

The Reverend William Henry and the idea of ‘improvement’ in the eighteenth-century Ireland

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There is no dispute that Lafcadio Hearn (Yakumo Koizumi, 1850-1904) has been highly regarded as one of the earliest Japanologists. And he has been probably the most popular one among the Japanese. So much so a contemporary of Hearn once said, ‘the denunciation of Hearn is at the same time a denunciation of Japan’¹⁾. However, his ancestry in Ireland has always been a matter of dispute. His paternal family clearly belonged to the ruling Protestant class in Ireland, which is now known as the Protestant Ascendancy. Lafcadio’s father, Charles Bush (1818-66) was a British Army surgeon, grandfather Daniel James (1768-1837) was a Lieutenant Colonel of the British Army and later became a justice of peace and a high sheriff of county Westmeath in Ireland. Great-grandfather Robert Thomas (1748-92) was a Lieutenant of the British Army and his father, Daniel Hearn (1693-1766) was a clergyman of the Anglican Church in Ireland, the Church of Ireland. With the exception of Robert Thomas, they were all graduates of the Trinity College Dublin, which was a bastion of the Protestant population in Ireland since its foundation in 1592. Their choices of occupations also seem to have been the typical ones of the Protestants in Ireland of those days.

Generally, those who belonged to the ruling Protestant class had their origins in England. They were the descendants of those who moved mainly from England from later sixteenth century onwards. It is easy to assume then that the Hearn family came from England at some point. However, there is no document found so far that tells us anything about the background of the Reverend Daniel Hearn, who is thought to be the starting point of the Hearn family in Ireland. We do not know whether he came from England or he was born in Ireland. And this has allowed numerous speculations about the origins of the Hearn family to emerge. Some of the early biographies of Lafcadio Hearn have claimed that the Hearn family came from Somersetshire or Northumberland in

¹⁾ Yoné Noguchi, *Lafcadio Hearn in Japan*, (New York, Kennerly, 1911), p.20.

England²⁾. Others have speculated that a person called 'Sir Hugh de Heron' of Castle Ford, Northumberland, was the direct ancestor of the Hearn³⁾ and they came to Ireland with the Duke of Dorset, Lionel Sackville, when he became the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland⁴⁾.

As I have argued elsewhere, these claims should be dismissed. As for 'Sir Hugh de Heron', I have found out that he is a fictitious character, not a real person. Then he cannot be anyone's ancestor. 'Sir Hugh de Heron' appears in Walter Scott's *Marmion: A Tale of Flodden Field* (1808), which depicts the Battle of the Flodden Field (1513). This battle was fought between the English and the Scottish, and Walter Scott created the character 'Sir Hugh de Heron' out of a man who actually fought in this battle and whose name was Sir William Heron. Then could this Sir William Heron be Hearn's ancestor? My investigation so far concludes it is highly unlikely. Sir William Heron was given a knighthood in c.1523 and died in 1535. And there is no evidence which proves either he or his offspring ever settled in Ireland⁵⁾.

The claim that the Reverend Daniel Hearn had accompanied the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Lionel Sackville, as his personal chaplain can be easily denied. The Duke of Dorset was appointed as the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland in June 1730 and his first swearing-in was in September 1731⁶⁾. However, by then, the Reverend Daniel Hearn had already been working as a Church of Ireland clergyman in Ireland. Daniel had obtained B.A. in 1713 and M.A. in 1718 from Trinity College Dublin⁷⁾ and started working by 1721. The records show that he was a vicar of Annaduff in Ardagh, County Leitrim from 1721 to 1726, a vicar of Killan in County Offaly from 1726 to 1733, and a prebendary of Doon in the diocese of Emly from 1727 to 1766. He also became a prebendary in the diocese of Cashel in 1727 and an archdeacon of that diocese in 1728. He remained as the archdeacon until 1766, the year of his death. At the same

²⁾ Nina H. Kennard, *Lafcadio Hearn*, (London, Eveleigh Nash, 1911), p.15; Jonathan Cott, *Wandering Ghost: the odyssey of Lafcadio Hearn*, (Tokyo, Kodansha International New York, 1992), p.47.

³⁾ Kennard, *op. cit.*, p.15; Ryuji Tanabe, *Koizumi Yakumo*, (Tokyo, Waseda University, 1914), pp.3-4; Kageshiro Nishino, *Koizumi Yakumo to Europe*, (Tokyo, Furukawa, 1978), p.46.

⁴⁾ Vera McWilliams, *Lafcadio Hearn*, (New York, Cooper Square Publishers, 1970, first published in 1946), p.4.

⁵⁾ G. E. Cockayne, ed., *The Complete Peerage of England, Scotland, Ireland, Great Britain and the United Kingdom*, (London, Alan Sutton, revised edition, 1910-1959, originally edited by Vicary Gibbs, Geoffrey Waite and R. S. Lea), pp.489-91.

⁶⁾ J. G. Simms, 'Principal Officers of the Central Government in Ireland, 1172-1922, Succession Lists of Chief Governors' in T. W. Moody, W. E. Vaughan and F. J. Byrne, eds., *A New History of Ireland, Volume IX: Maps, Genealogies, Lists*, (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1986), pp.493-4.

⁷⁾ George Burtchaell and Thomas Ulick Sadlier, eds., *Alumni Dublinensis, 1593-1860*, (Bristol, Thoemmes Press, 2001, reprinted from the 1935 version), p.385.

time, he held the vicarage in Drung and Larah in County Cavan from 1740 to 1766⁸. It is clear that Daniel had been already in Ireland for a number of years when the Duke of Dorset became the Lord Lieutenant. In fact, Daniel could well have been born and raised in Ireland. The simple fact that he was educated at Trinity itself strongly suggests that he was an Anglo-Irish, an Irish Protestant, for Trinity accepted almost exclusively Irish Protestant males since its foundation and vice versa Trinity was the only place available for the Protestant population in Ireland who aspired for a higher education. And it was very rare that students from England or anywhere else other than Ireland would enter Trinity in those years. It was not until the beginning of the nineteenth century that the students from abroad would start to enter the college and the number was very small⁹. Trinity was a 'pillar' of the Irish Protestant community¹⁰ because the graduates were to become the defenders of the very community as clergymen, army personnel, law makers, law enforcers and so on. In the field of religion, 'the incumbents of the Church of Ireland had long been in the vanguard of the campaign to conquer Ireland for England'. In the 1740s for example, around ninety percent of the incumbents were the graduates of Trinity in some dioceses¹¹.

One of the first critics who suggested that Daniel was an Irish born is Paul Murray, whose pioneering work has challenged many of the dubious accounts about the Hearn. And yet, even his work has not been able to determine where the Hearn came from¹². Recently I have found a document which could be telling us that the search for the origin of the Hearn family might be futile after all. In a magazine published in 1878, someone called 'C. Hearn' was asking for an information on the lineage of the Hearn.

⁸ The Church of Ireland Representative Body Library, *Biological Succession List of Kilmore completed by Rev. Canon J. B. Leslie*, (transcript, n.d.), pp.166-7; Henry Cotton, *Fasti Ecclesiae Hibernicae: The Succession of the Prelates and Members of the Cathedral Bodies in Ireland*, (Dublin, Hodges & Smith, 1848-78), vol. I, pt. II, p.112, p.125 and p.170.

⁹ R. B. McDowell and D. A. Webb, eds., *Trinity College Dublin, 1592-1952: An Academic History*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1982), p.505; Alan Ford, 'Who Went to Trinity? The Early Students of Dublin University' in Helga Robinson-Hammerstein, ed., *European Universities in the Age of Reformation and Counter Reformation*, (Dublin, Four Courts Press, 1998), pp.53-74.

¹⁰ G. A. Hayes-McCoy, 'The Completion of the Tudor Conquest and the Advance of the Counter-Reformation, 1571-1603' in T. W. Moody, F. X. Martin and F. J. Byrne, eds., *A New History of Ireland, Volume III: Early Modern Ireland, 1534-1691*, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1991, first published in 1976), p.140.

¹¹ Toby Barnard, *A New Anatomy of Ireland: The Irish Protestants, 1649-1770*, (New Haven, Yale University Press, 2003), pp.81-2.

¹² Paul Murray, *A Fantastic Journey: The Life and Literature of Lafcadio Hearn*, (Kent, Japan Library, 1993); Paul Murray, 'Lafcadio Hearn and the Irish Tradition' in *Irish Studies Review* 15 (Summer 1996), pp.2-9.

Genealogists and others. £5 Reward will be given for proof as to the parentage, &c., of Daniel Hearn, Archdeacon of Cashel, 1728. Further particulars can be had on application to C. Hearn, 21, Idrone Terrace, Blackrock, County Dublin. ¹³⁾

It is not certain who this 'C. Hearn' is. This could be Charles Bush Hearn, Lafcadio's father. However, considering the fact that he had already passed away in 1866, this advertisement could have been placed by someone else in the family, and that someone might have been using his name. Or this someone could be Minnie Charlotte Hearn, a daughter from the second marriage of Charles Hearn, and she was around twenty years old when this magazine was published. The address given on this advertisement is not so far from the places where Lafcadio grew up or the residences of his great-aunt who raised him. We can only speculate but it is not impossible to assume that someone in the Hearn family did post this advertisement. If that would be the case, the information on the origin of the Hearn family was already not available in 1878. I have tried to find out whether there was any answer to this advertisement and I have not found any so far. Now it looks rather hopeless to continue the search if the information concerning the Reverend Daniel Hearn was already lost in the 1870s.

Perhaps we should turn our attentions to the other aspects of the life of the Reverend Daniel Hearn. As I have outlined on other occasions, he was involved in some of the noteworthy social activities of the era. Most interesting among them should be the membership of a voluntary society called the Incorporated Society in Dublin for Promoting English Protestant Schools in Ireland, which will be discussed later. In this society, he shared the membership with one of his in-laws. This in-law was another clergyman of the Church of Ireland named William Henry. Henry was married to a sister of the second wife of the Reverend Daniel Hearn, Anne Dowley or Dowling, one of the three daughters of Marcus and Abigail Dowley. The records show that Daniel married to Anne in 1732 and William married to Anna's younger sister Hanna in 1738¹⁴⁾. While Daniel does not seem to have left anything in writing or speech expressing his religious convictions or thoughts on the various issues concerning

¹³⁾ S. C. Hall, ed., *The Fifty Numbers of Social Notes Concerning Social Reforms, Social Requirements, Social Progress*, (London, Virtue and Co., 1878), No.24 (August 17, 1878), p.384.

¹⁴⁾ National Library of Ireland, Genealogy Office, G.O. M.S. 232, vol.10, p.24; The Church of Ireland Representative Body Library, The Diocesan Council and Derry & Raphoe, ed., *Clergy of Derry and Raphoe by the Ulster Historical Foundations*, (Belfast, Dungalden Press, 1999), pp.302-3; National Archives of Ireland, *Index to Marriage Licence Grand Books, diocese of Dublin 1672-1741*, p.128; National Library of Ireland, G.O. 474, *Dublin Marriage Licence Bonds*.

Ireland, the Reverend William Henry was a prolific writer and speaker. We can find dozens of his works published in the mid-eighteenth century.

It is not known exactly when and where the Reverend William Henry (?-1768) was born. It has been considered that he was possibly born in counties Donegal or Fermanagh in Ireland and his family was originally from Gloucestershire in England¹⁵. He too was a graduate of Trinity College Dublin, although he obtained his degrees in his later years; M.A. in 1748 and B.D. and D.D. in 1750¹⁶. He had been already a rector of Killesher in the diocese of Kilmore in county Fermanagh from 1731 to 1740 and a rector of Urney in the diocese of Derry in county Tyrone from 1740 to 1768. He was also a dean of the diocese of Killaloe in county Limerick from 1761 to 1768. Several records show that he and the Reverend Daniel Hearn were both buried in the St. Anne's Church in the Dublin city¹⁷. As was often the case with the clergymen of the Church of Ireland, they both probably resided in the Dublin city and not in their parishes. What is interesting about the Reverend William Henry is that his numerous pamphlets and orations illustrate the concerns and preoccupations of the Church of Ireland clergymen and the Protestant population in Ireland in general. In addition, his works reveal the influences of the Enlightenment teaching on the acts and thoughts of the learned class of the Irish Protestants.

Henry was a keen investigator of the topography of the north west of Ireland and left some works on this theme¹⁸. And any issue he would touch was to be associated with the 'improvements' of Ireland, for he was one of the fervent 'improvers' of the eighteenth-century Ireland. In one of his works on the landscape of Ireland, he explained how backward the Irish had been and how the overall condition of Ireland was now much better because of their subjugation to England.

What a miserable condition was this island in, when it was divided into several petty kingdoms, which were continually at war with one another?.....This condition put a stop to arts and sciences, to husbandry and improvement.....this uni-

¹⁵ H. C. D. Matthew and Brian Harrison, eds., *The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2004), vol.26, pp.595-6.

¹⁶ Burtchaell and Sadler, eds., *op. cit.*, p.390.

¹⁷ The Church of Ireland Representative Body Library, The Diocesan Council and Derry & Raphoe, ed., *op. cit.*, pp.302-3; Henry Cotton, *op. cit.*, vol.1, pt. IV, p.413.

¹⁸ William Henry, *Hints Towards a Natural and Topographical History of the Counties Sligo, Donegal, Fermanagh, and Lough Erne*, (National Archives of Ireland, M2533, 1739); William Henry, *Henry's Upper Lough Erne in 1739*, (edited by Sir Charles S. King, Clare, Ballinakella Press, 1987).

versal neglect of husbandry, and destruction of the inhabitants by intestine broils, covered the face of the country with thickets of woods and briars, and those vast extended bogs, which are not natural, but only the excrescences of the body. But since peace and unity has prevailed, how happily is the state of things altered?¹⁹⁾

And 'to extend our love to our country', what was necessary was 'the promoting of its improvements by meliorating and enriching the soil, making good roads, navigable canals, erecting comfortable habitations, introducing manufactures, encouraging industry and commerce'²⁰⁾.

He was known as a champion of 'the interconnected causes of physical and moral improvement' and in his opinion, 'the physical changes wrought by improvers in the north west of Ireland' would also improve the morality and the way of life of the people of Ireland.²¹⁾ And 'physical' meant not just the physical landscape of the land but also the physical existence of human bodies. For example, we can see his interest and enthusiasm for the 'improvement' of human bodies and minds from his works as an ardent supporter of the temperance movement. In the speeches he made in the 1750s, he was using strong words against the use of spiritual liquors. In 1753, he talked about 'a most dangerous Enemy, who is at this very Time actually destroying our County and happy Constitution'. He compared this 'Enemy' to 'the Pretender' and tried to remind the Irish Protestants of the recent wars against the Catholics. Then he warned that;

This Enemy is the more dangerous, because not suspected. He is already harboured in most of your Houses: And, under the Mask and fawning Appearances of Friendship, has cut many of your Neighbours Throats; and will not fail to do the same Office for every one of you that trusts him……The Enemy, the Destroyer of your Country is SPIRITOUS LIQUOR. This, under the various Names and Kinds, of Brandy, Rum, Gin, Usquebagh, and, above all, of Whisky, has spread over all parts of Ireland.

The Love of my dear Country constraints me to lay before you the fatal Effects

¹⁹⁾ William Henry, *Love of Our Country, Sermon Preached in the Cathedral Church of St. Patrick, Dublin, March 17th, 1756*, (Dublin, n. a., 1756), p.19.

²⁰⁾ *Ibid.*, p.17.

²¹⁾ Toby Barnard, *Improving Ireland? Projects, Prophets and Profiteers 1641-1786*, (Dublin, Four Courts Press, 2008), p.181.

of Spiritual Liquors with respect to your Lives; your intellectual Powers; your religious, your moral, your political Interests. And if I can make it sufficiently clear, that Spiritual Liquors are the Bane and Destruction of all these……

He was using the scientific knowledge of the day to persuade his fellows not to drink;

let me entreat you to consider fatal Effects of Spiritual Liquors. On your Bodies and animal Constitution. The whole Train of Miseries which they bring on the Body may be deduced from one simple observation, which is allowed by all Physicians, and has been confirmed by many Experiments, particularly by the most learned and ingenious the Reverend Dr. Stephen Hales: "That all the Spiritual Liquors coagulate and thicken the Blood; and at the same Time, contract and narrow the Blood-Vessels". They also destroy and burn up the red Parts of the Blood, and impoverish the whole Mass to such a Degree, as to make the whole vapid, and occasion, sometimes, the Quantity of Serum to be Ten times as great as that of the red Globules, wherein the whole Strength doth consist.

This one Quality induces at once a double Mischief; it renders the Blood less fit for Circulation, and at the same time, obstructs the Passage through which it is to circulate²²⁾.

In 1759, Henry published a sermon addressed in his own parish, urging people not to drink. His conviction was that the advancement in the knowledge of science would lead to the improvements of the bodies and minds of the people.

Spiritual Liquors burn up the Liver to Powder, disable it from its Office of separating the Gall from the Blood, and thereby occasion most terrible scorbutic, and inflammatory Disorders.

They also burst the lymphatic Vessels, and bring on incurable Dropsies, insomuch that most Drunkards, who are not carried to their Grave by some violent inflammatory Sickness, die miserably of the black Jaundice, or Dropsies.

But above all, the Mischief done to the Brain, is most terrible to reflect on; its Powers are shaken, its Membranes inflamed, even to Madness; insomuch that

²²⁾ William Henry, *An Earnest Address to the People of Ireland Against the Drinking of Spiritual Liquors*, (Dublin, Peter Wilson, 1753), pp.24.

Men, at other Times discreet and good, when drunk with Spirits become raging mad, and are like Bedlamites let loose, to destroy themselves and all before them²³⁾.

His interest in science and medicine can be found in another source. In a magazine published in 1763, Henry was reported to have examined a young man with a strange illness. In an article titled 'Officiation of the Tendons and Muscles', Henry's letter to Lord Cadogan in Castle Caldwell, near Inninskillen, dated March 1, 1759, was quoted.

The following account of the case of William Carey, aged 19, whose tendons and muscles turned to bone……he first felt an unusual pain in his right wrist, which in August, 1757, began to swell; this obliged him to cease from his usual labour. In the space of a month more, this swelling grew into a hardness, like to a bony substance, and continually shooting on, in December reached up as far as the elbow; all the muscles continually growing into a bony substance, and dilating, so that his wrist and arm are as thick and broad as in the beginning. About the space of a week after the pain began in his right wrist, he was seized with the like pain in his left wrist; this has proceeded, in all respects, in the same manner as in the right arm……

In March, 1758, he was seized with the like pain and swelling in his right ankle, where such another bony substance soon grew as in his arms. This bony substance has shot up from his ankle, both in the inward side, shot down from the pan of the knee, eight inches along the shin bone, and is daily increasing; so that he walks with much pain and difficulty, and after resting in his walk grows very lame……

Henry had this patient examined in a Dublin hospital in 1759. There Carey went through what was thought to be one of the most advanced medical treatments of the time.

I had sent him in March last to Mercer's Hospital in this city. After examining his case, the physicians and surgeons concluded, that the only probable chance to

²³⁾ William Henry, *A Dram for Drunkards. A Funeral Sermon……preached in the Chapel of Castle-Derge, in the Parish of Urney, Sep. 30, 1759*, (Dublin, Peter Wilson, 1759), pp.16-7.

prevent the progress of the ossification, and to remove the evil already effected, was, putting him into a mercurial course. This they tried; and, after some slighter mercurial medicines, they, in the latter end of April, laid him down in a salivation, through which he passed with safety.

This dried up the running sores at his elbows, occasioned by the bursting of his skin, through the ossification. Some lighter callus, which was shooting into bones, seems to be softened; in consequence of which he can move his elbows and the joints of his fingers with more ease; and he has a little more clearness and vivacity in his countenance: but none of the ossified parts are reduced, nor is there any appearance of their reduction; and he still continues to wear an hectic look. To reduce the ossified parts, they have applied to them mercurial plasters; the effects of which time will show.

As he is now discharged out of the hospital, they have directed him to bathe continually in the ocean, which happens to be very convenient to his habitation, and have directed him to anoint his limbs with soapy juice of the *quercus marina*, which lies in plenty along the shore.²⁴⁾

We do not know who this William Carey was or how he and the Reverend William Henry had acquainted. We do not know what happened to Carey after this treatment either. But what we can glimpse from this episode is that Henry had a very keen interest in the medical advancement and he actually put that interest into action.

The eighteenth-century Ireland was an era of 'improvement'. It was a time of relative peace and stability. The Protestants had defeated the Catholics in the 1690s and their rule over Ireland was supposed to be strengthening. Therefore, 'the greatest threat to English rule in Ireland in the eighteenth century was not the danger of Catholic rebellion. But instead the social and economic problems which plagued the country'²⁵⁾. To remove this threat, 'improvements' were necessary. In the Irish context the idea of 'improvement' dates back to the late sixteenth century, when the systematic plantations of Ireland by England started to intensify. The intention of the colonizers was 'to Anglicize Ireland: to make its systems of government and law

²⁴⁾ *The Medical Museum, or a repository of cases, experiments, researches, and discoveries*, 3 vols., (London, W. Bristow, 1763), vol.1, pp.38-44. This whole episode was quoted as a curious case in 1820, see R. S. Kirby, *Kirby's Wonderful and Eccentric Museum or Magazine of Remarkable Characters*, (London, London House, 1820), pp.38-40.

²⁵⁾ Karen Sonnelitter, *Charity Movements in Eighteenth-Century Ireland: Philanthropy and Improvement*, (Suffolk, The Boydell Press, 2016), p.1.

more like those of England and to spread English styles of dress, language, and agriculture'. And by the eighteenth century 'the term "improvement" had broadened implications which……contained a moral element'²⁶⁾. Improvers 'tended to be conquerors and colonizers' and the idea of 'improvement' 'functioned like a creed'. 'An article of their faith was the superiority of their culture: they and their ways epitomized civility'. And the Irish, 'presently inferior, would benefit -materially and morally- from being improved'²⁷⁾. In Ireland the movement of 'improvement' was most manifest in the eighteenth century and a number of voluntary societies with the aims of that nature were created.

The Reverend Daniel Hearn and, more fervently, the Reverend William Henry were involved in those societies. This is not surprising because 'most charity movements were founded and run by a combination of Protestant social elite and Church of Ireland clergy. The Church of Ireland was a major player in the reform and improvement movements'²⁸⁾. There were other aspects about those charity and improvement movements. Those 'societies became the focus of civic activism and patriotic endeavour'²⁹⁾, and 'voluntary societies were at once an outlet for sociability and conviviality for their members and, frequently, an entryway into civil society'³⁰⁾. As I mentioned earlier, Hearn and Henry were both members of the Incorporated Society in Dublin for Promoting English Protestant Schools in Ireland, which literally promoted the establishments of schools that would teach the Protestant faith and the English language to the Catholic and Irish-speaking children. The society was probably the largest in the scale and the budget among the voluntary societies created during the eighteenth century. This was a religious and educational charity movement that was 'one large scale attempt on the part of the Church of Ireland and the Anglo-Irish laity to bring about mass conversions'³¹⁾. In the field of science, medicine and education particularly, the religious connotation was stronger because those 'charities were motivated by both Enlightenment and religious values'³²⁾. The Enlightenment in Ireland 'was not secular' as elsewhere in Europe, and 'Irish improvers maintained close

²⁶⁾ *Ibid.*, p.17.

²⁷⁾ Barnard, *Improving*, p.13.

²⁸⁾ Sonnelitter, *op. cit.*, p.20.

²⁹⁾ Barnard, *Improving*, p.15.

³⁰⁾ Sonnelitter, *op. cit.*, p.19.

³¹⁾ *Ibid.*, p.37.

³²⁾ *Ibid.*, p.2.

ties with the Church of Ireland³³⁾. Behind the idea of 'improvement' in Ireland were the values of the Anglican faith and the philosophies of the Enlightenment.

The case in point was the activities of the Incorporated Society in Dublin for Promoting English Protestant Schools in Ireland, which was founded and managed almost exclusively by the Church of Ireland clergymen and the Protestant elites. This society was founded in 1733 by Hugh Boulter (1671-1742), the Church of Ireland Archbishop of Armagh. Alarmed by the situation in Ireland where the Protestants were greatly outnumbered by the Catholics, he, together with more than one hundred nobles and clergymen, petitioned for a charter to establish schools to teach the Irish children English and the Protestant faith. In his opinion, education is the best way because 'the ignorance and obstinacy of the adult papists is such, that there is not much hope of converting them' but 'if we could erect a number of schools to teach their children the English tongue, and the principles of the Christian religion, that we could do some good among the generation that is growing up'³⁴⁾. The charter was granted in 1733 and it described Ireland as 'almost entirely inhabited by the Papists', and 'in the most parts.....the Papists far exceed the Protestants of all Denominations in number'. And 'if some effectual Method be not made use of to instruct these great Numbers of People in the Principles of true Religion and Loyalty, there is little Prospect, but that Superstition and Idolatry, and Disaffection to Us and Our Royal Posterity, will, from Generation to Generation, be propagated amongst them'³⁵⁾. The aim of the society was 'that the Children of the Popish, and other Poor Natives of Our said Kingdom of Ireland, may be instructed in the English Tongue, and in the Principles of true Religion and Loyalty, in all succeeding Generations'³⁶⁾. The so-called charter schools were deployed to achieve this end.

By then, a series of the penal laws against the Catholics had been in force. However, today it is generally agreed that those penal laws were not effective at all to convert the Catholics. The debate concerning why the Reformation failed in Ireland is on-going, but at least it is agreed that 'there was no sustained effort by the state to bring the mass of Catholics into the Church of Ireland', although 'the penal laws

³³⁾ *Ibid.*, p.20.

³⁴⁾ Letter from Boulter to the Duke of Newcastle, May 7, 1730, in *Letters Written by His Excellency, Hugh Boulter*, (Oxford, Clarendon, 1769-70), vol.2, pp.12-3.

³⁵⁾ *A Copy of His Majesty's Royal Charter, for Erecting English Protestant Schools in the Kingdom of Ireland*, (Dublin, George Grierson, 1733), pp.3-4.

³⁶⁾ *Ibid.*, p.4.

did make the practice of Catholicism difficult³⁷⁾. By the 1720s, 'Protestant churchmen and laity alike were having to accept that the laws against Catholic ecclesiastics were not working'³⁸⁾, and they knew that 'the penal laws did little to curb the actual practice of Catholicism' and 'a new method was needed for dealing with the problem'³⁹⁾. The charter schools were the 'new method'. 'They were conceived by an enlightened group of gentry in the 1730s as a way of luring the poor from the perceived backwardness and indolence of popery by a mixture of proselytism, anglicisation and education into useful pursuits'⁴⁰⁾. The Reverend William Henry described the charter school system as a 'scheme of making Ireland a Protestant and an industrial Kingdom, not by the penal Laws, but by the truly Christian and humane Methods of Gentleness and Instruction' and 'one of the noblest that ever Possessed the Heart of Man'⁴¹⁾. This reflects the Enlightenment thinking prevalent in Europe in the eighteenth century, which 'saw Catholicism as backward, superstitious and oppressive, a dead weight on rational pursuits, improvement and prosperity'⁴²⁾. The charter schools were principally boarding schools and there were many rules to regulate them. The children to be admitted should 'be those of the Popish, and other poor Natives of this Kingdom, who are to be taught gratis'. The habit of labour was emphasized, reflecting the values of the Protestant teachings. Children were expected to learn and work and were to be apprenticed to Protestant masters; 'all the children shall be clothed, and taught to read English, and such of them as the Local Committee shall judge fittest, shall be instructed in Writing and common Arithmetic, but this only for two Hours in each Day; and to be employed, during the rest of the School-Hours, in proper Work and Labour; particular Regard being had to the Linen Manufacture'. Then 'the Children at Proper Ages be put out Apprentices to Protestant Masters or Mistresses, at the Expence of the Society'⁴³⁾. Initially this scheme was widely appreciated by the Irish Protestants. 'The enthusiasm of Protestants for the first Charter Schools and the widespread conviction that they had at last discovered an effective instrument of religious and

³⁷⁾ Sonnelitter, *op. cit.*, p.11.

³⁸⁾ S. J. Connolly, *Religion, Law, and Power: The Making of Protestant Ireland 1660-1760*, (Oxford, Clarendon 1995, first published in 1992), p.287.

³⁹⁾ Sonnelitter, *op. cit.*, p.52.

⁴⁰⁾ Marianne Elliott, *The Catholics of Ulster: A History*, (New York, Basic Books, 2001, first published in 2000), p.171.

⁴¹⁾ William Henry, *An Appeal to the People of Ireland*, (Dublin, Peter Wilson, 1749), p.13.

⁴²⁾ Elliott, *op. cit.*, p.172.

⁴³⁾ *Rules Established by the Incorporated Society in Dublin for Promoting English Protestant Schools in Ireland*, (Dublin, George Grierson, 1734), pp.6-7.

social change are unmistakable⁴⁴). According to the proceedings of the society, their activities peaked in the 1760s when they had forty-nine schools in all parts of Ireland and each school had twenty to forty boys and girls. But this means that only a few thousand children were under their care at any given time out of the estimated two million population.

The Reverend Daniel Hearn was a member of this society since its foundation and probably until 1764, two years before his death. He made contributions to the charter school in Cashel when it was built in 1751. As an archdeacon of that diocese this is an expected action⁴⁵). More deeply involved was the Reverend William Henry. He was not just a member of this society. In 1758 he was selected as a member of 'the Committee of Fifteen', which was in charge of overall management of the charter schools, and he seems to have held this position until the year of his death⁴⁶). He left many works celebrating the achievements of the charter schools. In one of those works, he boasted that 'we have now, in this Kingdom, an happy Opportunity of showing our Zeal for the Protestant Religion, and carrying into complete Execution the grand Design of the late glorious Revolution, to make us a free and flourishing people, by supporting and encouraging the English Protestant working Charter-Schools. This scheme is the best contrived of any that ever yet was thought on, for promoting true Religion, Liberty, and Industry in Ireland'⁴⁷).

Notwithstanding Henry's enthusiasm, ultimately the charter schools proved to be 'a tremendous failure'⁴⁸) as a project to convert the Catholics. From the late 1780s a number of reports started to expose the mismanagements of the schools. The abuse, neglect, and exploitation of the children were rampant, and the schools were criticized for virtually functioning as a proselytising machine. The society ended its work in 1831, when the national school system was established.

The charter school movement was 'the most sustained attempt at converting the

⁴⁴ Connolly, *op. cit.*, p.305.

⁴⁵ *An Abstract of the Proceedings of the Incorporated Society in Dublin for Promoting English Protestant Schools in Ireland*, (Dublin, George Grierson, 1737), p.33; *A Continuation of the Society's Proceedings*, (Dublin, S. Powell and Son, 1764), p.35.

⁴⁶ *A Continuation of the Society's Proceedings*, (London, J. Oliver, 1759), p.60; John Green, *A Sermon Preached Before the Society*, (London, J. and W. Oliver, 1767), p.54.

⁴⁷ William Henry, *A Sermon Preached in the Parish Church of St. Werburgh's, Dublin*, (Dublin, Peter Wilson, 1753), pp.33-4.

⁴⁸ Sonnelitter, *op. cit.*, p.47.

natives⁴⁹⁾ and supported by the Protestant elites with 'extraordinary enthusiasm'⁵⁰⁾. It was also 'the single most important effort during the eighteenth century to promote a widespread change in religious allegiance'⁵¹⁾. 'The idea of government playing active role, or any role, in the social welfare of its citizens was a new concept, however, the Irish parliament……awarded grants'⁵²⁾ to volunteer societies in Ireland. The Incorporated Society received a huge sum of governmental grant and yet its works failed miserably. Today the charter schools are criticized as 'one of the most iniquitous and disgraceful experiments in Irish education' and 'the primal aim of the charter schools was political, not philanthropic'⁵³⁾. The other side of the argument is that 'the Incorporated Society and its members were motivated by genuine philanthropic and religious concerns, and that the attempts of the Society to institute a widespread system of education were part of broader series of Enlightenment-inspired initiations to improve Irish society'⁵⁴⁾. The motivations and the convictions of the 'improvers' must have been diverse. In the case of the Reverend William Henry, judging from the works he left, it seems to me that he was one of the people who 'possessed strong moral convictions as to the righteousness of what they were doing'⁵⁵⁾. His keen interests in medicine and science, and belief in 'positive and progressive change' and in 'the capacity of man to affect that change'⁵⁶⁾ do not seem to have been motivated by any political agenda. On the other hand, he is today described as a 'relentless improver'⁵⁷⁾ and his acts and words are discerned as Protestant bigotry. This dichotomy makes him one of the most interesting examples among the Irish Protestants of the eighteenth century.

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⁴⁹⁾ Elliott, *op. cit.*, p.171.

⁵⁰⁾ M. G. Jones, *The Charity School Movement: A Study of Eighteenth Century Puritanism in Action*, (London, Frank Cass, 1964, first published in 1938), p.235.

⁵¹⁾ Connolly, *op. cit.*, p.304.

⁵²⁾ Sonnelitter, *op. cit.*, p.22.

⁵³⁾ Michael Ahern, 'Clonmel Charter School' in *Tipperary Historical Journal*, vol.2(1989), p.148 and p.152.

⁵⁴⁾ Sonnelitter, *op. cit.*, p.48.

⁵⁵⁾ *Ibid.*, p.18.

⁵⁶⁾ *Ibid.*, p.18.

⁵⁷⁾ Barnard, *A New Anatomy*, p.291.