summary' which detailed ongoing events, predominately within Europe. Within the context of these commentaries on events abroad, allusions to older attitudes surrounding the malevolence of the Pope and Catholic clergy as

[576] Kilcrease, B. (2016) *The Great Church Crisis and the End of English Erastianism, 1898-1906*, London: Routledge
[577] Bush, *"Papists" and Prejudice,* p37

well as the retrogressive influence of the Church remain, carefully parsed through the filter of foreign affairs. However, by the mid-1870s even this stream of commentary dissipates.

The trends of *The United Service Journal* during this period might be broadly categorized as similar to that of the wider British Army; transitioning increasingly toward a professionalized institution and away from the concept of citizen-soldiers or gentlemen who happen to be under arms. Consequently, the shift in written material includes fewer memoirs by soldiers and officers in favour of more technical and analytic material comparing British military practices with those of other nations, especially (by the 1890s) those of Germany. This transition has important significance as whilst we might be inclined to note the absolute decline in anti-Catholic comments within *The United Service Journal* as indicative of a significant transformation in attitudes, the transition towards more technical and analytic works also serves to obstruct any possibly for such views to be expressed. Thus whilst it is certainly possible to speak of an almost complete collapse in expressions of contempt directed at Irish Catholics in *The United Service Journal*'s pages, we must be careful not to extrapolate such an absolute decline onto the members of the corps.

However, further to this, we must also recall the changing circumstances of wider British Society and their impact on informing religious attitudes within the army. Whereas the events of the 1850s 'Papal Aggression Crisis' has spurred on a prodigious amount of anti-Catholic literature and abortive punitive legislation within Parliament, the 'outrage' of the 1870s failed to inspire a similar response. As Dennis Paz writes in 'Popular Anti-Catholicism'

> During the 1870s and later, anti-Catholicism gradually receded as a major public issue. On the one hand, it became increasingly limited to educated opinion rather than a topic of popular agitation. The reaction to the First Vatican Council's promulgation of doctrines related to papal infallibility and church-state relations took the form of a debate between W.E. Gladstone and Roman Catholic apologists, with little call for government involvement and little public agitation. Gladstone's pamphlet on the Vatican decrees made him more money than any

> other of his works, and sold more copies than any other […] but the general public was unmoved. [578]

Ultimately the potency of anti-Catholic sentiments would begin to abate. Whereas the issue of Papal aggression was sufficient to rally offence in 1851, government policy under Palmerston ensured placidity on the issues of religion in the elections of 1857 and 1859.[579] One can immediately note the parallels between developments in wider society with the change in content of the *Journal*, with the shift from numerous open expressions of contempt to far more infrequent and muted expressions, particularly in the final decades of the nineteenth century. Still we must be cautious not to view such changes as revolutionary in scope; Catholicism continued throughout the period as a somewhat disadvantaged faith and though muted, anti-Catholic prejudices were by no means extinct.[580] With issues such as the Maynooth endowment and Convent Inspections failing to elicit the levels of popular outrage that had accompanied the Papal Aggression crisis, the political stage began to be occupied by new issues, chief among them the disestablishment of the Church of Ireland and a reinvigorated constitutional nationalism. Meanwhile only in flashpoints of sectarian violence, such as Liverpool and Glasgow, would anti-Catholic prejudices continue to hold any major currency,[581] whilst cases like that of Ensign Sarsfield receded further into the past.

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[578] Paz, D. *Popular Anti-Catholicism in mid-Victorian England*, p18
[579] Ibid, p222
[580] Steinbach, S.L. (2012) *Understanding the Victorians: Politics, Culture and Society in Nineteenth Century Britain,* Oxford: Routledge, p269
[581] Paz, D. *Popular Anti-Catholicism in mid-Victorian England*, p223

Section Five: ‘Not quite pukka’, Four Irish Catholic generals

5.1: The Collective Approach

Over the course of this study, we have sought to quantify the extent to which Irish Catholics were present within the officer corps, without regard to the nature or degree of their success. This section will attempt to identify those few Irish Catholic officers who reached the highest ranks of the British Army, namely, that of Major-General and above, with a view toward assembling a collective biography for such men. This may help explain what permitted them to preform so well within an army that, as established in section three, had disproportionately few officers of their cultural background.

In considering generals, we must recall the peculiarities of promotion. Promotion from the rank of Ensign to Lieutenant Colonel occurred largely within the structure of the regiment but promotion to Major-General would take an officer beyond the Regimental structure onto one of the Army Staffs. This might lead an officer to hold two different ranks whilst in service, a regimental rank and a rank within the army – a process further complicated by the employment of honorary or ‘brevet’ promotions. Similarly, whilst promotion below the rank of Colonel could be achieved by purchase, any higher rank would need to be obtained by other means including political connections, honorary grants, seniority, or occasionally, merit. Indeed in certain branches of the army, most notably the royal artillery, promotion was exclusively by seniority. Moreover, promotion to the rank of general officer did not necessarily bring new responsibilities and the new general might remain ‘unattached’ at his new rank. Similarly, promotion could be restricted to only within the remit of a current military station, so a Lieutenant Colonel operating in South Africa, might have the ‘local rank’ of Major-General.

With these many peculiarities in mind, a measure of selectivity has been necessarily employed in order to try and assemble a list of Irish Catholic general officers promoted whilst in service and holding an active command. The result of this selectivity is of course a number of individuals who in several respects might qualify as a ‘General’ but who are not studied here. These ‘honourable mentions’ include a selection of men whose promotion was granted as an honorific upon their retirement. This category includes a surprising number of Irish

Catholics officers, perhaps most famously Luke O'Connor. O'Connor, an Irish Catholic sergeant, (and one of the first winners of the Victoria Cross), was promoted from the rank and file to the officer corps during the Crimean War. O'Connor would later serve as an active duty officer, most notably in West Africa. He retired from the army on the 9th of March 1887 having been given the honorary rank of major-general, having reached the rank of Lieutenant Colonel whilst serving with the Royal Welch Fusiliers (as well as Colonel within the Army).[582] Valentine Ryan, a scion of Tipperary gentry (born in the famous Castle Fogarty) and somewhat unusually a graduate of the Royal Military Academy at Sandhurst, is yet another example of honorary promotion. Having earned the rank of Colonel whilst serving with the 64th (2nd Staffordshire) Regiment of Foot, Valentine Ryan was granted an honorary promotion to the rank of Major-General at his retirement on the 18th of March 1882.[583] Henry Butler, a kinsman of William Francis Butler, purportedly an important influence in the latter's desire to enter military service,[584] as well as a hero of the Crimean War, retired at the rank of Major in 1881 but was granted the honorary rank of Major-General. There is also the case of Thomas Dennehy, native of Cork and sometime resident of Brook Lodge, a man who had served in India during the Santhal Rebellion and would serve as extra groom in waiting to Edward VII in 1901, is recalled in history as 'Major-General Dennehy' but only reached that rank after retirement from active service in 1885, at the rank of Colonel.[585] Dennehy would later prove instrumental in the introduction of royal favourite Abdul Karim (more popularly known as 'the Munshi') to Queen Victoria.

In other cases, promotion could be applied to officers who were not in active service but rather remained only on the half pay or retired lists, where promotion could still be granted under several circumstances such as royal birthday honours. This was the case for John Patrick Sutton Redmond (more commonly recalled as General J.P), uncle to Irish Parliamentary Party leader John Redmond, who retired from active duty at the rank of Colonel in 1873, was made major-general in 1877 and Lieutenant-General in 1881. Andrew Browne (an officer whom we have examined in Section Three) similarly earned some distinction whilst leading the 44th Regiment of Foot during the 2nd Opium War, most notably

[582] *London Gazette*, 8th March 1887, p1231
[583] *London Gazette*, 21st February 1882, p710
[584] McCourt, *Remember Butler*, p8
[585] *London Gazette* November 10th 1885, p5131

during the attack on the Taku Forts. However, Browne, despite being drawn from the same Catholic lesser gentry as Butler would languish at the rank of Brevet Colonel until retirement, later receiving an honorary promotion to Major-General in 1877 and Lieutenant-General in 1881.

In a similar vein as these men, we must consider those officers serving amongst the support elements of the army, especially institutions such as the commissariat or medical corps, who would be given honorary ranks for their duties. As such an example we might consider the case of Matthew John Tierney Ingram, who served as Commissary General of Ordnance in the Army Store Department in 1887. Ingram, a native of Limerick, would have had considerable responsibilities and had even served in the Maori Wars in New Zealand early in his career, but his position would not be easily comparable with the other men under study. In the same vein there is the case Dr. James Barry, the renowned mid-nineteenth century Army Surgeon who rose to the rank of Inspector General of Military Hospitals, who uniquely within this study, laboured under the four disadvantages of being an Irish, being a Catholic, being born into relative destitution and being (unknown to observers) a woman.[586]

Another question facing this examination is the issue of officers who receive their promotion by virtue of seniority. Thaddeus Ryan, one of the Ryans of Scarteen, descended from Thaddeus Ryan of Ballyvistea, a Jacobite soldier who served in St. Ruth's cavalry, fought at Aughrim and Limerick, and died in 1740.[587] His descendant, Thaddeus Richard Ryan, was born in the family home at Scarteen on the 25th of April 1837. We can reconstruct little of his early life, except that Ryan's father John was a director of the Sadlier bank in Tipperary, and the family suffered greatly from its collapse in 1856. Thaddeus appears to have had several family connections to Irish nationalism, most crucially his brother the Monsignor Arthur Ryan, who was a leading supporter Archbishop of Cashel Thomas Croke, himself a fierce proponent of the struggle over land ownership, as well as the Gaelic League. Nevertheless, the implications of this background are questionable; as distinct from most of the other men

[586] Savona-Ventura, C. (1996) 'Dr. James Barry: an enigmatic army medical doctor' in *Maltese Medical Journal*, No. 8 Vol. 1, p41 and [586] *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Entry: James Barry (c. 1799 – 1865)
[587] Burke, B. (1912) *Genealogical and Heraldic History of the Landed Gentry of Ireland*, London: Harrison & Sons, p613

under examination, Ryan advanced through the ranks of the Royal Artillery from his first commission in 1856. As promotion through the Royal Artillery was done on the basis of seniority, the possibility of an officer's views or family connections having any relevance on his promotion was more remote. As a result of this, Thaddeus Ryan, a veteran of the Indian Mutiny and the Siege of Delhi, was promoted to Major-General in October 1892, but retired from that same position barely a year later in June 1893.[588] [589]

One unique case worthy of mention but not included in the study of officers detailed below, is the life of Sir Garrett O'Moore Creagh, yet another Irish Catholic officer who would later reach the rank of general officer, earning a Victoria Cross in the process. Creagh, who served with distinction in British India, Afghanistan and China, was uniquely amongst the men here examined, the son of a Royal Navy Captain, and in common with several others, a member of the landed gentry of County Clare. Creagh would ostensibly hold the position of general officer in late 1899; however this appears to have only been a local position and not made substantive until the early years of the twentieth century. Nevertheless, Creagh would continue to rise through the ranks of the Army, reaching the rank of full General and succeeding Lord Kitchener as the Commander in Chief for India in 1909 – much to the surprise and disappointment of his contemporaries.[590]

Lastly, it must be recognized there exists a body of men who professed the Catholic faith and could conceivably claim some measure of Irish descent, who for our purposes have not been studied. This includes men such as Major-General Joseph George Fagan, whose grandfather was noted painter (as well as Catholic and Republican) Robert Fagan. The inherent problems of attempting to categorize degrees of 'Irish-ness', particularly on the Imperial frontier where ancestral ethnic affiliations would begin to be weighed differently, has required a more stringent definition of Irish than might otherwise be considered. As such, the men under examination in addition to professing the Catholic faith are also all recorded as being born on the island of Ireland.

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[588] *London Gazette*, 3rd March, 1892, p1397
[589] *London Gazette*, 27th June, 1893, p3643
[590] Moreman, T. (2002) 'Lord Kitchener, the General Staff and the Army in India,1902-1914' in French, D. & Reid, B.H. (eds.) *British General Staff: Reform and Innovation,* London: Frank Cass Publishers, p56

As a result of these complicating factors, it has been necessary to operate under a certain set of criteria when selecting Irish Catholic general officers. This has involved precluding several sets of men who might in common parlance be regarded as 'Generals', specifically; those men who received their promotion only on the occasion of their retirement, those officers of the Royal Artillery whose promotion was based on seniority and those officers of the army's various maintenance services. The exclusion of these men has left us with a body of general officers not especially numerous, but all boasting some degree of combat experience and a body of time spend in command of large numbers of troops. The merit of this somewhat exclusionary policy is its yield of a body of officers whose performance is readily comparable and eminently disposed towards the creation of a common model of Irish Catholic senior officers. Irish Catholics who won promotion to general officer formed an even smaller subset of an already small group of Irish Catholic officers. Of these men, the most well-known and successful is William Francis Butler, who remains the only one of these men to attract any significant historical interest as a biographical figure. However, for our purposes we may add to Butler's name those of William Mackesy, Thomas Kelly-Kenny, Sir Francis Clery and Sir Martin Dillon – all of whom achieved their advancement in the latter decades of the nineteenth and early years of the twentieth centuries.

Although there had by this stage already been Irish Catholic officers, who had already secured advancement to general officer before these men, they appear to have been black swans and outliers rather than trailblazers. Edward Stack and Henry Sheehy Keating had shown that it was possible for Catholics to rise to the rank of general officer, albeit in particular and unique circumstance. In the case of Stack – who stood as a model of the 'Wild Geese' class of officers entering into French and American service from the 1770s to 1790s – a measure of conformity was required. Upon receiving an inquiry as to his religious faith upon brevet promotion to the rank of Major-General, Stack replied with equanimity 'I am of the religion that makes general officers' – at the time Stack had been imprisoned in Paris for six years and would not in the course of his career undertake field command. Irish Catholic Sir Justin Shiel for example served for many decades in India and the Far-East, becoming the United Kingdom's ambassador to Persia during the 1840s and 50s. Yet Shiel would only become a general officer in 1859, nearly half a decade after his return from Persia, and several years after the death of his brother Richard Lalor Shiel, himself a significant figure in the Repeal movement. Henry Sheehy Keating, who hailed from the same area of Tipperary as

William Francis Butler, reached the rank of Major-General in 1813 following an impressive campaign on the islands of Reunion and Mauritius. Nevertheless, Keating's wife and sons (including his most famous son Henry Singer Keating) adhered to the established faith. Of the three men, only Sheehy appears to have functioned as a field commander, the other two acquiring their promotions as honorific grants. It is only from the latter decades of the nineteenth century that we can begin to speak of a cadre of Irish Catholics within the corps of general officers, and only a modestly sized cadre at that It.

5.2: Thomas Kelly-Kenny (1840-1914)

Thomas Kelly was born on the 27th of February 1840, in Kilrush, County Clare, the fifth son of Matthew and Mary Kelly (nee Kenny). His father, a bank manager, is recorded in Griffiths Valuation as leasing several hundred acres of land in the Treanmanagh area.[591] Similarly, Kelly-Kenny's uncle, Father Timothy Kelly, is noted as having served as the Parish priest for many years and both uncle and father had served as Poor Law Guardians for Kilrush. He was a younger son, at a time when many of the gentry's younger sons who could expect little in the way of inheritance and frequently ended up in the Army, the Church or at Law. His maternal uncles, David and Mathias Kenny, had served during the Napoleonic Wars, with the latter (a surgeon) acquiring a considerable wealth and landed estates.

Kelly, like many of the men of this era, was admitted to the army without formal military training or qualification. In 1858 then Thomas Kelly received a commission to the 2nd (The Queen's Royal) Regiment of Foot – without purchase.[592] Despite the name the 2nd Regiment does not appear to have been a unit of any great prestige or exclusivity, at the time of Kelly's commissioning in 1858, the battalions of the regiment were stationed in Malta and the Cape of Good Hope respectively. Even during this early period of his career Kelly could boast a number of noticeable assignments, being posted initially to the Cape of Good Hope (South Africa) to serve as escort commander for General Sir James Jackson (a fellow Irishman and native of Mayo), becoming an aide de camp for his successor General Wynyard. Here Kelly would remain until the outbreak of conflict in the Far East.

[591] Griffiths Valuation – Valuation of Tenements, County Clare, Barony of Clonderalaw, Parish of Kilmurry, p70
[592] *London Gazette*, 19th February, 1858, p847

The conflict in China, known as the Second Opium War or the Arrow War, began following the seizure of a British registered vessel on the Yellow River, and would later grow to involve the forces of the French Empire and the United States. At the outbreak of conflagration in 1860, Kelly resigned his position in the Cape and proceeded to the East where he became aide de camp (or orderly officer) to Brigadier Stanhope William Jephson, formerly a Lieutenant Colonel of the 2nd Regiment. The war was broadly divided into two stages; a campaign in the South around the British possession of Hong Kong, and later a second riverine campaign directed at Beijing. Kelly would serve in the actions at Sinho, and in the various actions against the riverine Taku (or Tangu) Forts, (the same place where Irish Catholic Andrew Browne would lead the 44th Regiment) earning himself a mention in the despatches.

Unlike Butler, Kelly managed to secure advancement to the rank of lieutenant both reasonably quickly at just two years on the 12th of October 1860 (the date of the surrender of Peking) and by purchase.[593] Just six years later he would secure his captaincy, once again by purchase, on July 20th 1866 and was at that rank when he served as acting deputy assistant quartermaster general in Bombay from 1869 to 1870. Perhaps owing to this logistical experience, he was later dispatched to serve in Napier's Abyssinian (Ethiopian) campaign to take charge of a division of the expedition's transport train. The expedition, described by Harold G. Marcus as 'one of the most expensive affairs of honour in history' was aimed at securing the release of several British missionaries and would involve the movement of more than ten thousand British troops in a gargantuan logistical task involving all manner of transport from elephants to railways. Nonetheless, despite the difficulties, Kelly's skill at this task was sufficient to earn him yet another mention in the despatches, earning praise from Napier for his 'zeal, energy and ability.'[594]

Following the Abyssinian campaign a relative lull in Kelly's military career occurred which was permeated by several important developments. Thomas Kelly would in 1874 assume the name of his late uncle Matthias (formerly an Army Surgeon), inheriting not just the name Kelly-Kenny but also his late uncle's estates and wealth, by that stage valued at more than

[593] *London Gazette*, 12th October 1860, p3680
[594] Robinson, C.N. (1900) *Celebrities of the Army*, London: George Newes, p71

twelve thousand pound and nearly six thousand acres of land in Clare. With this significant new source of the wealth, Thomas Kelly-Kenny could now begin considering significant career advancement. It must be recalled at this point that even with the abolition of promotion by purchase just three years prior, pursuing the career of a military officer was greatly aided by the possession of personal wealth. In addition to this, Kelly-Kenny, in spite of lacking to formal military training at Sandhurst and perhaps with a view toward further advancement, completed a period of education at the Army Staff College – incidentally little more than a decade following Kelly-Kenny's education the staff college would boast Sir Francis Clery as its commandant. Further advancement for Kelly-Kenny would occur in 1877 with his promotion to the rank of Major – whilst most of the Majors in the 2nd Regiment had earned their first commission from 1852-54, Kelly-Kenny had done so only in 1858 and had achieved advancement somewhat quicker than other officers of foot regiments.

Outside the realm of military affairs, the acquisition of this new landed status propelled Major Kelly Kenny into a new status in civil society. In 1876 he received appointment as a Justice of the Peace for Clare, reflecting his new found landed position.[595] In 1879 he approached the idea of standing in the April by-election for Clare M.P. Owing to his status as a local landowner and Catholic, the idea of the Captain running as a candidate was reputedly popular among sections of the clergy and Bishop Ryan. Nonetheless a majority of the local clergy appear to have been opposed to Kelly-Kenny's candidacy, in part perhaps due to a liberality in his politics, and as a consequence he withdrew from the contest. This would be Kelly-Kenny's only foray into the world of politics, although a second cousin, Fr. Matthew Kenny, would take an active part in the foundation of the Land League.

Fortuitously for Kelly-Kenny, the Childers Reforms of 1881 and the consequent reorganization of the regimental structure permitted further advancement for Major Kelly-Kenny, on this occasion to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel within the newly amalgamated 'The Queen's (Royal West Surrey Regiment)', the successor formation to Kelly-Kenny's 2nd (The Queen's Royal) Regiment of Foot, obtaining command of one of the Regiment's

[595] TKK/4/3/3- – Thomas Kelly Kenny Collection, Jesuit National Archives

battalions in September 1882.[596] After four years of service in battalion command, Kelly-Kenny was placed on the half-pay list.[597] However this was not to mark the end of his military career but rather the beginning of a long succession of staff appointments. One year later in 1883 he received further assignment as Assistant Adjutant and Quartermaster General, serving under General C.F.T Daniell of the Northern District.[598] Kelly-Kenny would continue in this position, later re-designated Assistant Adjutant General of the North-Eastern District, until 1893. This same year, he would receive membership of Most Honourable Order of the Bath,[599] as well as additional appointments first to assistant adjutant general at headquarters and then full assistant adjutant general, spending the next three years serving in that position at Aldershot under the Duke of Connaught.[600] [601] His relationship with the latter would become key to his subsequent advancement, and correspondence between the two men shows

By 1896 with a wealth administrative appointments and experience to his credit, now Colonel Thomas Kelly-Kenny was appointed to command an infantry brigade at Aldershot, a command which had previously been held by fellow Irish Catholic Cornelius Francis Clery – this also marked Kelly-Kenny's advancement to the rank of Major-General, albeit on a temporary basis.[602] Formal advancement to the rank of full major-general would occur little over a year later in March 1897.[603] This long and byzantine process of staff appointments and promotions would only be concluded in 1899 with the outbreak of war in South Africa. However, at the start of the war, Kelly-Kenny's prospects for a field command appeared somewhat bleaker; with the departure of Redvers Buller to South Africa, Kelly-Kenny was to remain in Britain, assuming command of Aldershot during the absence of the former, a task which earned him a temporary advancement to Lieutenant-General.[604] However, following the disastrous performance of British forces during the early stages of the conflict, underlined by the defeats of the 'Black Week' which saw nearly three thousand casualties, additional

[596] *London Gazette* October 20th 1882 p4693
[597] *London Gazette* October 1st 1886 p4785
[598] *London Gazette* August 30th 1887 p4696
[599] *London Gazette* June 3rd 1893, p3251
[600] *London Gazette* August 19th 1893 p4643
[601] *London Gazette* December 22nd 1893 p7460
[602] *London Gazette* March 10th 1896 p1613
[603] *London Gazette* March16th 1897 p1532
[604] *London Gazette* 13th October 1899, 6180

British forces were dispatched to South Africa. Amongst these was the 6th Division, a unit which was to be led by Thomas Kelly Kenny with the rank of Lieutenant-General in December 1899.[605]

Kelly-Kenny and the 6th Division would spend much of the conflict in the Western theatre of conflict, first taking part in the Relief of Kimberley, a centre of the lucrative diamond trade, which had been besieged almost since the beginning of the war. The 6th Division arrived in South Africa in mid-January and would spend the next month advancing towards the besieged town. In the interim, Kelly-Kenny's old superior, Redvers Buller, had been relieved of his duties and replaced by Lords Roberts. Marching at a feverish pace, the forces of the 6th Division reached 'Klip Drift' on the night of the 14th of February. Kelly-Kenny's arrival permitted the Cavalry Division under Sir John French to continue their own advance through Boer lines and relive the town on the morning of the 15th. This was followed by a pursuit of the Boer forces under General Piet Cronje who retreated eastwards towards the Transvaal. The two forces engaged in a minor skirmish at Klip Kraal Drift and with the return of French's cavalry division and the arrival of the 9th Division, a major field engagement was inevitable. Despite his seniority amongst the officers on the field, Kelly-Kenny would not command in the engagement, being superseded in this role by Herbert Kitchener, who had been dispatched by a sickly Field Marshal Roberts.

The engagement that followed would become known as the Battle of Paardeberg, yet in actuality it resembled more of a siege which persisted for more than a week and was permeated by assaults and repulses. The Boer forces under Cronje, fortified in a traditional Boer caravan circle or 'laager' on the banks of the river Modder, whilst the British forces were arrayed to their West. Although Kelly-Kenny favoured surrounding and bombarding the Boer forces, he was overruled by Kitchener who planned a direct assault. The ensuing disaster, launched on the 18th of February, saw the worst British casualties on any single day in the conflict, with more than a thousand casualties, nearly three hundred of them fatal. In the week that followed, Kelly-Kenny's initial proposals for a bombardment became reality as the Boer forces were slowly encircled and subjected to shelling. Finally on the 27th of

[605] *London Gazette* December 8th 1899 p8258

February the Boer forces (totalling some four thousand) surrendered – Kelly Kenny's foresight into the dangers of a direct assault and the efficacy of bombardment being thoroughly vindicated. However, after the engagement at Poplar Grove on the 7th of March, Kelly-Kenny and John French were castigated for the slow pace of their advance against the Boer positions, which permitted much of the Boer forces to escape – Kelly-Kenny in turn blamed Roberts for his inability ensure sufficient supplies.[606] Nevertheless, in the far more serious engagement of Driefontein on the 10th of March, Kelly-Kenny undertook a successful assault on the Boer forces, which attracted the approbation of German military commentators for his use of 'deep formations, limited front and of a wasting fire to obtain ascendancy,' presaging some of the developments of the First World War.[607] In the aftermath of the battle, Kelly-Kenny and the 6th Division were relegated to garrison duty in the Orange Free State capital of Bloemfontein, which fell to British forces three days later, whilst Robert's main force continued to the Transvaal capital of Pretoria. At this point, with the transformation of the war from one of set-piece engagements to a guerrilla war, Kelly-Kenny's duties were principally concerned with maintaining garrisons and countering Boer raiding parties – he would return to Britain with Lord Roberts in late 1900, having completed his final active campaign. In Field Marshal Roberts despatches (dated 31st of March 1900), he includes a warm description of Kelly-Kenny's performance during the war, writing;

> Major-General (local Lieutenant-General) T. Kelly-Kenny C.B., Commanding 6th Division, conducted with conspicuous ability the operations which resulted in the force under General Cronje being surrounded by our troops at Paardeberg. He also performed distinguished service in command of his division in the actions of the 7th and 10th March at Poplar Grove and Driefontein [608]

Kelly-Kenny was subsequently honoured by being named Colonel of his former unit, The Queen's (Royal West Surrey Regiment) in early 1902.[609] Nevertheless, Kelly-Kenny felt somewhat slighted by a delay in receiving a Knighthood, and wrote to Sir Henry Wilson,

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[606] *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Entry: Thomas Kelly-Kenny
[607] Anonymous (1910) *A Handbook to the Boer War*, London: Gale & Polden, p228
[608] *London Gazette*, 8th February 1901, p847
[609] *London Gazette*, 20th May 1902, p3324

assistant military secretary (and deputy assistant adjutant general) to Field Marshal Roberts, in protest.[610] Keith Jeffery notes Wilson, in addition to holding a dim view of the Catholic faith, was later the subject unsubstantiated claims that he attempted to block the promotion of Catholics such as William Hickie.[611] Regardless of such claims, the persistence of a measure of anti-Catholic bigotry within the officer corps at this late point should be acknowledged, but not overstated.

Regardless of any opposition, Kelly-Kenny proceeded up the ladder of military promotion. He received the position of Knight Commander of the Order of the Bath in 1902,[612] and would become Knight Grand Cross in 1904.[613] In October 1901, following his return from South Africa, Kelly-Kenny was made Adjutant-General to the Forces, succeeding Evelyn Wood, yet another member of the Wolseley Ring.[614] One might be tempted to regard Kelly-Kenny as a member of the Wolseley Ring, given his warm relationship with Wolseley himself, who regarded him as 'a very loyal and true friend'[615] but his name is not typically associated with that grouping.[616] Rather, it appears that in acquiring this position, Kelly-Kenny profited from a close relationship he had established with the then Prince of Wales, now King Edward VII. Indeed, his appointment to the position of Adjutant General appears only to have passed at the insistence of the King, it being opposed by Lord Roberts, and the two men would occasionally spar on issues of army organization.[617] Indeed, Kelly-Kenny offered his endorsement of his old superior, Redvers Buller, in a letter of support, following Buller's questionable return to his position at Aldershot.[618] However, this was insufficient to stop Buller's eventual removal by King Edward, at the insistence of Lord Roberts. In spite of these conflicts Kelly-Kenny remained in his position until 1904, to be succeeded by Sir

[610] Jeffery, K. (1996) *Field Marshal Sir Henry Wilson: A Political Soldier,* Oxford: Oxford University Press, p43
[611] Ibid, p7
[612] *London Gazette* 24th June 1902, 4190
[613] *London Gazette*, 24th June 1904, 4007
[614] *London Gazette*, 1st October 1901, p6400
[615] TKK/5/4/7 Thomas Kelly Kenny Collection, Jesuit National Archives,
[616] Spiers, 'The Late Victorian Army', p194
[617] Gooch, J. (1974) *The Plans of War: The General Staff and British Military Strategy c. 1900-1916*, London: Routledge, p27
[618] Corvi, S.J. & Beckett, I.F.W. (eds.) (2009) *Victoria's Generals*, Barnsley: Pen & Sword Books, p70

Charles Douglas. Kelly-Kenny achieved the rank of full general on August 25th 1905.[619] His most noteworthy task at this rank related once more to his familiarity with the Royal family, as he accompanied Prince Arthur of Connaught on his state visit to Japan.[620] As part of this Journey the General was addressed by the Emperor of Japan on the apparent need to improve the size of horses bred in Japan, to which Kelly-Kenny remarked 'it is not always the big horses and the big men that do the best work' – a remark which elicited amusement from the emperor.[621] Kelly-Kenny reputedly enjoyed good relations with not just the King and Prince Arthur, but also Queen Alexandra and the Prince of Wales (future King George the Fifth) – though reports that members of the Royal Family visited Kelly-Kenny's estates in Clare appear unfounded.

General Thomas Kelly-Kenny retired from active service only a few months after the conclusion of the 'Garter Mission' to Japan, in February 1907.[622] His relationship with the tenants of his estate appears to have been largely liberal, but perhaps slow to accept the increasing tendency toward tenant proprietorship. In private correspondence between the General's brother, Matthew Kelly and his solicitor, Henry d. L. Willis, the latter is quick to warn that despite the General's desire to offer liberal terms to his tenants, they will simply 'want more' and in line with the general trends, his would be better advised to simply sell off the estate at his best price.[623] Ultimately, in 1909 he divested himself of 5,000 acres from his Clare Estates under the auspices of the Congested Districts Board.[624] Much of his final years were spent socializing with some of the leading figures of not just the United Kingdom but also Sweden, Germany, France and Japan.[625] On the 26th of February 1914 in Sussex, at the age of 74 Thomas Kelly Kenny died. Despite forty-nine years of military service, he specifically instructed that he not be given a military funeral and was buried in Hove Cemetery.[626]

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[619] *London Gazette*, 28th November 1905, p8538
[620] *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Entry: Thomas Kelly-Kenny TKK
[621] *The London Quarterly and Holborn Review*, Volume 106, p347
[622] *London Gazette*, 12th February 1907, p966
[623] TKK/4/2/12 – Thomas Kelly Kenny Collection, Jesuit National Archives
[624] NUIG Landed Estates Database – Kenny/Kelly-Kenny (Treanmanagh)
[625] See TKK/5 – Thomas Kelly Kenny Collection, Jesuit National Archives
[626] Clare County Library, Family Histories, General Sir Thomas Kelly-Kenny

5.3: Cornelius Francis Clery (1838-1926)

Cornelius Francis Clery was born in February 1838, the fourth son of local merchant James Clery, a prolific Cork merchant dealing in 'Wine, Grocery and Gunpowder.'[627] Perhaps more so than any of the other Catholics officers under study, Clery's family was wealthy with his father eventually leaving at least £10,000 in inheritance to his widow and eldest son.[628] Indeed Cornelius' status as the younger son doubtless spurred on the prospect of a career in the army. Clery was educated by the Jesuits at Clongowes, but entered military service, like so many of his peers, without formal military training, being commissioned into the 32nd Foot on the 5th of March 1858.[629]

At that time the 32nd was stationed in India and elements of the regiment served at the sieges of Cawnpore and Lucknow. The 32nd at the time had a distant kinsman of Cornelius Francis, Lieutenant James Clery, who achieved a measure of distinction leading the sorties during the siege. A distant family connection must have aided Cornelius' admission to the regiment, though ultimately James Clery appears to have been dismissed from the army by court martial in 1867.[630] Cornelius Francis Clery would have benefitted in his appointment, from the significant attrition of officers within the 32nd during this period; in 1857 the regiment counted 41 officers from ensigns to lieutenant colonels, but by 1858 that number had shrunk to 36 in spite of several new admissions. Despite the intense fighting the 32nd was involved in, Clery does not appear to have taken any part of the combat, and the regiment as a whole would return to the United Kingdom in August 1859. Clery would rise through the ranks of his unit reasonably quickly, being made a Lieutenant in June 1859,[631] by purchase, once again giving evidence of the Clery family's access to disposable wealth. A crucial indicator of his early preferment is his appointment as regimental adjutant in November 1861, upon the promotion of Lieutenant Stabb.[632] As the position of adjutant served as a largely administrative one, it prefigured much of Clery's later contributions to the British Army.

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[627] Aldwell, A. (1844) *Aldwell's County and City of Cork Post-Office General Directory 1844-45,* Cork: F. Jackson – Entry: Patrick Street
[628] Wills and Administrations, 1872, p114
[629] *London Gazette*, March 5th 1858, p1920
[630] *London Gazette*, February 12th 1867, 762
[631] *London Gazette,* June 7th 1859, p804
[632] *London Gazette*, November 5th 1861, p1404

Overseas garrison postings to Gibraltar and Mauritius did not entail any combat duties. Nevertheless, Clery would continue his rise through the ranks, securing the rank of Captain in January 1866,[633] once more by purchase. With just nine years of active service from his first commissioning to procuring the rank of captain, Clery's rise was not especially rapid (indeed by 1867 the 32nd had two other captains of nine years' service and most had only a few of years longer) but his ability to purchase spared him a long period languishing as a subaltern. Yet even at this relatively early stage in his career with the 32nd, Clery had earned a remarkably favourable description in the confidential reports, which noted that he was as a 'very eligible' candidate for staff officers.[634]

Further advancement for Cornelius Francis Clery followed in 1870 when he graduated from the Army Staff College and was quickly employed in the Cadets College. The following year, 1872, he was promoted to one the newly established Professorships of Tactics alongside Lt. J.F. Maurice of the Royal Artillery, and would hold that position for the next three years. Drawing upon his experiences of education and lectures at Sandhurst, Clery would in 1875 compile a book titled Minor *Tactics*, a work which was to serve as a handbook for future study at the College.[635] [636] The work was to become a standard for the curriculum for the next quarter century, only being replaced by C.M. DeGruyther's *Tactics for Beginners* in 1899.[637] A somewhat conservative tome, Clery's work can be viewed somewhat critically in light of the subsequent conflicts in South Africa and Europe, particularly for its eschewing the value of firearms among mobile units and stressing the value of shock tactics and victory by offensive movement. Nevertheless we must be careful to avoid assessing Clery's work through the eyes of hindsight; whatever its practical implications, the publication of 'Minor Tactics' provided him with both a measure of 'celebrity' amongst the army as a tactical thinker and administrator. Indeed one description of Clery went so far as to describe him as

[633] *London Gazette*, January 16th 1866, p262
[634] National Library of Ireland – Kilmainham Papers, Vol. 308, *Copies of confidential reports on staff and regimental officers of the British Army in Ireland, proceded by summary chronological indexes noting destinataries*, 1876-80, p224
[635] Clery, C.F. (1875) *Minor Tactics*, London: Henry King & Co
[636] Minor Tactics is described in the Irish Dictionary of National Biography thusly; 'His textbook Minor tactics (1875), with its emphasis on the changes arising from the increased range and volume of infantry firepower, the obsolescence of cavalry in battle, and the importance of reconnaissance and mobility, was influential for over thirty years.'
[637] Prestia J.D. *"An ill-timed conservatism": tactical instruction at the Royal Military College, Sandhurst, 1879-1914*, Paper 834 University of Richmond Scholarship Repository

'more a student of war than a warrior.'[638] These accomplishments appear to have cleared the way for further advancement on Clery's part and he was shortly assigned to a succession of staff appointments; first as one of the deputy assistant adjutant and quartermaster generals for the District of Ireland, from 1875 to 1877 and then as in the same position as part of the Aldershot District from 1877 to 1878. In March 1878, Clery finally received promotion to the rank of major (without purchase).[639] However, in May of that same year, Clery was transferred to South Africa, as part of the British military build-up in the region.

In 1877 yet another war between the British administration and the Xhosa Tribes had erupted in response to attempts by Bartle Frere to pursue a policy of confederation in South Africa. With the Xhosa largely defeated, in January 1879 British forces invaded Zululand, In 1879 the long expected British Invasion of Zululand began under the command of major-general (with the local rank of Lieutenant-General) Frederic Thesiger, more commonly known as Lord Chelmsford. Meanwhile for Cornelius Francis Clery, now two decades in the service and forty one years of age, this was to be his first experience of active campaigning. The invasion force was to consist of five independent 'columns' of troops, totalling roughly fifteen thousand men, under the overall command of Lord Chelmsford. The centre column was under the command of Colonel Richard Glyn and Clery was assigned as chief staff officer to Glyn. Glyn's column was subsequently almost completely destroyed at the battle of Isandlwana, perhaps the most disastrous British defeat of the entire Victorian period, which saw more than a thousand British soldiers (including no less than fifty officers) killed. Clery had played quite a significant role in the lead up to the battle, laying out the camp and ordering its commander, Lieutenant Colonel Henry Pulleine to defend the ground.[640] Clery is subsequently recorded at having being present at the engagement at Isandlwana itself in the army list, but in practice was undertaking duties with Lord Chelmsford more than twelve miles away. [641]

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[638] Bowen, D. & Bowen, J. (2005) T*he Heroic Option: The Irish in the British Army*, Barnsley: Pen & Sword, p137 – Originally quoted from Farwell, B. (1976) *The Great Anglo-Boer War*, New York: W.W. Norton, pp121-122

[639] *London Gazette*, 19th March 1878, p2069

[640] Wright, W. (2014) *Warriors of the Queen: Fighting Generals in the Victorian Age*, Stroud: History Press, Entry: Clery, Lt Gen. Sir C.F.

[641] Yorke, E. (2011) *Battle Story: Isandlwana 1879*, Stroud: History Press, p124

Over the course of the campaign, Clery is reported to have quickly developed a great animosity for fellow staff officer John North Crealock, who served as military secretary to Chelmsford himself. This quarrel is evidence of an acerbic personality not unlike Butler's. John Frederick Maurice, an intelligence officer attached to Garnet Wolseley (who would subsequently replace Chelmsford in Zululand) remarked that Clery had a 'tendency to belittle the services of good men'[642] – Maurice's warnings are especially valuable considering he had previously served alongside Clery as a Professor of Tactics at Sandhurst. Crealock by contrast earned far worse condemnation from Wolseley himself, who he dubbed an 'evil genius', but more pertinent to us (and more demonstrative of the lingering prejudices remaining in the British Army at this time) is Wolseley's remark that Crealock was 'not born a gentleman, his father was not a gentleman before him and he can't help that.'[643] Crealock's father had been a lawyer and educated his sons at Rugby; Clery as the son of a merchant educated by Jesuits was not in a position to pull social rank. Even during the campaign itself, Clery had not shied away from ruffling feathers in his condemnation of its logistical arrangements and the conduct of the support forces. [644] [645] Little over a week into Clery's first campaign, he appeared to be in the midst of an unmitigated disaster. Yet despite the ignominious defeat at Isandlwana and Lord Chelmsford's subsequent recall and replacement by Garnet Wolseley, the British Campaign in Zululand was prosecuted to a rapid conclusion, with Chelmsford succeeding in capturing Ulundi (the Zulu capital) before the arrival of his replacement. Clery likewise, who was present at the engagement of Ulundi, does not appear to have suffered significant damage from Isandlwana, securing both a mention in the despatches as well as a brevet promotion to Lieutenant Colonel just four months after the battle, in November 1879.[646] Nevertheless, something of a lull in Clery's career followed his service in South Africa and for the next three years he would remain without significant duties.

[642] Clarke, S. (1984) *Zululand at War, 1879: the conduct of the Anglo-Zulu War*, Houghton: The Brenthurst Press, p27
[643] Preston, A. (1973) The South African Journal of Sir Garnet Wolseley 1879-1880, Cape Town: Van Riebeeck Society, p47
[644] Yorke, *Battle Story*, p77
[645] Ibid, p81
[646] *London Gazette*, 28th November, 1879 p6940

However, further scope for active service would soon be furnished by events in Egypt and Sudan. In late 1882 circumstances in Egypt (itself formally a province of the Ottoman Empire) deteriorated as the Khedive was overthrown by a popular figure, Colonel Ahmed Orabi. Orabi, playing upon anger within Egypt at the financial crisis arising from the Khedives plans and soon came to be viewed as a threat to British citizens in Egypt and Britain's stake in the Suez Canal, an earlier imperial commitment undertaken by Disraeli in 1875. After a failed attempt in the summer of 1882 to cow the Egyptian leader into submission through the bombardment of Alexandria, Britain was left with little recourse but to undertake a land based campaign to seize Cairo and depose Orabi. The primary element of the expedition involved a thrust of some twelve thousand British troops from Ismailia (a settlement situated roughly halfway between the Mediterranean and Red Sea entrances of the Suez Canal) westward along a railroad to Cairo.

For this task, Clery was gazetted brigade major with the Egyptian Expeditionary force in September of that year.[647] He would shortly afterwards be assigned to serve as assistant adjutant and quartermaster general within that force.[648] However the nature of this duty meant Clery spent much of the 1882 campaign relegated to rear-area duties, handling the administration of the army in Alexandria, far from the campaigning between the Suez Canal and Cairo. However, the subsequent eruption of conflict in Sudan and the besieging of Charles Gordon in Khartoum provided Clery with an opportunity to shine. Serving as assistant adjutant general under General Gerald Graham, Clery took part in the Suakin Expedition, which sought to relieve the pressure of the Mahdist rebellion by relieving the besieged garrisons of eastern Sudan. Previously, the Egyptian forces at El-Teb had been routed by the Mahdist troops, leading to the dispatch of a British expeditionary force. The two forces clashed once more at El-Teb, where British troops steadily advanced in an enormous square formation. Clery won distinction at the battle, in part for his eccentric habit of forsaking the newly introduced Khaki uniform in preference for the traditional scarlet red. Gerald Graham would later comment;

[647] *London Gazette*, 8th September, 1882, p4180
[648] *London Gazette*, 24th November, 1882, p3520

> ‘When at any critical period I saw his red coat [..] I knew that matters would be going well, or, if wrong, would soon be rectified’

In-fact, Clery would throughout the course of his career develop something of a reputation as a flamboyant dandy, with one ‘Tommy’ describing him as ‘a queer looking bloke with a puzzle beard and blue whiskers.’[649] Sonia Clarke in her history of the Anglo-Zulu War would describe him as ‘vain, able, critical of friend and foe, egotistical and amusing.’[650] Clery would continue to serve with distinction during the campaign, most notably at the later battle at Tamai, where it is reported that he and the commanding staff were exposed to significant danger, including one instance where a bullet impacted the ground in front of him.[651]Following his service in this campaign Clery was rewarded with several accolades, including yet another mention in despatches, promotion to the rank of brevet Colonel and membership of the order of the Bath.[652] [653] He would not immediately return to Britain however, remaining in Egypt and Sudan as part of the aforementioned Nile Expedition, which had sought to relieve the siege of Khartoum and rescue General Charles Gordon. Unlike Butler, Clery does not appear to have been present at any of the major engagements of this campaign, most likely being relegated once more to staff duties in Alexandria. Subsequent to this duty, he was Chief of Staff to the Army of Occupation within Egypt, the most senior staff appointment within that force, and later earned a substantial promotion to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel (his previous promotion being a brevet one).[654] He would continue in that position for several years until, in 1888, his experiences of education would rise to the fore once again.

In August 1888, Cornelius Francis Clery was appointed once more to serve at Sandhurst, on this occasion as Commandant of the Staff College, in the process earning himself a substantive promotion to the rank of Colonel, as well as a temporary status as Brigadier

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[649] Monckton, W.J.P (ed.) (1900) *Black and White Budget*, Vol. 2, London: Black and White Publishing Co, p5
[650] Clarke, *Zululand at War*, p27
[651] Grant, J. (1887) *British Battles on Land and Sea*, London: Cassell and Co, p556
[652] *London Gazette*, 21st May 1884, p2278
[653] Ibid, p2277 – Ordinary Member of the Military Division of the Third Class: Order of Bath
[654] *London Gazette*, 4th January, 1887, p5

General.[655] Clery would complete five years in his position as Commandant, returning once more to the half-pay list in 1893.[656] Following this, Clery would once more return to a series of staff appointments, but not before being made a major-general, dated from the 20th of December 1894.[657] From the 20th of January the following year, Clery assumed a position on the staff in command of the 3rd Infantry Brigade at Aldershot. At that point in time, Thomas Kelly-Kenny was serving as an assistant adjutant general in the same division. In March of 1896 Clery would receive even further preferment with the position of Deputy-Adjutant General to the forces, where he would serve under Adjutant General Redvers Buller.[658] Having being admitted to the Order of the Bath several years earlier, Clery advanced in that order to the Second Class (or rank of Knight Commander) in June 1899.[659] However, it would be the outbreak of war in South Africa that provided Clery with the most senior command of his military service, namely command of the 2nd Division and promotion to the local rank of Lieutenant-General. Clery may well have owed this assignment to a close working relationship with Buller whilst serving under him.

Clery's appointment as part of the substantial British intervention in South Africa was the culmination of years of growing tension. In the aftermath of the first Boer War, where the Dutch Republics in South Africa re-asserted their independence from Britain, major new deposits of gold were discovered within the territory of the Transvaal, prompting a 'gold rush' and an enormous influx of (predominantly English-speaking) settlers into the Boer Republics, who became known as 'Uitlanders'. At the same point in time, there existed within British controlled South-Africa, a great desire to form from a unified federation in the style of Canada, a process which would require the capitulation of the Boers peacefully or through force. This process had come to a head with the appointment in 1897 of Alfred Milner as High Commissioner for South Africa. Milner, with the collusion of Colonial Secretary Joseph Chamberlain, attempted to cultivate a suitable *casus belli* for British invasion and annexation of the neighbouring Boer Republics, particularly by exploiting the 'Uitlanders' issue.

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655 *London Gazette*, 8th September 1888, p4736
656 *London Gazette*, 8th August 1893, p4524
657 *London Gazette*, 8th January 1895, p157
658 *London Gazette*, 10th March 1896, p1613
659 *London Gazette* 3rd June 1899 p3585

Clery, having taken the field at the age of sixty one, suffered from ill-health during his time in South Africa and the combination of his varicose veins with a personal penchant for dyeing his prominent whiskers blue, would have produced an extraordinary sight amongst his men, perpetuating his reputation for eccentricity and as a 'fighting general'.[660] [661]Despite a period of illness (notwithstanding Buller's presence)[662] and the difficult circumstances of the war, Clery performed adequately in his duties; the 2nd Division would take part in the successful battle of the Tugela Heights which permitted the relief of Ladysmith. Clery and the British army succeeded in driving the Boer forces out of British Natal within four months of the battle, and by September of that year, both Boer capitals would be in British hands as the war devolved into a guerrilla conflict. Although Buller (a member of the Wolseley Ring) was superseded in command by Lord Roberts (the head of his own eponymous Ring) before the campaign was to be concluded, he nonetheless retained great confidence in Clery. Buller undertook two separate mentions of Major-General Clery in his despatches – both quite favourable. The first dates from March 1900,[663] however a second lengthier description of Clery can be found in his despatches for the 30th of March 1901, after the 'set-piece' warfare of the conflict had come to an end.

> With the exception of a short interval, during which he was in hospital, Major-General (local Lieutenant-General) Sir C. F. Clery, K.C.B., has commanded this Division throughout. With a thorough knowledge of his profession, he thoroughly understands how to lead troops in the field, and to look after them in camp. His services have been most valuable, and I strongly recommend him to your consideration. [664]

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[660] Barthrop, M. (1988) *Anglo Boer Wars: The British and the Afrikaners, 1815-1902*, London: Blandford Press p93

[661] Clery's entry in the Irish Dictionary of National Biography offers the following account of his service: 'He commanded (October 1899–October 1900) 2nd Division in South Africa, where the weight that Minor tactics had given to firepower, reconnaissance, and mobility was fully vindicated. Clery was, however, conspicuous for his dandyism, manners, and hospitality rather than for success as a field commander.'

[662] Symons, J. (2008) *Buller's Campaign: the Boer War and his career*, Looe: House of Stratus, p166

[663] Dated 30th of March 1900, republished *London Gazette* February 8th 1901, p940

[664] *London Gazette*, 8th of February 1901 p974

Later references to Clery in army literature appear to strengthen such a view, with one extract from *Celebrities of the Army* elucidating the point;

> It is no secret that Sir Redvers Buller entertains the highest opinion of Sir Francis Clery's fighting qualities; and it is in a large measure due to his good advice that the field force in Natal has been able quietly but surely to force the Boers back from positions which at one moment it seemed almost hopeless for us ever to think of occupying, so unsurmountable did the geographical difficulties appear.[665]

Clery did not end up becoming a scapegoat for the British Army's poor performance as his patron Buller had. In the end, this question is perhaps superfluous to this study; Clery had proven Irish Catholics were capable of obtaining and conducting high level commands and the absence of dramatic displays or panache on the battlefield is for the most part indicative of the new industrial form of warfare emerging at this time. The campaign in South Africa would be Clery's final duty on active service, as he ultimately retired from the service on the first of February 1901.[666] His death a quarter of a century later in 1926 was at the age of eighty-eight, in London at No. 4 Whitehall Court. Despite possessing a considerable personal wealth (worth four million pounds today), he died unmarried and without issue, perhaps as the price of pursuing a military career to such an extent. [667]

[665] Robinson, C.N. (1900) *Celebrities of the Army,* London: George Newes, Entry: Clery, Maj. Gen. Sir C.F
[666] *London Gazette*, 4th June, 1901, p3773
[667] England and Wales, National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills and Administrations), 1926 'Aarons – Cypher', Sir Cornelius Francis Clery

5.4: Martin Dillon (1826-1913)

The life of Sir Martin Dillon is, when compared with the other senior Irish Catholic officers under study, comparatively difficult to piece together. Born on the 19th of June 1826 in County Down, Dillon is easily the oldest of the men under study. His father, Major Andrew Dillon of Lissiane Co. Mayo, had served in various units during the Napoleonic Wars before being placed on half pay in 1816.[668] He became a major in the army in an honorary promotion in 1837, dying later that year whilst the regiment was stationed in Jamaica.[669] The career of Andrew Dillon permits us to infer certain facts about the Dillon family; Dillon's advancement in the army had been exclusively without purchase and he had languished for a considerable length of time on the half-pay list following the end of the Napoleonic Wars before becoming a Captain in the 2nd Royal Veteran Battalion in 1822.[670] Such facts strongly suggest a relatively poor officer though his wife Catherine was one of the wealthy Cloonfad Brownes and Sir Martin Dillon appears to have been named for his mother's father, Martin Browne of Cloonfad, Roscommon.[671] Further to this, examination of his private correspondence indicates Martin Dillon was distantly related to those Dillon family members who had settled in France following the Treaty of Limerick.[672]

Unsurprisingly Dillon's first commission in the army at the rank of ensign of the 98th Foot in 1843 would be without purchase. This may have been possible due to contacts made during the regiment's posting to Ireland just two years before. The 98th was soon dispatched to fight in China as part of the First Opium War, though the war concluded by the time that Dillion was commissioned. However, at that time the Regiment was under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Colin Campbell, who would in time become a patron of Dillon's. Campbell had been deployed to Ireland on garrison duty at the same time as Major Andrew Dillon, during the Tithe War of 1831-36, and this may explain the subsequent connection. Martin Dillion would obtain early advancement reasonably quickly, becoming Lieutenant without purchase in November 1844.[673] However, as a junior officer stationed with a

[668] Army List 1820
[669] *London Gazette*, 1837, Part 1, p67 and *London Gazette* 29 December 1837 p3383
[670] *London Gazette*, 16th November 1822, p1869
[671] NUIG Landed Estates Database Browne (Cloonfad)
[672] MS 41,682/Cintegabelle Correspondence – Martin Dillon Papers, National Library of Ireland
[673] *London Gazette*, 1845, Volume 1, p679

regiment on garrison duty in the far flung reaches of Bengal, further prospect for advancement looked grim, and Dillion would remain at the rank of Lieutenant for more than a decade. Nonetheless, the Imperial frontier provided some experience of combat and Dillon is recorded as having served in the Punjab Campaign of 1848-49 (also known as the Second Anglo Sikh War). Further service occurred during the forcing of the Kohat Pass in February 1850, when Dillon served in the flanking companies under the command of Sir Colin Campbell and Sir Thomas Napier.

Dillon's promotion to the rank of Captain, once more without purchase, occurred in 1855 and somewhat unusually for the men we are examining, involved a transfer from the 98th Regiment of Foot to the Rifle Brigade.[674] Dillon's promotion may well have owed to his relationship with Colin Campbell, which by this stage appears to have been quite cordial;[675] however the ongoing Crimean War also created many new prospects for advancement owing to the increased turnover of officers. Dillon only arrived in the Crimean theatre in the final few months of the conflict, but he would remain with the second battalion of the Rifle Brigade for the remainder of that conflict and subsequently the Indian Mutiny. The outbreak of conflict in India would provide a means for further advancement, as would, crucially, his existing rapport with Sir Colin Campbell, who had in 1857 been named commander in chief of all British forces in India, for the purpose of supressing the rebellion. Campbell had an established reputation for liberal sensitivities and a humble sense of religious modesty.[676] Dillon's first service during the Siege of Cawnpore nearly saw him killed as he sustained serious injuries including two separate bayonet wounds and a sword wound. He would later fight at the siege and capture of Lucknow, where he would earn a brevet promotion to the rank of major. He would also take part in the Oudh Campaign under General Sir Hope Grant as well as once more under Sir Colin Campbell as part of the 'Trans-Gorga' Campaign [677]

[674] The Rifle Brigade had formerly been known as the 95th Regiment of Foot (Rifles) but following the end of the Napoleonic Wars was reorganized as a larger Brigade sized formation.
[675] MS 41,682/Campbell Correspondence – Martin Dillon Papers, National Library of Ireland
[676] Greenwood, A. (2015) *Victoria's Scottish Lion: The Life of Colin Campbell, Lord Clyde,* Stroud: History Press, p107
[677] Named for the 'Gorga' or Ghaghara River

Yet Dillon's 'big break' appears to have been his subsequent assignment as Brigade Major to Sir Alfred Horsford.[678] A combination of skill in his role, the favour of suitable patrons and his earlier exploits appear to have worked to his favour as a succession of staff appointments followed, starting with his position as the principal staff officer to Sir Alfred on the Nepal Frontier, during operations there and in the second 'Trans-Gorga' campaign. Dillon would again serve as a Brigade Major to Major-General Holdich during further operations on the Oudh frontier, aimed at capturing escaped mutineers.

By 1860 Dillon had sufficiently impressed his superiors to earn a position as assistant adjutant general for the 2nd Division of Sir Robert Napier during the 1860 Campaign in China, as part the overall expedition under the command of Dillon's old superior General Sir Hope Grant. As with several of the other men in this study, Dillon served at the capture of the Taku forts and would later join the advance on Peking, a service which earned him yet another brevet promotion, this time to the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel. Crucially, this period of service under Sir Robert Napier would prefigure another staff appointment, that of military secretary, as part of Napier's Abyssinian Campaign. In this campaign he earned yet more accolades, being mentioned in despatches, made member of the Order of the Bath, promoted to the Colonel and named aide de camp to the Queen, it would also serve as the final campaign he would participate in directly.

Dillon would remain associated with the newly styled 'Lord Napier of Magdala' who was appointed Commander in Chief of India from 1870 until 1876, with Dillon serving as his military secretary for the same period. He would continue this trend of senior appointments when in October 1878 he was appointed as Assistant Military Secretary to the Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces, the Duke of Cambridge, cousin of Queen Victoria.[679] The Duke of Cambridge is more popular known as a conservative military figure that had occupied the top position since 1856 and would hold the office for almost four decades. Perhaps more significant for Dillon's position was the fact that the Military Secretary to the Duke had, since 1874, been Dillon's former commanding officer Sir Alfred Horsford. From this position further advancement would spring, with Dillon receiving the rank of Major-General on the 1st

[678] Most famous for accidentally killing businessman Frederick Gye
[679] *London Gazette* October 1st 1878 p5372

of May 1878.[680] Dillon's advancement within the circle of the Duke of Cambridge indicates that he stood on the more traditional end of the spectrum of army officers, whatever his exploits on the battlefield. Indeed, Dillon's appointment to this position was not seen as a positive development for characters interested in the reform of the Army, among them Garnet Wolseley who wrote:

> Martin Dillon to be Military Secretary. They might as well have been [bring?] in the old woman who sweeps the crossings in front of the War Office. She certainly could not have been more garrulous than dear good Martin, now well known as 'Rippling Rot.' His conversation is a bursting diarrhoea of words…without even drawing breath he will discuss a hundred subjects, each totally distinct from the other and his discussion will be as valueless as it is wordy and rapid.[681]

This assignment would later be followed by a divisional command in the Bengal Presidency of India, from 1884,[682] and advancement to the rank of Lieutenant-General in 1887.[683] Finally in 1892, at the age of 66, Sir Martin Dillon managed to achieve the rank of full General in the Army, a rank surpassed only by that of Field Marshal – typically held only by members of the Royal Family or the most exceptional of military commanders.[684] Dillon would remain in this high rank on active duty for only a short period of time, retiring from the service just one year later in February 1893.[685] Dillon would later become the Colonel (an honorary position) of the Prince of Wales Own (West Yorkshire Regiment) in 1897.

From the time of his first commissioning Dillon had spent no less than half a century in military service. Across the length of that period of service, Dillion had managed to secure advancement without once resorting to purchase, relying instead upon skill (if not a reforming zeal) and personal connection with important men. Indeed, as with William Francis

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[680] *London Gazette*, June 11th 1878 p3557
[681] Wright, *Warriors of the Queen*, Entry - the Queen – Dillion, Gen. Sir M.
[682] *London Gazette*, October 3rd 1884 p4333
[683] *London Gazette*, December 6th 1887 p6800
[684] *London Gazette*, August 2nd, 1892, p4379
[685] *London Gazette*, February 14th, 1893, p822

Butler, Martin appears to have been affiliated with one of the late Victorian Army's notorious 'Rings', specifically the 'Indian Ring' of Field Marshal Roberts. This can be inferred from his previous contacts with members of that cadre such as Napier, as well as his enthusiastic welcoming of Robert's appointment in India, where he addresses the Duke of Cambridge as follows;

> '[I] could have made no selection which would have given such satisfaction to the Army British and Native and to the civilian element. Sir Frederick [Roberts] is liked and trusted'[686]

In-fact it would appear that Dillon was a great enthusiastic for Roberts' appointment to India, writing to the Duke of Cambridge that 'in public opinion at home and in India and with the Army, Sir F. Roberts stands first and Lord R. Church appreciates this as do [senior?] conservatives generally.'[687] Indeed on another occasion Dillon had served as an agent in Roberts' machinations to silence a troublesome member of the press.[688] One can infer little else from such correspondence and actions save that Dillon had, in rising to high, rank become a confidante of Field Marshal Roberts and his extended network of officers. In an army where connections and politicking could play as much a role in an officer's advancement as experience or personal bravery, Martin Dillon appears to have been an accomplished officer in both spheres of action. Dillion received further recognition in 1902, being appointed a Knight Grand Cross of the Order of the Bath in 1902.[689]

Dillon's success does not appear to have precluded him from an active and visible participation in Catholic public life. In his retirement General Martin Dillon remained active in Catholic circles, holding a seat on the council of the Catholic Union until 1908.[690] Even

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[686] Quoted from Atwood, R. (2014) *The Life of Field Marshal Lord Roberts*, London: Bloomsbury, c8p2 - Originally from Robson, B. (ed.) (1993) *Roberts in India: the Military Papers of Field Marshal Lord Roberts 1876-1893,* Stroud: Army Records Society, p379
[687] Ibid
[688] Atwood, *Life of Field Marshal Roberts*, c5p5
[689] *London Gazette*, 26th June 1902, p4189
[690] *The Tablet*, 5th of December, 1908, p29

more than this, from his private correspondence we find evidence of Dillon's enthusiastic interest in the 'Dillon Connection' to France, as well as correspondence with Lady Bellingham, spouse of Sir Henry Bellingham of Castlebellingham County Louth, a prominent convert to Catholicism.[691] As for connections to fellow Irish Catholic officers; Dillon is recorded as giving a gift of silver to the daughter of the late General Butler, Eileen Butler, and her fiancé Viscount Gormanstown in late 1911.[692] Incidentally it was one of Butler's sons, the Reverend Richard Butler O.S.B. of Downside Abbey, who is recorded as officiating at the ceremony. Dillon would not live to see the outbreak of the First World War, dying on the 18th of August 1913 at the age of 87, and was buried in Glasnevin Cemetery Dublin.

5.5: William Francis Butler (1838-1910)

The most famous of this small cadre, William Francis Butler, was born at Suirville on the 31st of October 1838. His family is described as 'an impoverished family of Tipperary gentry',[693] possessing several hundred acres of land on the banks of the river Suir.[694] William Francis' wider family were Catholic descendants from the Butlers of the Barony of Dunboyne.[695] These modest noble beginnings appear to have been compounded by the onset of the Great Famine, which for the young William Francis meant a disruption of his education owing to the charitable efforts of his father, as well as inculcating in him a sense of sympathy for the less fortunate. His education otherwise was conducted at St. Stanislaus College, Tullabeg, under the auspices of the Jesuit Order, an experience he is reported to have 'greatly disliked.'[696] In spite of this dislike, he would subsequently send his sons to the successor institution of St. Stanislaus' – Clongowes Wood College.

His entrance to military service is dated in the London Gazette for the 17th of September 1858, in which he was commissioned an Ensign in the 69th (South Lincolnshire) Regiment of Foot at the age of nineteen. The 69th enjoyed little prestige or fame and was earmarked for

[691] MS 41,682/Bellingham Letters – Martin Dillon Papers, National Library of Ireland
[692] *The Tablet*, 28th of October, 1911, p28
[693] *Canadian Dictionary of National Biography*, Volume XIII (1901-1910) Entry: Butler, Sir William Francis
[694] Ryan, *William Francis Butler*, p5
[695] NUIG Landed Estates Database: Butler (Ballycarron)
[696] Costello, *Clongowes Wood*, p51

service in Burma. This choice suggests Butler was limited by family resources and had only a modest capacity to advance by purchase. Butler advanced to the rank of Lieutenant by purchase on the 17th of November 1863, five years after his commissioning. Butler's progress contrasts poorly with many of his peers, a significant number of whom could expect to be made Lieutenant within a year and the majority by three years. His advancement to Captain on the 18th of April 1872, some nine years later represents another disproportionately long wait since(most officers could expect to become captain six to eight years after obtaining the rank of lieutenant. His captaincy also came only *after* the abolition of purchase. By comparison, Butler's future patron Garnet Wolseley had gone from Ensign to Major-General in the space of sixteen years. Early in 1870, Butler pondered his poor prospects of promotion;

> I had now to return to my regiment in Canada. No 'look outs' there and no outlooks anywhere else. Regimental promotion had begun, but it was not for me, the steps were all by purchase. I made a last attempt on the Horse Guards and was kindly informed by a very choleric old Peninsula Military Secretary, who had a terrible reputation for vocabulary vehemence to old officers (but whom on this and other occasions I found particularly gracious to young ones), that I had not a ghost of a chance.

Later commentary would reveal that Butler had indeed been in line for purchasing the captaincy of his company (No. 10) within the 69th, but instead an old friend had made the purchase 'over my head'.[697] In the absence of promotion, Butler busied himself with other tasks, and in 1870 W. Mitchell and Co. published Butler's history of his Regiment, the 69th, forthrightly titled *A narrative of the historical events connected with the Sixty-Ninth Regiment*.[698] Despite these grim circumstances, an opportunity for advancement would soon present itself on Butlers return to the 69th Regiment in Canada, later that year.

[697] Butler, *An Autobiography*, p118
[698] Butler, W.F. (1970) *A narrative of the historical events connected with the Sixty-Ninth Regiment,* Charing Cross: W. Mitchell & Co.

In the early 1870s Butler achieved his earliest distinction as part of the Wolseley Expedition, a military expedition aimed at suppressing the 'Red River Rebellion' of Louis Riel and the local Metis population.[699] Butler's own initiative in securing the assignment should not be understated; building on little more than a chance encounter several years earlier, Butler dispatched a telegram to Wolseley containing little more than 'Please Remember Me'. Despite this bold attempt at securing a place with the expedition, none could be found, leading Butler to propose a novel assignment for himself, traversing the distance to Red River via the United States and gathering intelligence en-route. Coincidentally, just prior to embarking upon this ambitious journey, Butler and the 69th would engage in a minor skirmish with several hundred Fenian rebels originating from the United States, at the site of the US-Canadian Border, along the southernmost reaches of Quebec. Despite his later nationalist affiliations Butler betrays no particular sense of prejudice or pride towards these men in his autobiography, relating the account with an almost dull equanimity.[700] With this minor campaign complete, Butler set out on his task as intelligence officer for the expedition, tracing a route that would lead him first south into the territory of the United States, west to Fort Abercrombie in what was then the Dakota Territory (now North Dakota), then north alone the Red River by steamer, finally disembarking covertly before Fort Garry, (modern Winnipeg) seat of the Red River Rebellion. After a chance meeting with the leader of the rebellion, Louis Riel, Butler proceeded east once more toward the main expedition force under Wolseley, finally reaching that force at Fort Frances in Westernmost Ontario. Together with Wolseley, the force finally reached the seat of the rebellion on the 24th of August 1870, four months after its departure from Toronto, arriving to find Riel fled and the rebellion collapsed.

Despite the lack of a military engagement, Butler's participation in the campaign as an independent scout provided him with yet further opportunities. Whilst at Fort Garry, he was approached by the newly assigned Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba (which had been established as a province a month before the expedition's arrival in Winnipeg), Adam

[699] The Metis population is the progeny of early inter-marriage between 'First Nation' Tribes of Eastern Canada and early European settlers. The Red River Rebellion (1869-1870) was an attempt by the largely Francophone and Catholic Metis to secure various guarantees from the newly established Canadian government. Ultimately the conflict would end with the region admitted to the Canadian Confederation as the province of Manitoba.

[700] Butler, *An Autobiography,* pp114-119

Archibald, to conduct an exploratory expedition going as far west as the Rocky Mountains. The spectacular Anabasis of a lone lieutenant across much of the Canadian wilderness is the subject of Butler's 1872 work, *The Great Lone Land*, which brought Butler some popularity as a writer. Upon the lifting of the moratorium on promotion (occasioned by the abolition of purchase in 1871) Butler was made captain in April 1872.[701] [702] Later, having tired of garrison duties with the 69th, he would attempt to surpass his journey in the expedition of 1871 in 1873 with a new more ambitious route that would take him farther north, across the Rocky Mountains and ultimately to the western coast of Canada. Though the expedition was a success, the work arising from it, the 1874 *The Wild North Land* appears to have fared worse compared with its predecessor,[703] leaving Butler once again apparently stagnant in his career without prospects for further advancement. Those prospects would soon pick up in that great venue of late nineteenth century European Imperialism – Africa.

By the early 1870s British influence in the 'Gold Coast' region of Western Africa (modern day Ghana) was largely limited to the area around the settlement of 'Cape Coast' and a number of British protectorates in the surrounding area. To the north of this agglomeration, across the river Prah, loomed the Ashanti Empire, a native kingdom dating from the early eighteenth century, centred on the capital of Kumasi. In 1873 the third of four 'Anglo-Ashanti' wars erupted following the invasion of the British dominated coast region by an Ashanti army of some twelve thousand men. The response to this invasion was to be headed up, fortuitously for Butler, by Garnet Wolseley. In imitation of his earlier call 'remember me' Butler, at the time in the United States, once again dispatched a telegram to Wolseley in the hopes of securing an assignment and proceeded to cross the Atlantic. The operation was originally envisaged at an operation of no more than a few dozen British officers assembling and leading a force recruited from the native protectorates to defeat the Ashanti forces; in the event quickly evolved to include the deployment of some three thousand British troops. Wolseley's plan sought to advance on the Ashanti capital of Kumasi in a four pronged approach, one element of which was to be commanded by Butler.

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[701] McCourt, *Remember Butler*, p84
[702] *London Gazette,* April 12th 1872, p1842
[703] Ryan, *William Francis Butler*, p49

The course of events, detailed in Butler's *Akim-Foo: The History of a Failure*, described as Butler's most emotionally raw work, need not be explored in intimate detail here. Roughly sketched, Butler's travails began with a failed attempt at persuading one local potentate to provide troops and a moderately successfully attempt to convince another. After some time, Butler assembled a force of several thousand local levies and proceeded north across the Prah river toward Kumasi in accordance with Wolseley's plan. Shortly before reaching the Ashanti capital the local levies reconsidered their participation and subsequently went home, whilst Wolseley's central force began its ultimately successful engagement at Kumasi. Desperate to achieve some part of the coming action, Butler and his few retainers engaged in a long detour, but only joined Wolseley's force after the conclusion of the combat. Broken from a long campaign and a physically exhausting experience in an unfamiliar land redolent with strange new flora and fauna as well as dangerous tropical diseases, Butler began the journey home by boat, languishing at death's door for the next few months as he began the long road to recovery.[704] Although Butler's command had been both damaging to his health and a failure in its stated objective of bringing a force to battle the Ashanti, these facts would in no way impede his further advancement. The overall expedition had been a success and compelled the Ashanti leader to sign a new treaty with the United Kingdom and Butler had retained the confidence of his patron Garnet Wolseley. Martin Ryan offers a compelling explanation for this state of affairs in arguing that Butler, although he had failed in his stated objective, had performed admirably in the face of a difficult task and that his failure in bringing troops to battle owed to the fault of the native levies themselves rather than any failure on Butler's part. By comparison, on Wolseley left flank, Captain W.L. Dalrymple had been assigned a similar task as Butler, but was unable to raise any men let alone bring them into Ashanti territory. In either case, Wolseley's own comments shed much light on the matter;

> That Captain Butler failed In his effort to lead a force of Akims to Comaasie is not his fault [...] The high option of Captain Butler which caused me to give him an independent command is strengthened by his conduct in this war; and I beg to

[704] Ryan, *William Francis Butler*, p63

> recommend him especially to your notice as an officer of great ability, of remarkably ready resources and of untiring powers of action. [705]

Henry Morton Stanley, who would later achieve fame in his quest for Dr. Livingstone, at this time worked as a journalist with the expedition and ascribed Butler's failure not to a lack of effort but to an excessively lenient attitude toward the forces under his command.[706] Stanley's description of affairs appears remarkably congruent with Butler's later reflections on his services in the expedition, which were quickly put to paper. Described by Ryan as Butler's most emotionally intense work, written perhaps as an act of catharsis, the story within *Akim Foo* does not share the same sympathy for the 'noble savage' expressed in his works detailing travel in Canada. In any case, either owing to the intervention to Wolseley, the overall success of the campaign or the popularity of his published account of the matter, Butler would not suffer any disadvantage from the debacle, described by Winwood Reade as 'a failure of which any man might be proud'[707] – Butler would receive his promotion to the rank of major during his period of convalescence after the campaign, on April 1st 1874, as well as entry to the Order of Bath as a Companion.

Before this period of recovery could be fully completed, Butler would proceed once more to Africa, to pursue a largely civil assignment in Natal. One incident during this duty conveys some of the lingering sense of 'otherness' that Butler's Irish Catholicism entailed. Whilst in the company of James Anthony Froude, a celebrated popular historian and free agent for the Colonial Officer, Butler found himself the subject of several religious and national jabs.[708] On one occasion Froude (a veteran anti-Catholic) enquired as to whether Butler had observed the 'Winking Virgin' during the course of his visit to Madeira – a barely veiled thrust at Butler's Catholic faith. Butler responded that he had not, given the abundance of 'winking ladies' he had observed whilst in England.[709] Despite the apparent gulf, Butler and Froude

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[705] Originally from Wolsey's despatches, later published in *The Times* of the 9th of March 1874, quoted from Martin Ryan's *William Francis Butler*, p62
[706] Stanley, H.M. (1874) *Coomassie and Magdala: The Story of two British Campaigns in Africa*, London: Sampson Low, Marston Low & Searle, p175
[707] Ryan, *William Francis Butler*, p62
[708] McCourt, *Remember Butler*, p122 and Ryan, *William Francis Butler*, p70
[709] Butler, *An Autobiography*, pp183-4

soon surmounted such difference and became friends. Following this assignment Butler would return to Britain in late 1875 to assume a new role as deputy assistant quartermaster general within the quarter-master generals department, to spend the next few years dealing with bureaucratic quagmires and the banal business of procurement. Once again it would only be disturbances in South Africa that would shatter this stolid state of affairs, yet in the interim, an important development in Butler's private life occurred.

In June 1877 Butler and Elizabeth Thompson were made man and wife, at a service officiated by Cardinal Henry Manning, Catholic Archbishop of Westminster.[710] Elizabeth Thompson was by this stage at the start of her famed artistic career, having produced the famous painting 'The Roll Call' just three years earlier to popular acclaim. Indeed their honeymoon in Ireland would provide the sketch for Thompson's later painting 'Listed for the Connaught Rangers.' More significantly for our purposes, Thompson was a convert to the Catholic faith, having been raised a Protestant in Italy, but converting in 1873 – she was also an acquaintance of the aforementioned Cardinal Manning. Her faith was, in Martin Ryan's estimation, a factor which 'drew Butler into the cerebral world of lay Roman Catholicism that flourished in the London of the 1870s.'[711]

Little more than a year following his marriage, the aforementioned British Invasion of Zululand began. Butler was part of the frantic response on the part of the British government, which saw Wolseley assigned as governor of Natal with Butler serving in a logistical role as assistant adjutant general, based in Durban, far from the combat zone. Despite his disappointment at the support role, Butler is reported to have conducted his duty with the energy and efficiency he had come to be known for.[712] On the capture of the Zuku King, Cetshwayo, (one of the few tasks which remained by the time of Wolseley's arrival) Butler is reported to have procured a supply of rushes from his native land to provide him with a more comfortable sleeping arrangement than the European style beds he was provided.[713] Ryan recounts the following exchange from Butler's diary:

[710] McCourt, *Remember Butler*, p125
[711] Ryan, *William Francis Butler*, p84
[712] Ibid, p75
[713] Ryan, *William Francis Butler*, p78

> I was soon in the room where the unfortunate Cetshwayo was kept. He was delighted to get this little bit of his beloved Zululand in his dreary four-walled prison. It was the same as putting a little bit of green sod into the cage of a lark; only the unfortunate king wept when he saw these reminders of his hold home, and he said to the interpreter as he shook my hand 'say to him that he has brought sleep to me: now I can rest at night'[714]

Butler's offering of comfort to a defeated enemy was not merely a customary expression of mercy to a defeated enemy; Butler would later write that that Britain itself shouldered much blame for the rise of Cetshwayo and stressed a common humanity between Britons and the native population from which one can infer a great deal of sympathy from Butler for the newly subjugated Zulus. Such views represent a clear evolution in Butler's attitudes from his earlier West African experiences. Nonetheless, they also represented a curious and potentially eccentric divergence from the mores of Victorian society, now on the eve of the great 'Scramble for Africa'. Nor did Butler shy away from an attitude of great enthusiasm for France and especially the Napoleonic dynasty, lamenting the death of Louis Napoleon, the 'Prince Imperiale' whilst in British service in South Africa, and later beginning a lengthy friendship with the Prince's mother, the former Empress Eugenie, whom he met in 1880.[715] During this same period Butler made further efforts in the world of writing, contributing several literary works during the 1880s covering diverse topics including a new collection of essays detailing on his service in foreign vistas titled *Far Out: Rovings Retold*, a cautionary piece on the dangers of a rising Germany entitled *The Invasion of England* and a fictional work drawing upon his experiences in Canada known as *Red Cloud: The Solitary Sioux.* The last piece in particular conveys some of the more radical attitudes Butler held for a man of his position, lamenting the changes underway in North America and saluting the nobility of the titular Indian tribesman. In another piece published in 1881 in *The Contemporary Review,* Butler expounded further anti-Imperial views, in this case foreshadowing views that would ultimately cause his recall two decades later, in which he argued against the British policy of

[714] Ibid, p78
[715] McCourt, *Remember Butler,* p137

annexing the Transvaal and ending Boer independence.[716] In spite of such increasingly convinced anti-Imperialist views, Butler's writings do not appear to have impinged upon his military career. Indeed, it must be recalled that during this same period, William Ewart Gladstone had been returned to the office of prime minister in 1880 on a platform of lessening Imperial commitments and expansion, not expanding them.[717] However a similar political perspective to the governing Liberal Party was insufficient to exclude Butler from the lingering mark of his religion; in 1880 the Marquess of Ripon was assigned as Indian Viceroy and Butler was speculated as a candidate for the position of private secretary. However, as Ripon was himself a convert to the Catholic faith, it was thought (according to Butler);

> 'That a Catholic viceroy in India was sufficiently experimental without further endangering the position by the appointment of another of the same creed to a subordinate but still influential post.'[718]

Nonetheless, Butler still obtained preferment in rank, obtaining a brevet promotion to Lieutenant Colonel in April 1880,[719] and occupying the position of Assistant Adjutant General and Quartermaster General in the Western District from July 1880. It was in this office that Butler would receive promotion to the substantive rank of Lieutenant Colonel.[720]

With the outbreak of hostilities in Egypt in 1882, Butler, like Clery, was tasked with ensuring the logistical safety of the expedition – in this instance as Assistant Adjutant and Quartermaster General.[721] Nevertheless, he would be present with the staff for the decisive battle of the campaign, Tel-El-Kebir, a daring night assault on the main Egyptian force. After this brief victorious engagement, Butler was relegated once more to arranging supply routes

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[716] Ryan, *William Francis Butler*, p88
[717] Matthew, H.C.G. (1997) *Gladstone, 1809-1898,* Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp267-268
[718] Butler, *An Autobiography*, p215
[719] *London Gazette*, April 20th 1880, p2601
[720] *London Gazette*, 30th September 1881, p4895
[721] *London Gazette* 1st August 1882, p3581

and troop accommodation in the Egyptian capital. Despite involving himself in a debate surrounding the treatment of the deposed Egyptian leader, Colonel Orabi, the success of the Egyptian campaign would provide yet more plaudits and means for advancement for Butler, including a brevet promotion to the rank of Colonel and an honorary appointment as extra 'aide de camp' to Queen Victoria,[722] as well as the acquaintance of several members of the royal family including the future King Edward the VII (then Prince of Wales) and the Duke of Connaught.[723] Wolseley himself was similarly impressed by Butler, giving him the following brief but ebullient mention in his despatches as 'a very able officer of high attainments and of great resource.'[724]

Following his return to England, Butler resumed his duties as assistant adjutant and quartermaster general for the Western District.[725] However this sojourn would only be temporary, as following his term in the aforementioned position, he was assigned to serve as a Colonel on the staff of the Army with the force on the Nile, in the process earning a substantive promotion to the rank of Colonel.[726] Butler returned once more to the Middle East, assuming a new role a as garrison commander at Wadi-Halfa, an Egyptian settlement on the river Nile close to the border with Sudan. Butler's new position, in addition to entailing the rank of Brigadier General, placed him at the vanguard of future engagements with the Sudanese forces, now under the rule of the Madhi's successor, the 'Khalifa' Abdullah ibn Muhammad. At Wadi Halfa Butler busied himself once more with the business of logistics and preparation, attempting to defend the local railway from Mahdist raids and attacks and earning the commander of the Egyptian forces, General Stephenson, who commented;

> 'Butler […] showed great judgement, forethought and vigilance and promptness of action when he had to act on his own responsibility … [he] has been untiring in his exertions and by the energy and forethought for which he is remarkable, he

[722] *London Gazette*, 17th November 1882, p5174
[723] The Duke was a younger son of the Queen who had completed a military education at Woolwich and shared many life experiences with Butler, having served in the defence against the Fenian Raids in 1870 and later becoming involved in the governance of the native 'Six Nations' – he would later serve as Governor General of Canada.
[724] *London Gazette*, 2nd November 1882, p4883
[725] *London Gazette*, November 24th 1882, p5320
[726] *London Gazette*, 10th July 1885, p3182

> placed the whole of his command on such a footing that the enemy has been comparative harmless and the various posts have held their own with trifling losses'[727]

In the ensuing battle of Ginnis, Butler would assume command of a brigade of troops, leading them once more in daring night assault of the type which had served Wolseley so well several years earlier. In an enormous hollow square of infantry, with artillery at its centre, Butler's forced stormed a Mahdist held ridge that dominated the position and Ginnis, a position which could potentially enable the British to encircle their enemies and drive them into the Nile. Although the encirclement was unsuccessful, Butler succeeded in taking the ridge and forcing the Mahdists to retreat, earning yet more praise from Stephenson, who noted that Butler had 'the brunt of the fight' but that his force preformed 'remarkably well' regardless. [728] In the pursuit of the defeated Mahdist forces, Butler distinguished himself once more, capturing several supply boats and ensuring the dissolution of the enemy force. In the aftermath of this victory however, Butler's severe lack of diplomatic skill soon became as evident as his possession of great martial skill. First however, it is necessary to recall once more the original Egyptian Campaign, which had seen a force under Garnet Wolseley depose the Egyptian leader Orabi. This deposition of the Egyptian leader presented a dilemma to British and Egyptian Loyalist forces, namely whether or not he should be executed. Butler, in yet another example of his 'anti-Imperial' (or perhaps simply contrarian) credentials, dissented against the prevailing attitude amongst the British forces (including Wolseley) that Orabi should be killed.[729] On his own initiative Butler personally petitioned the expedition's chief of staff, Sir John Miller Adye, on the occasion of his return to Britain to counsel the government on its decision; this was sufficient to attract the ire of both the military establishment at Home and Wolseley himself. As Martin Ryan argues;

> The Urabi incident is an example of that combination of outspoken concern and impetuosity which helped make Butler's reputation as an officer who was not quite pukka. He was clearly not a lone voice among the military in Cairo […] A

[727] Quoted from Martin Ryan, *William Francis Butler*, p124
[728] Ryan, *William Francis Butler*, p127
[729] McCourt, *Remember Butler,* p155

> more cautious man would have held back satisfied that the time between Adye's departure from Cairo and a government decision being telegraphed from London to Egypt was enough to resolve a situation which, though serious, was not yet critical.[730]

This would not be the last time that William Francis Butler incited tension between himself and his brother officers. If we resume our consideration of events at Wadi Halfa, we can find yet another example of Butler's ability to antagonize and irritate his fellow officers. The presence of such a large number of British troops along the Egyptian-Sudanese border presented a logistical dilemma; as with the West Indies or the Interior of Africa, European troops were unsuited to the climatic demands of these stations. Consequently, in a display of fore-thought which would continue to cause trouble throughout his career, Butler began to desperately petition for the material and equipment required to sustain such a large number of European troops in reasonable health. However, these demands were apparently ignored by army command in Cairo, which only ordered the removal of these troops after a significant number of mortalities due to heat. Butler however, was left to remain at his border posting, in the sweltering heat, as a form of punishment for his bellicosity in dealings with army command in Cairo. In a letter to Butler, Garnet Wolseley castigated his comrade in arms for his apparently inability to work as part of a team, to answer the commands given to him and for issuing telegrams that were 'bordering on the insubordinate'.[731] Butler would only return to Britain in July 1886, his health once more in a precarious state and his prospects for advancement similarly perilous.

Yet another demonstration of Butler's difficult relationship with officialdom and propriety loomed on his return to Great Britain. In 1884, Butler had been named as a co-respondent in the divorce case of Campbell versus Campbell. Along with three other men, Butler was purported to have committed adultery with Miss Gertrude Blood (known formally as Lady Colin Campbell, not to be confused with the aforementioned commander). Towards the end of 1886, following his return from Egypt, the trial began. Though the case against Butler was flimsy at best, he had not aided his own case by his obstinate refusal to attend the

[730] Ryan, *William Francis Butler*, p100
[731] Ibid, p130

proceedings, instead remaining in France, where he had relocated his family. Despite the unseemly business of the divorce case, in November of that year Butler received further recognition for his service in Egypt by being named Knight Commander of the Order of the Bath.[732]Butler followed this tumultuous period of his career by returning to the business of writing, publishing a succession of works, from his 1887 account of the Egyptian War *The Campaign of the Cataracts: Being a Personal Narrative of the Great Nile Expedition of 1884-5,*[733] a biography of Charles Gordon (part of the *English Men of Action* series) published in 1889,[734] and a similar biopic published in 1890 entitled Sir Charles Napier regarding that notable veteran of the Napoleonic Wars and Britain's conquests in India (not to be confused with the aforementioned Napier of Magdala).[735] Notwithstanding the military careers and exploits of both men, Butler appears to have relished the opportunity to voice his anger at the injustices he saw, both historical and contemporary. In his account of Charles Napier he recalls one occasion where Sir Charles sought to have a promotion antedated, but was refused;

> He mentioned his long and arduous services and his many wounds, but all to no effect. Clearly the man who held that rotten boroughs were not the perfection of representative government, that a Roman Catholic ought to be allowed to make a will and have a horse worth more than five pounds, was fit only for foreign service or active warfare, and quite unsuited to hold a military appointment at home.[736]

Similarly, in his account of Gordon, Butler reproduces a letter written by Gordon which correlated significantly with Butler's own view of difficulties;

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[732] *London Gazette*, 26th November 1886, p5975
[733] Butler, W.F. (1887), *The Campaign of the Cataracts: Being a Personal Narrative of the Great Nile Expedition of 1884-5*, Marston, Searle & Rivington
[734] Butler, W.F. (1889) *English Men of Action: Charles George Gordon*, London, Macmillan & Co
[735] Butler, W.F. (1890) *English Men of Action: Sir Charles Napier*, London, Macmillan & Co
[736] Butler, *Sir Charles Napier*, pp64-65

> In conclusion, I must say from all accounts and my own observation, that the state of our fellow countrymen in the parts named [Ireland] is worse than that of any people in the world, let alone Europe […] The Bulgarians, Anatolians, Chinese, and Indians, are better off than many of them are.[737]

Notwithstanding his writings and the tepid reaction from Wolseley, [738] Butlers advance through the ranks continued, with him being assigned in February 1890 to serve as commander of the British Garrison at Alexandria, being granted the local rank of Brigadier General whilst in that capacity.[739] Neither would the relative placidity of this new station impede his further advancement, with Butler being promoted to the rank of Major-General from the 7th of December 1892.[740] At the conclusion of his garrison service in Egypt he returned once more to Great Britain, obtaining a new posting as a commander of one of the infantry brigades at Aldershot in late 1893.[741] From 1896 Butler was appointed as commander of the British Army's South Eastern District.[742] In addition to his military duties, Butler and his family participated fully in the social life of London, including the Jubilee celebrations of 1897 which marked Queen Victoria's sixtieth year on the throne.[743] By the 1890s Butler had attained no small measure of respect in military circles, with one commentator adding in the 1890-91 edition of the United Service Magazine 'we take it no magazine would refuse contributions from General Brackenbury or Sir William Butler.' [744] In 1899, he published a biography of his erstwhile comrade (and fellow 'Ring' member) George Pomeroy Colley, who had fallen in battle during the first Boer War in 1881.[745] In time, South Africa would claim Butler's military career.

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[737] Butler, *Charles George Gordon*, p176
[738] From the letters of Garnet Wolseley, quoted from Ryan, *William Francis Butler*, p153
[739] *London Gazette*, 18th March 1890, p1647
[740] *London Gazette*, 13th December 1892, p7293
[741] *London Gazette*, 21st November 1893, p6555
[742] *London Gazette*, 8th March 1896, p1270
[743] Ryan, *William Francis Butler*, p165
[744] *United Service Magazine*, 1890-91, Volume 2, p476
[745] Butler, W.F. (1899) *The Life of Sir George Pomeroy Colley 1835-1881*, London: John Murray

From the 12th of November 1898, William Francis Butler was to have command of the troops in South Africa – he would do so with the local rank of Lieutenant-General.[746] Butler's arrival in South Africa was a significant upset to this process in two ways. Firstly, by virtue of his appointment and Milner's concurrent absence in the latter months of 1898 meant that until February 1899, Butler was to serve as the Colony's acting High Commissioner. During his tenure, not only did Butler refuse to press the case of Thomas Edgar (an English settler shot dead in Transvaal), but he also took a dim view at the attempts of groups such as the South African League to exploit the issue.[747] On Milner's return to South Africa, and Butler's resumption of military duties, affairs deteriorated further. Given the litany of contrary (and indeed anti Imperial) acts and views expressed by William Francis Butler in the course of his career to this point, it is perhaps unsurprising that a rupture would quickly emerge between himself and Alfred Milner. Butler's unwillingness to be drawn into provocative military manoeuvres, his grim predictions about the numbers of troops that would be required to prosecute a war in South Africa and his earnest belief in the attempts to secure a peaceful resolution of disputes at the Bloemfontein Conference, all produced an unsustainable relationship with a High Commissioner seeking to provoke a conflict. Simultaneously, Butler faced more and more questions as to his loyalties from both the war office, Wolseley and the press in Britain.[748] Despite the threat of war apparently receding, Butler offered his resignation from the position on the 4th of July 1899. Back in London, reaction to Butler's departure was mixed. Whilst Henry Petty-Fitzmaurice, the Secretary for War, reacted with a calm decency, Garnet Wolseley was furious, writing to his brother;

> Between you and me strictly Butler, whom I selected for the Cape as the ablest man we have, has made an ass of himself. At heart he is an Irish rebel and took Orabi's part and the part of every enemy England has had in my time. [749]

Despite his fury, Wolseley arranged for Butler a new position as commander of the Western District.[750] A little over a month later the 2nd Boer War would erupt in South Africa, and

[746] *London Gazette*, 15th November 1898, p6694
[747] Ryan, *William Francis Butler*, pp175-177
[748] McCourt, *Remember Butler*, p231
[749] McCourt, *Remember Butler*, p232

Buller (another member of the Wolseley 'Ring'), not Butler, would be charged with prosecuting the war. This would prove to be the calm before the storm, as once news of Britain's early reverses in South Africa became known, Butler's circumstances began to diminish. Martin Ryan provides us with the multiple assaults Butler's character began to face; the Daily Mail castigated Butler for failing to prepare British forces in South Africa for the conflict, he began to receive anonymous letters conveying abominable sentiments, whilst the city fathers of Bristol deemed him 'the pro-Boer general' who might cause a disturbance if he were to attend a military procession attended by Queen Victoria.[751] Butler dutifully continued his duties as commander of the Western District, before temporarily assuming command of the Aldershot District, in the absence of Buller,[752] and had his temporary rank of Lieutenant-General made substantive in October.[753] He would hold this position for three months before resuming his former station in January 1901.[754] Butler maintained his position during the ascendancy of Lord Roberts as the new Commander in Chief, and even obtained two positions directing investigations into army provisioning. He also contributed to the postbellum inquiry surrounding the Boer War and attempted with some success to vindicate his decisions. William Francis Butler retired from the army on the 31st of October 1905 (his sixty seventh birthday) having reached retirement age.[755]

Butler would pursue his retirement with much of the same zeal and energy that had characterized his military career. He stood abortively for the Parliamentary seat of East Leeds, accepting the nomination of the Liberal party before withdrawing.[756] Nevertheless, he was recognized by the new Liberal administration by being made a Knight Grand Cross of the Order of the Bath in June 1906,[757] and was viewed sympathetically by both King and Queen.[758] In 1909 he was named a Privy Councillor for Ireland and in his retirement he remained a prolific public figure, addressing the Irish Catholic Truth Society, the Royal Hibernian Military Academy, commenting on proposals to construct a tunnel beneath the

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[750] *London Gazette*, 28th September 1899, p5814
[751] Ryan, *William Francis Butler*, pp188-191
[752] *London Gazette*, September 14th 1900, p5692
[753] *London Gazette*, 9th October 1900, p6183
[754] *London Gazette*, January 18th 1901, p396
[755] *London Gazette*, 7th November 1905, p7425
[756] Ryan, *William Francis Butler*, p209
[757] *London Gazette*, 26th June 1906, p4459
[758] Ryan, *William Francis Butler*, p198

English Channel, as well as writing for the London Tribune as well as serving as a commissioner on the National Education Board. In his final years he assembled his life's story into what would become *William Francis Butler*: *An Autobiography*. It would only be published posthumously, with William Francis dying on the 7th of June 1910, at the age of 71.

5.6: Prosopography

Collectively, these four men, 'The Rippling Rot, the Irish Rebel, the Royal Favourite and a Queer Looking Bloke', represented the highest levels of military status that Irish Catholics had achieved in British service since the Penal Laws. Curiously, they also emerged to high status at the same time Ireland's Catholic population was providing a smaller and smaller proportion of the rank and despite the Irish Catholic element in the officer corps remaining disproportionately small. In order to explain these men's relative success we must once more employ qualitative methods. By a close examination of these selected individuals it becomes possible to engage in comparative observations, noting what facets of their life were common and which were distinct. The assembled group of individuals is broadly comparable; all were born (if we exclude Martin Dillon) within three years of each other, all (except Dillon) were commissioned in 1858, and all retired and died within a few years of one another (excluding Cornelius Clery) within a four year period from 1910 to 1914. Furthermore, all four served within the line infantry or the staff corps of the British Army, and, naturally, all were Irish Catholic Generals in the British Army. Through an exercise of prosopography it is hoped that it will begin to be possible to explain the overarching trends behind their careers, what they shared with their fellow Irish Catholic officers and what they did not, ultimately in order to provide an answer to both their own advancement and the consequent languishing of most Irish Catholics at the lower echelons.

If we turn to consider the total number of Field Marshals, Generals, Lieutenant-Generals and Major-Generals at the end of the period in question, one cannot help but observe the paucity of Irish Catholics, regardless of the individual success of these men. Of 58 (non-honorary) Field Marshals and Generals and Lieutenant-Generals in 1899, there was not one Irish Catholic. Of 122 Major-Generals only three (Kelly-Kenny, Clery and Butler who had a local rank of Lieutenant-General) can be counted. Not dissimilar to their predecessors in the first half of the nineteenth century, these men remained exceptions rather than the vanguard of a

new cadre of Irish Catholic senior officers. By 1909, a decade later, those numbers would remain unchanged, with Irish Catholics once more numbering just three (Garrett O'Moore Creagh, Matthew James Tierney Ingram and Sir Bryan Mahon) out of 130 general officers.[759] One important distinction however, is that by this point, two of the three served as full Generals. Over the course of the First World War, Sir William Bernard Hickie and Edward Bulfin appear to be the only notable examples of Irish Catholics serving as generals, though rigorous examination might produce more examples.

Their apparent success however begs the question of how they, and by extension the religious and cultural group they represented, were placed within the structure of the Army. Naturally, as these men's careers traversed the abolition of advancement by purchase, it would be wise for us to recall briefly the distinctions in circumstance this created. Prior to the Royal Warrant of 1871, an officer with requisite funds, seniority and sufficient years of service, could purchase an advance in rank should a suitable vacancy arise. By contrast, promotion during the period after the abolition of purchase had many of the styles (if not forms) of merit surrounding it. Limited forms of examination were instituted for promotion to the ranks of Lieutenant and Captain, yet these were largely unchallenging or passable with the liberal use of cramming and rote learning.[760] Examination was also not competitive, and the practice was used merely to establish an officer's eligibility for advancement, rather than determine his skill relative to his peers. Merit was theoretically assessed by a bevy of confidential reports compiled in July, done regimentally and hierarchically, which was supposed to assess who would fill vacancies and secure advancement.[761] This state of affairs arose in the aftermath of the aforementioned abolition of purchase in 1871, despite the reservations of the Commander in Chief, the Duke of Cambridge, who protested that he could not be expected to adjudicate over more than six thousand confidential reports per year.[762] In many cases those reports would often include little more than indications as to whether an officer was liked by his

[759] Both 1899 and 1909 totals adjusted to ignore honorary foreign appointees
[760] Spiers, *The Late Victorian Army*, p108
[761] Erickson, A.B. (1959) 'Abolition of Purchase in the British Army' in *Military Affairs*, Vol. 23 No.2, p76
[762] Spiers, *The Late Victorian Army*, p109

peers, or possessed the necessary tact for advancement. [763] The Duke of Cambridge, as has been established previously, was not enthused by the various reforming efforts of Garnet Wolseley and others. As a result, for many of the decades of nominal promotion by merit, it might be more accurate to speak of a process of promotion by adulterated seniority – impacted upon by factors such as length of service, wealth, family background, military skill and patronage.

As such, in order to properly compare these men with their religious and national bedfellows, we must establish in broad terms, the characteristics which defined most general officers during the period, in order to discern what distinctions if any, emerged between these Irish Catholic generals and the wider body of general officers. If we turn to consider the foremost of these categories; that of length of service and seniority, it is possible to observe several discrepancies. The success of these four men was an aberration - in 1899 Butler, Clery and Kelly-Kenny ranked as Major-Generals on the Army list, 3 men out of 122. These men had each served 41 years under arms, comparing somewhat unfavourably with the average length of service amongst Major-Generals of just below 40 years.[764] Moreover, a cursory examination of the rank of Lieutenant-General demonstrates further incongruities; of the 37 Lieutenant-Generals on the staff in 1899, 17 had received their promotions to Colonel at the same time or after William Francis Butler in 1882. Another four had even reached the rank of Colonel in 1884, at the same time as Francis Clery. Whilst these discrepancies alone are only marginal – the fact that all three men appear to have suffered from of them is unusual.

The logical explanation for such a discrepancy would of course be that the men in question simply had not the military experience of those who obtained promotion in advance of them; however this does not appear to hold true. Whilst most of those officers who had reached the rank of Lieutenant-General did so with a body of military experience largely comparable to any Irish Catholic General officer, some managed to reach high rank without any apparent experience of combat at all, as in the case of Lieutenant-General Nathaniel Stevenson.

[763] See National Library of Ireland - Kilmainham Papers, Vol 309, *Copies of confidential reports on staff and regimental officers of the British Army in Ireland, preceded by summary chronological indexes noting destinataries*, 1880-84, p351
[764] Ascertained from statistical analysis of the 1899 Officers List

Others, such as John Plumptre Carr Glyn (another scion of the Wolseley Ring), first commissioned roughly the same time as Butler, reached the rank of Lieutenant-General despite having not seen active campaigning since the Anglo-Zulu War of 1879. By contrast only Martin Dillon appears to have achieved advancement in rank in advance of this average, becoming a Major-General after just 35 years of service. Yet even Dillon appears to have suffered disproportionately in his further advancement, reaching the rank of Lieutenant-General in 1887, despite the routine promotion of other officers several years his junior in length of service.

In the absence of a purely military explanation for the disproportionate position of the four men, it behoves us to consider other factors. Logically, the question of the men's respective backgrounds is the first issue which presents itself for examination, and provides both surprising and unsurprising details. Unsurprisingly, the family history of the men is reflective of the demographics which furnished the British Army with most of its officers; the landed or mercantile classes. Francis Clery (and indeed William Mackesy) clearly represents the latter grouping, and by his presence also gives evidence to the difficulty that Catholic Ireland had in providing men of that class who might opt for military service. Whilst the Penal Laws had left the occupations of Medicine open to Catholics and Emancipation had opened new venues such as the Law and Politics, the growth of a Catholic bourgeoisie was an ongoing process. As Maureen Wall writes in her 1958 piece 'The Rise of a Catholic Middle Class in Eighteenth Century Ireland' much of the newly established Catholic middle class was drawn from the formerly landed Catholic gentry.[765] Such individuals, seeking a new economic safe harbour in the middling classes, were not yet capable of sustaining the military careers of younger sons. Even by 1911, Irish Catholics would continue to exist as an under-represented element within the middle classes, only coming close to representing the religious demographics of the island in the most modest of middle class occupations such as teacher or journalist.[766] This is particularly borne out when we consider that William Henry Mackesy was of course not drawn from the Irish Catholic middle class but rather its Anglo-Irish counterpart. Thomas Dennehy also appears to have been drawn from a middle class background, born in Cork, educated in Paris and ultimately marrying a doctor's daughter. Clery by contrast, appears to have been drawn from a better endowed family of Catholic

[765] Wall, 'The Rise of a Catholic Middle Class in Eighteenth Century Ireland' , p104
[766] Boyce, *New Gill History of Ireland V: Nineteenth Century Ireland*, p266

middle class (certainly sufficient to afford several 'steps' by purchase), which continued to thrive in Cork in the absence of Cornelius Francis. The distinction between middle class and upper middle class may well be an underrated element in explaining the discrepancy of Irish Catholics in British service, where in Ireland the latter continued to be dominated by the Irish Protestant community.

William Francis Butler and Thomas Kelly-Kenny by comparison belonged to the class of lesser landholders. Martin Dillon also appears to have been born to a family with some landed assets to their name; however this has been difficult to identify specifically. Thomas Kelly-Kenny's rather unusual circumstances of inheriting an enormous landed estate worth just under one thousand pounds a year would have been a particular boon to a young officer. By contrast, the account of relative poverty conveyed by William Francis Butler and Martin Dillon's tenuous landed connection both intimate the difficulties in advancement the two men faced and consequently their slow promotion without purchase. More generally, the ability of Catholic Ireland to sustain landed families of sufficient wealth to afford military careers was not yet possible; by 1778 Catholics owned only five percent of the land of Ireland. This percentage would increase across the nineteenth century, including the movement of successful members of the mercantile elite into the landed gentry. By 1870 however, Catholics were thought to make up forty percent of all landlords - however this number does not convey the tendency of Catholic landowners to be found at the lower end of the scale in regards estate size and wealth.[767] By way of context, a mere 1.5% of landlords (or 302 individuals) owned roughly one third of Irish land.[768] In looking at this same grouping of 300 largest landowners, Fergus Campbell's recent study of major Irish landlords (those possessing estates in excess of 10,000 acres) in 1881, revealed just 7.5% to be Catholic in 1881.[769] Indeed, even by 1926, ownership of the largest class of farms (those in excess of 200

[767] Winstanley, M.J. (1984) *Ireland and the Land Question: 1800-1922*, London: Methuen, p11
[768] Ibid
[769] Campbell, *Irish Establishment*, p20 – Although Campbell could only identify the religious affiliation of 266 out of 291 individuals studied, projecting the existing figures onto the total would suggest at most roughly twenty-one Irish Catholic families belonging to this highest grouping.

acres) in what then constituted the Irish Free State was still 27.5% in the hands of non-Catholic ownerships, who themselves made up just 7.2% of all farmers.[770]

By contrast, of 80% of landlords controlled a little less than 20% of the land, or roughly 250 acres each.[771] If we employ the figures reached by W.E. Vaughan regarding the receipt of agricultural incomes in 1865, [772] suggesting a return to landlords of 14.7 million pounds per 19 million acres of agricultural land,[773] one is left with an average return of 15 shillings per acre per year. For an average holding of 250 acres, this suggests an annual income of just less than £190 pounds per year. For an infantry officer who might be expected to spend between £150 and £200 per year, the meagre yields of 250 acres of land in Ireland would be considerably taxing – this if before we consider the reality that such landlords were unlikely to be able to devote the entirety of their incomes to the upkeep of soldiering sons. Such inheritances frequently involved significant expenses of their own, ranging from family maintenance to estate improvement. Furthermore, the official remuneration for officers did not provide much incentive either; the Royal Warrant of 1870 denominated a 1st Lieutenant's pay as 6 shillings and 6 pence per day for officers serving in the line infantry, totalling just over two pounds per week or one hundred and twenty pounds a year.[774] By contrast, a Church Parson could expect an income of one hundred and forty pounds per year and would need not concern himself with the demands of maintaining the 'appropriate' lifestyle of an officers, nor 'fitting out' costs of new officers, let alone the price of purchasing any commissions. Securing a clerkship could provide a man of some education with even better financial prospects, a 2nd Class Clerkship paying between £300 and £500 per year – roughly twice the sum of an army Captain.[775] Given such circumstances, it is difficult to see how Catholic permeation of the lowest echelons of the landed class could be said to provide it with any improved means for furnishing the officer class.

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[770] O Gráda, C. (2004) 'Irish Agriculture after the Land War', *Centre for Economic Research: Working Paper Series,* April 2004, UCD, Table 6.3
[771] Winstanley, *Ireland and the Land Question, p11*
[772] Vaughan, W.E. (1994) *Landlords & Tenants in Mid-Victorian Ireland,* Oxford: Clarendon Press, p8 Table 1
[773] Guinnane, T. & Miller, R. (1997) 'The Limits to Land Reform in Ireland, 1870-1909' in *Economic Development and Cultural Change,* Vol. 45 No. 3 (April), p595
[774] Royal Warrant for the Pay and Promotion, Non-Effective Pay, and Allowances of Her Majesty's British Forces service elsewhere than in India – Dated 27th December 1870
[775] Harries-Jenkins, *The Army in Victorian Society*, p87

More broadly, we must consider the implications of increased Catholic landownership more deeply than just the overall percentage of land owned. If we examine the Land Acts of the later nineteenth century, one cannot ignore the tendency of such laws to propagate a distribution of existing estates, rather than the transfer of landed power from a largely Anglo-Irish Protestant elite to an Irish-Catholic one. Indeed, Thomas Kelly-Kenny was in later years a participant in this process, seeing his estates broken up in 1909. The emergence of a new norm of tenant farmer in the countryside may have redressed economic and political grievances, but could provide little in the way of men fit to enter the British officer class. The significance of this last point cannot be overstated, as across the period in question the British Army drew roughly half its officers from this landed class, ranging from 53% of the officer corps in 1830s to the still imposing figure of 41% in 1912.[776] Given these facts, it is less difficult to understand how Catholic Ireland would have struggled to provide officers of a landed background.

One benefit which all the men appeared to have benefitted from, with the possible exception of Clery, is the possession of a family connection with the military service. Whereas Dillon, Butler and Kelly-Kenny all had immediate family members with some military experience (and consequently a network of connections and contacts), many of the other men reference at the outset of this section also benefitted from such connections, including Garrett O'Moore Creagh whose father was a Royal Navy Captain, Thaddeus Richard Ryan whose father in law was a Captain in the East India Company, and J.P. Redmond whose father was a patron of the Militia and grand-father one of the few Catholic members of the Wexford Yeomanry that aided the suppression of the 1798 rebellion.[777]

This is also a common thread with the men we have chosen for closer examination; William Butler, despite his father's misgivings, had the benefit of an uncle who had undertaken a military career and ensured he was aware of the difficulties he would face in securing advancement. Meanwhile, much of Martin Dillon's early life appears to have been formed in part around the different postings of his officer father, Captain Andrew Dillon. On the other

[776] Razzell, 'Social Origins of Officers in the Indian and British Home Army', p248
[777] McConnel, J. (2013) 'A Soldier of the Queen: General J.P. Redmond' in *History Ireland*, Vol. 21 No. 6 (November/December)

hand, Thomas Kelly-Kenny benefitted the connections and largess of two martial uncles, particularly that of Mathias Kenny. It is relevant to note that Mathias Kenny's service was not as a command officer but as a regimental surgeon; examination of officer lists during the earlier decades of the nineteenth century suggests that this type of service was a common means for Catholics to enter the officer corps, most likely to the existence of the medical professional as one of the few middle class fields of occupation not closed to Catholics under the Penal Laws.

Only Francis Clery appears to have been without a family tradition of military service, however it remains eminently plausible that his father James, would have developed no small number of contacts in the military service, in the course of his duties as a 'wine and gunpowder' merchant (one of the few other fields not closed to Catholics during the Penal period). Nevertheless, in all the cases listed, it would appear crucial to the officers in question, that they possess at least some manner of family military experience or connection, most likely for the purposes of overcoming the initial difficulty of obtaining entry to a profession still marked by social prejudices.

Whilst traversing the issue of these men's family background in upbringing, it would also be wise to consider what schooling they benefited from. It is noteworthy that none of the men under examination attended a formal military training institution prior to their commissioning. Whilst this was not especially unusual for British Army officers of the mid-Victorian period, we should recall that all of the officers (with the exception of Dillon who cannot be confirmed) boasted attendance at some manner of second level educational institute and do not appear to have suffered in their career for the fact that these institutions tended to be run by the Jesuit Order. Whether the choice of such educational establishments was motivated by cost, (running to perhaps £125 per annum by the 1880s at Sandhurst) by a desire to see a child obtain a 'Catholic' education or by some other factor, remains to be seen. In all cases the most elementary point we must keep in mind is that admission to the officer corps was delineated by *some* form of higher education (in Great Britain this was usually associated with the system of Public Schools). And once more we must bear in mind the difficulties faced by Catholic Ireland in providing a body of population capable of paying not just for a potential officers' education, but in supporting him through the early years of his

career. Given such difficulties, the discovery by Edward Spiers of only five Catholics in the eight Guards Battalions of the British Army (those most elite and expensive units of the Army) during the 1855-67 period, is by no means surprising.[778]

Lastly, we ought to determine if it was perhaps simply the issue of outstanding skill which distinguished these officers from their fellow Irish Catholics, by turning once more to look at their military careers. We must be careful of course not to simply view this from the perspective of battles won or campaigns fought – in the wider world of military endeavour, front line command is simply one element among men, whilst in the British Army of the Victorian era, campaigns could be waged not just on the Imperial frontier but in the officers mess and the domain of public celebrity.

The most obvious supposition would be that all men possessed an exceptional level of skill which permitted their advancement, though we might debate over what extent skill as a junior officer correlated with the skills required by a general officer. As elucidated previously, all four men who reached the rank of general officer did so with a considerable body of military experience under their belt. Al boasted some experience of campaigning, though in the case of Butler and Clery this was deferred for some years; Dillion served in the Indian Mutiny and beyond, Butler in Canada, Western and Southern Africa as well as Egypt, Clery in South Africa, Egypt and Sudan, whilst Kelly-Kenny fought in China, Abyssinia and South Africa. All served on (ultimately) successful campaigns (with Clery lucky to escape notoriety for his involvement in the debacle at Isandlwana) and all punctuated these campaigns with a body of staff work. However, these accomplishments in and of themselves do not explain the success of these men; clearly they were not the only Irish Catholic officers to serve on campaign, as men like Andrew Browne and Maurice Moore attest to, yet neither of these men reached the rank of general officer. By comparison, as mentioned above, it was possible for officers of no combat experience, to proceed up the ranks with greater alacrity than any of these men. Was military skill then a necessity but not a guarantor of advancement for Irish Catholic officers?

[778] Spiers, *The Army and Society*, p298

In addition to this measure of military acumen, perhaps of more significance was the ability of all four, during in their prosecution of low level campaigns, to attract the interest of patrons and superiors who could provide tracks for further advancement. Butler, Kelly-Kenny and Dillon all made plain their use as logisticians, orchestrating campaigns in Africa, Ethiopia and India respectively. In-fact it would be staff work and administration that would come to define their careers, rather than a glory on the front-lines. Butler remained primarily at the rear during his first tour in Egypt, Kelly-Kenny and Clery only commanded front-line units at the end of their careers whilst Dillion would never have the privilege of doing so (in Dillon's case at least not in wartime). Broadly characterized, this cadre of Irish Catholic officers spent much of their careers in administrative and support position which might involve combat, rather than being employed as commanders of combat units.

On further examination, one cannot help but notice that all four men in addition to boasting a body of considerable combat experience also boasted patrons of varying degrees of influence. This may well have been a product of a conscious effort at forging personal relationships with superior officers as a means of advancement. In any case it certainly appears to be something which distinguishes these men from their less successful fellows. The most successful such man, Martin Dillon, (perhaps owing to a lack of reforming zeal) attracted the patronage of the Duke of Cambridge and impressed Lord Roberts. Butler whilst serving in Canada clumsily but determinedly cultivated a connection with Garnet Wolseley; this choice of patron is particularly curious given Wolseley's sometimes fiery invective against the Irish;

> They are a strange, illogical, inaccurate race, with most amiable qualities, garnished with the dirty and squalor which they seem to love as dearly as their religion […] with noses so cut away that you can see where their brains should be.[779]

Even Francis Clery, both through his connection to Redvers Buller appears to have operated on the outskirts of the Wolseley Ring, whilst Thomas-Kelly Kenny (and Butler to a lesser

[779] Ryan, *William Francis Butler*, p23

degree) boasted a sufficiently strong relationship with Edward the VII that he was able to persist in his position as Adjutant-General to the forces in the early years of the 1900s, despite the opposition of the now ascendant Lord Roberts.

However this apparent aptitude for securing appropriate patrons does not appear to have presented itself in isolation – all four men displayed a notable proclivity for marking a stir in the course of their careers; Butler achieved fame not just for his service but due to a healthy penchant for publishing, Dillon achieved preferment through early distinction in India, Cornelius Francis Clery made his mark early in his career as a tactician and educator (literally writing the book on tactics for the next quarter century) whilst Thomas Kelly-Kenny advanced rapidly through the purchase system while it endured. One might suspect that such energetic displays reflected a determination amongst the men to advance regardless of what disadvantages they faced.

5.7 Conclusion

In examining the implications of these collective factors on the advancement of the four men, it is striking to note that all four men appeared to labour under not just the disadvantage of their faith but also of difficulties than any officer might find troublesome to surmount; Dillon does not appear to have been possessed of the financial resources required (perhaps occasioning his service in India), Butler similarly makes plain his early financial struggles, Clery appears to have entered the military service a scion of the middle class without any verifiable military connection whilst Kelly-Kenny appears, in spite of his later inheritance, to have been drawn from that same class. In addition to this, all four laboured under the burden of practising the Catholic faith in a military class which, as observed in section four, still possessed some of the prejudices which would have in the previous century precluded the men from military office outright. Nevertheless, all four men achieved what most of their peers in the officer corps would not, becoming General officers of various statures, albeit taking slightly longer to do so than their peers.

In terms of wealth, it is interesting to note that whilst Kelly-Kenny and Clery came from fairly wealthy backgrounds, the former rose higher than the latter, with Clery not exceeding the rank of Major-General whereas Kelly-Kenny became a full General. The distinction of the two men was of course whilst Kelly-Kenny (eventually) drew from landed wealth, Clery's family fortune was that of the middle-class merchant. Similarly, Martin Dillon was drawn from the lesser landed gentry and though lacking the wealth of Clery, nevertheless managed to parlay his position to that of full General also. Even William Butler, who despite the acrimonious end to his career reached the rank of Lieutenant-General, was a bona-fide member of the landed gentry, certainly more so than Dillon. Once again, this is not a novel conclusion as the continued importance of the landed gentry in providing the upper echelons of the British Army's officer corps during this period has been well documented. Nevertheless, the differences in success strongly suggest that for Irish Catholics, possession of landed wealth was an almost essential element in doing well as a general officer, and highly desirable if merely seeking to enter that class.

In a very similar vein stands the question of family connection; it is unsurprising that, once three of the four men boasted military connections within their family, whereas in the case of Clery we can only infer a work related relationship. The precise nature of this relationship does not actually appear to have impacted on the future of the officers very much and seems primarily to have been valuable in getting an officer an entry to the officer corps. Whilst Butler could boast a Major within his family, Dillion's own father was a Major, and Kelly-Kenny had two uncles in the service, none of the men appear to have obtained particularly enviable first postings as a result of these connections, let alone further advancement. Nor does the absence of a family connection appear to have hindered Clery in contributing enormously to the army's training and education. The family connections, rather than background, were not of decisive importance.

In terms of military service, naturally the most obvious variable to consider is the military skill of the men, both on the battlefield and off it. As established previously, all four men had active military careers, ranging from Dillon's early displays of gallantry and later administrative acumen (and special competence in logistics and transport, understated but necessary skills, seem to be common to most of the Irish Catholic generals) to Butler's

apparent ubiquity across the American and African continents). On balance, the experience of the four men was easily the equal of most of their fellow Generals and in some cases, far in excess of some of them. Nevertheless, with the possible exception of Clery, one cannot reasonably assume this to be a decisive factor in their advancement – they were experienced officers, but not so dramatically more so than their fellow officers as to merit promotion by that right alone; such experience was (normally) a prerequisite of obtaining senior command, not a guarantee of it. Clery may well be the exception to this case, being not just experienced on campaigns but also having made those aforementioned contributions to army training.

However, one cannot help but note that the route of advancement which all four men held in common; namely as staff officers rather than regimental ones – the one exception to this might be Thomas Kelly-Kenny did however hold a battalion command in the 2nd Regiment for four years, but did not see active service with the 2nd since the 1860s. Although this was by no means an unusual method for an officer to advance into the body of general officers, it is striking that not one of the of the Irish Catholic generals under examination reached high rank through regimental command, a path taken by officers such as Charles Henry Brownlow or Andrew Gilbert Wauchope. Whether this reflects an inability of Irish Catholics to do well within regiments (which the success of Maurice Moore and Andrew Browne would belie) or a similar paucity of Irish Catholics in regimental commands deserving of promotion, remains unclear.

That leaves us to consider the question of patronage; we must at this point be careful not to regard this as somehow grubby or improper, as this study has had as its objective the question of how Irish Catholics faired relatively *within* the British Army, with all the peculiarities and oddities which that military force featured in the nineteenth century. In this one sphere, all four men appear to have possessed sufficiently powerful patrons as to render any possible disadvantage of faith eminently surmountable. It was these connections, Dillon with the Duke of Cambridge, Butler and Clery (the latter to a lesser degree) with Garnet Wolseley, and Kelly-Kenny with the Royal Family, which provided these men with a means for advancement and opportunity. Such patronage could provide great means of advancement, but was no guarantee of an officer's ascendency as Butler and indeed Redvers Buller would discover. When we consider the power that these patrons held, the Duke of Cambridge as

Commander in Chief for several decades in the latter half of the nineteenth century, Wolseley as one of the army's two great minds during the same period, and the Royal Family's intimate involvement with the pageantry of government, it is perhaps not surprising that men benefitting from such patronage would be able to overcome any religious or ethnic stigma.

Ultimately it is perhaps wisest to attribute the eventual success of these four men, (and consequently the failure of so many like them) to the combination of these factors. Certainly, it is difficult to imagine any of these men rising quite so high without each possessing the abilities and facing the circumstances that they did. Whilst background and wealth permitted them to be officers, talent and skill permitted them to perform sufficiently well to attract the patronage required to become Catholic Ireland's most senior members of the British Army. Having broadly charted this path by which so few could do so well, it now becomes possible to consider in a wider sense, the overall nature of the Irish Catholic element in the officer corps during this period.

Section 6: Conclusion

6.1: Conclusion

At this point, it is possible to begin providing an overall characterisation of Irish Catholic service in the British officer corps during this period, having learned just how many Irish Catholic officers there were and explored how they were regarded by their fellow officers. With the remove of formal barriers, we were left with a question, specifically; what did it take for an Irish Catholic to advance within the officer corps? A collective biography of four of the most successful Irish Catholic officers has suggested some answers. If we return to the initial questions posed at the outset of this study we are now better placed to provide answers. This study began by remembering that Irish Catholic service in the British Army during the Victorian era occurred within a dichotomy of Irish Catholics as rankers with Irish Protestants over represented as officers. Additionally, Irish Catholics occupied an ambiguous position as subordinates within the Imperial mission or at any rate as the 'shock troops' of that project.

As noted in Section Two, the practice of excluding Catholics from both political office and military service was a long-standing one in the English political establishment. The strict prohibitions set forth on Irish Catholic military service at the start of the eighteenth century represented a clear continuation of policies germinating during the 'Glorious Revolution' of 1688. The vision of Catholics as potentially dangerous, subversive and even treasonous, is clearly enunciated in the legislation of the period. Such protestations might strike the modern observer as paranoid expressions, yet we must recall that at the time of their institution, the reign of James II was well within living memory and provided the proponents of such measures with ample evidence for their value. The recurrence of the Jacobite threat at various points during the first half of the eighteenth century appears to have been the prima facia justification for the maintenance of the prohibition on Catholics serving in any military position during the period, though there were a significant number serving during the War of Spanish Succession. Nevertheless, as with any legislative effort, the very institution of prohibitions arose in reaction to a continuing record of desertion from British to French service by covertly enlisted Catholics, underpinned by a trickle of discharges for discovered 'Papists' with British regiments.

Only during the periodic Jacobite military forays into Great Britain does it appear that the laws in question were imposed most stringently, with varying degrees of tacit acceptance during more peaceful times. Yet, notwithstanding such times, this period clearly represents the nadir of Irish Catholic fortunes within the British realms. Although this examination has been primarily concerned with the details of such exclusion in the realm of military affairs, Penal legislation also famously extended to several realms of public employment from the holding of elected office to the practice of the law. In addition to these, it is also possible to speak of the Established Church as yet another form of middle class employment naturally closed to the Catholic population. All of this must be considered in addition to the enormous transfers in land ownership which preceded and accompanied the Penal period. The Penal legacy would cast a long shadow.

The bifurcated origins of military officers between those of the various landed classes and those of the professional classes, is one of the more commonly known details of the British Army in the Victorian era. When we consider the historical legacy that resulted in measurable lack of Irish Catholic landownership by 1830 and underperformance in certain professional spheres, we can begin to explain the disparity in contribution. However, we must also be careful to acknowledge the impact of legislative punishment on not just damaging the prospects of Irish Catholics during their period of enactment, but also their lasting impact. This is of course not to say that there was no Catholic landed class or middle class in Ireland either during the Penal period or afterwards, but rather that one can draw a strong correlation between the damage done to those classes in previous decades with the relative weakness of Irish Catholic presence in the officer corps in later decades.

This becomes evident when we turn to consider the backgrounds of those Irish Catholics who did become officers and who do reasonably well as such; those who come from what would be categorized as a landed background tend to be from the most marginal lands of the country far from the centres of power. Most of the Irish Catholic officers (including the four most senior) examined in this study (of a landed background) hail from Connacht and Munster and appear to be drawn from families that had long roots in those same regions. A less common factor amongst these families but one still worthy of note, is the presence of Protestant converts amongst their ranks; this should not be regarded as especially unusual as collusive

conversion was one method amongst many employed by Irish Catholics to circumvent the legislation of the Penal era. Although one might be tempted to regard this simply as the hallmark of those Catholic families that succeeded in retaining their lands, the possibility of such familial scions acting as a bridge between the Army and a new body of potential officers should not be discounted.

Similarly, if we turn to the body of men furnished by the middle classes, there are several recurrent themes. As with their counterparts in the landed classes, middle class Irish Catholics who entered the British Army during the period 1829-99 tended to be from the provincial centres of Cork, Limerick and Galway, rather than the Dublin metropole. This is perhaps a less unexpected development if we recall that many of the occupations that might have otherwise attracted a large Catholic middle class to Dublin such as political representation, the law or the Established Church, remained closed until the period of Catholic Emancipation (or in the case of the Church, permanently closed). The latter point might not immediately appear to bear any relevance to the question of officers, yet a number of the men in this study with 'Irish' names, determined not to be Irish Catholics, were in fact the sons of Anglican Clergymen, whilst one – Harry George Adams Connor – was the son of no less than the Dean of Windsor (as well as a Royal Favourite of Queen Victoria). However, whilst the Anglican clergy might yield famous sons ranging from Lord Nelson to Baden-Powell, for Irish Catholics this was simply another precluded possibility.

Moreover, the absence of large-scale industrialization outside of Ulster precluded yet more opportunities for the swelling of a large Irish Catholic middle class. Instead, the aforementioned provincial centres provided what officers it could to the officer corps, typically from families of merchants, bankers or physicians. The latter category is of particular interest as one of the bridges by which Irish Catholics could enter into army service; from an examination of the officer lists in the decades under study and in preceding decades, one cannot help but observe the significant number of Irish names occupying the positions of Regimental Surgeon or Assistant Regimental Surgeon. As one of the few middle class professions which remained open to Catholics during the Penal period, such technical positions (which unlike most officer positions required a level of training and competency) would have provided an ideal venue from which Irish Catholics could enter military service,

and where some, like Matthias Kenny could do quite well. Consequently, it is not unusual to find Irish Catholic officers who boasted fathers or grandfathers who had previously served as surgeons, men such as George Cuthbert Digan whose father Patrick had risen as a navy surgeon. Other men such as Charles Peter Costello or James Albert Cleary managed to parlay their medical service into military careers for their sons. Even by 1900, Irish and Catholic doctors would continue to make up a significant proportion of the Royal Army Medical Corps annual intake, as Steven O'Connor notes, 30 of 140 Clongowes graduates who took commissions during the First World War, did so as doctors.[780]

Lastly, if we turn back to considering the origins of all officers, be they of the landed gentry or the middle class, there remains a question of family tradition. Having examined hundreds of officers during the period 1829 to 1899, one cannot help but notice several key trends amongst army officers which would have worked to the disadvantage of any Irish Catholics looking to follow in their footsteps. The first of these is the recurring presence of a military 'family tradition' amongst officers of all religious stripes; it is by no means unusual to find that an officer's sons will in time become officers themselves, albeit not necessarily following the same regiment or even branch of service. The two rival figures of the fin de siècle British Army – Garnet Wolseley and Frederick Roberts – were both officers' sons as were Lord Robert's sons after him. The four most successful Irish Catholic generals during this period were with one exception, had a family connection to the service whilst Clery is highly likely to have benefitted from a commercial one. However it is precisely this manner of family tradition which was thoroughly difficult to sustain during the Penal era. Meanwhile many of those Irish Catholic families who built the greatest martial traditions, such as Lally, Browne, Nugent, Lacy and O'Donnell, were obliged to depart Ireland permanently in order to do so. The significance of the relationship of military tradition with landed wealth need not be repeated here, but the role of the Penal period in not only destroying the economic underpinning of most of Catholic Ireland's officer class, but also precipitating their mass exodus should be. It is the destruction of this class (or rather its reduction to a small cadre of officers who could seek service on the continent and then return home) which is perhaps the largest single explanation for the paucity of Irish Catholic officers in the Victorian period –

[780] O'Connor, *Irish Officers in the British Forces,* p87

however this is not an entirely satisfactory answer as by the close of the nineteenth century Irish Catholics remained considerably under-represented as officers.

The recruitment of Irish Catholics for service abroad as both officers and rankers continued apace until 1745, the year of yet another failed Jacobite Invasion and the triumph of the Irish Brigade at Fontenoy. Following these events, conscious efforts on the part of the British government aimed at both stopping the flow of Irish Catholics to the continental armies as well as opening the doors of the British rank and file to suitable Protestant Irishmen. Although Catholics remained disbarred from the officer ranks, this change marks the beginning of the shift of Catholic Ireland from continental into British service. This process was nevertheless a slow and tedious one, occasioned only by the dramatic events of the French Revolution, which would culminate in the advance of the Repeal Bill in 1793 and latterly with the passage of Catholic Emancipation in 1829. Yet, in spite of any reversal of legislative prohibition, the damage done during the eighteenth century could not and would not be quickly undone in the nineteenth, as evidenced readily by the statistical findings of Section Three – in effect, the end of this prohibition was necessary for any increase in the representation of Irish Catholic officers; it was not a guarantor of it.

At a glance, transition in the status of Irish Catholic officers over the whole period is marked. In 1829 there had been a solitary Irish Catholic general of note over the preceding decades, Sir Henry Sheehy Keating, who had risen to high rank during one of the forgotten campaigns of the Napoleonic Wars. By contrast, at the height of the South African War in 1899, two of the British Army's eight infantry divisions in the field were commanded by Irish Catholics (Francis Clery and Thomas Kelly-Kenny) whilst several Irish Catholic officers had made a mark in royal circles and public life with their writings and exploits. This would appear to contradict the model considered at the start of this study, which postulated a largely Anglo-Irish officer class and Catholic-Irish rank and file defining the Irish contribution to the British Army.

Yet the results of a more scrupulous and detailed analysis of the sampled regiments as well as the overall returns during this period throw doubt on this assertion of Irish Catholic success.

From 1829 to 1859 the proportion of officers in the British Army of Irish extraction remained roughly constant at 25% - yet during this same period the proportion of Catholics (of all nationalities) serving as officers languished at just 1.84% in 1829 and 4.23% in 1865. Projections based on the regiments sampled suggest a similar percentage (definitively Irish Catholic as distinct from all Catholic) persisted until 1899 and did not in-fact continue to swell upwards as it had in previous decades, and may have in fact stagnated. However, given the ongoing migration of Catholics from Ireland to Britain during this same period, it remains highly plausible that the number of Catholic officers (as distinct from specifically Irish Catholic) continued to increase.

Although this may appear to represent a surprising failure to progress, we must recall that this contribution largely persisted in size at a time when the Irish proportion of both the British Army and the United Kingdom was falling from roughly one third to one tenth, with the proportion of those being Irish Catholics being just three quarters of that number. In light of such developments, the fact that the proportion of army officers who were Irish Catholics managed to maintain and possibly increase slightly, is in and of itself quite remarkable. This fact however, may well be bounded by the reality that from the start of the century, Irish Catholics were starting at a very low proportion of the officer corps, so much so that one might be led to conclude that their numbers had nowhere to go but up. By contrast, the Anglo-Irish population, which has attracted comparisons to Prussia's east-Elbe 'Junker' class, provided and continued to provide throughout the period, the lion's share of Ireland's officers. If we take the total proportion of Irish officers within the Army as 25%, the number of Irish Catholics appears to go from being one tenth of the total in 1829 to not quite one fifth of the total in 1899. Certainly when one considers the difficulty involved in locating Irish Catholic officers within the British Army, their Anglo-Irish compatriots are comparatively common and have enjoyed far greater recognition and renown to this day. Such comparative figures make it rather difficult to assail the assumption proffered at the outset of this study, that Irish service in the Victorian Army was representative of the class divide between Irish Catholic rankers and Irish Protestant officers.

Delving more deeply into the statistical data we have available illuminates the matter considerably; from the detailed figures of 1829 it seems quite clear that not only was there a

paucity of Irish Catholics serving as officers, but even in those regiments where Irish Catholics made up the bulk of the rank and file, the numbers, even of non-commissioned officers, were still quite strikingly skewed in favour of the Anglo-Irish population. If we examine once more the case of the 88th Regiment (Connaught Rangers) in 1829, a unit made up of three quarters Irish Catholics, it is striking that of 42 sergeants, only 18 are Catholic. A similar pattern repeats itself across the other units with a significant Irish presence. One is forced to conclude that much of the same disadvantages which accrued to Irish Catholic officers in 1829, expanded to include their non-commissioned peers as well.

Nevertheless, an abstract view of the figures taken without context cannot provide a full picture of the developments over the course of the Victorian era. Delving more deeply into the statistical data one can find more positive indications for the state of the Irish contribution to the British officer corps. At regimental level a considerable amount of progress is evident; in 1829 we can count one quartermaster, one ensign and a captain amongst the sampled regiments, by 1899 that figure had risen to include four quartermasters, three second lieutenants (comparable to ensigns), one first lieutenant, a captain and a major. The association of Irish Catholics with the 'Q' branch, what we would now call support and logistics, is indeed interesting, and reflects – in part – the disproportionate number of Irish Catholic officers who were ex-rankers and who had the necessary experience for this vital (if unglamorous) rank. Concerning ourselves with the rank and file again, there is also clear demonstration of an upward trend; in 1829 the proportion of Irish Catholics in the rank and file was perhaps fifteen times the proportion of Irish Catholics in the officer corps. By 1859 this proportion had fallen to perhaps eight times whilst at the close of our period that number ranged from 'just' two to three times what their numbers in the rank and file would suggest. Thus whilst the continued small numbers of Irish Catholics officers in the British Army on the eve of the Boer War might appear to give the impression of a little change, it would be more accurate to describe the situation as a significant if painfully slow improvement.

Ultimately, the assessment of how Irish Catholics performed statistically in this period is one which will depend upon the reader, yet a fair assessment might be to assert that in a difficult historical terrain their status underwent a significant improvement.

Although this may seem a modest development, if placed within the broader context of the attitudes which Irish Catholics faced during this period, we can reveal a far more nuanced understanding of how significant this level of change was. In many respects, the attitudes enunciated in the nineteenth century were a continuation and more sophisticated vision of many of the same principles that had underpinned the legislation of the Penal Era. The notion of Catholicism (and Irish Catholics) as representing a serious danger to the integrity of the state readily reflects many of the attitudes percolating in the early eighteenth century. However, by the time of the period under examination, the terms of that debate had shifted from the mere prospect of admitting Catholics to political and military office (which had been forestalled under the reign of George III) to determining the nature and disposition by which those same Catholic subjects should be admitted to high office. This lingering sense of concern over the potential loyalty (or rather disloyalty) of Irish Catholics (as well as other Catholics) is recurrent in attitudes expressed high and low. Through the pages of the United Service Journal we have observed the type of suspicion occasioned by the spectre of Catholicism, particularly in the 1830s, 40s and 50s, and the concurrent sense of a need to take steps to ward off the potential danger by anything from spiritual education to wrenching soldiers from Catholic services should they begin to take on an unseemly tone.

The rise of such fears and perceived dangers might be in one assessment seen as little more than a continuation of the anxieties that had been imbued in the national spirit since the days of the Spanish Armada and the Gunpowder Plot. Yet, a more careful reading would suggest that, although such a spirit did play a role and that there was a potent strain of anti-Catholicism expressed in certain quarters of British society during this period, primarily the expressions of this nature that we can observe coming from the officer corps in the *United Service Journal*, represented more of a short term reaction to certain incidents. Events such as Catholic Emancipation, the return of the Catholic hierarchy and to a lesser extent the act of disestablishing the Church of Ireland; all appear to serve as the focal points for occasional upturns in the output of material concerned with the potential disloyalty of Irish Catholics. Consequently, with the passage of time, such interest clearly becomes increasingly muted and placid, so much so that by the time of disestablishment in 1871, one could venture to characterise the reaction of officers in *The United Service Journal* as bordering on apathetic. If we compare these developments in 1870s Britain, with the concurrent status of Catholics in

the newly unified German state or with the position of French Jews in later decades, Irish Catholics were comparatively worse off than either of their continental analogues.

We should be careful however, not to infer from such relatively better treatment, that Irish Catholics within the Army's officer corps were by the 1870s seen as being no different than any other officer. From the attitudes we have observed it certainly appears that Irish Catholics occupied a space in the minds of the British officer corps which retained a distinctive 'other-ness' even after the more paranoid fears about Catholic conspiracies began to erode. The Catholic Church would continue to be regarded in military circles as a backward institution, responsible for much of the retrograde state of Europe and a particular enemy of British Protestants. Despite half a century of Catholic Emancipation, in the realm of officialdom, attitudes developed at a slow pace. The appointment as Indian Viceroy of an English Catholic (to say nothing of an Irish one) was even in the 1880s, regarded as an experimental endeavour for a Liberal government. Such attitudes boded poorly when married with still potent conceptions of a distinctive 'Irish' or 'Celtic' blood. This sense of imagined 'quarrelsomeness' or violent irascibility may well have proved an asset to Irish members of the rank and file. Indeed one cannot help but draw comparison to the function of Irish (and indeed Scottish) recruits in British service as those groups identified as 'martial races' in British India.[781] However, for Irish Catholics seeking commissions and promotions as officers such stereotypes provided little advantage. Indeed some eschewed their purported 'Celtic-ness' in favour of a supposed 'Anglo-Saxon' heritage. Nevertheless, as with other instances of the Imperial Frontier, the Irish or Celtic blood of these officers ensured that in the far flung territories they remained on the correct side of the racial or colour divide. It is interesting to note that the route for advancement taken by the most successful Irish Catholic officers invariably involved service on these same Imperial frontiers, where peculiarities of race and Christianity were dwarfed by the enormous chasms formed between European and Native. By contrast, in the metropole, the waking giant of Irish nationalism would begin to create a new breach between the Irish middle classes and military service.

[781] Streets, *Martial Races*, p168

It may well be this new landscape of the Imperial frontier which stands the most ripe for further historiographical examination of the topic; certainly the question of how Irish Catholics fared in East Indian service from the period of the 1750s to 1860s looms large as an area of inquiry. If we return to consider the initial questions posed at this study once more, one cannot help but conclude that the vision of bifurcated service (Anglo Irish Officers versus Catholic Irish rankers) remains substantially true, but certainly not wholly so. In one respect this would place the findings of this study largely in line with the findings of McBride and Campbell – which is to say a 'greening' but not a particularly dramatic one. Indeed if one categorizes the lower echelons of public service with rank and file, the middling ones with regimental officers and the senior echelons with the body of general officers, a striking similarity is evident. Whilst it seems perfectly plausible that Irish Catholics might earn a living in the lower echelon and with the right birth and talent carve out a career in the middle, by and large the ranks of general officer remained as closed as the most senior of civil servant positions. Nevertheless, this may well stand to represent a greater presence than has previously been acknowledged within scholarship as well as popular perceptions of the period. At a time when the entire question of empire, its creation, its conduct, its legacy, continue to be hotly debated by scholars, the discovery of this small but discrete contribution on the part of Catholic Ireland, may well pose significant questions as to the vision of Ireland's place within that same, deeply contested, debate.

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