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**Gilbert Stuart and the politics of fine arts patronage in Ireland,
1787-1793: A social and cultural study**

Crean, Hugh R., Ph.D.

City University of New York, 1990

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GILBERT STUART
AND
THE POLITICS OF FINE ARTS PATRONAGE
IN IRELAND 1787 - 1793:
A SOCIAL AND CULTURAL STUDY

by

HUGH R. CREAN

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in
Art History in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy,
The City University of New York.

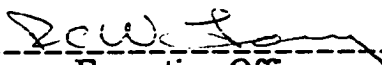
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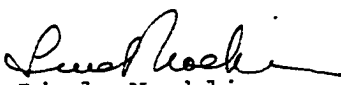
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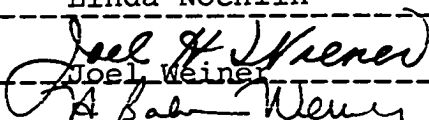
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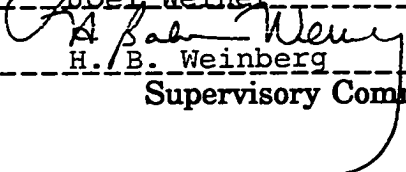
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PREFACE

Gilbert Stuart's enigmatic, international and largely misunderstood career, apart from his juvenilia, divides itself into three distinct periods: in England, Ireland and America; however, only those parts of his career in England until 1787 and in America after his return in 1793 have received due scholarly attention.¹ The six Irish years in between have been largely ignored or considered inseparable from the English period into which they were subsumed. The neglect of Stuart's Irish years began in Ireland shortly after his departure. There, Stuart's name is curiously absent from the authoritative contemporary work of Anthony Pasquin (alias John Williams) whose Authentic History of the Professors of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture, who have Practiced in Ireland, 1796, appeared just three years after Stuart's departure.² In America, the submergence of Stuart's Irish years seems to have continued with William Dunlap, for in his influential

¹ The year 1792 is sometimes erroneously given for Stuart's departure from Ireland. Confusion regarding his departure date may be cleared up for it is announced in the Dublin Chronicle, March 19 1793.

² Anthony Pasquin (alias John Williams), An Authentic History of the Professors of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture, who have Practiced in Ireland (London: H.D. Symonds, 1796).

History, 1834, Dunlap gave only brief and cursory mention to the Irish years, and noted only that Stuart was invited there by the Duke of Rutland.³ No paintings are mentioned by Dunlap, and information regarding Stuart's important and numerous Irish patrons is completely lacking. George Mason's Life and Work of Gilbert Stuart, 1879, is slightly more substantial regarding the Irish years, but remains cursory.⁴

Lawrence Park's invaluable catalogue raisonne, Gilbert Stuart, 1926, provides substantial information and reproductions of a great number of Stuart's works.⁵ Park provides no separation between those works produced in England or Ireland; however, no study of Stuart is feasible without reference to Park's monumental work. William Whitley's Gilbert Stuart, 1932, together with James Flexner's work of the same title, 1955, both rely heavily on the previous publications with little added information.⁶ Stuart's assistant, John Dowling Herbert, in his Irish Varieties of the Last Fifty Years, 1836, provides an important

³ Frank W. Bayley and Charles E. Goodspeed, ed., William Dunlap, A History of the Rise and Progress of the Arts of Design in the United States (Boston: C.E. Goodspeed and Co., 1918), all references are to this edition.

⁴ George C. Mason, The Life and Works of Gilbert Stuart (New York: Lenox Hill, Burt Franklin Reprints, 1972), all references are to this edition.

⁵ Lawrence Park, Gilbert Stuart: An Illustrated Descriptive List of His Works, (New York: William Edwin Rudge, 1926), 4 Vols.

⁶ William T. Whitley, Gilbert Stuart (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1932); James Thomas Flexner, Gilbert Stuart (New York: Knopf, 1955).

Irish source for Stuart studies.⁷ Walter Strickland's Dictionary of Irish Artists, 1913, is the first Irish source of Stuart's Dublin patrons and, though incomplete, it is an important list of some of Stuart's Irish portraits that would have been available to Park.⁸

Among modern writers on Stuart, Charles Merrill Mount is the first to approach the unravelling of Stuart's years in Ireland. Mount first illuminated Stuart's Irish period in a brief article published in 1963.⁹ This was later expanded and included in Mount's study Gilbert Stuart, 1964.¹⁰ Though Mount, unlike Park, separates the English and Irish periods, and provides extensive information on the Irish years, he still views the Irish period as but the extension of Stuart's time in England and like Park lists both the English and Irish works together and separate from the American portraits. No effort has been made by Mount to consider Stuart's peregrinations in the context of his time, and absent, for instance, is the recognition that Stuart lived in Ireland during the French Revolution, which deeply affected Stuart's Irish patrons. The unique nature of Stuart's Irish years and oeuvre therefore has been overlooked. The tendency to view Stuart's Irish portraits as but

⁷ John Dowling Herbert Irish Varieties of the Last Fifty Years (London: William Joy, 1836).

⁸ Walter G. Strickland, A Dictionary of Irish Artists (Dublin and London: Maunsell and Company, 1913). 2 Vols.

⁹ Charles Merrill Mount, "The Irish Career of Gilbert Stuart," Irish Georgian Society Bulletin, Vol. VI, No. 1 (January-March, 1963), 6-28.

¹⁰ Charles Merrill Mount, Gilbert Stuart (New York: W.W. Norton, 1964).

an extension of the English period neglects to recognize the extraordinary circumstances under which Stuart went to Ireland, and those conditions that contributed to his success there. The present study approaches the complex social, cultural, political and religious issues that dominated Stuart's time in Ireland and made his move there a calculated one, based on his extraordinary powers of political insight. It will be shown, moreover, how Stuart managed to maintain a position of eminence in Dublin at the apex of its Colonial power and (contrary to popular perception of an ignominious return to America) that he left only when no other political alternative presented itself. It is hoped as a result of this study that the personality of Stuart as a product of the Enlightenment will emerge as opportune and prescient; moreover, it will be proven that his strength lay in his keen, astute, intuitive and creative mind whose moves and progress were calculated to derive maximum benefit from the circumstances of his birth and time.

Furthermore, contrary to the commonly accepted view that Stuart's period in Dublin was but a hibernation, it will be shown that the style that later emerged in his memorable portraits of Washington, Jefferson and others after his return, received its genesis in Ireland in his uniquely contrived, monumental portraits of the Irish Protestant Ascendancy. Stuart's Irish years reveal a talent for suiting his style to the needs of patronage wholly in concert with the political and social needs of eighteenth-century Ireland. Given his political experience in Ireland, and his memorable portraits of the Irish ruling class, it is no

mystery how Stuart emerged as the painter who provided America with a permanent and immutable image of its first Presidency.

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INTRODUCTION

A study of the six year sojourn of Gilbert Stuart in Ireland from October 1787 until March 1793 provides a dramatic illustration of the extent to which patronage of the fine arts in late eighteenth-century Ireland was dominated by political concerns. It underscores how the business of portraiture was directed by social and political issues that infiltrated the painter's studio. Stuart's successful career in Dublin illustrates the enormous degree to which partisanship dictated a painter's life.

Stuart's patrons were members of a very particular social class whose political beliefs harmonised completely with their religious and cultural values. They were a homogenous group of privileged Protestants of the Irish Ascendancy, a ruling class whose power derived directly from land ownership and parliamentary office. Their political beliefs therefore were the life-blood of their sustained Ascendancy. This conservative elite feared erosion from Protestant non-conformists and Catholics. The political identity of the group had been forged in the seventeenth century and had since become entrenched. The group's self-conscious development of antiquarian interests, sometimes alluded to in Stuart's work, accelerated during the artist's years in Ireland.

This can be seen as a conscious attempt at justification and legitimization of a privileged position increasingly difficult to sustain. For Stuart, as this study reveals, Irish acceptance and patronage began with his invitation to Dublin by the Duke of Rutland, the King's representative in Ireland and leader of the Ascendancy. From the beginning, therefore, Stuart's position in Irish life as painter to that Ascendancy was clear.

In an environment where political distrust was cause for immediate ostracism, this privileged position was maintained only by Stuart's cautious choice of subject. In Stuart's Ireland political beliefs primarily defined the individual. In a society where separateness seemed the only form of co-existence, Stuart's professional life was therefore immediately and necessarily defined by his political, social and cultural role. This set of circumstances reached an apex during Stuart's years in Ireland and he most fully exemplifies the painter of Irish political subjects. It should come as no surprise then that Stuart's exit is abrupt when the political climate in Ireland changes dramatically during 1792 and 1793 because of the rise of Catholic power and the influence of the French Revolution on Irish political life.

CHAPTER I

GILBERT STUART'S DEPARTURE FROM AMERICA: ISSUES OF ARTISTIC AND CULTURAL IDENTITY

In Early American portraiture, Gilbert Stuart's name stands supreme, but there was little in Stuart's inclinations, taste, or convictions that qualified him as an American except for the accident of his birth in Rhode Island.... [emphasis mine]. There is not the slightest hint that Stuart ever considered joining the American rebels, for he himself took the last ship to clear the port of Boston for England on the eve of Bunker Hill, June 16, 1775.¹

Stuart's national and artistic identity must be addressed in any serious discussion of the painter and his art as it has become a major issue in the scholarly treatment of his work. American writers have, perhaps predictably, concentrated their efforts on Stuart's career after his return to the United States in 1793. It was then that his real fame began as an American portraitist who best immortalized the image of George Washington. In general studies of the artist's work, before Mount's publications, the six years spent in Ireland are rarely even mentioned. Pearson DeLorme, typically, writes with authority about Stuart's stay in England; then, however, she transfers attention

¹ Eleanor Pearson DeLorme, "Gilbert Stuart: Portrait of an Artist," Winterthur Portfolio, 16 (April 1979), 339.

immediately to the painter's career in America, ignoring completely Stuart's Irish years. This approach is typical in American studies of Stuart. Moreover, foreign writers rarely even mention him in their studies of British and Irish art. For instance, Ellis Waterhouse in his classic Painting in Britain 1530 to 1790 reflects the usual approach:

Stuart is the last of the American painters that need be considered, for, although many more came to England to become pupils of Benjamin West, the only one of them who settled and made any mark in London for a time was Washington Allston, who belongs wholly to the generation of the Romantics. Unlike West and Copley, Stuart returned to the United States (in 1793) to become the leading portrait painter of his own country.²

Waterhouse continues,

Although Stuart's American style can hardly be said to belong to the history of British painting, we cannot understand him without taking it into account, for it seems to have developed the moment he returned to America, and this instinctive adaptation to the requirements of patronage suggests a mind of considerable awareness. Stuart's New England style has something in common with Raeburn's Scottish idiom, but his lighting is less theatrical.³

When Stuart is mentioned in the context of painting in Britain, the Irish years are never acknowledged as is clear from the above text. The standard source on Irish painting by Crookshank and the Knight of Glin, The Painters of Ireland, c. 1660-1920, declares that though Stuart

² Ellis Waterhouse, Painting in Britain 1530-1790, 2nd ed. (London and Baltimore, Maryland: Penguin Books, 1962), 311.

³ Ibid.

"had a certain amount of influence on Irish painting a study of him really belongs to the history of art in America."⁴ These conflicting views result in the neglect of Stuart's Irish work, and the question of Stuart's national and artistic identity becomes a major issue that has determined and limited the study and appreciation of his work abroad, especially his years in Ireland. In effect, his position as a major figure has never been fully explored because of what appears to be a form of exclusion by which scholars of the arts on different sides of the Atlantic claim exemption from the study of various periods in Stuart's career. American writers, concerned with the history of art in America, consider Stuart's British years largely less important than his later American period, and his Irish years are seen as some form of hibernation before his eventual emergence as a great figure in the United States. Meanwhile, British and Irish writers concerned with those traditions regard Stuart as a visiting American whose work does not belong to studies of British or Irish art. Benjamin West and John Singleton Copley both preceded Stuart to England and remained abroad. Yet, unlike Stuart, their foreign careers are generally considered in studies of American art, while Stuart's Irish years have received little attention.⁵ This, therefore, points to a great inconsistency: the foreign

4 Anne Crookshank and The Knight of Glin, The Painters of Ireland c. 1660-1920 (London: Barrie and Jenkins, 1978), 156.

5 Of Stuart's biographers: Mason, 1879; Park, 1926; Whitley, 1932; Flexner, 1955; and Mount, 1964, only Mount provides any extended study of the Irish years. More recently, McLanathan, 1988, relies predominantly on Mount's research.

careers of West and Copley are considered central in studies of American art, while that of Stuart has been largely omitted.

The issue of whether Stuart is less American for his decision to leave just as the Colonies prepared for war, as suggested by Pearson DeLorme, must be tempered with the realization that Stuart considered himself a painter, not a soldier, and as Dunlap establishes:

Stuart, probably finding that his business of portrait painting failed in consequence of the preparations for war, [emphasis mine] then making in the colonies, found means to follow his friends Waterhouse... He went thither from the port of Boston, after hostilities had commenced between the veterans of England and the Yankee yeomen. Doctor Waterhouse says, 'Mr. Stuart was shut up in Boston, when the first blood was spilt at Lexington, in our contest with Great Britain, April the 19th, 1775, and escaped from it about ten days before the battle of Bunker hill, and arrived in London the latter end of November following....'⁶

Rather than interpret Stuart's departure from the American Colonies solely as a calculated political act guaranteed to provide him with immunity from military responsibility (as DeLorme suggests) it may be of further relevance to understand Stuart's embarkation for England in the context of the position of the artist in America during the last quarter of the eighteenth century. Stuart, it should be remembered, followed in the footsteps of both West and Copley in leaving the colonies initially for study in England. It is therefore in the context of this exodus of artists to Europe that Stuart is best understood. Stuart seems

⁶ William Dunlap, A History of the Rise and Progress of the Arts of Design in the United States, ed. Frank W. Bayley and Charles E. Goodspeed (Boston: Goodspeed, 1918), 1:201.

to have left America in the interest of his career, and he did so at an opportune moment. This, as will be seen, became a trend in Stuart's life, and his later departures from England and Ireland were equally calculated in favor of his art. The movement of many American artists to Europe in the second half of the eighteenth century is eloquently discussed by Neil Harris in his masterful work The Artist in American Society.⁷ Harris discusses the attraction of Europe for young American artists in the context of a search for "legitimization":

In Colonial America, art's existence seemed to depend entirely on personal decisions: American artists began their work in a condition of prevailing cultural scarcity, and community interest or support was not assumed to be either inevitable or beneficent. In the professional meaning of the word, European artists themselves were but recent specialists: semantic confusions still entangled artist and artisan at the start of the nineteenth century. Industrialism, urbanization and nationalism helped dissociate art from its craftlike connotations and granted it dignity and honor among civilized men. But nationalism, industrialism and urbanization were all lacking in Colonial America, and with them the need for art.⁸

Harris emphasizes what many contemporary writers of the period echoed time and again, namely that in Stuart's America, art had little support. There were no art schools, no art establishments, no professionals or connoisseurs. Puritan America did not look kindly on the making of images. Many church sermons show the extent to which

⁷ Neil Harris, The Artist in American Society: The Formative Years 1790-1860 (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1970).

⁸ Ibid., vii.

the clergy attempted the continual annihilation of artistic expression in Protestant America. The testimony of writers throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries confirms the persistent and negative impact of theological ideas on the visual arts in America. Even as late as 1839, Margaret Fuller Ossoli lamented that:

There is no poetical ground-work ready for the artist in our country and time. Good deeds appeal to the understanding. Our religion is that of the understanding. We have no old established faith, no hereditary romance, no such stuff as Catholicism, Chivalry afforded. What is most dignified in the Puritanic modes of thought is not favorable to beauty. The habits of an industrial community are not propitious to delicacy of sentiment.⁹

In the second half of the eighteenth century, during the years both preceding and following the Revolutionary War, many American artists, including West, Copley and Stuart, became disillusioned with prospects for a career in the visual arts at home and increasingly sought new opportunities in London, the center of the British Empire. Their various motives for travel have since been questioned. Benjamin West arrived in Rome in 1760, where, according to his biographer John Galt, he was warmly greeted:

The French courier conducted him to a hotel, and, having mentioned in the house that he was an American, and a Quaker, come to study the fine arts, the circumstance seemed so extraordinary, that it reached the ears of Mr. Robinson,

9 Margaret Fuller Ossoli, "A Record of Impressions of Mr. Allston's Picture's," Dial, July 1839, quoted in John W. McCoubrey, American Art 1700-1960. Sources and Documents in the History of Art Series, ed., H.W. Janson (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1965), 58.

afterwards Lord Grantham, who immediately found himself possessed by an irresistible desire to see him; and who, before he had time to dress or refresh himself, paid him a visit, and insisted that he should dine with him.... At the hour appointed, Mr. Robinson conducted him to the house of Mr. Crispigne, an English gentleman who had long resided at Rome, where the evening party was held. ¹⁰

West had been attracted to Europe for the purposes of studying the Old Masters, and it is of interest that accusations of disloyalty to America have not been raised in studies of his career. Admittedly the Revolutionary War seemed but a distant possibility in 1760, the year of West's departure. Unlike Stuart, neither West nor Copley returned to America. In West's case he had intended to return after three years in Italy, but his reception in England was so enthusiastic that he decided to remain in London, where he formed his historic relationships with the Archbishop of York, King George III and Sir Joshua Reynolds. These connections finally led in 1768 to West's appointment as a charter member of the newly founded Royal Academy of Arts, and as successor to Reynolds, he became President of the institution in 1792, just months before Stuart's return to America.

Among the reasons offered for Copley's departure for Europe are "the pressures on Copley himself to take part in the struggle."¹¹ Whether his departure resulted from political or artistic reasons: "The

¹⁰ John Galt, The Life and Studies of Benjamin West, 1816, quoted in McCoubrey, American Art, 38.

¹¹ Jules David Prown, John Singleton Copley, vol. 1 (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1966), 86.

forty years Copley spent as an English painter have been slighted by American writers on art. His leaving seems almost a desertion, and he was so profoundly an expression of our colonial past that Americans have difficulty seeing him in any other guise."¹² Copley's earlier correspondence with Benjamin West and Captain R. G. Bruce, however, anticipates his artistic reasons for travel and West's encouragement to do so.

You are the best judge of your own Affairs, and whether you can with propriety accomplish a Trip for a few Years to Europe. Should you take that Resolution, I believe I may venture to assure You, that You will meet with much Encouragement and Patronage.... I am already very happy in having contributed to make your Merit so far known to the world, and hope it has laid the Foundation of your being the great Man Mr. Reynolds prognosticates. ¹³

This testimony clearly indicates the attraction for Copley of travelling to London and weakens any accusation that he was solely avoiding the Revolution from a political point of view. At the time of his departure, Copley was certainly the most distinguished portrait painter in America. In his letter to West dated November 12, 1766, he writes of the "inexpressible pleasure" it would give him to make a trip to Europe in order to study "The Paintings, Sculptors and Basso Relievs that adorn Italy, and which You have had the pleasure of making Your Studies

¹² Milton W. Brown, American Art to 1900: Painting, Sculpture, Architecture (New York: H. N. Abrams, 1977), 103.

¹³ Captain R. G. Bruce to Copley, quoted in McCoubrey, American Art, 11.

from would, I am sure, animate my pencil and enable me to acquire that bold free and graceful style of Painting that will, if ever, come much slower from the dictates of Nature, which has hitherto been my only instructor." 14

Unlike that of Stuart the American identity of West and Copley has rarely been challenged. Add to this the lack of patriotism of which Stuart is sometimes accused and it becomes apparent that his foreign career suffers from inadequate scrutiny. It was during the eighteen years spent in London and Dublin that Stuart established his international reputation. It was his success abroad which permitted his triumphant return to the United States, where in New York, Philadelphia and Boston he became the foremost portrait painter of the new society. It seems ironic that the painter who returned to become the iconographer of George Washington, one of America's most celebrated heroes, should be characterized as having "little in [his] inclinations, taste, or convictions that qualified him as an American."¹⁵ Stuart's return to America would seem to indicate his clear view of himself as American. In going abroad, he was simply following the inclinations of most young, ambitious American artists in an age where artistic training was not available at home.

14 Copley to West, quoted in McCoubrey, American Art, 14.

15 DeLorme, "Stuart," 339. In Copley's case the existence of a mature and celebrated oeuvre, prior to his departure for Europe, won him an important place in American art. Copley's English career is frequently studied and is the subject of Volume 2 of Prown's work previously cited.

The issue of Stuart's national allegiance merits further attention, for it is central to his position as a foreigner both in London and Dublin. It should not be forgotten that Americans travelling to Europe, and most especially the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland during the latter half of the eighteenth century, were entering an atmosphere of political strain. In Ireland it was noted that Stuart "had all the equalizing spirit of an American" while at the same time he "had great affectation in his manner of speaking."¹⁶ John Dowling Herbert, author of the above remarks, was Stuart's assistant in Ireland and noted Stuart's foreign habits along with his attempts to cultivate an English accent. In this context, Stuart's position as a foreigner and most especially as an American must be examined.

Scholars generally recognize that a common sense of American identity was beginning to emerge in the years before 1750.¹⁷ Savelle maintained that it was this new American self-consciousness, this new loyalty to America, that gave Americans an intellectual and emotional sense of purpose and ideal:

The people of the British colonies in America did not yet, in the year 1750, constitute a homogeneous social entity. For the British Empire in this hemisphere was composed of a congeries of disparate settlements and societies ... Yet thirteen of the twenty-odd colonies were passing, more or less consciously, through a process that was at once drawing them together toward

¹⁶ John Dowling Herbert, Irish Varieties for the Last Fifty Years (London: William Joy, 1836), 232.

¹⁷ Max Savelle, Seeds of Liberty: The Genesis of the American Mind (Seattle, Washington: University of Washington Press, 1948), 564.

homogeneity and distinguishing them, as a single unit, from all the others. For these thirteen, located along the eastern seaboard of the continent, were being subtly fused by a number of forces that were daily becoming more powerful.¹⁸

Among the forces alluded to by Savelle and others was continued growth of economic relations between the colonies, which finally led to economic nationalism. Economic nationalism developed for many Americans far "beyond their economic philosophy in defence of their liberties to emotional glorifications of the economic grandeur and destiny of America as a whole or of one's own province as a separate unit."¹⁹ Allied to this economic maturity was the ever-increasing intellectual one. The publication of William Douglass's Summary, Historical and Political, of the British Settlements in North America, between the years 1747 and 1752, is often seen as the first important literary and documentary expression of an American self-consciousness.²⁰ The work, though unfinished, was intended to cover the entire Anglo-American colonial area on the continent of North America. The fact that it was not completed does not diminish the significance of the author's conception, for he gave the first important literary and documentary expression to an American continental self-consciousness. It was the American Revolution, however, that finally molded the many and discrete elements of the new society into a nation.

18 Ibid., 565.

19 Ibid., 566.

20 Ibid., 567-571.

As late as 1770, Copley complained that he found it "difficult to procure Subjects fit and pleasing to entertain the public with."²¹ The Revolution supplied not only compelling subjects for painters, but furthermore, it created a history. As Neil Harris points out:

The Revolution proved a godsend to art and artistic life; it created an alternative to the menial tasks and craft objectives to which American art seemed doomed. The Revolution created a History, marked with great event the beginning of an epoch, and introduced the factors of time and specific creation into the consciousness of a people. Indeed, by producing that consciousness, the Revolution created the people in the first instance. It made private events public events, and private figures public men; it shed an air of importance on a thousand actions, and placed the seal of destiny on individuals who otherwise would have been inconsequential and forgettable.²²

In Harris's opinion, Europeans of the eighteenth century identified national greatness with artistic maturity. As a result, American artists argued that art must be used as evidence to convince skeptical foreigners of the existence of an American nation. As a result of this view, The American Museum in 1787, the year Stuart arrived in Ireland, firmly held that the time had arrived "to explode the European creed that we are infantile in our acquisitions, and savage in our manners, because we are inhabitants of a new world, lately occupied by a race of savages."²³ The issue of how Americans, like Stuart, living

²¹ Harris, Artist, 15.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid., 20

abroad during the latter half of the eighteenth century thought of themselves, or were perceived culturally and in relation to international politics, needs to be addressed. The American and French Revolutions are viewed by historians as events of paramount significance in the formation of the modern world. Trumbull residing in London was jailed there by the British during the American Revolution and, afterwards, having moved to France, he experienced the Revolution there. Stuart, West and Copley were in London during the American Revolution, and Stuart lived in Ireland during the Revolution in France. Their social position as Americans in Europe has never been fully explored. Both foreign observers and contemporary eighteenth-century Americans agreed that vast differences separated European and American societies. This is a matter whose impact has never been fully considered in relation to the American artist abroad. If Stuart attempted to escape American indifference to the arts by travel abroad some evidence suggests that another form of barrier to full social acceptance awaited him in England. Despite England's extensive contact with the rest of the world through trade and commerce, one eighteenth-century visitor there complained that:

I do not think there is a people more prejudiced in its own favour than the British people, and they allow this to appear in their talk and manners. They look on foreigners in general with contempt, and think nothing is as well done elsewhere as in their own country. ²⁴

²⁴ De Saussure, quoted in J.H. Plumb, England in the Eighteenth Century, The Pelican History of England: 7 (Harmondsworth, England and New York: Penguin Books, 1970), 12.

In the context of this opinion the life and circumstances of colonial artists in London is worthy of attention. Of West, Waterhouse writes:

It was as a portrait painter that Benjamin West set himself up in London, where he decided to settle soon after his arrival in 1763... His success, both in Rome and in London, can be partly accounted for by his being an American, and thus a "phenomenon" in which society could allow itself to be interested. Cardinal Albani (who was blind) had naively supposed that he was a Red Indian, and it was an age when Wonders from the Western World were all the rage. At any rate his history pictures met with some response from the bench of bishops, a body of men who have patronized the arts with effect on no other occasion, and one cannot help wondering whether the reason for this was not some obscure feeling of transferred missionary endeavor. ²⁵

While in Dublin, Stuart was patronized by a number of Irish Bishops and also appears to have been observed as a phenomenon. Being American and a painter seems to have been favorable, as on the occasion in 1789 when Stuart was engaged on the portrait of John Fitzgibbon, Lord Clare (Figure 1), perhaps his most important Irish sitter. On that occasion, Stuart was given the place of honor at the Lord Chancellor's table so that he and Fitzgibbon could enjoy some private conversation.²⁶

Americans abroad during the latter part of the eighteenth century were not, it would appear, considered transplanted Englishmen, but

²⁵ Waterhouse, Painting in Britain, 276. As will be discussed subsequently, Stuart also enjoyed substantial patronage from the Church of Ireland clergy.

²⁶ Herbert, Varieties, 245.

were identified as a distinct group who were not entirely understood.

J.H. Plumb summarizes this view. Writing about the years prior to the War of Independence, he states:

For thirty years Anglo-American relations drifted toward shipwreck although the majority of politicians were indifferent to the theoretical relationship between the mother country and her colonies. Colonies were ordained by God to provide raw materials and to accept manufactured articles in return; all trade must be carried in British ships. These were unquestioned articles of mercantilist faith. The majority of the population, however, never thought about America at all; [emphasis mine] to them it was the dumping ground for thieves, bankrupts, and prostitutes, for which we received tobacco in return....

If England had been ignorant of America and its problems until they became of service in a common struggle, the same is equally true of Americans.... Recent immigration had consisted of German and French Protestants, of Irish peasants and Scottish crofters, of whores and felons and bankrupts from London. There could be no loyalty among these immigrants, nor was it to be expected among the American born. Usually their ancestors had left England in resentment and frequently their ambition had been frustrated by the economically inadequate mercantilist system. There was no comprehension of the great difficulties facing England; Americans were concerned with immediate issues and economic advantages.²⁷

The situation was exacerbated by the outbreak of the War of Independence, and Plumb continues:

Few Englishmen believed in their ability to succeed and fewer wished them success. For many, many years Americans were

27 Plumb, England, 124-125. See also J.H. Plumb, The First Four Georges (London: Batsford, 1956), 120-140.

distrusted and despised as rebels and upstarts who had nearly ruined the greatest empire of the world since the Roman.²⁸

Despite frequent contemporary references to America as a classless society dedicated to the advancement of a middle class, an informal stratification of society clearly did exist. Degler points out that references to "the Better Sort," "the Middle Sort," and "the Meaner Sort" did exist, and that wealth, rather than birth, established one's position.²⁹ Wayne Craven promotes the theory that America offered not only the opportunity to make money, but the chance to attain honor, respectability and prestige in a prosperous, middle class society where materialism, pragmatism, utilitarianism, and egalitarianism were the dominating tenets.³⁰ Historically, two opposing images of America seemed to co-exist in the European mind. One was exotic, based on images of Central and South America, the other was associated with the classical norm.³¹ Exotic images were propagated by the voyage of Amerigo Vespucci and others, and derived from descriptions such as appeared in accounts of Vespucci's travels during the fifteenth century:

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Carl Degler quoted in Wayne Craven, Colonial American Portraiture: The Economic, Religious, Social, Cultural, Philosophical, Scientific, and Cultural Foundations (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 257-258.

³⁰ Ibid., 258.

³¹ For a discussion of how Europeans viewed Americans, see Hugh Honour, The New Golden Land: European Images of America from the Discoveries to the Present Time (New York: Pantheon Books, 1976).

The people are thus naked, handsome, brown, well formed in body, their heads, necks, arms, privy parts, feet of women are slightly covered with feathers. The men also have many precious stones in their faces and breasts. No one owns anything but all things are in common. And the men have as wives those that please them, be they mothers, sisters or friends, therein they make no difference. They also fight with each other. They also eat each other even those who are slain, and hang the flesh of them in smoke. They live one hundred and fifty years. And have no government. ³²

While Vespucci's account was based on a group of Brazilian cannibals, it nevertheless provided Europe with a strange and savage image of the New World. The feathered head-dress emphasized this exoticism. Hugh Honour notes that from the 1570's to the early nineteenth century, a woman decked in feathers symbolized the American Continent in innumerable allegorical paintings and sculptures, as well as in decorations on ceramics, glass, silver, furniture and textiles (Figure 2). The image is also confirmed in English literature, and appears most notably in Edmund Spenser, who, describing America in The Faerie Queene, wrote of "paynted plumes in goodly order dight,"³³ and John Milton who in Paradise Lost wrote:

Columbus found the American so girt
With feathered cincture, naked else and wilde
Among the Trees on Iles and woodie Shores. ³⁴

³² Vespucci quoted in Honour, Golden Land, 12.

³³ Spenser quoted in Honour, Golden Land, 85.

³⁴ Milton quoted in Honour, Golden Land, 4.

Honour adds the important observation that while feather head-dresses and cinctures might have indicated the exotic characteristics of the Indian or native American, the nakedness of the rest of their bodies permitted their assimilation into the classically based European tradition. As evidence for this Honour quotes Giovanni di Verrazano who in 1524 wrote that the Rhode Island Indians looked "very much like the antique."³⁵ Therefore, when Benjamin West in 1760 described the Apollo Belvedere with the exclamation "My God, how like it is to a young Mohawk warrior!" he was simply confirming the existence of a long tradition.³⁶ Even as late as 1814, Alexander von Humboldt remarked:

When we speak in Europe of a native of Guiana we figure to ourselves a man whose head and waist are decorated with the fine feathers of the macaw, the toucan and the humming-bird. Our painters and sculptors have long since regarded these ornaments as the characteristic marks of the American.
[emphasis mine] ³⁷

John Galt in his Life and Studies of Benjamin West, 1816, writes of the famed meeting between the young West and the blind Cardinal Albani, and much can be gleaned about the way in which America was viewed abroad from the following passage:

The Cardinal, after some other short questions, invited West to come near him, and running his hands over his features, still more attracted the attention of the company to the stranger, by the

³⁵ Verrazano quoted in Honour, Golden Land, 5.

³⁶ West quoted in McCoubrey, American Art, 39.

³⁷ Humboldt quoted in Honour, Golden Land, 4.

admiration which he expressed at the form of his head. This occasioned inquiries respecting the youth; and the Italians concluding that, as he was an American, he must, of course, have received the education of a savage, [emphasis mine] became curious to witness the effect which the works of art in the Belvedere and Vatican would produce on him. The whole company, which consisted of the principal Roman nobility, were interested in the event; and it was arranged in the course of the evening, that on the following morning they should accompany Mr. Robinson as his protege to the palaces.³⁸

Finally, Hugh Honour draws attention to the fact that in allegories of the continents, Europe was always the presiding figure, sometimes graciously bestowing her gifts of civil government and religion on the other three. Honour points to Giovanni Tiepolo's magnificent Baroque ceiling in Wurzburg, in which America (Figure 3) along with Africa and Asia are depicted as yielding their riches for the benefit of a Europe which indulges in the civilized arts of music, painting and architecture.³⁹ Iconographically, therefore, it was in such allegories, that America and Americans appear in European art of the seventeenth and first half of the eighteenth centuries. The extremes to which belief in the inferiority of the New World persisted may be seen in Cornelius de Pauw's study Recherches philosophiques sur les Americaines, 1768.⁴⁰ Published a mere seven years before Stuart arrived in Europe to begin his career there, De Pauw declared

³⁸ McCoubrey, 39.

³⁹ Honour, Golden Land, 112-116.

⁴⁰ Cornelius de Pauw, Recherches philosophiques sur les Americaines, 1768. For a discussion of de Pauw's study, see Honour, Golden Land, 8.

that in the insalubrious climate of the American continent all mammals and Europeans who settled there degenerated: "It is without doubt a terrible spectacle to see one half of the globe so disfavored by nature that everything there is degenerate or monstrous."⁴¹ In this context, it is not surprising that personifications of America were depicted with an alligator, while Europe appeared with the bull, Asia with the camel and Africa with the lion.

The exotic European images of America based on feathered head-dresses, cinctures and alligators seem to have persisted indefinitely. During Stuart's years in Europe, however, while Americans were still not possessed of a coherent and stable identity there, change occurred toward that end. Mediterranean coast scenes by Claude Joseph Vernet, for instance, with captions bearing the names of the ports of New York, Boston and Philadelphia were published and widely distributed. Implicit was the suggestion that the New World was not unlike the old.⁴² Moreover, prints of the events of the Revolution, such as those published in Paris and Augsburg, depicted New York as similar to a European city.⁴³ Impressive municipal architecture that featured wide piazzas, stone buildings and fine architectural detail of the late Baroque period, were portrayed in a manner which Europeans could easily assimilate. Visual images of this nature slowly began to erode

⁴¹ De Pauw quoted in Honour, Golden Land, 8.

⁴² Honour, Golden Land, 150.

⁴³ Ibid.

the view that America was strange, savage and hostile, and made way for the belief that it was an extension of European civilization. European exposure to Americans such as West, Copley, Stuart and others undoubtedly also contributed to the creation of a more realistic and contemporary view of America although it was the earlier stereotype which greeted these painters on their arrival. The depiction of leading American figures in fashionable contemporary poses by American artists also significantly influenced the shift in the way America was perceived in Europe. For instance, during his stay in Rome, John Singleton Copley painted an elegant double portrait of Bostonians Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Izard, 1775. (Figure 4) The Izards were visiting the city, when Copley, also an American visitor, portrayed the couple in the manner of English dilettanti, representing the height of elegance, sophistication and learning. Seated at an elaborate gilded rococo table in a plush interior, the elegantly attired couple peruse a drawing of antique statuary while behind them a view stretches backward to the Coliseum. Plumes, cinctures and other paraphernalia have been forsaken for the richest damask and the finest tailoring. They represent the epitome of eighteenth century gentlefolk and seem to fit the characterization of de Crevecoeur who wrote that from about 1776 the citizen of the United States was "a new man, who acts upon new principles."⁴⁴

⁴⁴ For a discussion of Michel-Guillaume Jean De Crevecoeur, see Robert E. Brown, Middle Class Democracy and the Revolution in Massachusetts 1691-1780 (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1955), 1-20. DeLorme concedes that Stuart's "portraits of Americans with cosmopolitan experience, such as Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, and

This new type was best typified in European eyes by Benjamin Franklin. Turgot linked Franklin's scientific achievements with the latter's political ideals and gave rise to the epigram: "He snatched the lightning from heaven and the scepter from tyranny."⁴⁵ A proliferation of images discerning the new American appeared in Europe. Franklin himself was wholesomely represented in works by Fragonard and Houdon while George Washington was commemorated by Houdon in antique drapery and partially nude as corresponded to the heroic style. Houdon, in his series of portraits of Americans Joel Barlow, Robert Fulton, and John Paul Jones, represented them as a group of contemporary men to whom the business of government is a responsibility which they are ready to assume with confidence.

Other and more complex views of America also proliferated. The Irish painter James Barry allegorized the American Revolution as the resurrection of ancient democracy. In The Resurrection of Freedom, which was the study for the print The Phoenix or Resurrection of Freedom (Figure 5), issued anonymously in 1776, Barry attacks the British government's American policy. Barry had been brought to London in 1764 by fellow Irishman Edmund Burke whose Philosophical Enquiry into the Nature of the Sublime and the Beautiful, had appeared in 1757. Burke had such a high opinion of Barry's talent that he financed his fellow Irishman to study in Italy. The drawing and the

James Swan, are rendered with unusual sympathy and are among his best portraits of the American period." DeLorme, "Stuart," 341.

⁴⁵ For a discussion of Franklin, see Craven, Portraiture, 257-258.

later print represent Burke's view of the American Revolution, as put forward in his many parliamentary speeches and pamphlets. In the print, a group of men are depicted standing by a monument "to the memory of British freedom." A recumbent figure who represents British freedom lies on the monument and is mourned by Locke. The group behind turn to a pastoral landscape, where a man is plowing and figures dance near a classical building that resembles a temple and bears the words Libert. Ameri. The temple is crowned by a phoenix from whose wings Liberty arises. Barry's etching was a fierce attack on England's treatment of her colonies, especially New England. The print contained the following message, inscribed underneath:

Respectfully dedicated to the present minority in both Houses of Parliament by an Artist. O Liberty thou parent of whatever is truly amiable and illustrious, associated with Virtue thou hatest the luxurious and intemperate and hast successively abandoned thy lov'd residence in Greece, Italy and thy more favored England when they grew corrupt and worthless. Thou hast given them over to chains and despondency....⁴⁶

Among other artists who contributed to a slowly changing and more sophisticated view of America was Benjamin West. Indeed, West had on occasion shown his disapproval of England's policy even at the royal court of George III and such views caused the artist to fall from royal grace for a time. It was not only West's political opinions, however, that contributed to a more current and realistic understanding

⁴⁶ See David Erwin, English Neoclassical Art: Studies in Inspiration and Taste, (Greenwich, Connecticut: New Graphic Society, 1966), 147.

of America among Europeans. The appearance of West's painting The Death of General Wolfe at the Royal Academy exhibition in 1771 attracted a great deal of attention, and the engraving by Wollett which appeared five years later in 1776 proved extremely popular. Despite the fact that much of the attention which the picture attracted derived from West's use of modern dress rather than classical attire, the portrayal of Colonial troops along with the figure of an American Indian created a more realistic, if also "romantic," view of the New World. West clearly aimed at historical reportage rather than classical fantasy and always remained more faithful to accuracy in dress, despite substantial pressure from Reynolds and others. Reynolds argued the inappropriateness of such presentation, declaring that it was much more in keeping with "the inherent greatness of the subject to use the costume of the ancients."⁴⁷ West replied that the event had occurred in the eighteenth century, in a country unknown to either Greeks or Romans, and "at a period of time when no such nations, nor heroes in their costumes any longer existed."⁴⁸ In the 1790's when it was suggested that a monument should be erected in honor of Cornwallis, West argued that it should be historically accurate and that "the prejudice in favour of representing moderns in ancient dress was an absurdity."⁴⁹ The real achievements of West's General Wolfe and Barry's version painted in 1776 are concluded by David Irwin:

⁴⁷ West quoted in Erwin, Neoclassical Art, 148.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

West's Wolfe had overshadowed James Barry's version of 1776. It was unfortunate that this painting was exhibited in the same year that Woollett's engraving of West's painting was published, as critics naturally compared the two, to Barry's disadvantage. Why, asked one writer, should he have tried to follow West with "such unequal power"? And a later writer said that Barry's painting was neither "a poetical interpretation of the fight, nor an historical illustration." Yet he did make some attempt at accuracy. It is known from Barry's notes that he took the trouble not only to find out about the site of the battle, but also interviewed one of the surgeons who took part in the campaign. Unlike West's version, there is no symbolic and historically inaccurate Indian beside the dying General, nor has he introduced a galaxy of people who were not actually present at the death. It is perhaps because of this refusal to idealize that his work was not popular at the time ... It was perhaps because of Barry's attempted accuracy in portraying a contemporary scene that he was invited in 1792 by an American Congress to go to the States to paint the actions of Washington ... Barry, nevertheless, refused the offer. ⁵⁰

Despite how idealized or historically inaccurate the paintings of West and Barry proved to be, it is certain that their popularity along with other images of events and people from the New World helped initiate a change toward a more realistic image of America during the late eighteenth century. As a result of this, Americans abroad would slowly begin to be assimilated within a cultural and historical context. At the time of Stuart's arrival, however, Americans were still extremely foreign to Europeans, and emphasis on cultural differences persisted.

Among contemporary eighteenth-century views of America worthy of consideration here are those of Michel-Guillaume Jean de

⁵⁰ Ibid., 149-151.

Crevecoeur and Benjamin Franklin, both of whom contributed to a fuller understanding of the real differences between European and American society.⁵¹ Struck by the contrast between Europe and America, the French immigrant de Crevecoeur noticed that in America there was not so prominent a gap between the rich and poor as existed in Europe. There were no aristocratic families, no kings, no bishops, no haughty mansions in comparison with the clay hut or "miserable cabin."⁵² The Frenchman observed a country of fair cities, substantial villages, abundant land, comfortable houses and possessed of a general air of prosperity. It was in his estimation the most perfect society in existence, where men were free as they ought to be. The reasons for the idyllic state de Crevecoeur attributes to extraordinary economic opportunity — the fact that people were amply rewarded for their work monetarily, allowing them to procure land which was not then confiscated by greedy and avaricious potentates.

Benjamin Franklin, like de Crevecoeur, advised Europeans that America had abundant opportunity for the middle and working classes. He, like de Crevecoeur, emphasized that America was predominantly middle class, and proclaimed that few were either as rich or as poor as Europeans. Franklin moreover emphasized that title carried little use in America, and that a man's usefulness was more important than his station and that it was a land of labor, and that one, "Who has no other

⁵¹ See Brown, Democracy and Revolution, 18.

⁵² Ibid.

Quality to recommend him but his Birth," should not immediately consider immigration, and that:

In Europe it has indeed its Value; but it is a Commodity that cannot be carried to a worse market than that of America, where people do not inquire concerning a Stranger, What is he but, What can he do? If he has any useful Art [skill], he is welcome; and if he exercises it, and behaves well, he will be respected.⁵³

By contrast, Franklin described conditions as they existed in Ireland and Scotland during his visit there in 1751.

In those countries a small part of society are landlords, great noblemen, and gentlemen, extremely opulent, living in the highest affluence and magnificence: The bulk of the people tenants, extremely poor, living in the most sordid wretchedness, in dirty hovels of mud and straw, and cloathed [sic] only in rags.

I thought often of the happiness of New England, where every man is a freeholder, has a vote in public affairs, lives in a tidy, warm house, has plenty of good food and fewel [sic], with whole clothes from head to foot, the manufacture perhaps of his own family....

Had I never been in the American colonies, but was to form my judgement of civil society by what I have lately seen, I should never advise a nation of savages to submit to civilization: For I assure you, that in possession and enjoyment of the various comforts of life, compar'd to those people every Indian is a gentleman. And the effect of this kind of civil society seems only to be, the depressing multitudes below the savage state that a few may be rais'd above it.⁵⁴

53 Franklin quoted in Craven, Portraiture, 258.

54 Franklin quoted in Brown, Democracy and the Revolution, 14-17.

In this context it is possible to understand Herbert's remarks regarding Stuart's arrogance while in Dublin:

He (Stuart) was perfectly conscious of his pre-eminence in painting; and he, by his manner, exhibited that self-opinion to his visitors: this gave him the air of a coxcomb, although he assumed an independence of mind, which scarcely would be endured from any other man.⁵⁵

According to Herbert, Stuart also "looked contemptuously upon titled rank,"⁵⁶ and relating an incident witnessed by Herbert, we see in Stuart the manifestation of what was considered his American nature:

I had an example of that not long after, the Archbishop of Dublin had his daughter's portrait painted by Stuart, but had made some remark upon it, that was not complimentary to the artist. His Grace called on Stuart, and sent up his name that he wished to speak to Mr. Stuart. I happened to be conversing with Stuart at the time, and I rose to depart; but he said, — "No, you must stay and witness a novel scene." He sent down an excuse, that he was not accustomed to attend carriages, — that if his Grace would honor him in his painting room, he would attend him.⁵⁷

When the Archbishop finally appeared, the discussion revolved around his desire to have Stuart make changes in his daughter's portrait. Stuart was adamant, replying that "a dressmaker may alter a dress; a

⁵⁵ Herbert, Varieties, 226.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 232.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

milliner a cap; a tailor a coat; but a painter may give up his art, if he attempts to alter to please: it cannot be done."⁵⁸ Herbert continues:

The Archbishop bowed obsequiously, hobbled down: Stuart attended him half-way, and bowing low, returned to his painting room, enjoying his victory. He asked me how I like the scene. I said I could not have believed it, had I not been a witness to it. He remarked that the Archbishop was arbitrary — therefore he was resolved not to yield to his rude and overbearing temper.⁵⁹

The above incidents suggest the so-called "equalizing spirit" which was thought to be distinctly American. It was, moreover, understood to be derived from Stuart's recognition of himself as pre-eminent in portraiture, thus placing skill at craft above titled rank. Franklin, de Crevecoeur, and others provide clues to the origin of this in Stuart's nature. Both Franklin and de Crevecoeur emphasized that one reason for the prevailing economic democracy was the favorable conditions for workers and for ordinary people in America. For instance, in 1772 workingmen near London received 10d. a day while Massachusetts towns paid more than twice that figure for work on the highways.⁶⁰ While wages were higher in the colonies than in England, provisions were much lower in cost. In addition to this healthy economic state in the colonies, Jefferson claimed that from Portsmouth to Savannah one seldom met a beggar and then only in the larger towns.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 234.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Brown, Democracy and Revolution, 18.

This, as will be discussed, was in direct contrast to the conditions that Stuart encountered in England and Ireland.

Monetary considerations made for clear discrepancies in standards of living between England and the American Colonies: Anne Hulton, the sister of an English customs official, complained of a lack of servants in Boston. No one would call anyone else master, she said, and she defined the reason as there being "no distinctions, scarcely" in the society.⁶¹ This may also partly explain Stuart's close relationship with his assistant John Dowling Herbert, and Stuart's frequent choice of him for company above others of high society.⁶²

The process of assimilation for Americans into the European consciousness would prove to be a slow one, and Gilbert Stuart's career abroad until 1793 encompassed a period when the image of America and Americans was still largely unsettled in the European mind. This may have played a part in Stuart's eventual decision to return home in 1793, when the possibility of issuing images of American's founding fathers arose as an artistic challenge. Since it has generally been assumed that Stuart's only reason for return was to escape his debts, the above issue suggests that other concerns were present to occupy Stuart's mind regarding his return to America. More importantly, the complex political situation in Ireland in 1793 most definitely influenced Stuart's decision, for, as will be discussed, his source of patronage was

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Herbert, *Varieties*, 244.

fundamentally threatened and the society that made Stuart its painter would be eradicated shortly after his departure. That Stuart was prescient to these events is clear, for his Irish success was due entirely to his political and religious association with the Protestant Ascendancy. His unique position as an American allowed him access to this circle of patronage, and in a curious way, as a foreigner he managed to manipulate this closely-knit society in his favor.

CHAPTER II

STUART'S SUCCESS IN ENGLAND:

THE SKATER IN CONTEXT

This picture [The Skater, 1782] was exhibited at Somerset House, and attracted so much notice, that Stuart said he was afraid to go to the Academy to meet the looks, and answer the inquiries of the multitude. Mr. Grant went one day to the exhibition, dressed as his portrait represented him; the original was immediately recognized, when the crowd followed him so closely that he was compelled to make his retreat, for everyone was exclaiming, "That is he, there is the gentleman." Mr. West now told Stuart that he might venture to take rooms.¹

Prior to a discussion of Stuart's successful career in Ireland, it is important to define his talent and account for his success within the cosmopolitan context of late eighteenth century rococo portraiture in London. This chapter is devoted to a study of Stuart's style as defined in The Skater (1782) (Figure 6), one of his major English works and that which first attracted the attention of his Irish patron, Charles Manners, Duke of Rutland.

¹ Dunlap, History, 1:219.

Dunlap gives an account of Stuart's first meeting with the Duke of Rutland, as narrated by Stuart to Fraser. The exhibition mentioned in the account is that in which The Skater was shown:

Returning one morning from the exhibition he (Stuart) stopped at Sir Joshua Reynolds' residence: whilst he was looking at his pictures (and here he told me that he had always derived improvement from studying the works of that artist), the Duke of Rutland walked in, and passed from the outer room, in which Stuart was, into the next one, where Sir Joshua was painting; the door was left open and Sir Joshua, being hard of hearing, the Duke spoke so loud, that he was overheard, and said to Sir Joshua, "I wish you to go to the exhibition with me, and there is a portrait there which you must see, everybody is enchanted with it." Sir Joshua enquired who it was painted by? "A young man by the name of Stuart." Stuart said that he did not remain to hear more.²

The successful exhibition of The Skater displayed Stuart's extraordinary ability to synthesize the complex zeitgeist of his age into a deft visual presentation in perfect harmony with its time and place. Moreover, it explains how Stuart arrived at a successful style completely in keeping with the taste of his late eighteenth-century English aristocratic patrons. A discussion therefore of the philosophical and aesthetic issues of the age provides an important point of departure for a study of Stuart's style.

In the annals of British political philosophy of the late eighteenth century, the controversy between the philosophers

² Ibid.

Edmund Burke and Thomas Paine is a central issue.³ Burke exerted all his strength in a conservative defense of what seemed to him the standard principles of civilized, moral and righteous thinking while Paine waged a furious war in the interest of social reform and innovation. At issue here were two apparently opposing philosophies that overlapped during the late eighteenth century when the old political and social order of the ancien regime was threatened with destruction.

The late eighteenth century saw the final weakening and destruction of the doctrine of the Divine Right of Kings. In its place was the growing notion established in the American Constitution that: "all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights (and) that among these are Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness."⁴ The leaders of eighteenth-century thought, despite their differences, were unified as products of the Enlightenment, and shared a common belief in the power of reason. In the full Newtonian sense, they sought in discourse a rational explanation for the laws determining the structure and working of the universe. They believed in human perfectability and in the possibility of human omniscience; it also

³ Edmund Burke's views are most vehemently expressed in his Reflections on the Revolution in France, 1790; Thomas Paine's appear in his Rights of Man, 1791.

⁴ Constitution, art. 1, sec. 1.

seemed to them that if mankind were learned enough, all the problems of society and governance could be solved. In this optimistic environment all aspects of human behavior were scrutinized from a "rational" point of view: political systems, social customs, religious practices and artistic endeavors. Everything deemed worthy of man's attention was ordered and encapsulated in the great French encyclopedia, which began its appearance in 1751. It is in this context of man's great fascination with himself that Gilbert Stuart's place in the world of eighteenth century portraiture may be examined, and his success understood.

Benjamin West, alluding to Stuart's abilities as a painter said of him that he "nails the face to the canvass."⁵ Given the intellectual environment in a period much concerned with the empirical, the remark provides insight into the common perception of Stuart's work. From an artist whose radically contemporary and empirical treatment of the Death of General Wolfe (c. 1770) had changed the norm by which history painting would forever be judged, the significance of the term "nailed" cannot be understated.⁶

⁵ This remark appears in a letter from W.T. Franklin to Benjamin Franklin, November 9, 1784 quoted in Park, Stuart, 1:37 and DeLorme, "Stuart," 351.

⁶ The bibliography on West's Death of General Wolfe is considerable. See Ann Uhry Abrams, The Valiant Hero: Benjamin West and Grand Style History Painting (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1985). See also, Helmut Von Erffa and Alan Staley, The Paintings of Benjamin West (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1986).

West's comment clearly recognizes Stuart's talent for pragmatic portraiture. As shall be discussed, that alone, however, was not sufficient to guarantee success in the complex social atmosphere of late eighteenth century England. It will be demonstrated that to ensure success, Stuart, like Reynolds, combined elements in the crosscurrents of taste that comprised the late eighteenth century sensibility. Pragmatism alone was not sufficient.

In his Wolfe, 1771, West's own empiricism demanded that the historical subject be treated in a revolutionary and contemporary style. Forsaking the accepted traditions such as allegory or personification and using contemporary dress instead of classical costume, West braved the critical storm resulting from his use of candid elements of reportage. The selective use of Classicism, together with symbolic elements and contemporary costume, combines disparate and opposing styles giving the work its revolutionary power. The painting, like the political and intellectual character of the period, is in fact a synthesis of tradition and innovation. Artistically, the decade of the 1770's was one where the pragmatic and the fanciful met in a series of clashes that historical nomenclature now refers to as the "Dawn of Romanticism."⁷ Such generalizing, however, ignores the more specific issues of the

⁷ Ellis Waterhouse, Painting in Britain 1530-1790, Pelican History of Art, ed., Nikolaus Pevsner (London, Melbourne, Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1953), 225.

time, and reduces the importance of personalities in the formation of the period.⁸

Early in the decade Benjamin West exhibited both the Wolfe (c. 1770) and Penn's Treaty with the Indians (1772) creating a series of major innovations in history painting that had advanced that genre into a completely new area of concern. He challenged the theory and practice of history painting at its very core by painting modern subjects in modern dress. In Penn's Treaty, West, depicting the event which occurred in 1680, ignored the issue of "correct" historical costume of the period in favor of Pennsylvania Quaker dress from his childhood. The picture was meant to have the immediacy of a recent event, and to this end West even included portraits of his father and brother in the painting. In these innovations, West had gone against the sage advice and conservative wishes of both George III and Reynolds. The issue however was a far deeper one than that of appropriate dress, and reached into the core of English aesthetic thought of the period involving the careers of Reynolds, West, Copley and Stuart.

Reynolds had returned from Italy to England and settled in London in 1753. In Italy he had studied the classics and deepened his knowledge and appreciation of the old masters. On his return

⁸ See Mark Girouard, "English Art and the Rococo," Country Life, 1 (13 January 1966), 58-61.

he rapidly gained a wealthy clientele, who espoused his so-called "classicism." From 1768, when he was elected Foundation President of the Royal Academy, until his death in 1792, months before Stuart's departure from Ireland, Reynolds was an arbiter of taste and his life was closely intertwined with the artistic, literary, intellectual and social history of his time.⁹ The period, for instance, is sometimes referred to as the "Age of Reynolds." Reynolds' success as a portraitist provides insight into some of the most important issues of taste and patronage in London of the 1770's and 1780's during Stuart's time there. It may well be asked, for instance, what elements convened in English society to allow for Reynolds' success while Copley found the production of even one major artistic success elusive. An examination of some major portraits by Reynolds from the decade and a half before Stuart's departure for Ireland in 1787 reveals an extraordinary degree of variety. The ingredients of success seem to have been difficult for painters to predict. The volatile conditions that created a certain diversity of taste in the English capital are worthy of consideration, and, as has been seen, West's controversial departure from the tenets of history painting is indicative of a much larger crisis in aesthetic identity that beset England in these formative and crucial decades. It was to be Stuart's understanding and absorption of

⁹ Ibid.

these conditions and complexities that would secure his success. The reception of The Skater, exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1782, consolidated his career as a portraitist and paved the way for his Irish patronage.

An examination of Reynolds' style is central to this discussion. A considerable number of drawings and studies completed by him in Italy were taken from classical sculpture and became the source of many of his portrait poses after his return, but, more importantly, Reynolds also discovered the diversity of style in Italian Renaissance art. He noted, for instance, that Raphael was not so free in his technique as the Venetians, never acquiring:

that nicety of taste in colours, that breadth of light and shadow, that art and management of uniting light to light, and shadow to shadow, so as to make the object rise out of the ground with that plenitude of effect so much admired in the works of Correggio.¹⁰

This distinction between Raphael and Correggio later enabled Reynolds to create a style that balanced and combined both approaches in a correct degree that suited his London patrons. Reynolds' mature style is generally recognized as having a basis in contemporary eighteenth century theory. He had studied with

¹⁰ Robert Wark, ed., Joshua Reynolds, Discourses on Art (San Marino, Calif.: Huntington Library, 1959), 81.

Hudson, the son-in-law of Jonathan Richardson, author of the famed Essay on the Theory of Painting, 1715.¹¹ In his work, Reynolds fulfilled Richardson's ambition which was to elevate portraiture in the artistic hierarchy. In his obituary of Reynolds, Edmund Burke wrote, "In painting portraits he appeared not to be raised upon that platform but to descend to it from a higher sphere."¹² This has been plausibly interpreted as an illustration of the effects of Italian study on the art of Reynolds. The "higher sphere" from which he descended represents the idealism of antiquity and the Renaissance, from which vantage point he portrayed society. This created an inherent tension in the aesthetic concerns of Reynolds, a tension which was not unusual in the context of his time. Reynolds did not seem to question the superiority of Raphael, and analytically he made a distinction between the "great" style of Raphael and the "ornamental" styles of the Venetians.¹³ To secure his position in England, Reynolds chose a composite style. To justify his placement between the "dignity of Raphael and the glow and bustle of a Paulo, or

¹¹ The Works of Jonathan Richardson (London: Strawberry Hill, 1792).

¹² The obituary is quoted in full in C.R. Leslie and T. Taylor, Life and Times of Sir Joshua Reynolds (London: J. Murray, 1865), II:629-630.

¹³ Wark, Discourses, 72.

Tintoret,"¹⁴ Reynolds distinguished between heightening the elegant and degrading the sublime: "It happens in a few instances that the lower may be improved by borrowing from the grand." When this union is successful, portraiture, according to Reynolds, "becomes in some sort a rival to that style which we have prized as the highest."¹⁵ Clearly Burke, in his eulogy, was closely following on the established aesthetic doctrine of Reynolds himself. A study of Reynolds' style reveals all the qualities of a painter whose historical bias was toward Rubens rather than Poussin. It was essential for Reynolds to forge a style which recognized the importance of the painterly Van Dyck, who was still the artistic heir of the English aristocracy. In his Notes on C. A. Dufresney's Art of Painting, Reynolds remarked:

When I was in Venice, the method I took to avail myself of their principles (those of Titian, Paul Verones, Tintoretto, and their follower Rubens) was this. When I observed an extraordinary effect of light and shade in any picture, I took a leaf of my pocket-book, and darkened every part of it in the same gradation of light, and this without any attention to the subject or to the drawing of the figures. [emphasis mine]¹⁶

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid., 89.

¹⁶ Edmond Malone, The Works of Sir Joshua Reynolds, Knight (London: T. Cadell and W. Davies, 1798), 111:147-148.

The elements of Reynolds' eclectic and composite style are most revealing in a study of his use of the Apollo Belvedere pose which he adopted many times in his portrait work. The portrait of Frederick, 5th Earl of Carlisle in Garter Robes (1769) (Figure 7) shows a gracious and youthful Earl against a background of Venetian rococo splendor. A second use of the same pose from the antique is present in Omai (1776) (Figure 8) described by Joseph Burke as:

... the cynosure of London salons ... showpiece of the fashionable world for different reasons. He is the noble savage, whose example instructed society in natural virtue. His spurious Tahitian garb evokes the Rajah and the Roman Senator. By altering the arms of the classical statue Reynolds has translated combative action into a gesture of proud indication as the young prince pauses during a stroll on his native island. For a memorable moment the classical and romantic tendencies of the eighteenth century are fused in perfect reconciliation, so that the picture becomes a kind of summation.¹⁷

In addition, Reynolds incorporated many stylistic elements of rococo design and painterliness into his classicising style. It was Reynolds' genius that made this amalgam of apparently opposing styles acceptable, and even desirable to London's fashionably conscious. There is overwhelming proof that in most other areas of

¹⁷ Joseph Burke, English Art 1714-1800 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), 205.

aesthetics, the taste for the Rococo was generally perceived by traditionalists as antagonistic to and destructive of classical and Renaissance design.¹⁸ Rococo was perceived as threatening the purity of classicism, and preventing that monopoly of taste which its admirers and exponents believed was its inalienable right. If one looks further afield into the rich world of the decorative arts in England during the latter half of the eighteenth century, one finds that English designers, artists and craftsmen were not nearly so troubled by the burden of classical antiquarian concerns. Frequently when they took pencil in hand, whatever historical sense they possessed evaporated. Without apology, they employed in the same room or on the same piece of fabric or furniture, rococo details and other types of ornament from such totally different sources as the Orient, the Middle Ages and the Classical past. This fusion of decorative ideas, whose origins were separated in time and space, evinces the uncertainty of taste from the middle of the eighteenth century onward when nascent Romanticism developed an antipathy with the Renaissance. Even Hogarth, in his assessment of the serpentine line as the fundamental element of all good design, prepared the way for rococo indulgence by later artists. In fact, the St. Martin's Lane Academy, founded by Hogarth in

¹⁸ B. Sprague Allen, Tides in English Taste 1619-1800 (New York: Pageant Books, 1958), 100-115. See also Mark Girouard, "English Art and the Rococo," Country Life, 2 (27 January 1966), 188-190 and 3 (February 1966), 224-227.

1735, was the training ground for many artists who subsequently became exponents of the Rococo. It was a clear sign that the English were breaking away from the strict disciplinary canons of Classical and Renaissance art when, early in the century, as soon as the new French ideal of beauty defined itself, the asymmetry and curvature of the Rococo began to appear in Britain.¹⁹ An examination of some sources in the decorative arts will illuminate ways in which French rococo design was assimilated in Britain.

Of the numerous patternbooks which streamed from the press during the eighteenth century, Chippendale's is the most famous, and one of the few that was widespread in its influence. While Chippendale's The Gentleman's and Cabinet Maker's Director (1751) set the tone, a host of other books by lesser-known figures illustrate the diversity of English taste between 1740 and 1780.²⁰ These authors, inspired by their artistic predilections, published without discrimination a series of classical, Chinese, Gothic, and Rococo designs, and these various styles satisfied and defined the varied taste of the time. Moreover, workmen, whether architects or cabinet-makers, needed to have at hand a dictionary of ornament if they were to satisfy the ravenous and eclectic tastes of their fashionable clients.

¹⁹ Ibid., 101.

²⁰ Ibid., 106.

Among the first books that espoused and articulated the rococo style in ornament for English designers and builders was Mathias Lock's elaborately titled work, A New Drawing Book of Ornaments, Shields, Compartments, Masks, etc., 1740.²¹ In the course of the ensuing dozen years, Lock issued several more sets of designs, including Six Sconces and Six Tables in 1744 and 1746, respectively.²² Both showed actual pieces of furniture, whereas the earlier work had been devoted to a series of sketches in the rococo manner, and their adaptation to practical purposes was left to the craftsman. Other books of ornament appeared in 1752 by Lock together with Henry Copland, in 1766 by architects Thomas Milton, John Cruden, and Placido Columbani, and in 1775 by the cabinet maker Robert Manwaring.²³ Combining these sources provided English patrons of the arts with alternatives to the classical repertory.

The inherent qualities of the Rococo, its asymmetry and its curvature, encouraged extravagance in design but never influenced English decoration to the extent it did in France or Germany. What did occur in England was a practice of amalgamating ornament

²¹ For a discussion of these publications see Geoffrey Wills, English Furniture, 1550-1760 (Enfield, England: Guinness, 1971), 243.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

and design allowing for incongruous historical and geographical associations, thereby making it possible for artists to loosen the knot of classicism in favor of a hybrid style. This is a fundamental element in the art of West, Reynolds, Copley and Stuart. While the spirit of the Rococo in England definitely represented a departure from tradition, that departure was still measured and the restraining effects of classicism continued to be present, even in the most liberated areas of the fine arts. Adherence to elements of classical "refinement" permitted reasoned departure into less controlled areas of Rococo expression. In Reynolds especially the imitation of the Classical idiom remained seminal. Rococo, on the other hand, largely repudiated any such ideal of imitation and tempered Reynolds' style. Fundamentally open, free and fanciful in spirit, it emancipated design from its subservience to Graeco-Roman and Renaissance classicism by offering spontaneity and diffusing restraint. Reynolds' success, like that of Stuart, and like Copley's failure, revolves around an individual assessment of and response to these concerns. It is precisely Reynolds' appreciation of Correggio and the Venetians that paved the way for his assimilation of the Rococo. His work, relying on the classically derived pose of the Apollo Belvedere, illustrates the successful use of the Classical and assimilation of the Rococo as it continued well into the advanced years of the eighteenth century in England. When Reynolds painted his Augustus Kepple (1753-54) (Figure 9) he

created a subdued portrait where the Viscount emerges from the rocky seashore. The whole is presented with elegant refinement as would appear to befit a seaman of distinction. One year later, Reynolds painted his Peter, 1st Baron Ludlow (1755) (Figure 10) in which the figure strikes a similar, but reversed pose. However, enjoying rococo emancipation, the Baron appears accompanied by a hound and in addition he sports an elaborate costume, complete with an ostrich feather headdress. Classical refinement and its tenets gradually erode here in favor of more fanciful and playful rococo ornament. Returning to a discussion of the portrait of Frederick, 5th Earl of Carlisle (1769), already mentioned, it becomes clear that Reynolds displays an even more complex and elaborate series of rococo elements there. Set ambiguously in a point of architectural transformation between interior and exterior space, and within a complex architectural setting of eighteenth century classicising elements, the Earl descends the stairs. Accompanied by a small dog of distinctly rococo allusion, he is elaborately dressed in foppish attire reminiscent of all that the Rococo can muster. Still, the classical elements are clearly in place both in the architecture and in the Apollo pose. These provide balance and keep the picture from becoming formless in its roccco excess. It is overall a work that brilliantly assimilates the rococo style in a fashion that was acceptable to the period. It was perhaps Reynolds' greatest genius that, as the century progressed, and in accordance

with the taste of his sitters, he could adapt his classicism to absorb French rococo elements. His portraits were therefore satisfying to a people for whom fashion and refinement were of great importance.

Thus, by the 1770's, Reynolds had reached a point of artistic finesse by which he could deftly apportion both his classical and rococo allusions in the correct measure to insure the satisfaction of his patrons and the success of his portrait trade. In the 1780's, when circumstance allowed it, he could embrace the Rococo with zeal as he does in many works. His portrait of George IV. when Prince of Wales, (Figure 11) exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1787, the year of Stuart's departure for Ireland, again shows the Prince in the Apollo pose, restrained in all but the elaborate costume, resplendent with rococo plumes to the left and balanced with a classical column to the right. The added figure of the servant or valet who fumbles with the costume offers an added, if somewhat labored, element of rococo informality. It is, however, again a striking example of Reynolds' ability to combine and adapt the Classical with the Rococo which so pleased his patrons and provided him with financial and social success.

Against a background of Reynolds' social, adaptive and artistic genius we can better understand Copley's failure. In 1785 Copley showed his Daughters of George III, (Figure 12) wherein he lost a great deal of the control that had been the successful hallmark of his history paintings and of his American portraits. In

this work, Copley produced a rococo extravaganza which was observed as being devoid of any restraint, and he paid the price in the ensuing review by John Hoppner in the Morning Post:

So, Mr. Copley, is this the fruit of your long studies and labours? Is it for this you have contemplated the Iris and the Prism? Is it because you have heard fine feathers make fine birds, that you have concluded fine cloaths will make Princesses? What delightful disorder! Why, you have plucked up harmony by the roots, and planted confusion in its stead! Princesses, parrots, dogs, grapes, flowers, leaves, are each striving for pre-eminence, and opposing, with hostile force, all attempts of our wearied eyes to find repose.²⁴

The review was patently unfair since Hoppner had painted three individual portraits of the same princesses for the exhibition.²⁵ However, Hoppner's views were contagious and two weeks later the Morning Chronicle stated:

Copley has nothing to do, but to obliterate all the profuse decoration about the portrait of the prince's [sic], to make it a very picture - when unadorned, adorned the most. This is precisely the case, with such beautiful objects, as the figures are, and of such ugly objects, as are the ducks, the dogs, the red flowers, and the green leaves, &c. &c. &c.²⁶

²⁴ Morning Chronicle, 4 May 1785 quoted in Prown, Copley, 11:316.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 315.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 316.

Hostility at court from the royal painters, Reynolds, West, and Ramsay, could also have been a factor in the unfavorable review of Copley's work. Copley's relationships with both Reynolds and West were strained at the time. While personal enmity was certainly a factor, Prown agrees that the rococo flamboyance and opulence of The Daughters of George III in a period where classical restraint and decorum was still very important may have been an even larger factor.²⁷ Rococo splendor was certainly acceptable as is borne out by the success of Reynolds's rococo portraits in the Apollo Belvedere pose, but a measure of classical restraint was clearly an important ingredient for success. It is the apparent abandonment of that restraint that seems to have committed Copley's picture to trial, and defeated his most major attempt at fashionable portraiture.

Classicists continually sneered at the prevalence of French taste in all phases of English life, and the Rococo was seen as one pernicious example of it. Hostility to the Rococo is, however, rarely specific in print, and apart from one or two indictments, written criticism of it is rare. Allen points out that this lack of criticism has derived from the fact that, although abundantly evident in its influence upon interior decoration and the decorative arts, the

²⁷ Ibid.

Rococo did not effectively influence English exterior architecture.²⁸ Making no such discrimination between interior and exterior use of the Rococo, however, Isaac Ware delivered against it an unequivocal broadside.²⁹ Ware's criticism exemplifies the resolve of the Classicists, both in France and England, to recall taste from the vagaries of the Rococo to the restraint of Classicism. Ware's conservatism is such that he even finds the square and fluted column unacceptable on the grounds that the tree from which the column developed is neither square nor fluted. After this tiresome argument, Ware declares: "This is judging with severity, but it is judging with truth." He sees the sound principle of domestic architecture in Britain undermined by "the caprice of France." Moreover, he designates the French as "these frivolous people whom we are apt to imitate."³⁰ He criticizes the

... unmeaning scrawl of (C's) inverted, turned, and hooked together,[which] take the place of Greek and Roman elegance.... This is not because the possessor thinks there is or can be elegance in such fond weak ill-jointed and unmeaning figures: it is usually because it is French.³¹

²⁸ Allen, English Taste, 110-111.

²⁹ For a discussion of the works of Isaac Ware: Mercure de France (1754) and A Complete Body of Architecture (1756), see Allen, English Taste, 112-114.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ *Ibid.*, 113.

In a final burst of sarcasm and uncontrolled anger, Ware attacks even the political structures of the French and their institutions. Clearly, at issue here is not the matter of rococo style or aesthetics, but Ware's deep-rooted resentment of French influence on English art of the day. Regarding the French, Ware writes that they are,

... difficult to conquer; but let us rouse in every sense the national spirit against them; and no more permit them to deprave our taste on this noble science, than to introduce among us the miseries of their government, or fooleries of their religion.... Upon the most impartial review we shall find that nothing in greatness or in grace, can compare with the Greek or Roman architecture: therefore let us employ nothing in the place of them.³²

Later, however, even Ware begins to accept the inevitable and undertakes to accompany his readers into the "wilderness" of fancy. Restraining himself from outright attack, he suggests that the luxuriance of the Rococo be curbed until it has have been reduced "into a more decent appearance."³³ Clearly, Ware's retreat from his earlier position is the result of his desire to please an aristocracy which had an ever-increasing interest and

³² Ibid., 114.

³³ Ibid.

fascination with the Rococo. His amelioration was conceived as a means to placate aristocratic clients such as those who patronized Reynolds. Socially, the attraction of the Rococo in England was almost irresistible. Primarily an aristocratic style, it fulfilled the fancies and elaborate taste of an aesthetically insecure and wealthy audience. What seems to have been of fundamental importance for artistic success in the England of the period was the ability to strike the median balance between classical reserve and rococo splendor as determined by the requirements of patronage.

In the light of these complex aesthetic issues, the matter of Stuart's success in London may now be considered. According to Dunlap, "Mr. Stuart had his full share of the best business in London, and prices equal to any, except Sir Joshua Reynolds and Gainsborough."³⁴ In his seminal Painting in Britain, Waterhouse devotes a mere half page to Stuart; nevertheless, he makes a comment of great importance when he writes:

During his English period, therefore, we must consider that Stuart showed his genius only in a muted form, calculated to the requirements of his patronage. [emphasis mine]³⁵

The full-length portrait of the Scottish gentleman, William Grant, known as The Skater (1782), was Stuart's first great success

³⁴ Dunlap, History, 1:222-223.

³⁵ Waterhouse, Painting in Britain, 225.

in London. The picture, as stated, was much admired at the Royal Academy when it was exhibited there. It is significant that when the same picture was exhibited a century later, in 1878, again at the Royal Academy, the work was mistakenly attributed to Gainsborough.³⁶ This error is but one in a long series of mistaken attributions that confused the work of Stuart with that of Gainsborough. Frank Jewett Mather relates that the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, wishing to use Stuart's portrait of Copley as a model for a medallion, received from Copley's descendants in the late 1800's an engraving after Stuart but with a false ascription to Gainsborough.³⁷ In short, as Mather points out, a Stuart of the early seventeen-eighties looked like a Gainsborough to all but the most discriminating eyes, and most were deceived by the general analogy of style and feeling. Mather adds that the close resemblance of style between Gainsborough's work of the 1770's and Stuart's work of the same decade is not fortuitous but indeed the result of considerable imitation on Stuart's behalf. The abundant fiction which surrounds Stuart's life is frequently of little use in scholarly endeavor. However, an account of a meeting between Stuart and Gainsborough is described by Dunlap and was related by

³⁶ Barbara Novak O'Doherty, "Philosopher of the Face," Art News 66 (Summer, 1967), 42.

³⁷ Frank Jewett Mather, "The Origin of Gilbert Stuart's Style," Art Studies 4 (1926), 5.

the aged Stuart to Neagle.³⁸ According to the story, young art students were debating their ideals in the antique class at the Royal Academy. While some advocated the direct imitation of some great master or school, Stuart apparently insisted that the artist must see nature with his own eyes. Gainsborough, who, it was reported, happened in at that moment patted Stuart on the shoulder, saying, "That's right, my lad: adhere to that, and you'll be an artist."³⁹ Mather notes that there is no further mention of any further relationship between Stuart and Gainsborough. Of more scholarly significance is Stuart's inevitable knowledge of the work of Thomas Gainsborough gained through the ambiance of London exhibitions and patrons which would have provided him with first hand experience of Gainsborough's pictures. Gainsborough's work appeared annually at the Academy throughout the seventies and eighties, and Stuart's account of his own method, as related to Dunlap, shows by implication his debt to the style and technique of Gainsborough. Whether the events were indeed as Stuart told them is irrelevant, because Stuart's recognition of his debt to Gainsborough is clear whether that occurred in the manner of a personal meeting or not. The following account in Dunlap concentrates on Stuart's own technique:

³⁸ Dunlap, History, 1:216.

³⁹ Ibid.

He [Stuart] told me [writes Dunlap] that he thought Titian's works were not by any means so well blended when they left the easel, as the moderns infer from their present effect. He considers that Rubens had a fair perception of colour, and had studied well the works of the great Venetian, and that he must have discovered more tinting, or separate tints, he (Rubens) resolved not only to keep his colours still more distinct against the ravages of time, but to follow his own disposition with spirited touches. Mr. Stuart condemned the practice of mixing the colour, and comparing it with whatever was to be imitated. — "Good flesh colouring," he said, "partook of all colours, not mixed, so as to be combined in one tint, but shining through each other, like the blood through the natural skin." VanDyke he much admired, for the intelligence of his heads and his freedom. He spoke well of Gainsborough's flesh, and of his dragging manner of tinting; but he could not endure Copley's laboured flesh, which he compared to tanned leather.⁴⁰

The passage makes it clear that Stuart recognized in the work of Gainsborough a contemporary assimilation of the techniques of Rubens and VanDyke. The loose handling and dragging of paint across the surface of the canvas provided that richness of technique that was well suited to the taste of Gainsborough's patrons. Gainsborough's own presentation of rich effects reflected the assimilation of Rococo taste in his style. Copley's "laboured flesh," as Stuart termed it, was clearly less attractive in an age that found the easier technical grace of Reynolds, and above all Gainsborough, the highest aesthetic of the day. It was Stuart's

⁴⁰ Ibid., 217.

consummate understanding of this Rococo appeal that created for him a London clientele. He, like Reynolds and Gainsborough, manipulated the Rococo with a correct measure of restraint allowing his works to appear elegant and aristocratic without appearing vulgar. Frank Jewett Mather sums up Stuart's style:

Stuart ... could produce a bit of lace with the fewest possible strokes, yet have the object as complete in its essentials as the most labored lace collar in a good Dutch portrait.... His method finally developed so that the whole envelope of the face is simply drawn in fast sweeping strokes, yet these strokes do not have unpleasant edges or in fact any that are discernible. They merge into tone automatically, and we found the man modelling in pure color.⁴¹

Mather then cites a criticism frequently levelled at Stuart, namely his difficulty with anatomical issues. Mather concludes that given his talent, Stuart's position as an artist was inferior to what it should be. Contending that Stuart painted "heads alone," he adds "when he strayed from this somewhat narrow path the results were not always happy. One is forced to the conclusion that he did not take these strayings too seriously."⁴²

In accounting for Stuart's English style, Barbara Novak, examining Stuart's early work prior to his arrival in England, notes

⁴¹ Frank Jewett Mather, Estimates in Art: Sixteen Essays on American Painters of the Nineteenth Century (New York: Henry Holt, 1931), 9.

⁴² Ibid.

that like Copley, Stuart grew out of an essentially "ideographic linear tradition."⁴³ Unlike Copley, however, she maintains there is a "lightness of his stroke." Novak accurately sees this natural disposition toward lightness, as making Stuart capable, as few Americans had been, of mastering the European painterly conventions. Writing of The Skater, Novak explains its mistaken attribution to Gainsborough in the R.A. exhibition of 1878:

The swift expediency with which the trees are brushed in does indeed call to mind Gainsborough and also reminds us of Stuart's occasional proximity to the silvered painterliness of Velasquez. But the face of William Grant has another quality entirely. Opaque and weighty, it stands in contradistinction to the transparent background, and ties Stuart to a tradition of the specific, resulting from the pragmatic encounter with nature which seems to be more frequently found in America.⁴⁴

Stuart's English pictures are frequently compared not only to Gainsborough but to works by other contemporaries, including Raeburn, Romney, Hoppner and even Beechey.⁴⁵ Waterhouse and Mount also draw attention to the similarities between Stuart's

⁴³ Novak, "Philosopher," 42.

⁴⁴ Ibid. For a contrasting view of the painting, which stresses psychological aspects of Stuart's personality, see William L. Pressly, "Gilbert Stuart's The Skater: An Essay in Romantic Melancholy," The American Art Journal 18:1 (1986) 42-51.

⁴⁵ Mather, "Stuart's Style," 5; Waterhouse, Painting in Britain, 225.

English style and that of Romney. Both mention respectively "the broad, flat, planes of modelling" and the "abstract definitions of style."⁴⁶ Indeed a great number of Stuart's works were at one time or another attributed to Romney, just as the pictures of Copley were sometimes mistaken for those of Joseph Wright.

Within seven years of his arrival in London, Stuart had become one of London's most sought-after painters, and the success of The Skater at the Royal Academy exhibition in the Spring of 1782 represented his debut as a major talent. Stuart was then just twenty-seven years old. In that year Mrs. Hoppner wrote:

Today the exhibition closes. If Hoppner should be as successful next year as he has been this, he will have established a reputation. Stuart has taken a house, I am told, of 150 a year, rent, in Berner's street, and is going to set up as a great man.⁴⁷

The elegant pose, soft lines and effortless sense of movement together with the strong portrait likeness in The Skater were the perfect and fortuitous ingredients of success for Stuart. The scene occurred to Stuart after he and Grant spent a winter morning on the Serpentine in Hyde Park. Thus inspired, Stuart painted William Grant as a genteel skater in a winter landscape. Ice

⁴⁶ Waterhouse, Painting in Britain, 225; Mount, Stuart, 36.

⁴⁷ Dunlap, History, 1:223.

skating is presented as a refined, elegant sport, and Grant glides across the canvas with aristocratic grace, self-assurance and control. Other skaters can be seen in the background; the whole event takes place in a frozen, silvery landscape that is in keeping with the best tradition of benevolent, French Rococo winters. Stuart had assimilated the softness of the Rococo along with its freedom, and this allowed him to present a casual yet restrained pose, while "he nails the face to the canvass." In short, he had invented a form of Rococo Classicism that was perfectly suited to the fashionable pretensions of his London clients. Amazingly, Stuart's The Skater is extremely close in temperament to a work by the Irish painter Robert Healy. In 1768, Healy painted Members of the Connolly Family Skating at Castletown (Figure 13). Though Healy died in 1771, and the possibility of direct influence is remote, Stuart's figure of Grant is astonishingly close to the central figure in Healy's composition (Figure 13A). In both works the general pose, with right foot raised, head turned to the left, arms folded and billowing coat tails provide a similarity that is compelling. It appears, therefore, that in The Skater Stuart also displayed a temperamental suitability to his future Irish clients.

CHAPTER III

THE POLITICS OF STUART'S PATRONS: VICEROY AND PARLIAMENT IN LATE GEORGIAN DUBLIN

When Gilbert Stuart arrived in Dublin in the fall of 1787, the ruling class of the Irish Protestant Ascendancy were secure in their position.¹ By the time of his departure in 1793, that position had changed radically as Catholic power dramatically increased and threatened the established order. By virtue of an invitation issued to him by the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Charles Manners, Duke of Rutland, Stuart became the painter of the highest officials in Ireland's Protestant governing class at the apogee of their power. Among Stuart's many distinguished patrons were Henry Grattan, who gave the period its name, John Foster, Speaker of the House of Commons, and John Fitzgibbon, Lord Clare, Chancellor of Ireland. All of these were at the

¹ For discussion and clarification of the date of Stuart's arrival in Ireland, see Chapter IV.

The Protestant Ascendancy was established by the victories of William of Orange in the seventeenth century and confirmed by the Penal Laws which prohibited use of Irish language, customs and the Catholic religion. The Ascendancy did not include Presbyterians or other Protestant sects, but was limited to members of the Church of England.

pinnacle of Irish political and social life during Stuart's period in Dublin, and their patronage illustrates the painter's privileged position among them. A study of their roles in Irish life and the position of the Protestant Ascendancy of which they were part is central to an understanding of Stuart's career in Ireland. Coinciding with Stuart's period of residence in Dublin, the years between 1787 and 1793 witnessed the climax of many political issues in eighteenth-century Ireland.² By the time of his departure Protestant power had significantly weakened, resulting in the removal of Stuart's source of patronage, as that class with whom he identified reached its political and social demise. Stuart ingratiated himself with this class at the height of their power. It is significant, therefore, in the context of this study, to note the origins and nature of the political power held by the Irish Protestant Ascendancy who were Stuart's only patrons, and the circumstances that led to their rapid downfall during the short years of Stuart's association with them.

Various acts passed by the British Parliament earlier in the century had effectively brought about the demise of the Roman Catholic gentry in Ireland and increased the power of the Protestant Irish of the Established Church.³ The Protestant ruling class were members of

² The authoritative source for the period is R. B. McDowell, Ireland in the Age of Imperialism and Revolution (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979).

³ These were known as the Penal Laws. An Act of 1704, for instance, legislated that Catholics could not purchase land and leases to Catholics were not to exceed thirty years in duration. Catholics were forbidden to acquire land either by inheritance or by marriage. In addition, the holdings of a Catholic landowner were divided between all male heirs on his death, unless the eldest son conformed to the Church of Ireland whereby he would inherit all. If the eldest son conformed before his father's death, he could rightfully claim the estate during his father's lifetime. Other laws prohibited Catholics from holding public office or from receiving an education. The cumulative effect of the

the Church of Ireland, and were politically suspicious of Protestant dissenters and Roman Catholics alike. Their identity as described in Jonathan Swift's Drapier's Letters, 1724, was wholly Irish.⁴ Swift taught the Irish Protestants that, despite their English origins, they were the people of Ireland, with all the rights and privileges of a distinct nation. The insistent quality of Irish Protestant nationalism is a key issue in any discussion of late eighteenth century politics in Dublin. Henry Grattan, subject of a lost portrait by Stuart known only through an engraving (Figure 14), was the political figure who most fully realized the Irish Protestant national identity at the end of the eighteenth century, and the period of "Grattan's Parliament" was to enter the political memory of Irish Protestants with associations of prosperity and a sense of national dignity. Grattan entered Parliament in 1775, and with superb oratorical style, characteristic of public

Penal Laws was that Catholics were kept in a position of inferiority to Protestants. The Irish Protestant Ascendancy believed that it was in their interests to remain a minority. For further information on these issues see Francis G. James, Ireland in the Empire, 1688-1770, Harvard Historical Monographs, no. 68 (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1973) and William E.H. Lecky, A History of Ireland in the Eighteenth Century (London: Longmans Green, 1892), III.

⁴ An "Irishman" by the late eighteenth century meant simply anyone who had taken root in Ireland. The coherence and identity of the class was based first on its Irishness and then on its Protestantism. In 1782, Grattan stated: "In the reign of Charles II, a committee consisting of Papists, Protestants, and Presbyterians, were sent from this country to prosecute the Lord Strafford; we find them perfectly agreeing in the object of their mission and indeed when men begin to differ upon principles of religion, it is because they have no other great object to engage their attention; we cannot give the people of Ireland a common faith, but we can give them a common interest. The Parliamentary Register: or, History of the Proceedings and Debates of the House of Commons in Ireland (Dublin: James and William Porter, 1782), 254. Quoted in W.J. McCormack, "Vision and Revision in the Study of Eighteenth-Century Irish Rhetoric," Eighteenth Century Ireland, ed., Andrew Carpenter, vol. 11 (Dublin: Mount Salus Press, 1987), 13.

figures during the Enlightenment, demanded that Ireland be granted status as an independent nation free from England. In Grattan's view, Ireland should remain linked to Britain only through sharing a common crown.⁵

Two intertwined issues, Parliamentary reform and Catholic emancipation, dominated Irish parliamentary proceedings until the end of the century and had a direct bearing on Stuart's patronage. The arguments for reform were clear to all. If Ireland were to be in practice and in theory a genuinely distinct country with control of her own affairs, then reform of the parliamentary system which favored landed Protestants was crucial in the interest of peace. As it existed, two-thirds of the seats in the Irish Parliament were the property of a few whose allegiance was often bought by the British Government.⁶ In addition to this national constitutional argument, there was pressure for reform from those Protestants who were not part of the small oligarchy involved in the system of patronage which dominated political life. By the late eighteenth century, these dissident Protestants began to clamor for political attention, and in urban areas they formed armed bands known as "Volunteers."⁷ The argument in favor of Catholic emancipation was equally clear: Ireland's status as

⁵ See The Speeches of the Right Honourable Henry Grattan in the Irish and in the Imperial Parliament, edited by his son (London: Longman, 1822), 111-112.

⁶ McDowell, Ireland, 141.

⁷ For a history of the Volunteer Movement, see McDowell, Ireland, 423-491.

an independent nation under the Crown would mean that the three-quarters of the nation who were Catholic would be eligible for the same political rights as the Protestant Ascendancy. The issues of parliamentary reform and of Catholic emancipation were also concerns of the day in England.⁸ Both however were more pressing in Ireland. The Catholic question was, of course, less acute than in Ireland; Catholics in England formed but a minute part of the population, while in Ireland they were the national majority. It was against this political background that Stuart arrived in Ireland in the fall of 1787 under the patronage of the Duke of Rutland, the King's representative and holder of the highest office in Ireland.

Since there were significant resemblances between the position of Ireland and the North American colonies within the British Imperial framework, the success of the American War of Independence, as shall be discussed, profoundly and dramatically influenced Irish politics.⁹ Before independence, each of the American colonies had its representative assembly; in Ireland's case it was a decorative and virtually ineffectual parliament. Westminster vehemently claimed the right to legislate for all within the empire. In Ireland, the Acts of Parliament, legislated in 1494 by Sir Edward Poynings, formed the basis of England's claim to Ireland. In compliance with its terms, Parliament was to meet in Ireland only

⁸ See Plumb, England, 91-98.

⁹ See David Noel Doyle, Ireland, Irishmen and Revolutionary America: 1760-1820 (Dublin and Cork: The Mercier Press, 1981), 22-39.

after royal permission had been granted, and after king and council in England had been informed of and had approved the measures which it proposed to enact. Though variously interpreted during the following three centuries, Poynings' Law remained entrenched until its repeal in 1782 when, however, certain powers of veto were retained by the crown over the Irish Parliament for an additional eighteen years.

The success of the American colonists with the surrender of Lord Cornwallis at Yorktown in the fall of 1781 propelled the Irish by example.¹⁰ Moreover, Lord North, the British Prime Minister, suffered a loss of confidence and was driven from office. The new Whig government was anxious to conciliate Irish opinion for fear of further colonial losses. In the Constitution of 1782, a mere five years before Stuart's arrival in Dublin, Poynings' Law was modified so thoroughly that in appearance Ireland was now an independent dominion sharing a monarch with England.¹¹ Signs of independence and sovereignty began to appear in Dublin, but the British government continued to control Irish affairs. The growing feeling of independence was expressed in the founding of an Irish Post Office, which was separate from that of Great Britain, the founding of the Bank of Ireland, the building of the Custom House, the Four Courts, and the great canals linking Dublin with the Shannon. The concrete

¹⁰ Doyle, Irishmen, 15-16.

¹¹ McDowell, Ireland, 146.

and continuing evidence of English power, however, was the presence of the Lord Lieutenant or Viceroy at the pinnacle of Irish parliamentary, political and social life. This office, which selected and controlled the Irish executive, was appointed to, and entirely controlled by the British government. The incumbent after 1784 was the Duke of Rutland to whose beneficence Stuart's arrival in Ireland is directly attributable.

Despite the parallels between the American colonies and Ireland in the 1770's, and the fact that Benjamin Franklin, on a visit to Dublin in 1771, suggested the possibility of co-operation between Ireland and America in the cause of freedom, the position of Ireland within the Empire was quite distinct.¹² The complexities of this position are perhaps best understood through the writings of Edmund Burke. For Burke, Irish by birth, Ireland was not a colony like North America, but part of the British Isles, one with Great Britain, the center of the Empire. Burke makes this clear in a letter written in 1796:

I cannot conceive how a man can be a genuine Englishman without being at the same time a true Irishman, tho' fortune may have made his birth on this side of the water. I think the same sentiments ought to be reciprocal on the part of Ireland,, and if possible with much stronger reason. Ireland cannot be separated one moment from England without losing every source of present prosperity, and even every hope of her future.¹³

¹² Beckett, Modern Ireland, 167-187.

¹³ Burke quoted in Beckett, Modern Ireland, 170.

In this context it is well to briefly recall the long and entangled history of the English in Ireland. Ireland was England's first colony, an appendage gained as a result of the Norman invasion of 1179.

Successive Tudor monarchs tightened English control of Ireland, and by the eighteenth century England was so entrenched that Ireland's problems seemed more those of a recalcitrant internal sector than of a colony. This attitude was clearly at the basis of Burke's belief that the interests of Ireland and Great Britain were not merely compatible, but were identical. Such was the political belief of many of Stuart's Irish patrons.

In the growing movement toward Irish sovereignty, the country's Roman Catholics seemed guaranteed better political treatment by the Protestant ruling class. Mounting conflict with England made clear to Protestants their need of Roman Catholic support. Therefore, during the 1770's the parliamentary Protestants seemed, at least on the surface, willing to allow the old fissures of Irish life to fade in order to present a united front to the British government. This in effect was the substance of Henry Grattan's famous assertion that the Irish Protestant could never be free till the Irish Catholic had ceased to be a slave.¹⁴ At this critical point in Anglo-Irish relations the issue of religious freedom, therefore, became identified with the national cause. The 1770's saw some repeal of the Penal Code which

¹⁴ For a discussion of the rise of Irish patriotism and nationalism see Beckett, Modern Ireland, 187-206, and McDowell, Ireland, 390-423.

had been designed and enforced to subjugate Catholics in Ireland, but they were still debarred from parliament, from government office, from commissions in the armed forces and from the legal profession. The latter resulted in large numbers of Irish Catholic barristers and lawyers converting to the established church early in the century, a trend that even continued through the 1780's.¹⁵ These included John Fitzgibbon, father of the future Earl of Clare, Lord Chancellor of Ireland, the subject of Stuart's great portrait. In this context, it is ironic that Stuart's patron, the Earl, should become one of the most avidly anti-Catholic forces in Irish politics. Any Catholic, by changing his religion, automatically became eligible to participate fully in public life. About four thousand such converts were registered in the eighteenth century.¹⁶ Many of these, such as Fitzgibbon, were ancient Gaelic or Gaelicized nobility of Norman origin often seeking to renew their status in the context of a new society. It is in this manner that some of those names most associated with oppression in the eighteenth century are thoroughly Irish in origin. Such conversions generally received great attention in the press.¹⁷ This branch of the Protestant Ascendancy in eighteenth-century Ireland seems to have been characterized less by religious conviction than by consideration

¹⁵ A full discussion of these events is found in Beckett, Modern Ireland, 227-246.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ The practice was still common during Stuart's time in Ireland. The Dublin Chronicle carried continuous listings of those who converted to the established church, both in Dublin and in the provinces.

for secular matters. Even loyalty to the Crown seems often to have been more a pose than a commitment.

The gradual emancipation of Roman Catholics in Ireland in the late eighteenth century was supported by Grattan.¹⁸ At the time of Stuart's arrival this did not seem an immediate threat to the status quo and Stuart had every reason to believe that his position among the Ascendancy would remain secure. Burke even advised that, though Irish Catholics had legitimate grounds of grievance against Irish Protestants, Irishmen as a whole had no grounds of complaint against Great Britain.¹⁹ In holding this view, Burke was atypical of his class of fellow Irish Protestants. Though he resided in England, his upbringing was by Irish parents in Ireland. His father was an Irish Protestant, his mother Catholic. In accordance with the tradition of sons of mixed marriages Burke followed his father's creed. Burke's sympathy with the Irish Catholic cause was allied to his conviction that the Catholics, once admitted to political rights, would become firm supporters of the crown and the British government. Furthermore, the counter-revolutionary position of the Roman Catholic Church during the French Revolution probably quickened Burke's belief that the Irish Catholic Church would support the established order in the Empire. Irish Protestants, however, threatened by what they felt was "popery" strove to maintain dominance behind a calculated facade of

¹⁸ Grattan, Speeches, 112-114.

¹⁹ For a discussion of these issues, see McDowell, Ireland, 393.

conciliation. These issues played a significant part in Stuart's choice of subjects while in Ireland, for in his attempt to align himself with the Protestant Ascendancy, Stuart avoided patronage by Catholics and by Protestant dissenters.

Henry Grattan's claim that Ireland was a distinct kingdom, and was therefore entitled to legislative independence, was anathema to Burke. The repeal of "Poynings' Law" or "The Sixth of George I" in 1782 was the central coup of Grattan's parliament. The glory that surrounded Grattan as engineer of the Irish constitution of 1782, however, was not lasting. His major rival for leadership of the patriotic cause was Henry Flood. Flood, attempting to undermine Grattan, declared that the constitution of 1782 was virtually meaningless.²⁰ His thesis was that the British Parliament had legislated for Ireland before the "Sixth of George I" was passed, and could continue to do so just as effectively after its repeal. In effect, Flood argued that Ireland would never be free until the British Parliament formally renounced its claim to sovereignty. Flood's following derived from the constant Irish fear of oppression from England. This fear also contributed to the rise of the Volunteers.²¹

²⁰ See McDowell, Ireland, 278-281, for a discussion of these issues.

²¹ At a meeting in Dungannon in February 1782, the Volunteers passed two resolutions that had been drawn up by Grattan. They resolved, "that we hold the right of private judgement in matters of religion to be equally sacred in others as in ourselves; that as men and as Irishmen, as Christians and as Protestants, we rejoice in the relaxation of the penal laws against our Roman Catholic fellow subjects, and that we conceive the measure to be fraught with the happiest consequences to the union and the prosperity of the inhabitants of Ireland," William F.H. Lecky, A History of Ireland in the Eighteenth Century, (London: Longman's Green, and Co., 1892), 11, 284.

The Volunteer corps were numerous and proudly wore their uniforms at frequent parades and reviews which were often the scenes of strong political activity. Volunteering did not receive government approval since Parliament was threatened by the fact that the politically minded had now become armed. Flood received strong support among the Volunteers, many of whom also favored Grattan.²² A further area of political disagreement between Grattan and Flood was the issue of admission of the country's two million Roman Catholics to the franchise. Here Grattan, for political reasons, supported enfranchising the country's Catholics; Flood was adamantly opposed. In general, the Protestant population were in disagreement on the issue. Catholics and Protestants alike, however, agreed on the need for overall parliamentary reform, and politicians both in Ireland and England were discussing schemes to achieve this end.

The Volunteers championed the issue of political reform. Under the chairmanship of Lord Charlemont, delegates from the Volunteer movement met at the Rotunda in Dublin in November 1783. Flood dominated the convention and a plan of reform arrived at there reflected his views.²³ A short distance away, at College Green, Parliament was in session. The plan of reform which Flood executed at the Rotunda was delivered to Parliament by him while wearing his volunteer uniform. The House of Commons rejected the proposition

²² For further discussion of the Volunteers, see McDowell, Ireland, 255-261.

²³ Lecky, Ireland, 11, 376.

almost on the basis of its presentation alone, feeling that it had been presented at gunpoint. Grattan who felt that the scheme had merit voted for its adoption. The reform proposal predictably received its greatest opposition from John Fitzgibbon, who later became Stuart's patron. Fitzgibbon was at this time an ambitious young barrister with an acute political sense and eager for promotion. Just as his father had been willing to renounce his family's religion in the interest of social and political advancement, Fitzgibbon was undoubtedly influenced by the Viceroy's opposition to reform.²⁴ Fitzgibbon greatly distrusted the Volunteers, and popular political action in general received the full force of his invective in parliament. His animosity for Flood was legendary, and his conservatism was most fully evident when he engineered the parliamentary union between Ireland and Britain at the end of the century. The Act of Union, passed in 1801, terminated Ireland's legislative freedom making Ireland subject to the British Parliament.²⁵ The defeat of Flood's bill in 1783 fatally undermined the unity of the Protestant nation and the fissure created by the proposed parliamentary reform was a constant reminder of the separate interests that divided the Protestant Ascendancy and further cautioned Stuart in his choice of sitters.

Despite the disputes over parliamentary reform, Irish Protestants, as a body, were generally loyal to the crown. After 1782,

²⁴ J.C. Beckett, The Making of Modern Ireland 1603-1923 (New York: Alfred A Knopf, 1966), 220-226.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 268-284.

whenever British influence on Irish affairs seemed weakened it could usually be traced more to instability in British politics itself than to Irish Protestant resistance.²⁶ The British general election of 1784 elevated William Pitt to Prime Minister, and the Duke of Rutland was dispatched as the new Lord Lieutenant to Ireland. The three years of Rutland's tenure provided the position of Lord Lieutenant and the Irish executive with a continuity and strength that had long been missing and the arts with needed support.²⁷ The overall effect was that the "Castle," as it was known, was deeply implanted in Irish political life.²⁸ Annual sessions of parliament increased the volume of legislation and of parliamentary business in general. Moreover, it provided Stuart with a substantial portrait business among the political and social elite. These political events created a need for further executive staff with political skills necessary to sensitively manage the Commons in issues that concerned constitutional rights. Among the appointees who were crucial to the smooth operation of Rutland's parliament was John Fitzgibbon. As part of a dynamic new executive, Fitzgibbon was appointed Attorney General in 1783, just before Rutland's arrival, and after he arrived in Ireland Stuart formed a substantial friendship with Fitzgibbon.²⁹ Fitzgibbon's conservatism

²⁶ Plumb, England, 77-84.

²⁷ McDowell, Ireland, 318. Rutland's Chief Secretary was Thomas Orde, an accomplished caricaturist and art enthusiast who shared the Viceroy's artistic interests.

²⁸ Dublin Castle, home of the Viceroy, and symbol of English occupation in Ireland.

²⁹ Herbert, Varieties, 244-246.

can be seen in his attitude toward parliamentary reform which he completely obstructed. When considered in this light, his long friendship with Henry Grattan is astonishing. Grattan even approved Fitzgibbon's appointment as Attorney General. Both Grattan and Fitzgibbon passionately hated Flood, and in the milieu of the 1780's which was filled with political strife, this indeed may have been basis enough for friendship. It is of further interest that Stuart never painted Flood's portrait, an omission that may well have derived from the politics of the day. In 1785, Fitzgibbon spoke of his high regard for the character of Grattan, both as a public figure and personal friend:

From the first I have ever reprobated the idea of appealing to the volunteers, though I was confident Ireland was in no danger while they followed the counsel of the man whom I am proud to call my most worthy and honourable friend (Mr. Grattan); the man to whom this country owes more than, perhaps, any State ever owed to an individual; the man whose wisdom and virtue directed the happy circumstances of the times and the spirit of Irishmen to make us a nation. While the volunteers continued under his influence I feared no evil from them.³⁰

Fitzgibbon's rise within the Irish executive was near meteoric. In 1789, the year of Stuart's great portrait, he was nominated to the position of Lord Chancellor. The fact that he was the first Irishman in over sixty years to hold this most coveted office is indicative of the esteem with which he was held in Westminster. Predictably, Fitzgibbon's policy was to maintain and strengthen the Protestant

³⁰ Fitzgibbon quoted in Lecky, Ireland, 11, 416.

Ascendancy. Maintenance of British power in Ireland was, for Fitzgibbon, of fundamental importance, and any diminution of this power was seen as a direct popish threat. In 1789, Fitzgibbon in an impassioned speech informed the Irish commons:

The only security for your liberty is your connection with Great Britain, and gentlemen who risk breaking the connection must make up their minds to a union. God forbid I should ever see that day; but if ever the day on which a separation shall be attempted shall come, I shall not hesitate to embrace a union rather than a separation.³¹

For sixteen years John Fitzgibbon held a dominant position in the Irish parliament. His object was to represent the Protestant community as an English garrison planted in a hostile country, to govern exclusively in their interest and to resist steadily and sternly any attempt to conciliate the Roman Catholics. In short, though his father had been one of many Catholics who abandoned their faith in order to pursue a legal career, he represented an arrogant and defensive form of Protestant Ascendancy at its most intense. Fitzgibbon's policy of refusing Catholic emancipation in 1795, is often believed to have induced the Irish rebellion of 1798. Later his opposition was to be one of the chief obstacles to Catholic emancipation at the time of the Act of Union in 1801. Of Fitzgibbon's personality William Lecky writes:

In private life he appears to have been an estimable and even amiable man; several acts of generosity are related of him, and

³¹ Fitzgibbon quoted in Beckett, Modern Ireland, 236.

the determination with which in spite of a large inherited fortune he pursued his career at the bar, shows the energy and the seriousness of his character. He is said not to have been a great orator, but he was undoubtedly a very ready and skilful debater, a great master of constitutional law, a man who in council had a peculiar gift of bending other wills to his own, a man who in many trying periods of popular violence displayed a courage which no danger and no obloquy could disturb. He was, however, in public life arrogant, petulant, and overbearing in the highest degree, delighting in trampling on those whom he disliked, in harsh acts and irritating words, prone on all occasions to strain prerogative and authority to their utmost limits, bitterly hostile to the great majority of his countrymen, and, without being corrupt himself, a most cynical corrupter of others.³²

Fitzgibbon's views on the subject of government were quite simply those of the Castle and in the years preceding, and at the time of Stuart's arrival in Dublin, that meant the views of the current Viceroy, Lord Rutland. Rutland was opposed to any kind of parliamentary reform either in Ireland or in England. The English parliamentary system, on which the Irish was modelled, had been persistently justified by political theorists in the eighteenth century, most notably, by David Hume and William Paley. Both recognized the fact that many seats in the House of Commons in Westminster were occupied by members who had obtained those seats either by purchase or patronage and that this necessary influence of the Crown in the Commons was crucial to the effective working of the constitution. By 1785 the number of such seats constituted about half of the total.

³² Lecky, Ireland. 11, 216-217.

Rutland's views on the subject as related to Ireland were clarified in a letter to Pitt:

The questions of reform should it be carried in England, would tend greatly to increase our difficulties, and I do not see how it will be evaded. In England it is a delicate question, but in this country it is difficult and dangerous to the last degree. The views of the Catholics render it extremely hazardous... Your proposition of a certain proportionable addition to county members would be the least exceptionable, and might not, perhaps, materially interfere with the system of Parliament in this country, which, though it must be confessed that it does not bear the smallest resemblance to representation [emphasis mine], I do not see how quiet and good government could exist under any more popular mode.³³

At a time when Irish nationalism along with a demand for parliamentary reform were substantial issues in Irish politics, Rutland and Fitzgibbon advocated the conservative policy of creating more parliamentary patronage in order to strengthen the influence of the Administration.

Schemes for electoral reform were flourishing in England in the 1780's, and pressure for reform of the antiquated franchise system in Ireland followed suit. Any expansion of the electorate would inevitably erode the closely guarded monopoly of political power held by the Protestant landlords and ultimately that of Stuart's patrons. Middle-class Protestants, some of whom had served as Volunteers, demanded enfranchisement and a greater degree of representation. The eighteenth century in Ireland also witnessed the growth of a middle-

³³ Rutland quoted in Lecky, *Ireland*, 11, 422-423.

class Catholic community, and these had similar ambitions. Many members of that class were merchants, who hoped to benefit from modification in the electoral system. The Constitution of 1782 had revoked previous impediments to the renting and purchase of land by Catholics but carefully excluded the land of parliamentary boroughs. This measure was obviously determined by Protestant fear of Catholic strength in the electorate. Catholics might, the Protestants feared, come to control elections by purchase of lands in parliamentary boroughs, despite their being excluded from Parliament and the franchise. From 1782 until the end of the century, the Irish Protestant Ascendancy were balanced precariously between policies of a return to greater dependence upon England, or a widening of the electorate. Fear of both, along with recognition of the untenable present, dominated the shifting and unstable politics of Stuart's time in Ireland, and greatly affected his patronage.

In this political environment, Henry Grattan appeared as a moderate. Intensely loyal to England, he sympathized with the Irish Catholic cause:

The question is now, whether we shall be a Protestant settlement or an Irish nation ... for so long as we exclude Catholics from natural liberty and the common rights of man we are not a people.... The indulgence we wish to give to Catholics can never be injurious to the Protestant religion. That religion is the religion of the State, and will become the religion of Catholics if severity does not prevent them. [emphasis mine] Bigotry may survive persecution, but it can never survive toleration. Gentlemen who speak of the enormities committed by Catholics ... do not take into account the enlightening and softening of men's minds by toleration; nor do they consider that as they

increase in wealth they will increase in learning and politeness.³⁴

Grattan's moderation was an attempt to combine Irish patriotism and full representation with loyalty to the British connection. Throughout the 1780's he persistently offered this view in parliament. The Constitution of 1782 had achieved much to temporarily satisfy the Protestant nation, and consequently the mid-eighties were comparatively placid. However, the period of calm was dispelled at the outbreak of the French Revolution, for here rebellion against an oppressive monarchy surfaced, and the Protestant Ascendancy in Ireland was in no position to receive the news with political serenity. Ever since 1782, the Catholic population had hoped that the reversal of the Penal Laws would prove to be the first step in their enfranchisement and would ultimately lead to representation in parliament. Politicians like Grattan, who advocated the admission of Roman Catholics to political rights, were confident that this would in no way imperil the governing strength of the Protestant Ascendancy. Questions of parliamentary reform in England centered on the issue of the small Roman Catholic minority resident there. The fear of enfranchisement for the huge Catholic majority in Ireland, however, appeared unthinkable.³⁵ Henry Grattan seems to have been dedicated in his political life to uniting the discrete and severed members of the

³⁴ Grattan quoted in Lecky, Ireland, 11, 313-314.

³⁵ Beckett, Modern Ireland, 227-246.

Irish population. He viewed the Irish House of Commons as a body of educated, loyal and respected leading citizens, who with intense loyalty to the Crown, would frown on disloyalty and do all possible to prevent and repress anarchy. Grattan's policy, though lenient in the context of eighteenth century Ireland, was by no means democratic. Grattan's concept of leading statesmen led him only to the class of lawyers and landed gentry whose position in parliament rested on a freehold suffrage. For Grattan, religious difference was less important than political loyalty. In this ability to separate the two, Grattan emerged in the politics of late eighteenth century Dublin as a maverick. If Ireland were to be elevated to the level of informed nationhood, Grattan believed that government should be a true organ of national feeling, faithfully representing independent property, and educated opinion. To achieve this end, Grattan believed that the system of government, based exclusively on patronage, corruption and family interest, should end. The more Grattan and his party advanced ideas of reform in the eighties, the more they seem to have been resisted.³⁶

By 1784 William Pitt, freed from the more immediate problems of his party in England, turned his attention to Ireland. His ambition was clear: he hoped to establish a commercial treaty between Ireland and England so comprehensive in its scope that it would bind them indissolubly together, and remove every possibility of misunderstanding or rivalry between them. Pitt's own words

³⁶ Lecky, Ireland, 11, 229-230.

eloquently stated his view: "England and Ireland one country in effect, though for local concerns under distinct legislatures, one in the communication of advantages, and, of course in the participation of burdens."³⁷ The terms of this commercial treaty were worked out by Pitt and Rutland after the latter arrived in Ireland as Lord Lieutenant. By the terms of the treaty, Britain would open her market to Irish manufacturers, neither country prohibiting the import of any product from the other. Petitions against the proposed treaty almost immediately began to arrive in Westminster, and this combined with British parliamentary resistance, insured the failure of the propositions. Its failure was due, mainly, to the fact that in neither country was public opinion ready to recognize the interests of the other. Finally, due to conditions placed on the treaty by Westminster, which called for implementation in Ireland of all measures passed in Britain concerning elements of colonial and foreign trade, Ireland rightfully felt that her legislative independence, gained in the Constitution of 1782, was fatally threatened. Basically, therefore, though the ambition of Pitt to be impartial seems genuine, the whole issue might have had more an effect of widening than of narrowing the gulf between the two countries.

The temporary insanity of George III, which occurred in November 1788, during Stuart's first year in Dublin, caused further tension between the two parliaments. It seemed inevitable that the

³⁷ Pitt quoted in Beckett, Modern Ireland, 238.

Prince of Wales would become Regent; it was generally expected that he would dismiss Pitt from office and replace him with Charles James Fox. Grattan supported Fox and fully expected that when the change took place the direction of Irish affairs would naturally fall into the hands of the Irish Parliament. When the latter met in February 1789, Britain was still debating the powers of the Regent. On this issue, Pitt argued that Parliament should limit in advance the powers of the Regent. Fox countered that the prince had a hereditary right to exercise full royal authority during his tenure as Regent. The Irish Parliament, anxious to show its independence of Britain, called upon the Prince of Wales to assume the Regency of Ireland. The issue passed in Parliament probably because many members believed the Regent to be in the ascendant and were anxious to be among the victorious. The king's recovery however halted these proceedings, and once it became obvious that there would be no regency or any change in ministry, the Castle in the person of Lord Buckingham had little difficulty in establishing control in parliament. Despite the failure of William Pitt's commercial propositions, Ireland began to enjoy increased prosperity, a growth in population and an expansion in the home market. Events in France, however, insured that whatever political respite existed in Ireland would be short-lived. In the light of Irish politics heretofore discussed, the seismic disturbance in France resulting in the meeting of the states general, the representative assembly and the fall of the Bastille, could not fail to have a resounding effect in Ireland. There were many strong links between Ireland and

France, and as a result the Irish press provided elaborate coverage of events across the Channel. The effect of the French Revolution on Irish life during Stuart's years there is the subject of a subsequent chapter in this study.

In 1789, it was apparent that in Ireland political patronage had substantially grown since 1784, and that these favors had predominantly been distributed among members of parliament. Increase also was evident in the number of salaries offered to holders of sinecure offices controlled by members of parliament. The situation was described by Grattan in 1790:

Above two-thirds of the returns to this House are private property; of those returns many actually this moment sold to the minister; the number of placemen and pensioners sitting in this House equals near one-half of the whole efficient body; the increase of that number within the last twenty years is greater than all the counties of Ireland.³⁸

By 1790, therefore, it appeared to Grattan that the Constitution of 1782 was in practice a sham, and he vented his disapproval against the Ministers in the House of Commons:

We charge them publicly in the face of their country, with making corrupt agreements for the sale of peerages, for doing which we say they are impeachable; we charge them with corrupt agreements for the disposal of the money arising from the sale, to purchase for the servants of the Castle, seats in the assembly of the people, for doing which we say they are impeachable; we charge them with committing these offences, not in one, not in two, but in many instances, for which complication of

³⁸ Grattan quoted in Lecky, *Ireland*, 11, 430.

offences we say they are impeachable; guilty of a systematic endeavor to undermine the constitution in violation of the laws of the land....³⁹

The ministers replied that the disposal of Crown patronage was a matter of the royal prerogative and above debate. Grattan often complained about the corrupt structure of parliament, but he never wavered in his fundamental belief that connection with Britain was the true basis for Irish nationhood and independence. Sir Lawrence Parsons, in a speech to the Irish House of Commons in 1790, summed up Ireland's position with relentless honesty.

Boast of the prosperity of your country as you may, and after all I ask: what is it but a secondary kingdom? An inferior member of a great Empire without any movement or orbit of its own...We may pride ourselves that we are a great kingdom, but the fact is that we are barely known beyond the boundaries of our shores. Who out of Ireland ever hears of Ireland? Who respects us? Where are our ambassadors? What treaties do we enter into? With what nation do we make peace or war? Are we not a mere cipher in all these, and are not these what give a nation consequence and fame? All these are sacrificed to the connection with England.... A suburb to England we are sunk in her shade. True we are an independent kingdom; we have an imperial Crown distinct from England; but it is a metaphysical distinction, a mere sport for speculative men.... It is asked why, after all the acquisitions of 1782, there should be discontent? To this I say that when the country is well-governed the people ought to be satisfied but not before.... It has been the object of English ministers ever since to countervail what we obtained at that period, and substitute a surreptitious and clandestine

³⁹ Grattan quoted in Francis Plowden, An Historical Review of the State of Ireland from Henry II to the Union, 2 Vols. (London: No publisher, 1803), 11, 157.

influence for the open power which the English legislature was then obliged to relinquish....⁴⁰

Despite the truth and clarity of Parsons' speech, Grattan remained steadfast in his fervent belief in the English connection. In this same year, 1790, when there was a possibility of war between England and Spain as their claims clashed on the west coast of North America, Grattan emphasized that the interests of England and Ireland were inseparable. This position, wholeheartedly in keeping with Grattan's policy ever since his debut in parliament, drew the attention of Theobald Wolfe Tone, a young Protestant barrister who was then beginning to take an interest in politics. Popularly known as Wolfe Tone, he was to enter the historical annals of the period the following year after the publication of his inflammatory and radical pamphlet An Argument on Behalf of the Catholics of Ireland, 1791. Tone argued that Ireland had no quarrel with Spain and that she was being ruled over by a foreign power. Tone asserted that Ireland had no national government and was under British control. Moreover he argued that the only way to counteract British influence over Irish affairs was by parliamentary reform and Catholic emancipation. Tone's views appealed to Catholic and Protestant radicals alike.⁴¹ In the fall of 1791, he was invited to Belfast and his visit there resulted in the founding of the Belfast Society of United Irishmen. This was

⁴⁰ Parsons quoted in Plowden, Historical Review, 11, 157-158.

⁴¹ McDowell, Ireland, 380.

quickly followed by the formation of the Dublin Society of United Irishmen in November of the same year. These societies were middle-class debating societies whose intention was to influence public opinion. They held debates, called meetings and published manifestos. As such they were evidence of the formation of organized radicalism on a thoughtful and intellectual level, aiming to bring about reform by persuasion and enlightened public opinion. Their intentions were threefold: parliamentary reform, Catholic emancipation and the elimination of English influence in the government of Ireland. Beginning about 1790, Irish radicals, both of Catholic and Protestant origins, were active in proclaiming their principles, clarifying their ideas and promoting their political objectives.⁴² We shall see that Stuart's final departure from Ireland in March 1793 was influenced by these rapid developments in radicalism that threatened the very core of his Irish patronage.

The activities of the United Irishmen in the early 1790's eventually sufficiently alarmed Westminster that the British Government, acting through Sir Hercules Langrishe in the Dublin House of Commons, proposed a relief bill. By the terms of this bill Catholic Irishmen were to be admitted to the legal profession, and significant restrictions on education were to be abolished. Catholics would still however be excluded from parliament, from the judicial

⁴² Many middle-class Presbyterian businessmen in Belfast seemed to be as critical of the ruling class of Episcopalian landlords as were Catholics, and suspected that their economic interests were being ignored. T.W. Moody and F.X. Martin, The Course of Irish History (New York: Weybright and Talley, 1967).

bench and from the higher offices of state; other measures guaranteed to retain British control in Ireland were simultaneously proposed. Of great significance was the order that "volunteering" should be suppressed.

By the early 1790's the Volunteers had become a potent expression of Protestant nationalism and could no longer be ignored as a political force with a militaristic identity. As such, they were of enormous help to leaders like Grattan in attempts to loosen England's commercial and legislative restrictions on Ireland. With the foundation of the United Irishmen, clear affinities began to emerge between them and the Volunteers. A Catholic convention assembled in Dublin in December, 1792.⁴³ This convention had been suggested by the liberal party in the Irish parliament who had engaged Tone as their assistant secretary. Supported by the United Irishmen, parish delegates chose representatives from all over the country, and the convention assembled in December. The representatives had one main request: the abolition of the remaining Penal Laws with emphasis on enfranchisement. Predictably, Tone's position encountered its greatest resistance from John Fitzgibbon, the Lord Chancellor. The Dublin society of United Irishmen was among the most conspicuous and influential political clubs in eighteenth-century Ireland. Moreover, the presence of so many professional men, and especially the large

⁴³ McDowell, Ireland, 405-412.

numbers of lawyers, contributed to the professional and formal manner in which the Dublin society was conducted.

The leaders of the Dublin society are most often represented as a coherent, intelligent, professional, intellectual and politically intense group dedicated to organizing and unifying liberal opinion in Ireland. In this context, affinities between Protestant liberals and politically minded Catholics seemed entirely possible. The fact that the United Irishmen published their views in newspapers such as the National Journal in Dublin (founded in 1791) and the Northern Star in Belfast (founded in 1792) should be noted. These papers, along with many others, were distributed widely in Ireland, and perhaps even more significantly, the Northern Star (which printed news from France, America and Britain) was distributed in London. The avowed aim of the National Journal according to its preface was to promote union amongst men of all denominations and parliamentary reform. Moreover, it declared that it was written not only for the politician and man of letters, but also for the artisan and farmer.

This pressure and publicity resulted in the passing of Langrishe's Relief Act in January 1792 which granted Irish Catholics the concessions already referred to, but not enfranchisement.⁴⁴ This, however, seemed for the moment to appease them. In the context of world events, further concessions seemed, if not secured, at least inevitable. At Westminster, during the parliamentary sessions of 1789

⁴⁴ Ibid., 385

and 1790, restrictions governing English dissenters had been repealed and in France, civic rights were granted to French Protestants. The act of 1792 also gave Catholics the same rights of property and leasehold as Protestants. This insured the emergence of the Catholic middle classes, farmers and businessmen, as a formidable force in Irish political and public life. The subsequent political events of 1792 are worthy of examination.

The position of the Viceroy, Lord Westmorland, on the Catholic question was made clear in a lengthy letter to William Pitt on January 18, 1792. Westmorland clearly stated the real fears of the conservative Irish Protestant class. It was, he wrote, generally believed that "increasing power, with their disproportion of numbers, must eventually, either by influence or more probably by force, give the Catholics the upper hand, overturn the Church Establishment first, next proceed to the possession of the State, and the property" which, he adds, had been obtained through conquest.⁴⁵ It was abundantly clear that the Lord Lieutenant and his chief advisers, who included John Fitzgibbon and William Beresford, Lord Bishop of Ossory, another of Stuart's subjects, saw in any form of Catholic relief the submersion of their Ascendancy.⁴⁶ However, despite the fears and pronouncements of Westmorland and his advisers, Langrishe's Bill passed in the Irish

⁴⁵ Westmorland quoted in Lecky, Ireland, 111, 47-48.

⁴⁶ The Lord Lieutenant's advisory also included Charles Agar, Archbishop of Cashel, and this provides evidence of the close association between Church and State during the period. McDowell, Ireland, 398.

Parliament with little opposition early in January 1792. The terms of this bill admitted Catholics to the legal profession; restrictions on education abroad were abolished; Catholic schoolmasters were no longer compelled to acquire a special license; and the limitation on the number of apprentices that a Catholic could employ was lifted. The Catholic petition for the franchise was rejected however by 208 to 23.⁴⁷

Grattan was clearly disappointed, and the Catholics soon made it clear that they would not be satisfied with Langrishe's Bill. It was obvious that Irish Protestants were determined not to concede any measure of political power to the Catholics, a fact which pleased Westmorland.

British public opinion on the Irish Catholic question was again influenced by Edmund Burke. Burke, who from the outset was both intellectually and morally opposed to the French revolution, was convinced for many reasons that in the interests of peace Irish Catholics must be won over to the conservative side and granted the concessions which he felt were their moral right. Moreover, concession in the form of Mitford's Act of 1791 in England set a precedent of relief: Catholics were granted full rights to worship and to educate their children in their religion. They were also permitted to enter the legal profession, and were freed from other social and political restrictions. From such reforms in England, the position of Irish Catholics could only benefit. Like his father, Edmund Burke had

⁴⁷ Lecky, Ireland, 11, 47-48.

married a Catholic. Therefore, not only was he Irish by birth, but he had good reason for loyalty to the Catholics of Ireland. As early as 1765, Burke published his Tracts upon the Popery Code, and returned to the subject in 1778, in 1780 and in 1782. His support of the Catholic cause was continuous and persistent. What is perhaps his most influential work, Reflections on the French Revolution, appeared in 1790 at the height of his influence. As an influential political writer, he represented the Conservative principles in flawless prose, and remained to the forefront of political theory. His support of reform therefore could not easily be ignored.⁴⁸

Burke, in the true spirit of the Enlightenment, was adamantly opposed to political injustice, and had often declared the Penal Laws as atavistic, immoral and injurious to Irish society. He was continually distressed to see Irish Catholics, who he was convinced would make good citizens and loyal subjects, debarred from playing an actively constructive part in the Irish community.⁴⁹ Given what Burke believed to be the inherent respect for hierarchy and tradition that existed in the Catholic Church, he was certain that if Irish Catholics were treated fairly they would be a tremendous asset to the maintenance of the existing social order. On the other hand, Burke argued that if the Irish Catholics were kept among the underprivileged, they would inevitably align themselves with those

⁴⁸ Ibid., 30-31.

⁴⁹ McDowell, Ireland, 393.

forces of insurrection which were willing to destroy existing institutions. Burke pressed for a policy of concession to the Catholics with intense, impatient, and at times violent, vehemence.⁵⁰ With European civilization imperilled by the spread of revolution and revolutionary ideas, Burke saw that it was a matter of urgency to take steps which would stabilize Irish society. Opposition in these circumstances was exasperating, and what drove Burke from exasperation to anger was the quality of the opposition. The Irish Protestant critics of concession claimed to be good conservatives, defending existing institutions, but Burke saw them as trying to cling to positions which were indefensible morally, as well as being politically impractical. He explained their motives in the harshest terms as a monopolizing group with a corrupt, selfish, shortsighted leadership, who clung tenaciously to power.

With the passing of Langrishe's Act in 1792, and the defeat, much to Burke's annoyance, of the franchise issue, conservatives in England and Ireland alike feared the very real possibility of union between Catholics and Protestant dissenters. The wisdom of the Catholic Committee was evident in their choice of Richard Burke, the only son of Edmund Burke, and a Protestant, to act as their paid adviser in the continued struggle for enfranchisement. He was a practising barrister, and his selection as a paid representative of the Catholics appeared to be a move of great political acuity. This was

⁵⁰ Ibid.

especially true since the Committee was often accused of sympathy with the French Revolution. The choice of Burke's son therefore as a representative of the Committee created a necessary and powerful connection between the Catholics and the Conservatives.

The position of the English Parliament led by William Pitt regarding the Irish Protestants was one of conciliation. England was, however, despite its desire to see Irish Catholics absorbed into the mainstream, not eager to force the Irish Parliament to adopt measures that would greatly upset relations between the ruling classes in both countries. England recognized the need for Irish Catholics to be placed on at least as favorable a footing as their co-religionists in England. In a letter to the Viceroy, Lord Westmorland, England urged "that there cannot be a permanency in the frame of the Government and Constitution of Ireland unless the Protestants will lay aside their prejudices, forego their exclusive pre-eminence, and gradually open their arms to the Roman Catholics, and put them on the same footing with every other species of Dissenter."⁵¹

The Protestant Ascendancy was not about to yield without a struggle. They were fully aware that the maintenance of a Protestant Ascendancy was based on the substitution of influence for numbers. What they feared ultimately was the possibility of a Catholic government. However, it was made abundantly clear to the Irish government that if it expected to have British assistance in an

⁵¹ Letter from Dundas to Westmorland, quoted in Lecky, Ireland, 111, 41.

emergency, it could not resist what were seen as the legitimate wishes of the Catholic people of Ireland, and Great Britain would no longer be willing to expend its resources defending a mere monopoly. The Viceroy, Lord Westmorland, insisted that a policy of favoring Catholics might drive the Irish Protestants into opposition, thus depriving the government of its most reliable allies in Ireland.

Early in 1792 it was clear that the enfranchisement issue was not about to change in favor of Irish Catholics. The Dublin Corporation, a significant force in the politics of the city, voted in favor of the Protestant Ascendancy and made its feelings clear to the House of Commons. Despite Grattan's appeal to the parliament that the Catholic "differs from you only in the forms of his worship and the ceremonies of his commemoration," parliament was obdurate.⁵² Grattan even used specific examples of what he believed the outcome of a united Ireland would be. Convinced that denominationalism was ceasing to be a force in politics, Grattan suggested that religious differences meant little to men of similar backgrounds. He pointed out that a Catholic if granted a commission in the army would tend to adopt the outlook of his brother officers since fraternity was more important than religion.

Edmund Burke termed Grattan's appeal "a noble performance," but the Irish Protestant parliament remained steadfast.⁵³ The relief

⁵² Grattan quoted in McDowell, Ireland, 401.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

bill presented by Sir Hercules Langrishe, however, was an indication to Irish Catholics that England supported their emancipation and that the wall of Protestant conservative opinion could at least be assaulted if not entirely scaled. As events in France progressed during 1792, Irish Protestants began to be convinced in the interest of safety of the need to have Irish Catholics on the side of the constitution. Further relief to Catholics was expedient both in view of the perceived threat from France and from the point of view of mutual defense.

The Catholic Committee, despite rifts and divisions within itself, convened frequently and persistently worked to forward the issue of franchise. At a meeting on December 4, 1792, they discussed and approved a petition directly to the king. By January 2, 1793, an Irish deputation had arrived in London and had been warmly greeted at Court. In its final form the petition asked the House of Commons to take the whole of the Catholics' case into consideration, but it did not make any specific demands. By that time, the British Government had decided that Irish Catholics should receive even larger measures of relief. The eventual outcome was that, due mainly to English pressure, a Catholic relief bill was presented in the Irish parliament on February 4, 1793, little more than one month before Stuart's departure. It was among the most momentous pieces of legislation ever to come before the assembled parliament. The bill was comprehensive in terms of Catholic relief: Catholics were granted the parliamentary franchise and permitted to hold all civil and military offices. They were, however, not allowed to hold the higher offices of state including judgeships, and

the posts of high sheriff and general on the staff. Catholics of certain means could keep arms on the same terms as Protestants, and under certain circumstances, were allowed to study at the University of Dublin. The bill had its opponents, foremost among whom was John Fitzgibbon, whose attack was vehement and vitriolic. Fitzgibbon stated that in his opinion the Catholics, as descendants of the old Irish, would not be satisfied with anything less than political predominance. Fitzgibbon argued that the Penal Laws were extreme measures deemed necessary by the prior conduct of Catholics when in power.⁵⁴ Having demonstrated all the reasons why he considered the bill pernicious, Fitzgibbon then advocated its passing as necessary for the overall peace of the country, and an essential culmination to the various relief concessions of the previous year.

The clause giving the unlimited franchise to Catholics carried by 144 to 72. The passing of the Relief Act of 1793 was seismic in its range of influence; the social, economic and professional strength of Irish Protestantism was so strong and pervasive that it took some time before this political predominance began to weaken. The decline of Protestant control was somewhat slow. But many Protestants, expecting immediate change, saw themselves faced with social revolution and turmoil, and they steadfastly clung to the few remaining restrictions on Irish Catholics as their only remaining line of defense. The Act of 1793 was a measure devised principally to cope with a time of crisis

⁵⁴ He described the Penal Laws as "a code forced on the parliament by harsh necessity," McDowell, *Ireland*, 401.

and, seeing the basis of his patronage threatened, Stuart left Ireland within weeks of its enactment. This set of circumstances was far removed from the favorable conditions under which Stuart had decided to move to Dublin in 1787.

CHAPTER IV

THE FINE ARTS IN IRELAND 1750-1787 AND
CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING STUART'S ARRIVAL

We hear the Duchess of Rutland has ordered an urn to be made of pure gold and elegant device in which the heart of her beloved Duke, whose last sighs breathed conjugal and parental fondness, is to be deposited.

Dublin Chronicle, Thursday, November 15, 1787

Charles Manners, Duke of Rutland, was buried on November 25, 1787, at Bottesford, Leicestershire. Stuart would forever associate his arrival in Ireland with the death of Rutland. The painter's daughter concurs that "on the day he arrived, the duke was buried."¹ She later avers that her father arrived in Dublin in 1788.² Strickland, reviewing the evidence over a century later, concludes that Stuart arrived in 1789.³ Despite these conflicting accounts, the arrival of Gilbert Stuart

¹ Dunlap, History, 228.

² *Ibid.*

³ Strickland, Dictionary, II, 411.

in Ireland can be accurately dated to early October 1787. On November 11, 1787, the Evening Herald announced that:

Mr. Stewart, an English gentleman lately arrived in the metropolis, excels in his delicacy of colouring and graceful attitudes.⁴

In his conversations with John Dowling Herbert, Stuart narrates an event that occurred "soon after his arrival" in Ireland.⁵ This was an invitation "to dine with the Artists of Dublin, on St. Luke's Day." Herbert does not provide a date, but St. Luke's Day occurs on October 18th. We can therefore assume that Stuart's time of arrival was early in that month. The account that the painter arrived in Dublin on the day that the Duke of Rutland was buried is exaggeration derived from Stuart himself.⁶

According to Herbert, Stuart accepted the invitation by the artists and dined, as planned, on St. Luke's Day, 1787, being "very communicative to those who sat near him."⁷ Continuing the story, Herbert adds:

Mr. Pack, (one of the company) who delighted in anecdote, was relating one, where he was the hero of the tale himself, and he spoke so loud as to drown Stuart's voice, so that the great visitor

⁴ Evening Herald, November 11, 1787.

⁵ Herbert, Varieties, 227.

⁶ Jane Stuart's account appears in Dunlap, History, 1:226

⁷ Herbert, Varieties, 227.

was obliged to be a mute listener, until he silenced the storyteller.⁸

The Mr. Pack referred to here was undoubtedly Christopher Pack whom Pasquin in his History, 1796 mentions as an "historical, portrait, and landscape painter ... born in the city of Norwich, in 1750."⁹ Having spent some time in Liverpool, Pasquin reports that Pack,

... in the year 1787, returned to London; in which place he remained but a few months: when he was induced to make a journey to Ireland; being previously recommended by Sir Joshua Reynolds to the late Duke of Rutland who was then vice-roy, and whose intention it was, to have established another public academy for the polite arts; but his unexpected death rendered the measure abortive.¹⁰

By 1796, when Pasquin published his History, Christopher Pack was back in London. We can assume that before he returned there he practiced portrait painting in Cork, for Dowling Herbert mentions being on stage there with "a Mr. Pack, a portrait painter."¹¹ It is clear that both Pack and Stuart were invited to Ireland at the same time by the Duke of Rutland having been recommended to him by Joshua Reynolds. It may well have been this joint invitation, in addition to their shared relationship with Sir Joshua Reynolds, that

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Pasquin, Professors, 52.

¹⁰ Ibid., 53.

¹¹ Ibid., 176.

provided for the rivalry apparent at the St. Luke's Day festivities. Pack narrated anecdotes according to which Reynolds was grateful to him for help with "the foreshortening of an infant's thigh."¹² Stuart, apparently "fired with indignation" with what he heard, asked in a voice as loud as Pack's, "Who is that person relating these stories?"¹³ On being told that the person was Mr. Pack, Stuart replied, "Pack! Pack! Well, I have often heard of a Pack of nonsense, but I never saw it before."¹⁴ Dowling Herbert then continues,

Such an involuntary burst of laughter took place, like a volley, so generally was the excitement felt, as took some minutes to relapse into a decent silence or decorum. Pack then became mute, and we were deprived of his entertaining qualities for that evening.¹⁵

Clearly, Stuart had cleared his way of opposition at an early date, and shortly after his arrival in Dublin had established a reputation for wit. In Herbert's words the company then enjoyed "Stuart's account of himself, as he was freed from interruption."¹⁶ It is possible that Pack, acknowledging Stuart's victory, forsook Dublin for Cork before returning to London. A number of years later, in describing his arrival in Dublin, Stuart himself stated dramatically that, on entering

¹² Ibid., 227.

¹³ Ibid., 228.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

the city, he met Rutland's funeral procession leaving it.¹⁷ An examination of the historical facts dismisses this possibility and indicates that Stuart was resident in Dublin for a number of weeks prior to Rutland's death. Again, as with all Stuart lore, we must be mindful of Tuckerman's assessment that "the personal anecdotes of Stuart are piquant and original ... many of them are familiar and traditional, and received a memorable emphasis when related by himself."¹⁸ Much has been made of the fact that Stuart succeeded in Dublin despite the loss of his patron, the Duke of Rutland. The origin of this outlook probably lies with Stuart's own telling of the events. Dunlap, quoting Jane Stuart, states that "notwithstanding the loss of his friendly inviter, he met with great success, painted most of the nobility, and lived in a good deal of splendor."¹⁹ Undoubtedly, the death of Rutland came as a great shock to Stuart, but it must be considered that nowhere is it mentioned in the literature on Stuart that, at the time of his death in October 1787, at the age of thirty-four, Charles Manners, Duke of Rutland, was nearing the close of his tenure as Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. In the week before his death, the following announcement appeared in the Dublin Evening Post, for Saturday, October 20, 1787:

¹⁷ Dunlap, History, 226.

¹⁸ Henry T. Tuckerman, Book of the Artists: American Artists Life (London: G.P. Putnam and Son, 1876), 114.

¹⁹ Dunlap, History, 228.

The term of his Grace the Duke of Rutland's government of this kingdom, must expire in a short time. A successor is already named for him, which is the Marquis of Rainham, late Viscount Townshend.²⁰

It can be assumed that while Rutland's death came as unexpected, both Stuart and Pack must have been well aware of the tenure of office held by Rutland and cannot therefore have depended entirely on his patronage alone to forward their careers in Ireland. The contest for position in the artistic life of Dublin therefore seems to have been a natural one from which Stuart emerged victoriously.

Rutland had been sworn into office in Dublin on February 24, 1784, and his term would have been completed in February, 1788.²¹ Stuart cannot therefore have realistically hoped for more than a few months of the Duke's patronage and friendship. Stuart certainly must, however, have hoped to have painted Rutland's portrait, a possibility that was abruptly shattered by the untimely death of the Viceroy. Indeed it is possible that Stuart, even before he arrived in Dublin, knew of the ailment that eventually caused the Duke's death. Rutland had been ill for some time prior to Stuart's arrival in Dublin. On October 2, 1787, the Dublin Evening Post announced that:

He [Rutland] proposes to leave the metropolis in a few days, and will not return for five or six weeks. He first proceeds to Kilkenny, from thence to the Lake of Killarney and continues his excursion to Castle-martyr. His Grace for eight or ten days past,

²⁰ Dublin Evening Post, October 20, 1787.

²¹ The Dictionary of National Biography, rev. ed. (1964), s.v., "Manners, Charles."

has been rather indisposed, but is now nearly recovered, and this additional tour is said to be undertaken merely for the benefit of his health.²²

On Thursday, October 11, however, the same newspaper announced that "His Grace ... has totally laid aside the idea of another excursion into the country." Just two days before the Saint Luke's Day dinner attended by Stuart, on the following Tuesday, October 16, the Dublin Chronicle advised its readers that:

We are happy in announcing to the public that his Grace the Duke of Rutland is in a fair way of recovery from his indisposition under which he has laboured some days. Last Friday his Grace was let blood, and since that time his complaint has considerably abated.²³

Finally, however, the news of recovery turned to rumor of death, and on Thursday, October 25, the Dublin Evening Post announced: "Yesterday about eleven o'clock, a report was current through the metropolis which caused much confusion. It was that his Grace the Duke of Rutland had expired"²⁴ The rumor was well founded, and Rutland was indeed dead. On Saturday, October 27, the Dublin Chronicle mourned thus: "He is gone shrieked the spirit of the isle, and his voice shall no longer gladden the hall of Kings."²⁵ In the

²² Dublin Evening Post, October 2, 1787.

²³ Dublin Chronicle, October 16, 1787.

²⁴ Dublin Evening Post, October 25, 1787.

²⁵ Dublin Chronicle, October 27, 1787.

obituary, printed in the same issue, the cause of death was given as follows: "The disorder which his Grace the Duke of Rutland languished under was an inflammation in the bowels."²⁶ On Tuesday, October 30th, an account of the Duke's death was given in the Dublin Chronicle. The report stated that the Duke called during his final moments for his children whom he received "in a most affectionate manner."²⁷ The report continues that "soon after this affecting scene his disorder grew so violent that he became delirious."²⁸

During the following week, newspapers continually advanced the arrangements being made for the Duke's funeral. On Tuesday, October 30th, the Dublin Chronicle announced that:

It is expected that the procession which will attend our late Viceroy to the water side will be one of the greatest ever seen here, as he will be attended by all the regiments in the garrison, most of the Volunteer corps, and almost all the incorporated societies in this city: amongst which, it is hoped, that the corporations of Dublin and the students of our University will be the foremost to pay that tribute of unfeigned respect for his Grace's memory ²⁹

On Thursday, November 1st, it was announced that the Duke's body had been embalmed. The same publication on Thursday, November

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Dublin Chronicle, October 30, 1787.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

8th carried the news that the "corpse of the Viceroy is to be brought from the Lodge in the Park to the House of Lords, where it will remain in state for a fortnight."³⁰ The funeral of the Duke occurred on November 17th and it undoubtedly made a great impression on Stuart which is why afterwards he associated his arrival in Ireland with the death of the Duke. Solemnly, the cortege moved,

From the House of Lords, up Grafton Street, turning by Nassau Street, into Dawson Street, round Stephen's Green, down King Street, William Street, St. Andrew Street, Church-Lane, into College-Green, Dame Street, Parliament-Street, Capel-Street, Mary-Street, up Summer-Hill, to Circular Road, and along that to the North-Wall, where the barge will lie.³¹

It was reported that the funeral procession took two hours in passing, and for days tributes appeared in the press. Consistently found among these tributes is mention of the "many amiable qualities which adorned the late Duke of Rutland's private character."³² Moreover it was frequently noted that he was possessed of an "easy elegant politeness and social urbanity that mark the real gentleman."³³ In addition, the press widely acknowledged the "unbounded philanthropy which was a distinguishing feature in his

³⁰ Dublin Chronicle, November 8, 1787.

³¹ Dublin Chronicle, November 23, 1787.

³² Dublin Evening Post, November 29, 1787.

³³ Dublin Chronicle, October 30, 1787.

Grace's portraiture."³⁴ Celebration is made of the many visits made by the late Duke to "every part of the kingdom, to make himself acquainted with the true state of its agriculture, arts, manufactures and commerce in order to discover how they might be most essentially improved for the public welfare."³⁵ The Dublin Chronicle sadly noted that: "It was by the prosecution of this great and important work, with a disinterested zeal unequalled by any of his predecessors in office, that this illustrious nobleman contracted the malady which put an end to his life, and subjected this country to a loss what will be long and fiercely lamented, but can scarcely ever be repaired."³⁶ From an examination of the press from the period of the Duke of Rutland's office, a picture of an extremely popular Viceroy emerges. For instance, on Tuesday, October 2, 1787, just a few weeks before his death, the Dublin Evening Post noted Rutland's presence in Tuam in the west of Ireland where the Duke had arrived on the previous September 22nd. The notice had been placed by Tuam Corporation, with the intention of "expressing the satisfaction which we in common with the rest of the kingdom must feel at the many salutary laws which have been passed in your Grace's administration, particularly those respecting agriculture."³⁷

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Dublin Evening Post, October 2, 1787.

Few had done as much to foster the fine arts in Ireland as had the Duke of Rutland. Shortly after he became Lord Lieutenant, Rutland presented the idea of establishing various artistic institutions in Ireland including a National Gallery of Art in which works by the old masters would be shown. On this project Rutland sought and received the support of one of Stuart's patrons, Speaker Foster, and chose Peter de Gree of Antwerp to become the institution's first keeper. De Gree had been employed by Sir Joshua Reynolds to acquire old master paintings both for him and for Rutland and arrived in Ireland in 1785.³⁸ Rutland's scheme was frustrated by the opposition of Lord Charlemont, who retained other ideas on the subject of an art institution. Finally, on the untimely death of Rutland, and of de Gree two years later, the scheme was abandoned. Perhaps the greatest tribute to the Duke as a patron of the arts appeared in the form of a poem written by Samuel Whyte. The literary piece was in eulogy form, and entitled The Mourners: A Sketch from Life. In Memory of His Excellency Charles Manners, Duke of Rutland, Late Lord Lieutenant of Ireland.³⁹ Composed in four line stanzas, the following verses indicate appreciation of his role in fostering the arts in Ireland:

³⁸ Crookshank and the Knight of Glin, Painters, 167. According to Pasquin, DeGree "excelled in painting groupes of boys in imitation of alto-relievo on marble." However, according to Pasquin, he neglected the study of anatomy and designed the adult figures very incorrectly. He made an attempt at portrait painting, but did not succeed. He died in Dublin in 1788. Professors, 50.

³⁹ Samuel Whyte, The Mourners: A Sketch from Life. In Memory of His Excellency Charles Manners, Duke of Rutland, Late Lord Lieutenant of Ireland (Dublin: R. Marchbank, 1787).

Joy mark'd the Dawning of his Reign:
 All hearts his Presence fir'd:
 But with him died the Hopes of Gain,
 And Gratitude expir'd.

Envy, thro' Mists that all Things views,
 His life presumes to scan:
 And Slander tells us, wondrous News!
 He was, alas! but Man.

Who! - Darkness hovering o'er the Land
 To Polish'd Arts averse-
 Who first stretch'd out his fostering Hand,
 And bade the Clouds disperse?

The state of the fine arts in Ireland during the eighteenth century is assessed by Anthony Pasquin in his History, 1796.⁴⁰ Pasquin visited Ireland and resided there from 1778 until 1786, leaving just one year prior to Stuart's arrival. Indeed, it might be argued that it is for that reason that Stuart is nowhere mentioned in Pasquin's work. However, since the latter was published one whole decade after Pasquin left Ireland, and frequently contains references to dates and events that occurred in the Irish art world after his departure, the omission of Stuart from Pasquin's History raises other questions. It is clear that Pasquin in other cases made every effort to bring his work up to date for publication, and seems to have kept in contact with events in Dublin and the provinces.⁴¹ Frequently, for instance, Pasquin lists

⁴⁰ Anthony Pasquin (John Williams), who is the principal artistic source for the eighteenth century, was also an itinerant painter, and examples of his work survive. See Crookshank and the Knight of Glin, Painters, 167.

⁴¹ Pasquin seems to have made other visits to Dublin for this purpose. His entry on De Gree mentions that he was in Dublin again in 1787, but does not mention the month. Pasquin, Professors, 49.

changes of address, along with other data that includes death dates for many artists between the time of his departure from Ireland in 1786 and the publication of the History in 1796. In this context, therefore, the omission of Stuart altogether from the work is most curious. Pasquin's assessment is often extremely personal, and the reader is often suspicious of the role of animosity or favor in Pasquin's approach. Pasquin's entry on Nathaniel Hone, one of the most accomplished artists of the period, serves as an illustration of his personal and often biased approach. Pasquin begins:

Nathaniel Hone, R.A. was a native of Ireland, and principally formed by his own manner, which betrayed neither the possession of taste, or any eminent talent whatever, on the part of the artist.⁴²

With regard to Hone's The Conjuror, 1775, in which Hone satirized Reynolds' work by the inclusion of engravings used by Reynolds in his compositions, and by Hone's use of Reynolds' favorite model, Pasquin is particularly harsh and disparaging:

This vindictive effort was sent by its parent to the annual exhibition; but was rejected by the academicians with becoming scorn, as the issue of a little mind, and powers of fancy most scandalously directed.⁴³

Pasquin continues his attack on Hone, becoming increasingly more personal and avoiding any legitimate scrutiny of the man as artist:

⁴² Ibid., 9.

⁴³ Ibid.

He was accustomed to ride up to the best inn in a town, and beg to dine with the family. If there were any children, he began his operations in flattering the feelings of the mother, by praising the exceeding beauty of Master or Miss. This eulogy was followed by an enquiry, if their pictures had been drawn: which if succeeded by a negative, he immediately disclosed his profession, and offered his services — the portmanteau was unpacked, and the operation began; while the fond and partial parents hung in rapture over his shoulder: the lady exclaiming at intervals, Well, I protest, that is the very model of our Bobby! How charming his eyes are done...⁴⁴

Pasquin continues the diatribe:

Thus he made his establishment secure, and gave general satisfaction, by offending truth and outraging taste; making the children as angels, the mother as Venus, and the husband as a well-fed Job, in a brown perriwig!⁴⁵

Clearly, Pasquin's severe personal distaste of Hone obscures any effort to treat the work with critical detachment. By comparison we can see that Pasquin writes with great personal affection for Stuart's rival, Christopher Pack:

Christopher Pack, historical, portrait, and landscape painter, born ... in 1750; his father was the lineal descendent of Sir Robert Pack ... who made himself so conspicuous in the reign of Charles 1 ...⁴⁶

44 Ibid.

45 Ibid.

46 Ibid., 42.

Providing one of his longest and most complete entries of all, Pasquin ends his discussion of Pack with the following apotheosis:

Mr. Pack is now practicing in London, with much reputation. I have seen an original head of Werter, by this artist, which approaches, in the colouring, nearer to the charming taste of the Venetian school than any other instance I ever saw, by a native of this realm.⁴⁷

Clearly, Pasquin knew Pack well. There is no mention, however, of the infertile period of Pack's life spent in Cork when he was on stage as an actor with Dowling Herbert in an attempt to subsidize his income as a portraitist. Only Pack's successes are selected for reviews. In this context then it is most probable that Pasquin knew of the animosity between Stuart and Pack, and, playing favorites, eliminated Stuart altogether from his History. Pasquin even mentions Pack's invitation to Ireland, and while Stuart was invited at the same time, Pasquin omits any reference to him. The account is as follows:

... in the year 1787, he (Pack) returned to London: in which place he remained but a few months: when he was induced to make a journey to Ireland; being previously recommended by Sir Joshua Reynolds to the Late Duke of Rutland, who was vice-roy, and whose intention it was, to have established another public academy for the polite arts; but his unexpected death rendered the measure abortive.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ Ibid., 43.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

Pasquin also neglected to mention that Pack seems to have been waiting in the wings for Stuart's departure. On March 19, 1793, the Dublin Chronicle provided the information regarding the matter: "Mr. Stewart's quitting this kingdom for America gives a fair opening to the abilities of Mr. Pack, who now stands unrivalled as a portrait painter."⁴⁹ Naturally, if Pasquin had included Stuart in his work, scholarship on Stuart's years in Dublin would be considerably richer. Pasquin, for instance, frequently provides the addresses of painters' studios and residences thereby enabling the scholar to derive a profile of the neighborhoods congenial to the practice of portraiture in late eighteenth-century Dublin.

Overall, Pasquin's view of the fine arts in Ireland was not particularly favorable. Yet while his criticism is harsh, it is in his favor that he also criticizes the development of the fine arts in England, thereby reducing the possibility of criticism on the basis of personal or national bias.⁵⁰

While Pasquin's criticism centers on the excessive pursuit of portraiture, he also launches into an analysis of the Irish character which he acknowledges "possesses a more than ordinary portion of genius."⁵¹ In Pasquin's view, however, "that genius is exemplified in an aptitude of merriment according with momentary social desires,

⁴⁹ Dublin Chronicle, March 19, 1793.

⁵⁰ Pasquin, Professors, 6.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

and conducive to the sublimation of hilarity; rather than those progressive stages of endeavour, which lead the struggling mind to an established excellence."⁵²

Pasquin states that the Irish "... are more prompt and brilliant than Englishmen; but do not so repeatedly weigh causes with consequences; and that a man who wishes to become exemplary as an artist, must connect his understanding with his fancy."⁵³ Pasquin's harshest criticism is reserved for the "intemperance" of the Irish, and he blames on it the fact that "the fine arts knew not the pleasure of being embraced willingly in Ireland."⁵⁴ In a passage that reads akin to a religious sermon, Pasquin elaborates:

No description of people can have due regard for the Fine Arts, who are more enslaved by the pleasures arising from the grosser senses, than those attaching to reflection. The interest of intemperance and study are so opposite, that they cannot exist together in the same mind: or at least in such a degree as to produce any advantages to the agent. When we eat or drink more than we ought, we are dragged to contrition through the medium of anguish, and forego, and violate, that dignified calmness of the system, which is only compatible to the nurture of an honourable ambition.⁵⁵

Despite the image of the Irish presented by Pasquin and others, gentlemen were not concerned solely with drinking, carousing,

52 Ibid.

53 Ibid.

54 Ibid.

55 Pasquin, Professors, 7.

duelling and politics. The foundation of the Dublin Society in the 1730's is evidence of the presence of more lofty ideals that finally led to the establishment of the first school for training in the fine arts. The Society which aimed at "the improvement of Husbandry, Manufactures and other useful Arts" was one of the first such societies in Europe and had enormous positive impact on the development of the fine arts in Ireland.⁵⁶ The universal aims of the society reflected the spirit of the eighteenth century, and though the first priority of the society was the improvement of agriculture, it soon broadened to include other interests and priorities. The earlier members of the Dublin Society were primarily Protestant gentlemen of the landlord class, but very early in its history, the organization broadened to include men of all denominations and professions. Peers, bishops, government officials, judges, army officers, barristers and doctors were all found within the ranks of the Society. Moreover, the patronage of the Viceroy was occasionally bestowed upon it, thereby broadening its support in eighteenth-century Irish life.

In November 1745, the Viceroy Lord Chesterfield was elected President of the Dublin Society. Chesterfield was particularly interested in Ireland, considering it a young country with great potential. In a letter written from London in 1747 to Thomas Prior, who was then acting as secretary of the Society, he declared:

⁵⁶ W.D. Sarsfield Taylor, The Origin, Progress, and Present Condition of the Fine Arts in Great Britain and Ireland (London: Whittaker, 1841), 267-271.

They [the Society's members] have done more good to Ireland with regard to arts and industry, than all the laws that could have been formed; for unfortunately there is a perverseness in our natures which prompts us to resist authority, though otherwise inclined enough to do the thing if left to our own choice. Invitation, example and fashion with some premiums attending them are, I am convinced, the only methods of bringing people in Ireland to do what they ought to do and that is the plan of your society.⁵⁷

From its inception, the work of the Society was eminently practical. Books on farming by English and Dutch writers were circulated, new farming implements were introduced, and agricultural experiments were encouraged. Premiums were offered to those producing the best crops, while tillage and the planting of trees were strongly advocated.

The Society gradually expanded its interests to the arts and from the mid-1730's the members began to publish pamphlets relating to economic and cultural issues. Among these was one by Bishop Berkeley, who in the Querist (1735) suggested the establishment of an art school for the training of artists in Ireland and asked: "Whether when a room was once prepared, and models in plaster of Paris, the annual expense of such an academy, need stand the public in above £200 a year?"⁵⁸ In 1738, another plea was made by Samuel Madden in his Reflections and Resolutions proper for the Gentlemen of Ireland.

⁵⁷ Crookshank and the Knight of Glin, Painters, 70.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 69.

as to their Conduct for the Service of their Country.⁵⁹ In this ambitious work, Madden encouraged the nobility and gentry to devote themselves to building and embellishing their estates rather than becoming absentee landlords. He also urged them to take greater interest in the arts. The efforts of Berkeley, Madden and other founders of the Society bore fruit and resulted in a gradual development of interest in the arts. Arthur Young in A Tour in Ireland, notes the following in his entry for June 23, 1777:

Lord Charlemont's house in Dublin, is elegant and convenient, and apartments large, handsome, and well disposed, containing some good pictures, particularly one by Rembrandt, of Judas throwing the money on the floor, with a strong expression of guilt and remorse: the whole group fine. In the same room is a portrait of Caesar Borgia by Titian.⁶⁰

In addition to the above, Young described the Library as a most elegant apartment, having at one end:

a pretty anti-room, with a fine copy of the Venus de Medicis, and at the other, two small rooms, one a cabinet of pictures, and antiquities, the other medals.⁶¹

In addition, Young speaks highly of the collection of Robert Fitzgerald, Esq. in Merrion Square, but does not dwell on the holdings there.

⁵⁹ Samuel Madden, Reflections and Resolutions Proper for the Gentlemen of Ireland as to their Conduct for the Service of their Country (Dublin: R. Reilly, 1738), reprinted 1816.

⁶⁰ Arthur Young, A Tour in Ireland: With General Observations on the Present State of that Kingdom (Dublin: George Bonham, 1780), 3.

⁶¹ Ibid.

Moreover, Young mentions that there is a "very good society in Dublin in a parliament winter — a great round of dinners, and parties; and balls, and suppers every night of the week, some of which are very elegant, but you almost everywhere meet a company much too numerous for the size of the apartments."⁶²

By mid-century, Dublin was not the only beneficiary of a more enlightened outlook. Charles Smith in his History of Cork, 1750 stated that "Painting and Music are no longer strangers to Ireland nor confined to Italy."⁶³ Illustrating his contention, Smith describes the residence of the Bishop of Cork:

In the Episcopal palace of Cloyne, the eye is entertained with a variety of good paintings, as well as the ear of the best masters, as a Magdalen of Sir Peter Paul Rubens, some heads by Van Dyke, and Kneller, besides several good paintings performed in the house, an example so happy, that it has diffused itself into the adjacent gentlemen's houses, and there is at present a pleasing emulation raised in the country, to vie each other in these kind of performances. The great usefulness of Design, in the manufacturing of stuffs, silks, diapers, damasks, tapestry, embroidery, earthen ware, sculpture, architecture, cabinet work, and an infinite number of such arts, is sufficiently evident.⁶⁴

62 Ibid., 106-107.

63 Charles Smith, The Ancient and Present State of the County and City of Cork (Dublin: James Parker, 1750), 2 Vols; quoted in Crookshank and the Knight of Glin, Painters, 69.

64 Ibid.

Later in the century, while on a visit to Cork, Herbert noted another collection in addition to that observed by Smith in his History. This collection was that of Mrs. Jefferies who was the sister of John Fitzgibbon, later Lord Clare, Stuart's patron.⁶⁵ The collection described was seen by Herbert at Blarney Castle. Describing his meeting with Mrs. Jefferies, Herbert relates how:

She took me through the Castle and showed me the paintings, which she remarked, were my chief objects. A whole-length portrait of Charles the Twelfth, of Sweden, occupies much space, and exhibits that eccentric monarch in a truly grotesque manner. It appears to be an original picture, but not by any master of note: the costume agrees with the description given by historians — perfectly characteristic. A portrait in crayons of the Duchess of Rutland, by Stoker: that beautiful head formed an excellent contrast to grim Charles.⁶⁶

Herbert, who arrived in Cork sometime during the last quarter of the century, records Mrs. Jefferies as remarking that: "I [Herbert] had one thing greatly in my favour, my painting in oils; he [Mr. Pope, an earlier practitioner] had been a crayon and miniature painter."⁶⁷ This remark suggests that painting in oils was seen to have a more lucrative outcome and be in more demand by the end of the century, surpassing the need for work in other media.

⁶⁵ Herbert visited Cork as a painter later in his career and after Stuart had left Ireland. His experiences are described in Herbert, Varieties, 171-181.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 171-172. The Stoker mentioned here was Bartholomew Stoker whom Pasquin mentions "practiced crayon paintings in Dublin, and its vicinities with great success, but died in 1788 of a decline brought on by intense study." Pasquin, Professors, 31.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 173.

The presence of some collections in Cork by the late eighteenth century is indeed expected, Cork being the second city in Ireland. However, on a visit to County Meath, Herbert notes a discussion between Lord Bective and a physician regarding some paintings.⁶³ Complimenting his lordship on his pictures, the physician exclaims: "That's a good picture, that gentleman in his library."⁶⁹ To this Lord Bective replied: "Oh, that's my son, Lord Headford, that has been painted in Rome, by Pompeo Batoni; and the companion picture, by the same painter is Lady Headford." After this came the question: "That's your lordship's picture in the centre, is it not?" To this his lordship replied: "It is by Stuart."⁷⁰ The very fact that Stuart's portrait of Lord Bective was proudly exhibited, between the pendants of Lord and Lady Headford by Pompeo Batoni, is indication of Stuart's high position in Irish life. The ensuing discussion involves Herbert, and, in the light of occurrences after Stuart's departure, is of great interest. The Lord asks Herbert: "Could you make a likeness like that?"⁷¹ The reply came quickly that: "Yes — so like it you should not know the difference." It is most probable that Dowling Herbert did in fact finish many of Stuart's pictures both during his time in Stuart's studio, but also after Stuart's departure. Stuart left many works unfinished on

68 Ibid., 132.

69 Ibid.

70 Ibid.

71 Ibid., 133.

his departure declaring to Herbert that: "The artists of Dublin will get employed in finishing them. You may reckon on making something handsom by it, and I shan't regret my default, when a friend is benefitted by it in the end. The possessors will be well off. The likeness is there, and the finishing may be better than I should have made it."⁷²

The improvement in the arts cited by Smith along with the collections noted by Herbert resulted in large part from the foundation of the Dublin Society Schools, which was the brainchild of Samuel Madden and William Prior, the latter a founder member of the Dublin Society.⁷³ Prior had been educated at Trinity College and was among the most philanthropic of the Irish gentry. The first drawing master of the Dublin Society Schools was Robert West, who is one of the most important figures in the development of art in Ireland in the eighteenth century. Scholars have with difficulty traced the life and training of this important figure. West's contribution was recognized by Warburton, Whitelaw and Walsh in their History of the City of Dublin, published in London in 1818.⁷⁴ In this monumental two volume work, the authors refer to West as "the parent of the arts in Dublin."⁷⁵ Pasquin asserts that West was "the first master of the

⁷² Herbert, Varieties, 248.

⁷³ Taylor, Fine Arts, 267-268.

⁷⁴ J. Warburton, J. Whitelaw and R. Walsh, History of the City of Dublin (London: T. Cadell and W. Davies, 1818), 2:1180; quoted in Crookshank and the Knight of Glin, Painters, 69.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

Historical department in the national Academy for Design in Dublin: he was the son of an Alderman of Waterford, and studied in Paris under Vanloo and Boucher. He principally excelled in his drawings of the human figure in chalk and crayons, but could never embody a subject: he established the first Academy for Design in Ireland, in Shaw's-court, Dame-Street, Dublin."⁷⁶ In his Recollections of the Life of John O'Keeffe, 1826, an autobiographical study, the author mentions that his studies at the Society Schools were enriched by the French background of West's training.⁷⁷ In his work, Some Memoirs of the Patronage and Progress of the Fine Arts in England and Ireland, 1826, William Carey states that West won the first prize for drawing in the French Academy under Carle Van Loo.⁷⁸ Writing in the Citizen, in 1841, Thomas James Mulvany stated that West's chalk drawings from the living model, his academy figures, "have never been surpassed and perhaps but rarely equalled.... They are infallible models for study and have produced more good draughtsmen, and have impressed finer notion of the human form, than have the works of any other artist in the last century."⁷⁹ Strickland states that in the late 1730's West

⁷⁶ Pasquin, Professors, 17.

⁷⁷ John O'Keeffe, Recollections of the Life of John O'Keeffe (Dublin: 1826), 1:13; quoted in Crookshank and the Knight of Glin, Painters, 70.

⁷⁸ William Carey, Some Memoirs of the Patronage and Progress of the Fine Arts in England and Ireland (London: Saunders and Otley, 1826), 187-188; quoted in Crookshank and the Knight of Glin, Painters, 69.

⁷⁹ For a full discussion, see Crookshank and the Knight of Glin, Painters, 69. The authors identify Mulvany who wrote anonymously as "M." See also Thomas James

opened a school in George's Lane in Dublin, and that c. 1740 the Dublin Society arranged to send him twelve boys to teach.⁸⁰ This seems to have coincided with the first award of premiums to artists which the Society inaugurated in 1739, under the direction of Dr. Samuel Madden. An important document, now missing, but referring to the school, was found by W.G. Strickland, and quoted by him in his Dictionary.⁸¹ The following passage, according to Strickland, appeared in the minutes of the Society for May 18, 1746:

Since a good spirit shows itself for drawing and designing, which is the background of painting and so useful in manufactures, it is intended to erect a little academy or school of drawing and painting, from whence some geniuses may arise to the benefit and honour of this Kingdom; and it is hoped that gentlemen of taste will encourage and support so useful a design.⁸²

A few years later in 1750 it was announced that the school had moved to Shaw's Court.⁸³

In his Recollections, John O'Keeffe outlines the curriculum:

Mulvany, "Memories of Native Artists No. 1 - Mr. Francis R. West," The Citizen (Dublin), no. 24 (November, 1841), 206.

⁸⁰ Walter G. Strickland, A Dictionary of Irish Artists (Dublin: Maunsell, 1913), 419; quoted in Crookshank and the Knight of Glin, Painters, 69.

⁸¹ For the complications regarding this issue see Crookshank and the Knight of Glin, Painters, 69.

⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 70.

We were early familiarized to the antique in sculpture, and in painting to the style and manner of the great Italian and French masters. We also studied anatomy; and, indeed, the students there turned their minds to most of the sciences.⁸⁴

Later in the same account O'Keeffe mentions that many members of the Society, including the Lord Lieutenant, were frequent visitors to the school and that promising students were sent to Rome to study the Italian masters.⁸⁵ O'Keeffe was but six years old when he was admitted to the school; and most students were under fourteen at the time of admission. Crookshank and FitzGerald provide data from the annual student exhibitions which were held at the House of Lords.⁸⁶ In 1747, sixteen boys exhibited, and in 1748 twenty-eight students presented their work at the annual show.⁸⁷ From then onward, the numbers grew annually.

Dubliners were exceedingly proud of their school as is indicated by an account written by William Sleater in An Essay on Perfecting the Fine Arts in Great Britain and Ireland, 1767.⁸⁸ First drawing attention to the excellence of Anglo-Irish Literature Sleater proudly asserts that "Ireland gave England the hint of a drawing Academy and

⁸⁴ O'Keeffe, Recollections, 1:13; quoted in Crookshank and the Knight of Glin, Painters, 70.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ William Sleater, An Essay on Perfecting the Fine Arts in Great Britain and Ireland (Dublin:1767), 36-37, quoted in Crookshank and the Knight of Glin, Painters, 69.

asserts that some of the best Artists have been bred here ... Mr. West has sent out scholars of the greatest promise, now abroad."⁸⁹ It should be remembered that the school was not just for fine art, but also gave freehand, mechanical and pattern drawing for all "whose Profession depends upon Design."⁹⁰ Among professions receiving training at the school in 1784 were the following: "Painters, Carvers, Chasers, Goldsmiths, Carpet-Weavers, Linen and Paper Stainers, Damask and Daiper Weavers, their Journeymen and Apprentices, and others...."⁹¹ In 1842, Isaac Wells, Secretary of the Society, said that the admission registers for the preceding hundred years indicated that no fewer than 10,000 pupils had passed through the schools.⁹² That oil painting was not part of the curriculum is clear, for none of the early accounts mention it, and Sleater in the following excerpt implies that it was not taught: "The Academy has produced many excellent Chalks, and more it could not do, for more it did not teach. To expect Painters from mere Workers in Chalk, would be to expect Philosophers from a Grammar-school."⁹³

89 Ibid.

90 Ibid.

91 Ibid.

92 Crookshank and the Knight of Glin, Painters, 70.

93 See Crookshank and the Knight of Glin, Painters, 70, for the origins of this information.

Regarding instruction in the school, Strickland mentions that Robert Dodsley's The Preceptor, 1748, was used as a text; O'Keeffe reported that the school employed a model and had a large collection of plaster casts acquired in Rome by Lord Charlemont.⁹⁴ Crookshank and FitzGerald are of the opinion that the school was also in possession of a large collection of engravings which may have been brought from France by West and Mannin, as well as a collection of old master drawings and copies.⁹⁵ The publication of Joseph Fenn's Instructions given in the Drawing School established by the Dublin Society, 1769, is further evidence of the pragmatic nature of instruction in the Society Schools.⁹⁶ Fenn was primarily interested in accommodating the training available to the needs of military personnel, and his publication was really a proposal directed at the addition of more mathematical elements to the curriculum of the schools.⁹⁷ Though establishment of the Society Schools was the first such endeavor directed towards artistic training in Ireland, other private institutions came and went during the century. Among these were schools run by Thomas Kelly (opened in 1763) and by the

94 Ibid.

95 Ibid.

96 Joseph Fenn, Instructions Given in the Drawing School Established by the Dublin Society (Dublin: George Cecil, 1769). See Crookshank and the Knight of Glin, Painters, 70.

97 Ibid.

Frenchman William Bertrand (begun in 1765) who was a fellow student with West in Paris.⁹⁸

In the eighteenth century, the usefulness of drawing as a discipline appears throughout discourses on matters of aesthetics and manufacture from Hogarth onward. The publication of William Allen's The Student's Treasure, a new drawing book consisting in a variety of etchings and engravings executed by Irish artists, 1789, published during Stuart's time in Ireland, is further indication that this attitude toward drawing, as central to the practice of every art and craft, obtained.⁹⁹ Allen was a print seller in Dublin, and it is therefore understandable that his sensitivity toward line would have been developed. Allen wrote: "The advantages which accrue to the community from the Study of Design, are not confined to the Superior Ranks of life, they are diffused through a variety of ingenious branches of Manufacture, in which a taste and a knowledge of drawing is indispensably necessary, for their attaining perfection."¹⁰⁰ This

98 For a discussion of this issue see Crookshank and the Knight of Glin, Painters, 70-71. Another teacher, Pierre Monade Lesat, advertised his qualifications in the Dublin Daily Advertiser as early as 1736:

Painter and Medalist, member of the Royal Academy of Paris, bred by Monsieur le Bouteaux, Painter to the King of France having come hither from Lisbon where he was employed by his Portuguese Majesty and intending to settle in this Honorable City hereby advertises the Nobility and Gentry that he will teach pupils.... He will also Draw from Nature, copy Curious Pieces ... at the easiest rates.

99 William Allen, The Student's Treasure, a new drawing book consisting in a variety of etchings and gravings executed by Irish artists (Dublin: J. Roberts, 1789); quoted in Crookshank and the Knight of Glin, Painters, 71.

100 Ibid.

stress on drawing, which was a central focus in the arts in Dublin, is frequently thought to be responsible for the high quality of much Irish eighteenth-century craftsmanship. Sleater, in his pamphlet which has previously been quoted, also mentions that in the context of art in Great Britain, "... many of the capital engravers, were ours."¹⁰¹

Prior to the establishment of the Society Schools, there was no institution in Ireland that provided even rudimentary training in the fine arts. Evidence of the economic and social stagnation of the first two decades of the century abounds, and indicates the very real absence of interest in the visual arts or in antiquities.¹⁰² The following quote from Bishop Berkeley sums up much of the attitude of ignorance that seems to have prevailed in Ireland outside of Dublin. Sir John Perceval, the recipient of the letter, was later raised to the title of Earl of Egmont and was one of the most cultivated figures in eighteenth-century Irish life. On September 22, 1709, Berkeley wrote:

Dear sir, I am sorry to learn from Dan Dering that you have lost your statues, medals, etc, that you had coming from Italy; though on second thought I almost doubt whether it may be reckoned a loss. Nobody purchases a cabinet of rarities to please himself with the continued light of them, nothing in it being of any farther use to the owner than as it entertains his friends; but I question if your neighbors in the County of Cork would relish that sort of entertainment. To feed their eyes with the sight of rusty medals and antique statues would (If I mistake not) seem to them something odd and insipid. The finest collection is not worth a groat where there is no one to admire and set a value on

¹⁰¹ Sleater, Essay, 39; quoted in Crookshank and the Knight of Glin, Painters, 70.

¹⁰² Crookshank and the Knight of Glin, Painters, 69.

it, and our country seems to me the place in the world which is least furnished with virtuosi.¹⁰³

The absence of artistic training in Ireland early in the century, however, did not completely prevent the development of the fine arts in the country. A number of portrait and figure painters established careers in Dublin, while foreign artists were attracted by the existence of a market there, especially as the century progressed. An increasing number of native Irish embarked on training abroad either in London, Rome or Antwerp. Moreover, not only were foreign artists at work in Ireland, but foreign paintings were being imported in similar fashion as was the case in England. The following advertisement appeared in the Dublin Gazette, July 22, 1707:

A Choice Collection of fine Original Pictures, fit for Halls, Stair-Cases and Closets, lately brought over from Holland; as also a Collection of Liming, Indian and Painted Screens, Prints and Maps; Screwtores and Chests of Drawers; a large looking-glass and fine Glass Sconces, will be sold by way of auction (or who bids most) in Lucas's Coffee-House-Yard, on Cork Hill.¹⁰⁴

Pasquin states that Mr. Kiverley, who was a painter and picture dealer in Dublin's Ranelagh Road, brought a collection of Italian pictures to Ireland. Pasquin related that Kiverley "made a pedestrian journey to Rome, about the year 1738: where he purchased a collection of pictures, by the best Italian masters, for the Earl of Eley, and other

¹⁰³ Benjamin Rand, Berkeley and the Percival (Cambridge: 1914), 57; quoted in Crookshank and the Knight of Glin, Painters, 33.

¹⁰⁴ Dublin Gazette, July 22, 1707.

gentlemen."¹⁰⁵ Pasquin is of the belief that "the exhibition which he made of these pictures in William-street, Dublin, was a principal excitement to the gentry of Ireland to become, more generally, the lovers of virtu."¹⁰⁶ Kiverley died at his house in Ranelagh Road in 1789. From Pasquin's account of Kiverley's death, subsequently, one can understand that Stuart's particular brand of eccentric humor found sympathisers in Dublin. Of Kiverley's death, Pasquin writes:

... he was a man of singular humour: when he found himself seized with a mortal disorder, he sent for two of his particular friends, and told them. As he had enjoyed their company in the heighday and zenith of his life, he was determined they should behold him die; which he did with a most exemplary firmness; treating death as an event of no consideration; and he gave up his spirit, like Rabelais, with a jest.¹⁰⁷

Among the most illustrious painters to visit Dublin during the period was Anjelica Kauffmann who appears to have stayed in Ireland for six months during 1771.¹⁰⁸ According to William Carey, Kauffman was patronized by Colonel Madden, the son of Samuel Madden, along with Judge Hellen.¹⁰⁹ Carey reports that the reason for the invitation was a desire on behalf of her patrons to purchase

¹⁰⁵ Pasquin, Professors, 21.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Lady Victoria Manners, Angelica Kauffmann (London: J. Lane, 1924), 38.

¹⁰⁹ Carey, Memoirs, 189.

some of her pictures as models for the students in the Dublin Society Schools. Accounts, however, are conflicting on this issue, and Lady Victoria Manners in her biography promotes the idea that Kauffmann was the guest of Mrs. Clayton at Stephen's Green, the Tisdalls at Stillorgan Park, the Elys at Rathfarnham Castle and the Carlows at Emo Park.¹¹⁰ The large family group of the Elys along with that of the Tisdalls is extant. It seems unlikely, however, that any examples of her work entered the collection of the Dublin Society Schools since she seems to have been fully occupied by these large family groups.¹¹¹

Robert Home, another English visitor who, according to Pasquin, studied under Anjelica Kauffmann, arrived in Ireland in 1779 "under the protection of the late High Chancellor, Lord Lifford; Dr. Clements, the Vice-Provost of Dublin University; and Mr. R. Jephson."¹¹² According to Pasquin, he met with "unparalleled success" in Dublin but returned to London in 1789 from where he sailed to the East Indies. Herbert writes that Home as a young man studied in Rome for a number of years after which he returned to London where he commenced portrait painting.¹¹³ Continuing with his narrative, Herbert writes:

¹¹⁰ See Crookshank and the Knight of Glin, Painters, 151.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Pasquin, Professors, 13.

¹¹³ Herbert, Varieties, 122.

... but London being occupied in that line by Reynolds, Gainsborough, Romney, etc., there was little chance of a young painter getting practice against such formidable rivals; he therefore decided upon going to Dublin, and with letters from his countrymen, who are famed for serving their fellow Scots, he got into fashion at once. His friends were chiefly medical — Dr. Hutchinson, Grey, Cunningham, Cleghorn, Barry, Quin, &. These were all eminent in their profession, and had such influential power with persons of rank that Home had as many sitters as he could paint, and his show-rooms exhibited all the fashion and beauty amongst persons of the highest rank; and there was in Dublin at that period a great assemblage.¹¹⁴

So influential was Home in Dublin that Herbert ceased his formal training at the academy in order to "confine all my studies to copying Home's pictures."¹¹⁵

According to Herbert, Home:

was very obliging, and he saw much company, and frequently invited me to dinner ... many persons of talent, wit and humor, were to be seen at his table, — all the stars ... This went on for a long time, until Stewart [sic] came from London; his pictures were sought for with great avidity; so that Home fell off in his practice, and he left Dublin with a purse not filled, and he ought to have saved thousands.¹¹⁶

Strickland repeats Pasquin's account of Home's success in Dublin, but adds that "he grew careless in his work, his practice lessened, and finally on the arrival of Gilbert Stuart he found his studio

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 123.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 124.

deserted."¹¹⁷ Little of Home's so-called prolific career is now in evidence.¹¹⁸ A few probable examples exist, but condition makes attribution difficult. As with many eighteenth-century Irish portraits, his more impressive works may well be the victims of war and political strife in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Another Englishman, none of whose Irish works are known to survive, was William Doughty who arrived in Ireland, according to Pasquin, at the same time as Home. Moreover, Pasquin relates that Doughty studied under Sir Joshua Reynolds, who considered him one of his best pupils.¹¹⁹ Doughty's career in Ireland seems to have been unfortunate, and Pasquin relates that "although highly recommended by his master, and possessing greater ability than his more fortunate rival, he returned to London extremely dispirited: from whence he took shipping for Bengal, but died on passage."¹²⁰

It is of significance that two other Americans, Henry Pelham and Matthew Pratt, both visited Dublin during the eighteenth century.¹²¹ Pratt arrived in Ireland on April 28, 1777 and remained

¹¹⁷ Strickland, Dictionary, 1:312.

¹¹⁸ Crookshank and the Knight of Glin, Painters, 152. These authors agree that the products of Home's Irish practice are largely lost. A few Indian subjects exist, however, but these are later in the painter's career after he left Ireland and are of little relevance to Stuart's Irish career.

¹¹⁹ Pasquin, Professors, 13.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*

¹²¹ Strickland, Dictionary, 11:411.

there until June 8th of the same year.¹²² He was the guest of Archdeacon Isaac Mann whose portrait he claims to have painted.

Pratt wrote:

I painted it at full-length, as large as life, in his canonicals and robes, and took a lucky opportunity that offered itself at that time of placing it in a public exhibition that was to be made by the Society of Artists of the City of Dublin in the present month ... and had the pleasure of being presented with a catalogue and ticket of admission to the exhibition while it lasted.¹²³

The Irish sojourn of Henry Pelham was of much greater duration and of particular interest. Pelham was Copley's half-brother, and the celebrated subject of Copley's famous work Boy with a Squirrel (1765). Pelham's interest in Ireland seems to have derived from his contact with relatives there even before he left Boston for England where he joined the Copley family in mid-1776, staying with them in Leicester Square.¹²⁴ Whitley states that Pelham exhibited The Finding Of Moses at the Royal Academy in 1777 and in the following year submitted four miniatures, two watercolors and two enamels.¹²⁵ Following this, Pelham seems to have been a candidate for two Royal Academy associateships, but was not elected. It is most probable that it

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Pratt quoted in Strickland, Dictionary, 11:411.

¹²⁴ Jules David Prown, John Singleton Copley (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1966), 11:265.

¹²⁵ William Whitley, Artists and their Friends in England, 1700-1799 (London: 1928), 11:338; quoted in Prown, Copley, 265.

was at this time that Pelham left for Ireland. The exact time of his arrival in Ireland is not documented, and no mention of him occurs in Pasquin. Strickland estimates that Pelham arrived in Ireland in 1778 or 1779.¹²⁶ However, in 1780 or 1781, he married Catherine Butler of Castlecrine, County Clare in the West of Ireland.¹²⁷ Strickland gives some account of his activities in Ireland during the following years. These included a survey map of County Clare, an engraving of Nathaniel Grogan's portrait of the Countess of Desmond, along with drawings of Quinn Abbey and Ennis Abbey in County Clare for Groce's Antiquities of Ireland.¹²⁸ Prown mentions that in 1787, Pelham was engaged as agent for the Marquis of Landsdowne's estates in County Kerry, Ireland and continued in this position for eleven years.¹²⁹ Pelham's early years in this position overlapped Stuart's term in Dublin, but one searches in vain for any evidence of a meeting. During these years, Pelham seems altogether to have forsaken the profession of painting for that of agent in County Kerry, and his antiquarian interests replaced his artistic ones.¹³⁰ Consequently, in 1800 he issued a proposal announcing his plans to publish "An History of Ancient Palatinate of Desmond and the Present County of Kerry"

¹²⁶ Strickland, Dictionary, II:411.

¹²⁷ Prown, Copley, 11:265.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

under the auspices of the Dublin Society. In 1806 Pelham drowned tragically in the Kenmare River at Bear Island in County Kerry.¹³¹ If Pelham continued his artistic work during the years of his work as agent and antiquarian, his products may have been either drawings, watercolors or miniatures. None of these seem to have survived, if indeed they ever existed, and Pelham's untimely death has deprived others of his antiquarian talents, for the proposed history never reached the press.

This issue of Stuart and Pelham, both American artists in Ireland, needs some fuller attention. Pelham had arrived in Ireland several years prior to Stuart, and though there clearly was no center of social or professional life for American artists in Ireland such as existed around West in London, it is remarkable if the two did not meet. Moreover, Pelham's time in London was brief and occurred as far as can be ascertained before Stuart was introduced to West. Dunlap states that "late in the year 1778, Gilbert Stuart was unknown to Benjamin West."¹³² By then or shortly thereafter, Pelham left for Ireland, preceding Stuart there by about nine years; however, Stuart seems not to have sought Pelham out in Ireland, an issue that might shed some light on Stuart's position there. There is no reason to believe that Americans were anything other than welcome in Ireland during the eighteenth century, either before or after the American

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Dunlap, History, 1:207.

Revolution and, as has been previously mentioned, Benjamin Franklin had been well received there. Stuart, however, seems to have encouraged a public image of himself as an Englishman. Dowling Herbert for instance recalls that Stuart often modelled himself on the character of John Kemble, the famous Shakespearean actor and Stuart's contemporary. Stuart and Kemble frequently dined together in London, where Stuart painted Kemble's portrait. Herbert writes:

Stuart had great affectation in his manner of speaking. It was like an imitation of John Kemble, to whom he bore a great resemblance, and he was flattered whenever it was observed he was not only like Kemble in features, but in speech.¹³³

It will be recalled that the Evening Herald also announced Stuart's arrival as that of an "English gentleman."¹³⁴

Another possible influence on Stuart's personal and artistic style in Ireland, and one which sheds further light on his bid for acceptance among the aristocracy, is the career of James Latham, whose portraits of the Protestant Ascendancy made him the most successful Irish portraitist of his day. Latham received his artistic training in Antwerp, where he became master of the guild in 1724 and also acquired a familiarity with French art. His work was often confused with that of Hogarth. Latham's portrait of Bishop Berkeley (Figure 15)

¹³³ Herbert, Varieties, 226.

¹³⁴ There is evidence that Waterhouse confirmed Stuart's thoroughly British appearance and manners by noting that "he himself would pass for a Briton on either side of the Atlantic." Mabel Munson Swan, "Scraps: The Missing Waterhouse Biography of Gilbert Stuart," Art in America, 41, no. 2 (Spring, 1953), 91; quoted in De Lorme, "Stuart," 340.

departs from the repetitive mediocrity of so many Irish and English portraits of the period. Though in dignified dress, the Bishop is shown informally and the portrait captures the vibrant personality of this important figure. Though a chronology for Latham's work is lacking, the picture clearly presents an older figure than that of the Bishop in the famous Bermuda Group c. 1729 by Smibert.¹³⁵ Based on stylistic issues, and the appearance of Berkeley as an older man in the portrait, the date of c. 1745 seems most appropriate for the Latham. Pasquin narrates a story about the dissatisfaction of one of Latham's female sitters whose expressions on occasion appear vacuous.¹³⁶ Despite the fact that the complaint may have been justified, the Berkeley portrait is proof of Latham's genius in the presentation of male sitters. This is one of the first Irish portraits of the century where real sophistication, generally resulting from thorough training and genuine artistic talent, appears. Notable in the portrait is the masterful treatment of drapery, which was usually absent from Irish and English portraits of the period. Latham distinguishes himself from the provincial character of Irish portraiture during the early part of the century. He is not, however, consistent in his productions, and his portrait of Sarah Cosby c. 1740 (Figure 16) is indicative of how his style could lapse into

¹³⁵ A second version, possibly a study, exists in Dublin. See Wayne Craven, Colonial American Portraiture: The Economic, Scientific, and Aesthetic Foundations (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 158.

¹³⁶ "When Latham was in his prosperity, a lady of distinction, with coarse lineaments, sat to him for her portrait, which he drew faithfully; but she was so disgusted with the performance, that she abused the painter who immediately tore it from the frame, and had it nailed to the floor of his hall as a piece of oil cloth." Pasquin, Professors, 29.

provincialism. The Cosby portrait has all the stiffness, artificiality and flatness of Irish and English painting of the period.

Despite some lapses, however, Latham was extremely successful and proved a significant influence on Irish painters. Indeed, at least one of Stuart's Irish portraits can be seen to have great resemblance both in composition and treatment to Latham's earlier work, Two Ladies of the Leslie Family at the Harpsicord c. 1792 (Figure 17). In this work, Latham depicts two young women of the Irish Protestant Ascendancy engaged in playing music at a harpsichord, an activity clearly reserved for the privileged in Irish society. A similar composition was created by Stuart years later in his double portrait Miss Dick and her Cousin Miss Foster c. 1792 (Figure 18). In this work, as in the Latham, Stuart depicts the two young women engaged in activity befitting the aristocracy. The sitters, both very young women, are here seen creating artful embroidery. Overall, in feeling, and even in technique and composition, the two portraits bear a compositional resemblance to each other, thus emphasising Latham's continued influence on Irish portraiture during the eighteenth century. Indeed, Stuart may well have tailored his technique to suit the eyes of an Irish generation whose standard in portraiture was established largely by Latham. Pasquin writes of Latham's style that "His portraits ... were painted in so pure a stile as to provide him the title of the Irish Vandyke."¹³⁷

¹³⁷ Ibid.

After Latham's death in 1747 the marked achievement of the Dublin Society Schools is seen in the work of the first generation of students, many of whom left Ireland to pursue careers abroad rather than be constrained by the prosaic limits of Irish patrons. Among these are Thomas Hickey, Henry Tresham, Nathaniel Hone, and James Barry. The attraction of London and the vastly greater opportunities for patronage there attracted these artists, whose careers were spent substantially outside Ireland. It is, however, a testimony to the importance of training under the aegis of the Dublin Society Schools that their talent first emerged, and an indictment of the provinciality of Irish society that they had to emigrate for lack of patronage at home. That all of these figures achieved substantial patronage abroad, and in the case of James Barry even international renown, is indicative of their talent. Hone's fashionable patronage included the Prince and Princess of Wales, and he was one of the first directors of the Society of Incorporated Artists in London. In 1768 Hone was one of the founder members of the Royal Academy. However, Hone's relationship with the Academy degenerated in 1770 when he attacked the aesthetic principles of Reynolds, and he exhibited his famous, satirical painting The Conjuror in the following year.

Hickey, who was vastly less talented than Hone, expected to make a career in Bath following Gainsborough there in 1778. However, as is discussed by a critic in 1774, he fell far short of his aim:

If we may judge of the rest of these pieces, from the very great likeness preserved in the first, we must pronounce them so far good portraits; but there is a stiffness, and a want of

confirmation of character in most of Mr. Hickey's performances, which very much obscure the rest of his merit.¹³⁸

Though he studied under West at the Dublin Society Schools from 1765 and reached some distinction, Tresham's love of historical subjects almost insured that he would not find adequate patronage in Dublin where taste leaned almost entirely towards portraiture. He left for England in 1775, and like Hone received immediate commissions beginning with John Campbell, Earl of Cawdor. Later he was included in Hugh Douglas Hamilton's work as a spectator looking at Canova's sculpture of Cupid and Pysche.

The career of James Barry casts further light on the state of the fine arts in Ireland as the century progressed.¹³⁹ Even before Barry left Cork to study at the Dublin Society Schools he had completed a number of history paintings, mostly of Biblical themes. These from the outset suggested a breadth of interest far removed from the more prosaic considerations of most Irish artists of the period, and suggested the direction of Barry's artistic career. When he arrived in London the artist was introduced to Reynolds who maintained a continuing interest in his career. After a substantial visit to Italy where he studied voraciously, Barry returned to England in 1771 and the remainder of his career belongs to the history of art in Britain.

¹³⁸ Unidentified newspaper cutting in the Courtauld Institute. Quoted in Crookshank and the Knight of Glin, Painters, 88.

¹³⁹ For a discussion of Barry's career and training in Ireland, see Crookshank and the Knight of Glin, Painters, 105-106.

Barry retained no connection with Ireland. While a student in Dublin, however, Barry exhibited a picture, Conversion by Saint Patrick of the King of Cashel, at the Dublin Society in 1763.¹⁴⁰ The records of the Society are missing for that year, but it is deduced that apart from attracting much attention for its uniquely patriotic matter, it did not win Barry a prize. Such an outcome was predictable given the date which preceded the foundation of the Royal Academy in England and the promotion of history subjects by Reynolds in his yearly discourses. Given the provincial state of the fine arts in Dublin at this time there was simply no possibility of patronage for artistic interests such as those displayed by the precocious Barry. A career in London was the most obvious option, for if Dublin society considered itself fashionable, and second only to London, it was decidedly lacking in artistic awareness.

Of far more importance in the history of art in Ireland at mid-century is the career of Robert Hunter. Hunter attributions are very difficult for a number of reasons as outlined by Crookshank and FitzGerald.¹⁴¹ Hunter was apparently well known by 1753, when he painted the Lord Mayor of Dublin, Sir Charles Burton. In his work of the 50's and 60's there are reflections of Englishmen such as Stephen Slaughter, Allen Ramsay and Joshua Reynolds. Few of his works that date after 1785 have been located. Pasquin attributes this to the arrival

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 83-86.

of Robert Home in 1779 but adds that if Hunter was driven out of business by Home it was because of Home's "better fortune, more than his superior merits."¹⁴² Crookshank and FitzGerald are more convincing in suggesting that the increasing heaviness of Hunter's work was due to advancing years. Hunter's finest works are generally regarded as his three-quarter lengths, of which the very fine Lord Newbattle (Figure 19) painted in Dublin in 1762 is an example. Examples of both half and full-lengths by Hunter also exist, but the attribution problem remains vexing. Despite the derivative quality of much of Hunter's work he continued throughout his long career to remain in Ireland, where according to Taylor he "had a large and profitable practice."¹⁴³ In addition to portrait painting, Hunter also seems to have been a collector of paintings. William Carey, writing in 1826, describes Hunter as "a walking chronicle of everything relative to the Irish artists and arts," and Taylor mentions that Hunter "had collected many old pictures."¹⁴⁴

It is not surprising that Hunter, being compared to Hogarth and Reynolds, developed a style derivative of the English masters. Crookshank and FitzGerald note that he was, however, for thirty years, the most important painter of the Irish establishment. His

¹⁴² Pasquin, Professors, 13.

¹⁴³ Taylor, Fine Arts, 283-284; quoted in Crookshank and the Knight of Glin, Painters, 86.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

physical decline in the 1780's helped clear the way for Stuart's success after the latter's arrival in 1787.

Meanwhile, Robert Home remained in Dublin until 1789. Strickland follows Pasquin in the belief that Home "had a monopoly of the best practice in Dublin, but he grew careless in his work, his practice lessened, and finally on the arrival of Gilbert Stuart he found his studio deserted."¹⁴⁵ Like Hunter, Home's work is extremely difficult to locate and the poor condition of the few extant Irish works makes attribution hazardous and even impossible. However, the carelessness of which Pasquin accuses Home may well be justified. The arrival of Stuart in 1787 clearly filled the void left by Hunter's old age and Home's technical inadequacies.

Hugh Douglas Hamilton studied at the drawing school in the early 1750's and with his oeuvre may be seen the first effects of sound artistic foundation in Dublin. Hamilton departed for London in 1764 where he became immediately successful. Throughout his career he continued to refer works for exhibition to the Society of Artists in Dublin. After an important and illustrious career both in Rome and in England, Hamilton returned to Dublin in 1791, the year of his great work Henry Tresham and Canova looking at Canova's Cupid and Psyche.¹⁴⁶ (Figure 20) During his period in London in the 1760's

¹⁴⁵ Strickland, Dictionary; quoted in Crookshank and the Knight of Glin, Painters, 154.

¹⁴⁶ This work by Hamilton may have inspired Pasquin's harsh criticism: "The modern artists are too much wedded to the study of plaister models; they do not contemplate the living model sufficiently; they should recollect that the immediate outline of the frame and limbs is dependent on the circulation of the blood and juices..." Pasquin, Professors, 25.

Hamilton painted several subject pictures which won him acclaim; however, from his fourteen year stay in Rome only one subject picture is known. Historical subjects were his major artistic interest, and after his return to Ireland in 1791, Hamilton complained to Canova of his boredom with painting portraits and his disappointment with the fact that there was nobody in Ireland to converse with about the fine arts and that to relieve his tedium he did some sketches of heroic subjects.¹⁴⁷ A very fine example of his Irish work from the early 1790's is The Countess of Aldborough as Hebe. (Figure 21) Despite his earlier classicising temperament, Hamilton later as a portraitist appealed to a wider and more religiously and politically varying section of Irish society than did the portraitists of the establishment from Latham to Stuart. Stuart, during those schismatic years of great division and even greater turbulence in Irish society, remained close to his patrons in the establishment neglecting to broaden his base of patronage. Adaptation, on the other hand, allowed Hamilton to continue to make a career in Ireland while Stuart's neglect of the changing base of patronage presaged a shorter period of success. None of that, however, was predictable in the fall of 1787 when Stuart triumphantly entered the city to become the unofficial painter laureate of the aristocratic and privileged Irish Protestant Ascendancy.

¹⁴⁷ Crookshank and the Knight of Glin, Painters. 91-94.

CHAPTER V

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL LIFE IN
LATE EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY DUBLIN:
THE WORLD OF STUART'S PATRONS

Good lodgings almost as dear as they are in London; though we were well accommodated (dirt excepted) for two guineas and a half a week.¹

The Dublin that Stuart entered in the Fall of 1787 was a city of self-conscious grandeur. It was the second city of the Empire, surpassed only by London, and basked in its own importance. It was, moreover, a parliamentary capital with all the consequent pomp and ceremony that attended the social order. This sophisticated, cosmopolitan atmosphere had developed due to a number of unusual events and to circumstances of extraordinary patronage of the arts, throughout the century, that had attracted such figures as George Frederick Handel, James Gandon, Anjelica Kauffman and others to the capital. The gentry and aristocracy of Dublin enjoyed the privilege of a unique society that seemed without threat; however, underneath,

¹ Arthur Young, A Tour in Ireland: With Observations on the Present State of that Kingdom (Dublin: George Bonham, 1780), 5.

there lurked some disturbing social issues. As a result of these, by the time of Stuart's departure in March 1793, the Irish situation had become so tense that the whole social order which had drawn Stuart to Dublin just six years earlier was threatened with immediate extinction. For the brief six year period of his tenure, however, Dublin on the surface sparkled with the excitement and glamor of a polite society enjoying unchallenged security.²

During the eighteenth century, two fashionable areas developed in Dublin; both were located to the east, on opposite sides of the River Liffey. The city had spread steadily, and by the late eighteenth century development was westward in the direction of the two canals: the Grand Canal which commenced in 1772, and the Royal Canal begun during Stuart's stay in 1789. To a visitor approaching by sea "the city and the adjacent parts presented a prospect scarcely to be excelled; a wide, expanded semi-circle, ornamented on each side with villages and country houses."³ The northside fashionable area, according to a contemporary, "might vie with most in Europe" and included Sackville Street and its mall leading northwards to Rutland Square. The southside quarter comprised Saint Stephen's Green and Merrion Square along with "some short streets inhabited by great families."⁴ To the west of Sackville Street was a business district and beyond that a

² Maxwell, Dublin, provides a substantial study of Dublin society in those years.

³ Young, Ireland, 6.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 62.

middle class residential center with its hub at Smithfield, the livestock and hay market of Dublin. In the business district just mentioned is Pill Lane, where Dunlap and Mason suggest Stuart resided. More recent writers such as Mount and McLanathan subscribe to this theory also. These accounts, inaccurate though they prove to be, have often been repeated in place of new inquiry. Dunlap is the first to mention that the painter occupied an address on Pill Lane. Though he has not been given the information directly and it has many elements that render it unreliable, it has unfortunately continued to be used to locate Stuart's Dublin abode. The information, for instance, occurs in the context of illustrating Stuart's so-called extraordinary powers of memory, and seems from the outset far-fetched:

Of Mr. Stuart's power or faculty of recollection the following circumstance has been published. When he resided in Dublin, which must have been about 1788-9, a young lad, afterwards, during a long life, a citizen in Philadelphia, was an apprentice in a book store, nearly opposite the house, in Pill Lane, where the painter lodged. This citizen's portrait was painted in Philadelphia, a few years since, by Mr. John Neagle; who shortly afterwards making a visit to Boston, for the purpose of seeing Mr. Stuart (a pilgrimage many a painter has made), took the portrait with him, as a specimen of his talents. When presented to Stuart he gazed at it for a while, and then pronounced the name of the person for whom it was painted, declaring that he had known him in Pill Lane, Dublin. The citizen in question was in Boston not long before the painter's death, and went with Mr. O.C. Greenleaf to see Mr. Stuart, requesting his companion not to mention his name. As soon as he entered the room Mr. Stuart came up to him familiarly, shook him by the hand, accosted him by name, and told him that

he had recognized his portrait as that of his former acquaintance in Pill Lane.⁵

If, indeed, Stuart ever resided in Pill Lane, which is most unlikely, then his residence there must have been brief indeed, and most probably limited to a few months in 1787 during his first weeks in Ireland. Even that, however, is unlikely. Lawrence Park repeats this information, which, through scholarly transmission, finds its way into the most recent studies.⁶ Mount, who subscribed to this same idea, admits to lack of substantiation.⁷ Using Herbert as a source, Mount concludes that Stuart's painting rooms were, on some occasion, close to the fashionable Exchequer Street, where Robert West the painter had rooms at number 31.⁸ In his account, Dowling Herbert, while

⁵ Dunlap, History, 1:223.

⁶ McLanathan, Stuart, 67. McLanathan even argues that "He (Stuart) rented a house in Pill Lane, a highly respectable street near the River Liffey, and though most of Stuart's biographers have stated or implied otherwise, in a fashionable part of town." A study of the Wilson's Dublin Directory for the years 1787, 1788, 1789, and 1790, reveals that the only Stuarts or Stewarts resident in Pill Lane were merchants and those were listed at numbers 41, 67 and 69. None of these bore the name Gilbert, and the first names given are either John or James. Pill Lane was, as indicated from the occupations of the numerous residents, a manufacturing and trade center. Not one artist is listed as a resident in an area that has numerous listings of such crafts as sadlers, chandlers, ropemakers, linen-draper and haberdashers. A study of artists' residences from Pasquin, Professors, illustrates that not one painter, sculptor or architect of the period lived on the north side of the river. There is no basis, therefore, for the continued belief in Mason's statement that Stuart occupied an address in Pill Lane. Mason's information derived from the reminiscences of Jane Stuart who was extremely young when the painter left Ireland in 1793. The year of Jane's birth is unclear, but Stuart married in 1786. Dunlap, History, 228.

⁷ Mount, Stuart, 343. "Efforts to verify Stuart's presence there ... failed."

⁸ Strickland, Dictionary, quoted in Mount, Stuart, 345. Mount states that "Robert Francis West lived at 31, Exchequer Street (Strickland), not far from the Irish Parliament, which implies that Stuart was also in the area surrounding it."

visiting Stuart, reports asking Stuart to: "Get your hat, and come with me to West's house; it's not far [emphasis mine]."⁹ This important remnant of information at least identifies that Stuart's painting rooms were more plausibly situated on the predictable side of the River Liffey, close to the Houses of Parliament, Dublin Castle and the fashionable residential quarters. A study of the artists' residences and rooms in Pasquin, when they appear there, provides unrepudiated proof that all artists at the time residing in Dublin did so on the south side of the river, and close to the area mentioned.¹⁰ One is reminded that not one artist's residence listed by Pasquin occurs in the area of Pill Lane which is on the north side of the river, away from the fashionable section to the south.

This location clearly was unfashionable for a portrait painter of Stuart's standing and cannot have been the site of either his residence or studio. If his studio had indeed been on the north side of the Liffey, which in itself would have been unusual, then it most certainly would have been in the vicinity of Rutland Square, and not in the unfashionable area to the rear of the Four Courts.¹¹ Between the quays on the south bank and Dame Street lay a district of taverns,

⁹ Herbert, Varieties, 239. Quoted in Mount, Stuart, 345.

¹⁰ Pasquin identifies artists' residences frequently, and makes no distinction between those and their studios or painting rooms. It seems, therefore, unlikely that Dublin painters separated both. Stuart may only have done so after his move to Stillorgan, and that he maintained rooms in the city then is clear from Herbert's account. Addressing Stuart while in his "room" Herbert says, "Let us see; how long will you remain in town before you return to Stillorgan?" Herbert, Varieties, 239.

¹¹ For a comprehensive discussion of this issue see Chapter V.

bagnios, eating houses and whiskey shops. The southwest section was composed of slaughterhouses, soap factories, carrion houses, distilleries, glass houses, lime kilns and dairies. Numerous lanes and courts were occupied by "working manufacturers, the labouring poor and beggars." This part of Dublin, a visitor remarked, was "wretchedness and dirt."¹² Taken as a whole, Dublin contained within its city limits all the social extremes of Irish eighteenth-century life.

Stuart also lived, outside the city, at Stillorgan Park, on grounds provided him by one of his patrons, the Earl of Carysfort.¹³ That he commuted daily to his painting rooms in the city, as Mount suggests, is, however, most unlikely. The stagecoach service, as illustrated by a study of timetables in the Irish press of the period, did not run daily, and Stillorgan, in the late eighteenth century, was quite isolated from the city. When Dowling Herbert visited Stuart at Stillorgan it was, most probably, summer rather than "late autumn" as suggested by Mount. This is evidenced by Herbert's citing of geraniums on Stuart's land.¹⁴

¹² Maxwell, Dublin, 62.

¹³ Mount's research in this area is significant and complete. See Mount, Stuart, 344. Park mentions that Stuart resided only "for a short time" in Pill Lane and "for the balance of his stay in Stillorgan Park." Park, Stuart, Vol. I:72.

¹⁴ Geraniums are a summer bloom in Ireland and Stuart most probably spent more time at his country estate during the summer months since Parliament was not in session then; for the winter months, in particular, we can plausibly conclude that Stuart lived and worked in the heart of Dublin, close to the residences of his fashionable clients in the immediate vicinity of Parliament.

Dublin had been founded as a trading center, and, in the late eighteenth century, as the terminus of the two great canals, it was destined to become a great shipping and distributing center. Its place in the Irish economic world of the eighteenth century was symbolized by the construction of the Royal Exchange in 1779, which was considered one of the most elegant structures of its kind in Europe.¹⁵ When Stuart arrived in 1787, Dublin was a dominating and inspiring national metropolis: twice the size of Cork, the second largest city in Ireland. Irishmen were aware of Dublin's prominence as a metropolis in the eighteenth century, and seem to have on occasion even displayed annoyance when English visitors referred to London as "town." In 1786, an Irish writer was convinced that Dublin was "if not the first ... the completest city in Europe, if not the world."¹⁶

Dublin business life was invigorated by the large political and fashionable life to which the city played host, and conspicuous expenditure stimulated the building industry, the luxury trades, and the business of portraiture. By the end of the century, large numbers of peers, prelates and landowners maintained residences in Dublin. These residences were generally large terraced houses, and in some instances were great urban mansions which stood alone. During the last quarter of the century, extensive additions were made to the houses of Parliament in College Green in order to accommodate the growing

¹⁵ McDonagh, Ireland, 20-21.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

administration. In addition a new court house was built, a records office opened, and the Custom House, one of Gandon's masterpieces, was completed. The architecture of Dublin won for it acclaim as one of the finest Georgian cities in Europe. Malton's prints of the city (Figures 22 and 23) convey a powerful view of an expanding metropolis whose rapid growth often produced problems in civic administration. Matters of policing, planning, health and social welfare were all rapidly thrust on the city's governing body, which was often ill-equipped to cope.

A substantial view of the cultural and artistic life of the city during Stuart's years there is provided by John Dowling Herbert in his Irish Varieties of the Last Fifty Years, published in 1836. Herbert was Stuart's assistant, and while his "Memoir of Stuart , Portrait Painter" is rich in information on the painter in Ireland, Irish Varieties covers a host of other topics ranging from agrarian unrest to patronage of the arts. Consideration of these topics helps to elucidate the changing circumstances of Irish patronage during Stuart's years of residence. Herbert's work is characteristic of the way in which the generation which witnessed the Union with Britain in 1800 lamented the passing of the world of the late eighteenth century. Throughout he refers to the period of Stuart's tenure in Ireland as the "good olden time." Though the veil of memory softens the account, we must nevertheless heed Herbert's recollection:

In the good olden times, when Dublin was in a flourishing state, long before the Union was projected, when the nobles and gentry lived on their estates in their native country, when the

improvement of that country was their glory and their pride, when it was deemed not unworthy to encourage the merchant, and the emulation of the trader, when genius was nurtured by cultivating the fine arts: - to promote this great and general good, a number of patriotic characters ... formed the Dublin Society for the above-named laudable purposes, and aided by annual grants from Parliament, carried into effect their ... plan. By liberal premiums and bounties all hands and heads were put into active employment through the whole kingdom. It must have been a very remote, obscure, or barren spot that did not feel the influential power of such stimuli.¹⁷

Land values in Dublin began to rise steadily toward the last quarter of the century; the city expanded and suburban landlords such as Lords Fitzwilliam, Carysfort and Trimleston were parcelling out their land into small villa estates. Stuart's estate at Stillorgan was as stated owned by Lord Carysfort, and it was there, true to patterns of aristocratic eighteenth-century Irish life, that he forayed into horticulture and livestock production.¹⁸

Dublin's emergence as a graceful and gracious Georgian city was determined not only by the high quality of its major public buildings, but also by careful city planning and the high quality of private building. A Wide Streets Commission was established in 1757, and for the remainder of the century its commissioners devoted themselves to the systematic development of the city. The commissioners laid out avenues such as Parliament Street and the various squares that survive today. Advised by James Gandon, who

¹⁷ Herbert, Varieties, 54.

¹⁸ Mount, Stuart, 140.

settled in Dublin in 1781, they developed an ideal of spaciousness and logical design which makes the center of Dublin a showcase for eighteenth-century city planning. Gandon became the most important architect in Dublin during the period of Irish Parliamentary independence. His domed buildings have become synonymous with Dublin, and dominated the waterfront of the River Liffey: the Four Courts, the Rotunda Hospital (finished by Gandon), the eastern facade of the Parliament (designed in 1785, built later) and Old Carlisle Bridge (destroyed, but copied in O'Connell Bridge). Stokstad and Gill eloquently state the meaning of these buildings in eighteenth-century Irish life:

While one hesitates to overemphasize political or social explanations for a style, Gandon's exceptionally fine designs, which were enlivened with excellent sculpture by Smyth, seem to provide a visual equivalent for the aspirations of the Irish political leaders. Through his use of domes and porticoes, excellent proportions, restrained moldings, pediments and balustraded cornices, and through his balance of rustication and refinement he gave the civic architecture of Dublin a mature grace and grandeur which were also being sought in the United States and France to express similar ideals of political freedom and human dignity.¹⁹

Gandon, who never sat for Stuart (an explanation for this is considered in Chapter VII) appears in a portrait of 1783 by Tilly Kettle and William Cuming (Figure 24). The architect is represented seated

¹⁹ Marilyn Stokstad and Linda Gill, "Antiquarianism and Architecture in Eighteenth Century Ireland," *Irish History and Culture*, ed. Harold Orel (Kansas, Missouri: University Press of Kansas, 1976), 175.

beside a balustrade behind which is a sweeping view of Dublin showing his great buildings: the Four Courts, the Rotunda Hospital, and the Custom House. He holds a sheaf of plans, the uppermost of which is a version of the Four Courts. Gandon appears in the painting as the attractive and genial professional described by his biographers. In the work only the head and composition are believed to be by Kettle, who was in Dublin briefly about 1783, two years before the Four Courts was commissioned. The architectural background and the rest of the portrait are believed to be by William Cuming, who was a friend of Gandon's.²⁰

The Smyth mentioned above was William Smyth (1749-1812), one of Ireland's finest eighteenth-century sculptors. Smyth began his career as a carver of architectural ornament for the builder Henry Darley, who in turn worked for James Gandon. Smyth is responsible for the sculptural work on most of Gandon's buildings, and his work on the personifications of the rivers of Ireland decorating the keystones of the ground-floor windows of Gandon's Custom House is among the great masterpieces of Irish eighteenth-century sculpture and a tribute to enlightened municipal patronage by the Irish Administration.

Many young sculptors were employed as craftsmen in the extensive expansion of Dublin and other Irish cities during the eighteenth century. The Royal Dublin Society, as mentioned, had been founded as early as 1731 "for improving Husbandry, Manufactures and

²⁰ Ibid. See also Crookshank and the Knight of Glin, *Painters*, 152.

other Useful Arts," and offered free classes in art to students of both sexes in order to prepare them to enter the craft guilds or, since the guilds were open only to Protestants, to enable them, if Catholic, to work for master craftsmen. Instruction in ornament, figure, and architectural drawing began in 1742. Since both training and employment were available in Ireland, many Irish art students became sculptors, among them Edward Smyth.

During the late eighteenth century, in the better residential districts, wide streets and squares were lined with parapeted, red-brick Georgian houses which featured panelled doors framed with pillars and surmounted by a fanlight. On arrival in Dublin on June 19, 1776, Arthur Young, an admirer of Georgian architecture, found "a city which much exceeded my expectation; the public buildings are magnificent, very many of the streets regularly laid out, and exceedingly well built. The front of the parliament-house is grand.... The apartments are spacious, elegant and convenient, much beyond that heap of confusion at Westminster...."²¹ The growing prosperity of Ireland in the late eighteenth century was reflected in domestic architecture. The substantial middle class of well-to-do merchants and professionals, always an important element in the Dublin population, grew both in numbers and influence; and it was to meet the demand of this class for larger and more imposing houses that many of these new streets and squares were planned.

²¹ Young, Ireland, 1.

It is the cumulative effect of this domestic architecture, concentrated in a relatively small area, rather than the distinction of individual public buildings, that gave Georgian Dublin its character. In the restrained dignity and quiet confidence of these rows of red-brick houses we can sense the spirit of the Protestant Ascendancy far more intimately than in the country houses of the aristocracy or the public splendour of the Custom House and the Four Courts.²²

The Administration's patronage of painting, however, lagged significantly behind that of architecture and sculpture. Despite the existence of a business in portraiture from individual commissions, it is clear that only the best artists could make a living, and Stuart was foremost among this group. Herbert lists practitioners during his own time, and therefore Stuart's. Though the list is substantial, and includes such notables as Tresham, Barry, Shee, Hamilton and R.L. West, Herbert adds that:

Many of the above names are well known in England, as the artists have generally settled in London for want of patronage in their own country. The Dublin Society performed their duty, and made them painters; but it was never meditated by any public body to construct a plan, a mart, for the sale of works of art by native artists, nor did it ever enter into the contemplation of the great to furnish their houses with such productions ... Had they done so, fashion, no doubt, would have generalized the practice, for there is no country where fashion is more a law than in Ireland.²³

²² Beckett, Anglo-Irish Tradition, 68.

²³ Herbert, Varieties, 56.

The issue of rivalry between England and Ireland relating to the production of artists was a lively one during Stuart's tenure in Ireland. A rather lengthy article in the Dublin Evening Post attacked the tendency among the English to claim the works of Irish artists for themselves. On Tuesday, October 2, 1787, the editor wrote:

The vulgar prejudice of our neighbours of the sister country, too frequently breaks out. If any works in arts or manufacture, they would willingly attribute it to any thing but Irish genius. An English visitor looking at the spiral staircase at the Dublin Society House, in Hawkins Street, a few days ago eagerly inquired - what part of London the artist resided ... but on being informed that it was executed by a native, he wheeled as if bitten by an asp, and left the place in high disappointment.²⁴

Continuing on in a patriotic mood, the writer adds:

Gentlemen of this description should know that many of the more admired productions in England - in sculpture, painting, engraving, etc. are the offspring of Irish artists.²⁵

Anthony Pasquin in his History of 1796 has the following remarks in his introduction:

The fine arts have never been cultivated in Ireland, with that strong attention and encouragement which is necessary to produce eminent Professors: there are two reasons which may be adduced to apologize for this unfortunate truth; viz. the poverty of the nation, and the consequent want of illumination in the general orders of its inhabitants. Though Ireland has become proverbial for her wit and her bravery, she appears to me to want that portion of consideration and perserverance,

²⁴ Dublin Evening Post, October 2, 1787.

²⁵ Ibid.

which is incontestibly expedient to the furtherance and completion of such an object. – Painting, Sculpture and Architecture are the offspring of Luxury, and the concomitants of refinement; and were never known to flourish greatly, where Nature was unadulterated, or Society enfeebled by penury ...²⁶

With regard to the arts in England, Pasquin writes:

Yet, let me recollect, while I am bringing our sister kingdom to her purgation, that Britain, with more power, has less ardour; and though her taste is purer, her vain love of portraiture consumes her regards for sublimity. These remarks must be understood as applying to the comparative state of general patronage in either country, and not to the state of the Professors.²⁷

The absence of public patronage for painters, and therefore the lack of example provided for the nobility, is discussed by Herbert also.²⁸ The context for the discussion is a class attended by Herbert at the Dublin Society's Drawing Academy sometime during Stuart's stay in Ireland. The class, run by Robert West, was disturbed by "an interruption of an extraordinary kind ... an explosion which shook the Academy to the very foundation." The event was a volley originating from a Volunteer review at the Phoenix Park. The ensuing discussion between Mr. West and a studio porter provides some important details regarding patronage. The long discussion involved Lord Charlemont and Henry Grattan, as subjects of debate. Grattan, it was reported,

²⁶ Pasquin, Professors, 5.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Herbert, Varieties, 68-69.

"has taken a gift of £50,000 from the government..." As a result of this benefit, the studio porter suggests to Mr. West that Grattan "could now encourage the fine arts." West then announces, "Oh, he don't care for the fine arts." Discussion then turns, by way of contrast, to the patronage of:

Popes and others, James the First, Leo the Tenth! What noble patrons and how their memories are revered to this day. Oh, the arts have undergone a regular decline since their time; yet I am told the arts are rising in England under the present King. I wish we had a share of the encouragement in Ireland ²⁹

Discussion then advances to the subject of Lord Charlemont of whom it is reported:

He is fond of the arts ... he has a fine collection of the old masters, and one of Hogarth's, the "Lady's Last Stake," not engraved: oh! he's truly a great man, a credit to the country, and very properly at the head of this patriotic army, the Volunteers.³⁰

While it is clear that even in Dublin, the market for portraiture was limited, it is of interest to note that the provinces were not devoid of artistic patronage. Herbert narrates an event in his own career as a portraitist during which he travelled to the county of Meath:

The late Walter Keating, Esq. of Kells, in that county invited me to his house, that he might have the pleasure of forwarding me in my pursuit of portrait painting ... I had the good fortune to be numbered with his favourites, and he having witnessed my

29 Ibid.

30 Ibid.

emerging from trade to embrace the fine arts, he felt a strong interest in my welfare, and said, I should paint a dozen portraits of him and family, and that he had little doubt of recommending me a sufficient number to keep me some time in full practice ...³¹

Herbert continues:

Now fairly set down to painting, I commenced with Mrs. Keating. She was a good subject. I could not have desired a better model to make a show picture. My success was such that, in one month, I had the whole circle of gentry in and about Kells, and as many pictures to do as would require three months to finish.... The Keating's portraits alone filled a large and lofty parlour....³²

Subsequently, Herbert travelled to Cork where he also found demand for his portraiture. He relates that under the patronage of Mrs. Jefferies, "a fine, tall, commanding figure, with a stern aspect," he "took handsome apartments on the Grand Parade" where his patrons brought "Mr. Kellett the banker, then Counsellor Chatterton and his lady: in fine, I was completely in for a succession of sitters, and had as much practice as I could desire."³³ Herbert acknowledges remaining in practice in Cork for five years, after which he removed to Bath.

The nature of patronage, as it referred to portraiture in Dublin during the late eighteenth century, was such that it adequately

³¹ Ibid., 139.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid., 175. The Mrs. Jeffries mentioned here was the sister of Lord John Fitzgibbon, Stuart's patron.

supported a small group of practitioners. There seems, however, to have been room for no more than one outstanding talent. Prior to Stuart's arrival, (as we have seen in Chapter IV), that figure had been Robert Home. The very fact that Home's business was substantially threatened by Stuart's arrival is evidence enough of the extent and limitation of the market for portraiture in Georgian Dublin.

As has been stated previously, Anglo-Irish society comprised a very narrow section of the overall population; nevertheless, it reflected a surprisingly wide spectrum of social class within itself. Lord Charlemont's elaborate salons at Charlemont House and Marino, his suburban estate, along with the regal splendor of the Duke of Leinster's establishments at Carton and Leinster House, stand at one extreme in the kind of dilemma exposed by novelist Maria Edgeworth. Writing of the 1780's, Edgeworth recollects that:

... at that time in Ireland, some of the gentry were in remarkable extremes. Some erected superb mansions disproportionate to their fortunes, and at last were obliged to sell an estate to pay for a house; or at best they lived in debt, danger, and subterfuge the rest of their days, nominally possessed of a palace, really in dread of a goal. Other ... marking these misfortunes, they determined never to build; so lived on in wretched houses out of repair, windows without sashline ... without ... the comforts and decencies of life.³⁴

During the period in question, some of the most impressive and palatial of Ireland's public and private residences were built. Among private enterprises under way from early in the second quarter of the

³⁴ Edgeworth quoted in Maxwell, *Dublin*, 107.

century was Speaker Connolly's mansion at Castletown, in Country Kildare. This imposing edifice was one of the most magnificent of Irish palladian houses. Shortly afterwards, the Earl of Kildare decided to rebuild Carton, the family country seat, and retained the German architect Richard Cassels, who also designed Leinster House (now the Irish House of Parliament) and the Lying-In Hospital, begun in 1751.

Irish houses of the eighteenth century have long been famous for their exquisite interior plasterwork. Like the Irish glass and silver of the period, the inspiration was originally foreign, but Irish craftsmen eventually forged their own uniquely graceful style. Toward the end of the century, the rococo plasterwork inspired by the Italian Francini Brothers, who created the magnificent ceiling at Carton, predictably gave way to more formal designs inspired by the Adam Brothers, whose principal follower in Ireland was Michael Stapleton. These neo-classical designs made considerable use of moulds, which led to the decline of the free-style craftsman. The English manufacturer and entrepreneur, Thomas Wedgwood, established an agency in Dublin through which he conducted a brisk trade in medallions and chimney pieces, as well as vases and dinner-services.

The need for dinner-services is borne out by the many descriptions of elaborate meals that abound in extant source material of the time. "High living is too much the fashion here," wrote Mrs. Delany from Delville, her villa near Dublin, "You are not invited to dinner to any private gentleman of £1,000 a year or less that does not give you seven dishes at one course, and Burgundy and Champagne;

and these dinners they give once or twice a week."³⁵ Despite her complaints, Mrs. Delany appears to have been equally lavish in her hospitality. On one occasion while entertaining four guests, Primate Stone and his sister, along with the Bishop of Derry and his wife, she provided the following fare. The first course consisted of:

Fish—beefsteaks—soup—rabbits and onions—Fillet Veal. The second course included . . .—salmon grilde—pickled salmon—quails—little Terrene Peas—Cream—Mushrooms—Apple Pye—Crab—Leveret—Cheese-cakes. For Dessert they had Blamange—Cherries—Dutch Cheese—Raspberries and Cream—sweet meats and jelly—strawberries and cream—almond cream—currants and gooseberries—Orange Butter.³⁶

Sir Jonah Barrington, subject of one of Stuart's portraits (Figure 25), also provides an account of an elaborate meal of which he partook as a guest along with his eminent friend John Philpot Curran, one of the greatest lawyers of the day, and a leader in the Irish Parliament. Barrington himself was, as he proclaims:

... in high repute, most prosperous at the bar, living in the first ranks of society, a distinguished favourite at the vice-regal court, and designated as a candidate for the first offices of my profession....³⁷

³⁵ Ibid., 102. Mrs. Delany was Mary Granville who married as her second husband Jonathan Swift's intimate, Dean Delany. She is also known for her landscape studies and collages. She decorated her own house at Delville with shells in the form of a frieze. See Crookshank and the Knight of Glin, *Painters*, 62-63. See also Lady Llanover, ed., *Autobiography and Correspondence of Mary Granville, Mrs. Delany*, 6 Vols. (London: James Reade, 1861-1862).

³⁶ Ibid., 101-102.

³⁷ H.B. Staples, ed., *The Ireland of Sir Jonah Barrington: Selections from his Personal Sketches* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1967), 276.

On this occasion, the host was the Reverend Mr. Thomas, "an old college companion" of Barrington. The event was described by Barrington as follows:

Every guest of the reverend host having now decided on his chair, and turned down his plate, in order to be as near as possible to Councillor Curran, proceeded to whet his knife against the edge of his neighbour's, to give it a due keenness for the most tempting side of the luscious sirloin, which by anticipation frizzed upon its pewter dish. Veal, mutton, turkey, ham, duck, and partridge, all "piping hot," were ready and willing to leap from their pots and spits into their respective dishes, and to take a warm bath each in its proper gravy. The cork-screw was busily employed: the wine decanters ornamented the four corners of the well dressed table, and the punch, jugged, and bubbling hot upon the hearth-stone, perfumed the whole room with its aromatic potsheen odour.³⁸

Barrington had become MP for Tuam in the Irish Parliament in 1790. Later in his life after his political fame had regressed, Barrington augmented his income by publishing his Personal Sketches of his Own Time, 1827-32 and The Rise and Fall of the Irish Nation, 1833. Stuart's portrait of Barrington was most probably painted late in Stuart's Irish career, perhaps during the parliamentary session of 1793, when Barrington admits to being at the height of his political career. At that time, apart from being a favorite of the vice-regal court, Barrington writes:

I occasionally gave large splendid dinners, according to the habit invariably adopted in those times, by persons

³⁸ Ibid., 67.

circumstanced like myself. At one of those entertainments, Major Hobart (Lord Buckinghamshire); Sir John Parnel; Isaac Corry; I think, Lord Limerick; Sir John (afterward Lord) de Blaquiere; and Lords Llandaff, Dillon, Yelverton; the Speaker; in all upwards of twenty noblemen and commoners, did me the honour of partaking my fare.³⁹

The Speaker referred to here is John Foster, Speaker of the House of Commons, who was also painted in full length by Stuart (Figure 26), and whose portrait is subsequently discussed. Foster, along with his family, also appears in a contemporary watercolor (Figure 27). Here the Speaker is shown in front of the family's elaborate country estate, Oriol Temple, in County Louth. Barrington himself was noted for his strong connections with the government, and admits that connection in his Sketches: "My immediate personal connections were on the side of the government ... I voted for Mr. Foster (John Foster, Stuart's subject), as the friend of Sir John Parnel, and because I considered him more fitting for the station than his opponent, Mr. William Ponsonby."⁴⁰

In this context of social entertainment and lavish feasts, we can fully appreciate Stuart's great pride in serving his own home-grown "apple-fed pork" to his guests in Stillorgan. Moreover, we know that Home, Dublin's leading portrait painter before Stuart, "had many persons of talent, wit and humour ... at his table, — all the stars, J.

³⁹ Ibid., 276.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 143.

Kemble, Henderson, Pope, Holman, etc., etc., etc."⁴¹ Following the fashion of the day, according to Herbert, Stuart began his lavish living while in London. There, according to Herbert:

He shared practice when Sir Joshua Reynolds, Gainsborough, Romney, and others were all fully employed, and his receipts were considerable, — some thousands per annum. He had a splendid house and lived expensively. Amongst other servants he kept a French cook. He began giving dinners, and invited forty-two persons to dine with him. Those were men of talent in some professional line, — painters, poets, musicians, droll fellows, actors, and authors, etc., etc., etc.⁴²

Herbert reports that:

After dinner he said to his friends, — "I can't have you all every day, but I will have seven of you to dine with me each day of the week; and I have contrived it so that the party shall vary without further trouble. I have put up seven cloak pins in my hall, so as the first seven that come shall hang up their cloaks and hats; the eighth man seeing these full, will go away, and probably attend earlier the next day."⁴³

Reporting on the nature of Stuart's work day, Herbert quotes Stuart as saying that:

I tasked myself to six sitters a day; these done, I flung down my palette and pencils — took my hat — and ran about and around the park for an hour — then home — got ready for dinner — approached my drawing-room with a surety of meeting seven as clever men as could be found in society ... Oh, it was a delightful

41 Herbert, Varieties, 122.

42 Ibid., 236-237.

43 Ibid.

solace after such labour! I assure you my good friend, it was the greatest of all human luxuries.⁴⁴

Finally, Herbert asks Stuart whether the venture of such entertaining was expensive to maintain. Stuart answers: "It was more than I calculated on; but it enabled me to sustain the labour of six sitters."

Despite Stuart's love of high society, Herbert narrates that Stuart often joined him for more humble fare even when the opportunity to dine in fashionable society presented itself. Having asked for an introduction to Stuart, Herbert relates that:

This being complied with, he called upon me, and frequently came and partook of a dinner, in the family way, when perhaps he had been asked to a great house and splendid fare; but he was whimsical, and his attachment to me often surprised me. There was certainly one point in his disposition that he never deviated from. He had all the equalizing spirit of the American, — and he looked contemptuously upon titled rank.⁴⁵

If Stuart had, as Herbert claims, "all the equalizing spirit of the American," it is also clear that he was capable of conducting himself and his affairs in a manner appropriate to the aristocracy when it benefitted his portrait business.

Charles Manners, Duke of Rutland, whose invitation brought Stuart to Ireland, was a great lover of conviviality, as well as being amiable and extravagant. While undertaking a tour of the country in

44 Ibid.

45 Ibid., 232.

the summer of 1787, the year of his death, Rutland was entertained at the seats of many noblemen. Wraxall comments that:

During the course of this tour, he invariably began the day by eating at breakfast six or seven turkey's eggs as an accompaniment to tea and coffee. He then rode forty and sometimes fifty miles, dined at six or seven o'clock, after which he drank very freely, and concluded by sitting up to a later hour, always supping before he retired to rest.⁴⁶

On Friday, October 17, 1788, The Evening Herald, recalled the causes of Rutland's death, mentioning intemperance among them:

It is somewhat remarkable, that both the late Duke of Rutland and Earl Nugent took their last illness at a Lord Mayor's entertainment The former nobleman, however, had brought on his death by the intemperance of a few preceeding months, during which he deeply implanted the seeds of death ⁴⁷

Most visitors to Dublin during the eighteenth century were impressed with the air of gaiety in the houses of the well-to-do. Here they witnessed a particularly splendid way of living, manifested by multiplicity of servants, a great profusion of courses and an abundance of wine. Wine consumption was a serious political and social issue in Ireland at that time. Bishop Berkeley asked in The Querist, "whether any kingdom in Europe be so good a customer at Bordeaux as Ireland?"⁴⁸ Lord Chesterfield, when he was Lord Lieutenant,

⁴⁶ Nathaniel William Wraxall, Historical Memoirs (London: T. Cadell and W. Davis, 1815), 2:109.

⁴⁷ The Evening Herald, October 17, 1788.

⁴⁸ Maxwell, Dublin, 109.

reckoned that 5,000 tons of wine were annually imported into Ireland, "to destroy the constitutions, the faculties, and too often the fortunes of those of superior rank."⁴⁹ Chesterfield was horrified at the amount of claret that the Irish consumed and looked at excessive drinking as "a most beastly vice," and in one of his letters expressed the hope that God by His thunder should "turn all the wines in Ireland sour."⁵⁰

Earlier in the century, Lord Orrery commented that:

... a right jolly "glorious memory" Hibernian never rolls into bed without having taken a sober gallon of claret to his own share. You wonder perhaps what this animal is: It is a Yahoo that toasts the immortal memory of King William ... without any other joy in the Revolution than that it has given him a pretence to drink so many more daily quarts of wine....⁵¹

During Stuart's time in Ireland, opposition to drunkenness appeared frequently in print, and the following account, which appeared in the Dublin Chronicle on June 5, 1788, singles out artists for comment:

While the horrid practice of spirit-drinking continues in the manner it has done for some years past, it will be vain to hope for excellence in our mechanic arts and manufactures. This vile practice weakens the mind, emasculates the body, and reduces the human being below the level of the brute creation, — after a potion of this horrid poison, the artist quite nerveless and

49 Ibid.

50 Ibid., 101-102.

51 Orrery quoted in Johnson, Eighteenth Century, 143.

stupidified, is ill able to execute business, which requires steadiness of hand, and clearness of head.⁵²

Further testimony of the extravagant use of alcohol in Ireland at the time appears in the form of numerous advertisements often conspicuously placed on the front page of newspapers of the time. The following appeared in the Evening Herald:

From the present Scarcity of Bottles,
And the great Demand for bottled Liquors,
Charles Carrothers
Is obliged to request the Favour of his
Customers, who have empty Bottles which they
wish to return ...⁵³

Conspicuous display seems to have been central to Irish genteel life during the eighteenth century. Dr. Samuel Madden in his Reflections and Resolutions Proper for the Gentlemen of Ireland, published in Dublin in 1738, complained that every one dressed above his circumstances and fortune.⁵⁴ Madden saw too many plate buttons, and too much gold and silver along with "gaudy frippery" from France and other countries. During the late eighteenth century, and especially during Stuart's years in Dublin, The Dublin Chronicle carried extensive columns on the subject of French fashion. This section, which appeared at least once each month, was entitled "Notes

52 The Dublin Chronicle, June 5, 1788.

53 Evening Herald, October 6, 1788.

54 Maxwell, Dublin, 98.

on Paris Fashion," and presented in great detail the latest trends for ladies and gentlemen in the French capital. For instance, the column on March 19, 1793, in the issue that announced Stuart's departure from Ireland, noted that "suits of Scarlet, sea green or sky blue with Claret colored coats — green and gold waistcoats with profusions of gold braid" were then fashionable.⁵⁵

The maintenance of carriages and horses seems also to have been a particular passion among the Irish. Even those of moderate income kept a chariot with four horses, a coachman, footman and at least one postillion. Arthur Young maintained that, "As to horses the number is carried quite to a folly." In order to support his statement, in fear of disbelief on the part of his public, Young produced "a table of the demesnes of many of the nobility and gentry, which will show not only the number of horses, but of other cattle, the quality of land they keep, and other circumstances explanatory of their country life."⁵⁶ The importance of such social life which often incurred substantive debt is clearly seen in Arthur Young's observation that "their love of society is as remarkable as their curiosity is insatiable; and their hospitality to all comers, be their own poverty ever so pinching, as too much merit to be forgotten." Young then added that in Dublin "all there is gaiety, pleasure, luxury and extravagance."⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Chronicle, March 19, 1793.

⁵⁶ Young, Ireland, 108.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 107.

Stuart also clearly lived beyond his means while in Ireland. A discussion with Dowling Herbert on the subject illustrates that he was as profligate with his earnings as any of the personalities already mentioned. When asked about debt, Stuart asserts, "My good friend ... I am deeply in debt."⁵⁸ Herbert then suggests that Stuart's indebtedness must have had no basis in lack of business.

Well, great patronage, then is less productive than I thought; for I have had, in my humble practice, but a moderate share of patronage, and I never incurred a debt of one pound.⁵⁹

To this Stuart responds, "Well, I have to learn that art."⁶⁰

It was even rumored that the great Duke of Rutland himself lived beyond his means. The following account appeared in the Dublin Chronicle after his death:

False reports industriously propagated throughout the city, that the affairs of his late Duke of Rutland are so deranged and embarrassed as to prevent the possibility of fulfilling his pecuniary engagements, yet nothing can be further from the truth; His Grace's debts, we are fully warranted to assert will be punctually and speedily discharged.⁶¹

Despite similar allegations regarding Stuart's extravagance, and his own admission of spending time in prison, no record of him ever

⁵⁸ Herbert, Varieties, 246.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Chronicle, October 30, 1787.

appears in the "Bankrupt Calendar" either in The Dublin Chronicle or The Evening Herald during his time in Ireland.

Delineating the social class structure were three notable clubs open to the socially prominent. These were the Sackville Street, the Kildare Street and Daly's; the latter beside the House of Parliament provided a coffee room, a writing room, a hazard room and a private dining room. The Dublin Library in Eustace Street was building up a valuable collection of books and provided a newspaper and conversation room.

Dublin offered a variety and consistency of entertainment not paralleled anywhere in the country, and visitors to the capital city could find there "the elegant delights of plays, ridottos, public breakfasts, Castle balls, circular road canters, new garden concerts, and Blackrock casinos."⁶² During most of the century, Dublin had two theatres, and in 1789, the manager of the Theatre Royal boasted that it was "in point of convenience, elegance and decoration ... not exceeded by any other theatre in Europe."⁶³ The Dublin Chronicle, on Saturday, October 20, 1787, reported excitedly that:

This week Mr. Daly, manager of the Theatre Royal, arrived in this city ... and we hear is making such engagements, and fitting up the theatre, in Smock Alley, in such a manner, as to promise a high fund of entertainment to the public during the course of the ensuing winter. The theatre in Crow Street has undergone almost a total change, there being nothing but the

⁶² McDowell, Ireland, 27.

⁶³ Ibid.

skeleton left of the former building, the improvements are making at a vast expense; and it bids fair, when finished, to be the compleatest place of its kind in Europe.⁶⁴

For those who were disposed toward lighter forms of entertainment, Astley's Circus at the Amphitheatre Royal was available.⁶⁵ Here the privileged were entertained by a display of equestrian talent (including the humors of bad horsemanship), rope walking and pantomime. Moreover, audiences enjoyed a "multiplicity of machinery and scenery," along with spectacles such as the staging of the siege of Valenciennes and the landing at Toulon. In addition, at the Lyceum could be seen an eruption of Vesuvius in which "the effect of fire is most strikingly and interestingly represented." Also on display were panoramas of London and Westminster, of the Bay of Dublin, and of the taking of Seringpatam. These, together with the musical classes and "philosophical pyrotechna" available at the Shakespeare Gallery in Exchequer Street, offered "a rational and elegant entertainment."

In the 1790's, Lord Carlisle noted an important feature of Dublin social life, and one that seems to have often determined Stuart's careful choice of subject, namely that, "The whole town of Dublin is one large family or company under one roof and everything is known and made the subject of conversation immediately after it happens."⁶⁶

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ See McDowell, Ireland, 27, for a discussion of entertainments.

⁶⁶ Maxwell, Dublin, 120.

The "whole" referred to by Carlisle naturally meant the segment to which he was socially attached: the world of great Protestant magnates and higher officials in the circle of the Lord Lieutenant. The public assembly room of Dublin was the Rotunda, constructed in 1785. The Rotunda promenades were less costly than the assemblies, and at these the middle classes rubbed shoulders with the nobility and gentry, and may well have been under the impression they were partaking of the same mode of life.⁶⁷

Arthur Young noted that in Dublin there was a continuous succession of private parties, balls and suppers, and he adds that at most parties the guests were too numerous, the apartments crowded.⁶⁸ A correspondent, continuously disturbed by the "eternal rat-tat on my door," complained of forgetting her train of thought while being constantly interrupted by the issuing of invitation after invitation.⁶⁹ On the same note, a young writer confirmed, "Nothing can be so gay as Dublin is — the Castle twice a week, the opera twice a week, with plays, assemblies, and suppers to fill up the time."⁷⁰ The Castle referred to was of course Dublin Castle, home of the Viceroy, and therefore the most coveted invitation in the whole Dublin season. The parties given there were naturally on the grandest scale and were

⁶⁷ McDonagh, Ireland, 28.

⁶⁸ Young, Ireland, 107.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

on occasion reported by the Hibernian Magazine. The tone of such events was set early in the century as can be witnessed by the following account:

The ball was in the old beef-eaters' hall, a room that holds seven hundred people seated; it was well it did, for never did I behold a greater crowd. We were all placed in rows one above another, so much raised that the last row almost touched the ceiling! The gentlemen say we looked very handsome, and compared us to Cupid's Paradise in the puppet-show. At 11 o'clock minuets were finished, and the Dutchess went to the basset table. After an hour's playing the Duke, Dutchess, and nobility, marched into the supper room, which was the council chamber. In the midst of the room was placed a holly tree, illuminated by a hundred wax tapers; round it was placed all sorts of meat, fruit and sweetmeats; servants waited next, and were encompassed round by a table, to which the company came by turns to take what they wanted. When the doors were first opened the hurly-burly is not to be described; squawking, shrieking, all sorts of noises; some ladies lost their lappets, others were trod upon.... I and my company were more discreet than to go with the torrent; we staid till people had satisfied their curiosity and hunger, and then took a quiet view of the famous tree which occasioned more rout than it was worth ... There was a monstrous crowd. I did not dance. ⁷¹

As the century progressed, the entertainments seemed to have become even more lavish, and toward the end of the century, during Stuart's tenure in Ireland, Dublin social life reached a glittering apex. The Viceroyalty of the Duke of Rutland was noted for its lavish hospitality and it was remarked that he might well have been a

⁷¹ Ibid., 110-111.

sovereign of a rich and independent state.⁷² The Duke and Duchess had impressed Dublin society with complete services of gold and silver plate which they had transported from England. Regarding the Duke's love of societal pleasures, The Dublin Evening Post reported on Saturday, September 29, 1787 that:

The capacity and political talents of his Grace of Rutland, are not, nor were they ever spoken very highly of. Preferring the busy pleasures of social life to the intricate investigations of politics, he blends with society, and his moments, in consequence, are not embittered with reflections on the miscarriage of past measures, or solitude for the fate of those to come. His Grace is a philosopher by habit, rather than principle; and naturally enjoys that exemption from care, which in others is the effect of resolution. His late tour therefore ... will essentially benefit his private affairs.⁷³

Virtually all the aristocracy entertained on a lavish scale, and accounts abound.⁷⁴ Naturally, conversation was a constant attendant of such entertainments, and the nature of Irish conversation is characterized by Lady Morgan as follows: "In England conversation is a game of chess, the result of judgement, memory and deliberation—with us it is a game of battledore, and our ideas like our shuttlecocks are thrown lightly one to the other, bounding and rebounding—played more for amusement than conquest, and leaving the players equally

⁷² Maxwell, Dublin, 92.

⁷³ The Dublin Evening Post, September 29, 1787.

⁷⁴ Maxwell, Dublin, 92-93.

animated by the game, and careless of its results."⁷⁵ An American visitor, Edward Melville, who visited Ireland during the opening years of the nineteenth century, was not so amused by Irish conversation, and he contrasted Irish women of fashion unfavorably with their French counterparts. Irish women seemed to him to be more concerned with dinners that they served their guest than with the nature of their discourse. Melville criticized them for frivolity and lack of interest in things intellectual.⁷⁶

The particular and exuberant way in which the Irish gentry went about their social life, with all-night revelry attendant upon balls and suppers, had earlier in the century stimulated Dr. Madden to seek the origins of such lack of discipline. Madden believed he had found the source in the fact that:

The bulk of our gentry are descended from Englishmen and soldiers ... they seem to have inherited their stomachs, as well as their courage, which have been so often whetted by feasting and famines in their turns, that it has made us the fonder of enjoying our plenty where we can get it.⁷⁷

At this point in his argument, Dr. Madden displays a characteristically eighteenth-century turn of mind and resorts to a contemporary cliché:

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 94-95.

⁷⁷ Maxwell, Dublin, 88-89.

We had neither the buildings or gardens of Italy, her antiquities or pictures, her statues or manuscripts to refine our tastes, or employ our time or our money on, and so I fancy, instead of meditating the wiser people on the Continent, we fell to what was next to us, and enjoyed what the richness of our soil, and the frankness of our people, when undisturbed with war, threw before us.⁷⁸

This absence of visual stimuli is often referred to by writers of the period. Maria Edgeworth in The Absentee recounts that Lord Colambre after a "charming tour in the county of Wicklow" found the natural scenery far "surpassed the sanguine expectations" that he had formed.⁷⁹ However, on arrival in Tusculum (a country seat) he found the company "very elegant, with a large party of the ladies and gentlemen of Bray, assembled in a drawing-room, fine with bad pictures and gaudy gilding; the windows were all shut, and the company were playing cards with all their might. This was the fashion of the neighbourhood."⁸⁰

The glitter and excitement of the Dublin season were not, however, attractive to all, and some important political figures remained outside of Stuart's circuit. Some younger members of the Irish aristocracy such as Lord Cloncurry were critical of the social world. These already represented a new generation of Irish society far

78 Ibid.

79 W.J. McCormack and Kim Waiker, eds., M. Edgeworth, The Absentee (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 87. All references are to this edition.

80 Ibid.

removed from Stuart's supporters. For instance, though his father had been raised to the peerage in 1789, Cloncurry was nationalistic, revolutionary, and somewhat anti-English. In his Recollections he presented his point of view as a young man in Ireland during the years just preceding the Act of Union. Cloncurry believed that Irishmen had been deprived of the "wholesome stimulus of self-government," and therefore had never been able to become "men," but had remained "gigantic children." He wished to break the "parasitic connection" with England, in order that Ireland might "put forth roots and branches sufficient for her own sustenance." Cloncurry was suspected of having joined the United Irishmen and was later imprisoned in London during the Rebellion of 1798. His views were certainly not shared by the vast majority of his fellow-aristocrats; they were, however, shared by his close friend and intimate Lord Edward Fitzgerald. Writing to his mother in 1793, from Dublin, Fitzgerald confided,

My differing so much in opinion with the people that one is unavoidably obliged to live with here does not add much, you may guess, to the agreeableness of Dublin society. But I have followed my dear Mother's advice, and do not talk much on the subject, and when I do, am very cool. It certainly is the best way; but all my prudence does not hinder all sorts of stories being made about my wife and me.... It is rather hard ... one sees and talks only to a few people of one's own way of thinking, we are at once all set down as a nest of traitors. From what you know of me, you may guess all this has not much changed my opinions; but I keep very quiet, do not go out much, except to see my wife dance, and in short—keep my breath to cool my porridge.⁸¹

⁸¹ Maxwell, Dublin, 130.

Cloncurry and Fitzgerald remind us of the somber realities that lay behind the gaiety of social life in Dublin during the late eighteenth century, and indicate the isolated and limited nature of Stuart's patronage. Clearly, figures like Cloncurry and Fitzgerald had no place in Stuart's world, and it was a function of his place in the world of the Protestant Ascendancy that he could never include them. While the gentry amused themselves with music, dancing, husbandry and science, their main concern was politics, and politics was at the very hub of Dublin social life. This was a parliamentary society, drawn together for the sessions of parliament, where the central issues were the relationship with England and the stability of the Anglo-Irish hierarchy. The activities of parliament were closely followed, and debate in the Irish Houses of Lords and Commons was frequently of the highest form of oratory. "The orators of Dublin," wrote Horace Walpole to the Earl of Strafford on November 10, 1783, "have brought the flowers of Billingsgate to so high perfection, that ours comparatively will have no more scent than a dead dandelion. If your Lordship has not seen the speeches of Grattan and Flood, you may perhaps still think that our oyster women can be more abusive than members of Parliament."⁸²

Maxwell's insight fully states that the sprightliness of Irish conversation might well be explained by "the mixture of ranks" which

82 Ibid., 106.

then distinguished Dublin society. As she points out, politicians, soldiers, divines, and lawyers all rubbed shoulders together in the great houses. This observation on the nature of Irish conversation, moreover, had its origins in the writings of contemporaries such as Richard Cumberland. Cumberland in his Memoirs wrote that he had "found the state of society in Dublin very different from what I had observed in London ... the professions more intermixt, the ranks more blended; in the great houses I met a promiscuous assembly of politicians, lawyers, soldiers and divines ... The professional gravity of character maintained by our English dignitaries was here laid aside."⁸³

In The Absentee, Edgeworth writes in the character of Sir James:

You find a society in Dublin composed of most agreeable and salutary mixture of birth and education, gentility and knowledge, manner and matter; and you see pervading the whole new life and energy, new talent, new ambition, a desire and a determination to improve and be improved — a perception that higher distinction can now be obtained in almost all company, by genius and merit, than by airs and address ...⁸⁴

Perhaps because of the mixture of ranks in Dublin society, the masked ball was especially popular as entertainment in late, diverse eighteenth-century Dublin. Accounts in periodicals of the day describe an elaborate series of costumes and masked identities: "a jolly tinker

⁸³ Ibid., 170.

⁸⁴ Edgeworth, Absentee, 94.

who had something to say to every person; a Pan well-dressed playing on his pipes with great judgement and ease; a Spaniard of amazing size; a Methodist preacher; a Sultana most splendidly dressed; a half-abbe and half-officer ...; a sideboard of plate; a representation of the Devil."⁸⁵ With such visual delights it is not surprising to hear of complaints of the rude pressure of the mob who gathered around the doors to see guests arrive and were "vastly incommodious" when the night's entertainment was done by crowding around and impeding the return to the carriages.

Upper class Dublin during the eighteenth century was noted for its love of music, and undoubtedly the greatest event in the musical history of the city had been the visit of Handel in 1741-42.⁸⁶ His visit there stimulated and revolutionized musical taste for the next half-century and concerts of his music were given regularly up until the Act of Union. These were performed in Christ Church Cathedral, St. Werburgh's and other Protestant churches. Toward the end of the century, as laws against Papists were relaxed, oratorios were also performed in Catholic churches. For a time, Italian music was extremely popular in Dublin, and Castrucci, who had acted as conductor of Handel's music in England, arrived in Ireland in 1750, and gave concerts at the Rotunda. Giordani, the Neapolitan composer, brought an Italian opera company to Dublin in 1762. Later in the

⁸⁵ Maxwell, Dublin, 93.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 101-103.

century, the violinist John Fisher came to Dublin after a tour in France, Italy, and Germany. Fisher's arrival in Ireland was attended with great pomp:

A foreign valet in showy livery bearing a magnificent violin case in crimson and gold, which he deposited in the middle of the room, was followed by the entrance of the great professor, who stepped in on tip-toe dressed in a brown silk camlet coat lined with scarlet silk, illustrated with brilliant buttons, and a powdered and perfumed toupee so elevated as to divide his little person almost in two ... the atmosphere of the room was filled with perfume from his person.⁸⁷

In contrast to the gentle art of music, the violent strain in Irish life was never far below the surface. Duelling, for example, was common in Ireland during the eighteenth century. Political duels were notorious, and Lord Townsend wrote to John Hely-Hutchinson that "amongst other qualifications for public station, the gladiatorial is one of the most essential in your country."⁸⁸ The Belfast Newsletter reported that twenty-two duels were fought during the course of the 1783 election for County Cork.⁸⁹ The prospective member was required to sign a solemn declaration that he had exchanged a shot or a thrust with some antagonist, and a code of laws was drawn up as a standard on all points of honor.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 104.

⁸⁸ Johnson, Eighteenth Century, 50.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

In his Personal Sketches, Sir Jonah Barrington, Stuart's subject, gives an account of how duelling was considered a necessary part of a young gentleman's education.⁹⁰ The first two questions always asked of a young man when he proposed to a wife were "What family is he of?" and "Did he ever blaze?" According to Barrington, people took out their pistols on even the pettiest provocation. Maxwell lists an extraordinary number of prominent figures who engaged in duelling. Among them was Richard Daly, who was manager of the Theatre Royal in Dublin toward the end of the century. Daly is reported to have fought nineteen duels in two years. The Lord Chancellor of Ireland, the Earl of Clare, fought Curran the Master of the Rolls. Stuart's patron, Chief Justice, Lord Clonmell, fought Lord Tyrawley, a Privy Councillor. Lord Norbury, Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, was famous for his duels, and even Grattan was always ready to sustain his arguments with his pistols. These duels were often fought in the fields behind Merrion Square, or in the courtyard of Lucas' Coffee House, on Cork Hill. The favorite site, however, seems to have been the Phoenix Park, where the combatants did not always confine themselves to secluded spots, but often "stood up" on the roads. The danger to passers-by from stray bullets was frequently discussed in the contemporary press.

Toward the end of the century a number of authors were agreeably surprised to note a marked improvement in the manners

⁹⁰ Staples, Barrington, 174-186, 188-195.

and conduct of the Irish gentry. With respect to drinking, Philip Luckombe, a visiting Englishman, observed that:

I have been happily disappointed; the bottle is circulated freely, but not to that excess we have heard it was, and I of course dreaded to find. Common sense is resuming her empire; the practice of cramming guests is already exploded, and that of gorging them is daily losing ground. Wherever I have yet been, I was always desired to do just as I would chose; nay, I have been at some tables, where the practice of drinking healths at dinner was entirely laid aside.⁹¹

The social and cultural life described above came to an abrupt halt in 1800 with the passing of the Act of Union, which united Ireland with Great Britain and terminated the Dublin Parliament.

The circumstances leading to those changes had only begun when Stuart left Dublin in March 1793, and he left behind a society in the throes of deep, irreversible change, and in which he had no place to advance. At the time of his arrival in 1787, however, Dublin social and cultural life was in its apogee, and Stuart's portraits, according to Herbert, "were so well reported by the cognoscenti, that a rage to possess some specimen of his pencil took place ... and a difficulty of obtaining a finished picture became universal"⁹²

⁹¹ Luckombe quoted in Maxwell, Dublin, 271-272. Similar restraint was noted regarding gaming and duelling.

⁹² Herbert, Varieties, 226.

CHAPTER VI

ORGANIZED RELIGION IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY IRELAND:
STUART'S PORTRAITS OF IRISH BISHOPS IN CONTEXT

When Stuart arrived in Ireland in 1787, his invitation by the Duke of Rutland identified him as a proper painter to fulfill the portrait needs of the Irish Protestant Ascendancy. This resulted in the popularity of his portraits among Irish bishops of the Established Church many of whom became Stuart's intimates and patrons. In this society, as will be seen, the office of bishop was primarily political, and largely secular. In order to confirm his patronage, Stuart developed a familiarity and identity with the elite class from which bishops were chosen. While the status quo remained in effect, Stuart prospered, but by the time of his departure in 1793, the whole world of the Ascendancy was threatened with extinction. The association between art, religion and politics is central in eighteenth-century Ireland, and Stuart's portraits of bishops can only be fully understood in the context of this complex interaction.

When the Act of Union became law in 1801, seven years after Stuart's departure, it was estimated that in Ireland there were five million Catholics, three million Presbyterians and one-half million

Protestants of the Established Church.¹ The latter were organized under a hierarchy of bishops and were also known as members of the Episcopal Church, the Church of Ireland, or Anglicans. They were the Protestant Ascendancy from whom Stuart derived his patronage. The English monarch, since the time of Henry VIII, served as head of the Established Church in Ireland. Many Bishops of the Established Church were the sons of wealthy landowners and became powerful political figures in their own right. The lower clergy, however, who performed pastoral work, were often poor. Like the father of the poet Oliver Goldsmith, they were, in the poet's sarcastic words, "passing rich on forty pounds a year."² The Presbyterians were most numerous in Northern Ireland, having immigrated there from Scotland between 1692 and 1700. On matters of principle, they were opposed to church government by bishops. Presbyterian clergy were known as "Presbyters" and were all equal in rank. Presbyterians, known by the Established Church as Protestant Dissenters, shared with Catholics many of the restrictions imposed by the Penal Laws.

¹ Irish religious statistics for the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries are estimates based on defective materials. The first reliable religious census seems to have been that of 1861. However, the census of 1834 is used by scholars today to estimate the denominational balance at the close of the eighteenth century. See McDowell, Ireland, 155.

² In 1788, Grattan declared that the average clergyman's salary was "forty or at the most fifty pounds a year." E.M. Johnson, "Problems Common to both Protestant and Catholic Churches in Eighteenth-Century Ireland," in Oliver MacDonagh, W.F. Mandle and Pauric Travers, Irish Culture and Nationalism, 1750-1950 (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1983), 18.

The Irish Parliament was overwhelmingly Church of Ireland in character, and the bishops of the Church of Ireland were powerful holders of office in the House of Lords. The "nation" therefore referred to by Grattan in his famous speeches was the Protestant one of the official Established Church, endowed with the support and privilege of royal favor.

During his stay in Ireland, Stuart painted at least six bishops of the Established Church: William Bennett, Bishop of Cork and Ross (Figure 28); Euseby Cleaver, Bishop of Cork; John Fowler; Lord Somerston, Archbishop of Dublin (later Earl of Normanton); William Preston, Bishop of Kildare (Figure 29); William Beresford, Lord Bishop of Ossory (Figure 30) and Hugh Hamilton, Beresford's successor. The latter presented Stuart with a silver snuff box, which is in the collection of the Boston Museum and may be seen as a symbol of the close relationship that Stuart formed with the Protestant elite.

The Established Church disapproved equally of Protestant Dissenters and Roman Catholics. Stuart shunned the patronage of both of these groups. Dissenters were those Protestants who did not conform to official Anglican belief as preached from Canterbury. Jonathan Swift, Dean of the Episcopal Saint Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin, recognized Protestant dissent as an even greater danger than Catholicism to the established order. A sacramental test excluded Presbyterians, as well as Catholics, from civil and military employment. The implication of this was that a large section of Protestants now had a grievance in common with Catholics. The

growth of a political alliance, under Protestant leadership, between these Protestants and Catholics, was the predictable outcome, and ultimately weakened the power of the Established Church. This alliance was often known as "Defenderism," a term whose origins lie in agrarian terrorism. Edmund Burke noted that "Defenderism" was the only restraint to complete Protestant domination of Ireland. Many Irish Protestants who condemned the injustices of the penal laws, and the oppressive conduct of many landlords, however, were uneasy with aggressive Defenderism as a response to the crushing injustice prevalent in eighteenth-century Ireland.

Alliances between Protestant and Catholic in Ireland were very complex and were complicated further by issues of race and language. Aspects of these complications can be seen in the life of William Drennan, a member of Parliament and an Irish Presbyterian. Drennan was committed to Catholic emancipation; however, after an outbreak of agrarian unrest, Drennan pondered, and asked of Protestant Ireland:

Why should we tolerate, why should we commit arms and rights to such savages as these Catholics.... Why did you make them, and keep them savages, for that they are such is without question.³

Drennan claimed to see into the Catholic mind. It was, he wrote, "a churlish soil, but it is the soil of Ireland, and must be cultivated, or we must emigrate." Drennan's sister, Mrs. McTier, echoed the same

³ William Drennan, Letters, National Library of Ireland, Dublin.

concern on hearing "a singing procession" of Catholics: "I begin to fear these people and think, like Jews, they will regain their native land."⁴

Irish ecclesiastical history of the eighteenth century is dominated by the far-reaching effects of the penal laws. As has been seen in Chapter 3, these laws created and perpetuated racial division upon religious grounds in order to secure the politically dominant position of the Anglican minority. Among privileges retained by the Established Church was a monopoly of higher education. Trinity College, the University of Dublin, was, until 1793, the year of Stuart's departure, officially closed to all but those of Anglican persuasion. As a result, both Catholic and Protestant non-conformist clergy were educated abroad; France was most commonly chosen for Catholic clergy, while Scotland was popular among the Protestant non-conformists. The opening up of Trinity College to Catholics was but one example of the striking changes that challenged Stuart's Irish supporters.

The clergy of the Established Church were officially responsible for the spiritual welfare of the whole country, despite the fact that the Anglican population was at the very most only one-eighth of the population. Many bishops of the Anglican Church frequently fretted at the impossibility of their task. Archbishop Hort of Tuam, addressing his clergy at mid-century, and speaking of the penal laws, warned:

⁴ Ibid.

Coercive laws may restrain and disable those who avow principles that are destructive to the Church and State, and coercion in those cases is wise and necessary; but they never convince anybody; they may tie up men's hands and tongues, but never reach their hearts.⁵

The overall number of clergy of the Established Church as estimated by Henry Grattan in 1788 was about 900, and this figure is considered an overestimate.⁶ It is well established, despite the fact that population statistics for the eighteenth century in Ireland are mostly unreliable, that the population more than doubled over the course of the century. Moreover, as the population increased, so did the ratio of Catholics to Protestants. Understandably, this was a matter of great concern to the Protestant hierarchy during Stuart's years in Ireland. The number of Catholic priests did not, however, rise in proportion to the population. In 1731, there were an estimated 1,700 Catholic priests in the country, and in 1801, only 1,800. By contrast, in some areas of the country, Anglican parishes consisted of no more than a handful. This lack of parishioners is reflected in Jonathan Swift's rephrasing of the Prayer Book, stating that "the Scripture moveth thee and me in sundry places"⁷ or in Lady Bessborough's description of her local church: "Our congregation consisted of eleven people! In a very large church with two clergymen officiating — to make up in piety I suppose what

⁵ Hort quoted in Johnson, "Church Problems," 22-23.

⁶ McDonagh, *Ireland*, 162. McDonagh himself estimates that the number was 1,280.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 163.

was lacking in numbers."⁸ The Anglican clergy were therefore considerably less numerous than their Catholic counterparts. Within the Irish Anglican Church, a matter of substantial tension was the fact that only small numbers of Irish clergy were appointed to influential or lucrative sees, which were filled mostly by Englishmen. In 1726, Swift wrote to the Earl of Peterborough commenting on the great discouragement which this system caused the graduates of Trinity College.⁹ Archbishop King in 1725 complained that "the Bishop of Derry since his translation to that see has given about 2,000 in benefices to his English friends and relations.... The Bishop of Waterford has given all livings of value on his gift to his brothers and relations ... though none of these resided in the kingdom."¹⁰

The Presbyterians, as noted earlier, were largely concentrated in the North of Ireland where communication with Scotland was convenient. Throughout the eighteenth century, Presbyterian clergy were trained in Scotland, mainly at the University of Glasgow, a custom that continued into the nineteenth century. Resulting from the formidable philosophical and theological debates of the period, Presbyterians endured a series of schisms, so that by the end of the century there were four main divisions.¹¹ It is estimated that in all

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ McDonagh, Ireland, 163-164.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ The largest of these groups has been categorized as a "middle of the way" group in the Synod of Ulster; a second group was created when a "liberal," or "new light" group developed in the Presbytery of Antrim. Finally, the Calvinistic seceders of

there were about 280 ministers combined in the different sections of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.¹²

Together then, these three religious groups, Presbyterian, Anglican and Roman Catholic, comprised the vast majority of religious practice in Stuart's Ireland. However, there were also other small communities of Protestant sects scattered throughout the country. Among these were Quakers, French Huguenots, German Palatines, Moravians, and a few Utopian communities. In the case of all of these groups conformity to the Anglican Church was England's ambition since the Anglican belief in the unity of Church and State had obvious benefits. Edmund Burke was the major advocate of this tenet. In 1792, he pointed out that "the Church and State ... (were) one and the same thing, being different integral parts of the same whole...."¹³ Such an attitude certainly worked in Stuart's favor while in Ireland, but the growth in Catholic numbers and power in the early 1790s threatened the very core of his patronage, and ultimately hastened his return to America. During the first half of the eighteenth century the Anglican Church became more and more indissolubly linked to the politically exclusive Protestant Ascendancy. Its position during most of the eighteenth century, including Stuart's early years in Ireland,

the Presbyterian Church divided themselves into two groups called respectively "Burgers" and "Anti-Burgers," names and separations that originated from divisions in the Scottish Presbyterian Church.

¹² Johnson, "Church Problems," 19.

¹³ Burke quoted in McDowell, Ireland, 156.

was so secure that its members did not feel compelled to continue the vigorous policy of Catholic suppression established by the penal laws. Members of the Established Church seemed convinced that Anglicanism, with its loyalty to the Crown, avoidance of extremes, and respect for authority, was the greatest ally of the state.¹⁴

As a national church, whose responsibility included the religious welfare of the whole of Ireland, the Church of Ireland maintained a network of clergy and churches covering the whole country.¹⁵ To support this system, the Church of Ireland had inherited the framework of the medieval church: tithes, buildings, lands and other holdings. The holdings of the Established Church in Ireland included church buildings along with vast tracts of property. Bishops were responsible for the leasing out of church land, and of necessity were acquainted with the conditions of their leases. An incumbent, if he had a glebe, was responsible for its farming or lease. Moreover, the system of tithing provided the majority of clerical income.

Whatever benefits the tithe system held for the Established Church, there was widespread resentment engendered by its collection. Catholics and Protestant dissenters saw themselves contributing monetarily to a church to which they did not belong and

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid., 166.

the sense of injustice was compounded for Catholics, who supported their own clergy by voluntary contribution.¹⁶

The close of the eighties, just about the period when Stuart arrived in Ireland, witnessed a series of disturbances related to tithing. Central to the controversy was the publication in 1786 of the pamphlet, The Present State of the Church of Ireland. The document, written by Richard Woodward, Bishop of Cloyne, was so popular that it was published in four editions within two weeks of its appearance. Woodward, in the best spirit of eighteenth-century pamphleteers, argued that the Established Church was an essential part of the political constitution.¹⁷ In short he was expressing the opinion held by Edmund Burke and others, that there was mutual benefit to be accrued from the alliance of Church and State. It is predictable that Woodward's publication should provoke strong reaction from Protestant dissenters and Catholics alike. Clergy of all denominations responded to the work. Campbell and Barber, two northern Presbyterian ministers, along with James Butler, Catholic Archbishop of Cashel, were among those who responded.¹⁸ Campbell and Barber both denied that there was any inherent good in the association presumed by Woodward, and argued that the Established Church was not an essential element in the constitution. Barber emphasized that

¹⁶ Johnson, "Church Problems," 19.

¹⁷ Ibid., 18.

¹⁸ Ibid.

Presbyterians resented "their chains" and that the sooner the Anglican ecclesiastical establishment was abolished, the better. Together with Campbell he stated that Presbyterians were convinced that they had the right to participate in the outcome of their country's fate, and to achieve that end were willing to contemplate sweeping constitutional change. Butler of Cashel, conservative by nature and birth, chose to reiterate and dwell on Catholic loyalty to the crown. Growing parliamentary concern prompted Henry Grattan in 1788 to suggest a scheme whereby the tithe would be replaced by a parochial rate which would vary with the price of corn, but the issue was lost in rhetoric and resistance, and the tithe remained.

The system of tithes created tremendous discontent and resentment and was at the center of anti-clericalism in the eighteenth century. Grattan addressed the problem eloquently in 1788:

A tenth of your land, your labour, and your capital, to those who contribute in no shape whatsoever to the produce must be oppression.... But uncertainty aggravates that oppression ... for it is the fixed proportion of a fluctuating quantity, and unless the high priest can give law to the winds, and ascertain the harvest, the tithe like the harvest must be uncertain. But this uncertainty is aggravated by the pernicious motives on which the tithe frequently rises and falls. It frequently rises on the poor, it falls in compliment to the rich.¹⁹

The issue of tithing therefore generated significant social tension in eighteenth-century Ireland. The fact that the tithe was often collected directly by the clergyman frequently created allegations of corruption.

¹⁹ Ibid., 19.

Historians of the period are agreed that the wealth of the Established Church was unevenly distributed and that there were substantial differences in income amongst its clergy.²⁰ According to Arthur Young these ranged according to office from the curate's income of about 75 pounds per annum to that of the average bishop which was about 2,300 pounds per annum.²¹ Stuart's episcopal subjects received salaries in this range. Meanwhile, the bishops of Armagh and Derry received incomes in the range of seven to eight thousand pounds per year. Arthur Young declared that in the 1770's the bishop of Ossory received 2,000 pounds per annum. William Beresford, Stuart's patron, occupied this seat when Stuart painted his portrait.²² Bishop O'Beirne, who held the same office in the later 1790's, complained that his income of 2,300 pounds was insufficient. In a rather dramatic statement of his financial state he threatened that he would either "shut himself up" in his palace which he described as a wretched barracks needing improvement, or "live

²⁰ In 1750, Nathaniel Nesbitt, Lord Abercorn's agent, calculated that Church demands in general "amount one way or another to one-fifth of the landlord's rent, which is a very high tax on the country." Johnson, "Church Problems," 18.

²¹ McDowell, Ireland, 163-164.

²² The portrait of Beresford is not listed in Park, Stuart. Mount made the attribution, and though the portrait which is in poor condition could only be examined by photograph, it is probably Stuart's for it exhibits his style in the treatment of the face and hair. For Mount's account see Mount, "The Irish Career of Gilbert Stuart," Bulletin of the Irish Georgian Society 6 (January-March, 1963), 6-28. Ossory presented Stuart with the snuff-box already mentioned. Snuff taking was extremely popular in Ireland. Arthur Young wrote of the Irish that "they could take snuff and talk without tiring till doomsday." Young, Ireland, 106.

amongst the very numerous gentry who are proverbial for their extravagant living." In the context of episcopal incomes it should be remembered that bishops were also peers of parliament and local magnates. Incumbents of episcopal office were sometimes changed from see to see. This process known as "translation" was used as a system of reward and to create a hierarchy within the episcopal chain. For example, Hotham, a previous bishop of Ossory, was extremely pleased with his new post as Bishop of Clogher. He praised his new palace, which, unlike the palace at Ossory, was far from a disreputable place of residence. As for the food provided by his new demesne:

My beef, mutton, veal and lamb, are all as good in their kinds as can be, the farm is to produce pigs, poultry, cream and butter, hay, oats and straw. The decoy gives me teal and wild duck, the warren supplies me with as excellent rabbits as I ever tasted, the pigeon house with pigeons, the water furnishes carp, tench, trout, eels, perch and pike, the venison in the park is remarkably good and a most extensive range of mountain ... yields ... an astounding profusion of partridge, herbs and grouse.²³

Hotham, in addition, claimed to have a conscientious and exemplary body of clergy under his guidance and a borough under his control. All matters considered, most of the clergy of the Church of Ireland had, or could look forward to, moderate incomes that placed them firmly within the middle class while some could even be termed wealthy.

²³ McDowell, Ireland, 163-164.

Throughout the eighteenth century, the political nature of appointments to bishoprics was clearly understood both by clergy and laity alike. Bishoprics did not always bring independence, but the promise of translation to a better see seems to have maintained a steady demand for placement within the Established Church and the demand steadily outran supply as the century progressed. Devotion to the ministry was in most cases measured by attendance at the House of Lords, and by careful and calculated management of diocesan electoral interests. These when treated as priorities of office usually secured translation. Bishops were carefully watched by the Administration, and their political views scrutinized, so that the slightest political indiscretion could blight a career. This was naturally true also in England. For example, Archbishop Secker, as a result of a speech in the House, was kept in poor sees for sixteen years, and Bishop Watson of Llandaff remained there all his life as punishment for speaking his mind. As a result:

It meant ... that bishops became first and foremost politicians, and politicians are rarely men of spirit. There is a worldliness, almost a venality, about eighteenth-century prelates which no amount of apologetics can conceal. The clerical duties of visitation, ordination, and confirmation, were done only as political duties allowed. Dioceses were enormous.... No bishops retired, so that frequently old age and infirmity created a backlog of gigantic proportions with which the young and energetic tried to cope unavailingly. Most eighteenth-century bishops were not idle but industrious men, who accepted too easily the difficulties which faced them as part of the unchangeable nature of society.²⁴

²⁴ Plumb, *England*, 43.

As the century progressed, the value of sees and deaneries was increasing rapidly, as the nation's wealth also increased. Consequently, the clerical life attracted more younger sons of the nobility or gentry. In 1752, Bishop Wharton noted that, "Our grandees have at last found their way back into the Church. I only wonder they have been so long about it."²⁵ By the end of the century Stuart's patron, the Duke of Rutland, and his family, the Mannors, held eight English and twelve Irish sees in their control. It is not surprising then that at least six of Stuart's Irish patrons were bishops of the Established Church. This further indicates the close ties established between art and politics during Stuart's tenure in Ireland.

The essentially political nature of the Established Church meant that reform of the institution was not a common practice, and religion frequently played an inferior role to that of politics:

The way to success was in discretion and man-pleasing and the worldly virtues became heavenly ones. The most popular sermon in the eighteenth century was Tollotson's on the text: "His commandments are not grievous," in which he stresses that if a man applies the same principles he uses in business or commerce to his moral life, he will be sure — of what? A place in heaven. Evil and guilt, sin and redemption — the whole personal drama and appeal of religion was forgotten or rationalized away and the eupeptic optimism of politicians pervaded the Church.²⁶

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Plumb, England, 44.

The extremely secular and political nature of the higher Anglican clergy is worthy of further consideration and explains, in part, Stuart's patronage by Irish bishops. Since biographical information on Irish bishops is scarce, the life of Frederick Hervey, the Bishop of Derry (Figure 31), who was also the Fourth Earl of Bristol, is an important source for this study. The Bishop, born in 1730, appears to have been a man of some learning, of real talent and of urbane manner, all characteristics that would have attracted him, as a patron, to Stuart. In the privileged area of art patronage, Hervey displayed exceptional interest and had a very developed eye. Apart from substantial collections of Italian and Flemish art, he also patronized contemporaries.²⁷ However, Hervey left Ireland in 1785, before Stuart's arrival. It is probable, nevertheless, that Stuart would, in his political maneuvering, have avoided contact with this promising patron. Stuart was primarily interested in maintaining his relationship with John Fitzgibbon and the Castle intact, and it seems that he was not willing to allow chance, by the choice of politically questionable subjects, to disturb the main source of his patronage. Hervey, in the context of the eighteenth-century Irish Church, was a liberal. He introduced church reforms and pressed for the easing of Penal Laws against Catholics. In 1783, he even became Colonel of the

²⁷ In 1790 he commissioned John Flaxman's most ambitious Italian work, The Fury of Athamas, which was inspired by the Laocoon. On its completion, the Bishop lavished praise on the piece and suggested that in his estimation it even "exceeded the Laocoon in expression" and was "the finest work ever done in sculpture." Erwin, Neoclassical Art, 63. The sculpture still exists at Ickworth, the family seat of the Earls of Bristol, and birthplace of the Bishop himself.

Derry Volunteers. Stuart's episcopal subjects were much more conservative than Hervey, and one of them, William Beresford, Lord Bishop of Ossory, was even an intimate of Fitzgibbon's and became a friend to Stuart. Hervey is furthermore described as being, in questions of religion, more liberal than most of his contemporaries; but he appears at the same time as utterly destitute of any of the traditionally distinctive virtues of a clergyman, and is described as one of the most undependable politicians of his time:

Vain, impetuous, and delighting in display, with an insatiable appetite for popularity, and utterly reckless about the consequences of his acts, he exhibited, though an English peer and an Irish Bishop, all the characteristics of the most irresponsible adventurer.²⁸

The Bishop is described further as a man of clear, prompt judgement, indisputable courage, popular talents, but lacking the talents of either a great rebel or a great statesman.²⁹ He was, it appears, both violent and foolish. True to the spirit of the times, his habits were extremely convivial, but it was above all his ostentation which drew the attention of his contemporaries. According to Stuart's patron Lord Barrington, he dressed with peculiar care and neatness, generally in purple. His accoutrements included diamond knee and shoe buckles. Barrington observed that generally the Bishop "wore

²⁸ Lecky, Ireland in the Eighteenth Century, III, 213.

²⁹ William Edward Hartpole Lecky, Leaders of Public Opinion in Ireland: Swift, Flood, Grattan, O'Connell (New York: Appleton, 1879), 90.

white gloves with gold fringe round the wrists, and large gold tassels hanging from them."³⁰ It is an indication of the significant political power of the Bishop that he hoped to become the President of the Volunteers. Despite his great influence, however, the position was secured by Lord Charlemont. The Bishop was noted for his wealth, good nature, munificent patronage of the arts and brilliant social qualities, all contributing in his old age to his becoming the lover of Lady Hamilton.

Not only had Hervey spent a large part of his life in the social world of eighteenth-century European travellers, but he befriended a great number of society women of whom Lady Hamilton was but one. His title "Bristol" still lingers on in the names of many historical institutions in Europe. He even had the Prince of Wales as his godfather. Hervey's portrait was painted by Pompeo Batoni, as was characteristic of educated and privileged British and Irish travellers to Italy in the eighteenth century.³¹ The portrait depicts the Bishop standing with a quill in his right hand and a document in his left. In the background is the spire of Derry Cathedral. Of great interest here is the fact that the document held by Hervey bears the inscription "Act of Tolerance," thereby displaying his sympathy with the suppressed

³⁰ Barrington quoted in Lecky, Public Opinion, 90. In his biography of Grattan, Madden, considering the artificiality of the period, wrote that, "the woman of fashion was all powder and toupée — hoops and high-heeled shoes. Everything was modish — artificial — and unreal. Even the pulpit partook of that character." Madden, Grattan, 85.

³¹ This portrait was sold at auction, April 1987, Sotheby's, London.

Catholic majority. The Bishop's portrait was also painted by Hugh Douglas Hamilton, where he appears along with his grand-daughter, Lady Caroline Crichton (National Gallery of Ireland).

The portrait of Hervey painted by Batoni in 1778 follows in the venerable tradition of the English episcopal portrait, and remains in all details faithful to that tradition inherited from the sixteenth century and later used by Stuart in Ireland. Portraits of prelates of the Established Church such as John Greenhill's portrait of Seth Ward, Bishop of Sarum, 1673 (Figure 32), and Sir Joshua Reynolds' portrait of Thomas Newton, Bishop of Bristol, 1773-74 (Figure 33), have many important features in common with the Batoni. All three portraits depict the cathedral building to which the Bishop was attached, the ecclesiastical seat itself, in the background. In both the Reynolds and the Batoni, this feature is presented in a view to the left. In both, the bishops hold an object in the left hand: in Hervey's case, the "Act of Toleration," and in Reynolds' portrait of Newton, the so-called "college cap." In both cases the pose and setting are remarkably similar. In all three portraits mentioned, the bishops wear the attire known as "convocation dress." This consisted of the rochet, a white, long-sleeved, whole length tunic, worn over the cassock, and a tippet or black silk scarf worn over the shoulders.³² Stuart's portraits of the Irish Anglican bishops, Bennett, Beresford and Preston, all display the subjects in "convocation dress" as was the custom established for the

³² John Ingamells, The English Episcopal Portrait 1559-1835: A Catalogue (New Haven, Connecticut: The Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, 1981), 48.

episcopal portrait. None of Stuart's pictures, however, display the addition of a church building in the background, but all three works follow the traditional convention established for the Bishop's portrait in the eighteenth century.

As far as can be determined, Stuart, as stated, painted at least six episcopal portraits while in Ireland.³³ All of these were major sees, and the fact that Stuart was chosen by at least six of Ireland's most powerful bishops as their portraitist strongly suggests his importance in Irish political and artistic life. The period in question, that is, the latter half of the eighteenth century, witnessed an unprecedented growth in the demand for portraits of bishops and paralleled the rise of portraiture in general during the age of Reynolds, Gainsborough, Lawrence and Stuart. Moreover, the period also witnessed a growth in the popularity of portrait collecting, and with episcopal portraiture, collecting seems to have been as important as commissioning new portraits. Bishops during the period were anxious to collect and amass portraits of their predecessors for their residences, and the trend to both collect and to commission portraits increased as the century progressed.³⁴ This creates the context for Stuart's strong association with Anglican bishops in Ireland. In England Reynolds and Gainsborough each received about ten

³³ Three are lost works, see Appendix I.

³⁴ Ingamells, Episcopal Portrait, 34-44. In the Irish context, attention should be drawn to Latham's portrait of George Berkeley, Bishop of Cloyne. (Figure 15) Berkeley held the Bishopric of Cloyne from 1734 until 1753. For a discussion of Berkeley as an Enlightenment figure, see Craven, Portraiture, 158-161.

episcopal commissions; painters like Romney, Hoppner, Lawrence and Beechey received even more. In Ingamells' words,

The period begins with the unique intervention of the Bench in the history of post-reformation art in England. In 1764 Benjamin West arrived in London from Rome, and was promptly befriended by Robert Drummond, Archbishop of York, who probably admired the young Pennsylvanian's quaker simplicity. He introduced him to other Bishops of whom Thomas Newton, Bishop of Bristol, a scholarly and liberal prelate, commissioned The Departure of Hector from him together with his own portrait in which the history piece duly appeared in the background, together with a bust of the Emperor Augustus. At about the same time, c. 1765, Richard Terrick, Bishop of London, also sat to him before an exotic damask curtain, forcing a smile from his somewhat crabbed features. In 1767 Drummond introduced West to the King, from which moment the American's career was assured (in 1772 he became Historical Painter to the King, and in 1792 President of the Royal Academy).³⁵

It is not unlikely that both West's and Reynold's strong patronage by Anglican bishops ultimately benefitted Stuart through his association with them and that this advantage transferred to Ireland with him.

The growing interest among members of the Established Church in the history of their institution is evident in a number of publications. Pasquin, who wrote in 1796, reported that Haydon, an engraver, "executed several large plates of the coats of arms, with proper embellishments, of all the Irish Bishops."³⁶ This trend was

³⁵ Ibid., 34-35.

³⁶ Pasquin, Professors, 20.

earlier represented by the publication of the Rev. James Granger's Biographical History ... adapted to a Methodical Catalogue of Engraved British Heads, published in its first edition in 1769.³⁷ This monumental work, treating British history from the reign of Egbert the Great to 1688, devoted a whole section to episcopal and clerical subjects. Sir William Musgrave surveyed portrait collections throughout Great Britain by correspondence during the 1790's, and his letters are preserved in the British Museum. George Perfect Harding followed in the footsteps of Musgrave, compiling portrait lists from private collections dating from 1804 onwards. These notebooks are now in the National Portrait Gallery archive. From such sources, scholars have traced in detail the evolution of Church collections during the latter half of the eighteenth century.

Indications of collecting trends that occurred are presented by Ingamells and show that Thomas Secker, Archbishop of Lambeth from 1758 to 1768, appears to have collected the portraits of sixteen bishops from various sees. Richard Hurd, Bishop of Worcester from 1781 to 1808, collected portraits of both predecessors and friends, while Beilby Porteus, Bishop of London from 1787 to 1809, "formed a very laudable design of collecting (as far as may be practicable) the portraits of his predecessors," at Fulham Palace.³⁸ Finally, it is of interest that

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid., 40-41.

Bishop Newton, friend of both West and Reynolds, had amassed a collection of "old masters, prints and portraits."³⁹

Regarding the price of portraiture, Ingamells supplies some important figures: the "Bishop's half-length" was introduced apparently in the 1770's and was used by Reynolds in 1778 for his portrait of Bishop Markham.⁴⁰ The "Bishop's half-length" had been 50 in. by 40 in., but the billowing, long sleeves of the Hanoverian Bishop seems to have necessitated an increase to 55 in. by 44 in., and this new size became common after Reynolds used it.⁴¹ For this new three-quarter length, Reynolds charged 70 guineas in 1777; Romney 40 guineas in 1786 and 68 guineas in 1796. The term "Bishop's half-length" was used to describe this particular size whether the sitter was a bishop or not. Its invention nonetheless is ascribed to its vogue among the bishops of the Anglican church.⁴² The price of such portraits continued to rise through the Napoleonic era.

In the context of the above discussion the episcopal commissions received by Stuart in Ireland are clearly in keeping with the tradition of portraiture and collecting in Great Britain, and must be seen as part of the larger context of Church patronage of the arts in Britain and Ireland during the latter half of the eighteenth century. In 1764,

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 38.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

Horace Walpole noted that at Peterborough he saw "about a dozen bad pictures of Bishops."⁴³ This illustrates the growing popularity of episcopal portraits in the late eighteenth century. The fashion for portraiture engraving had reached unprecedented heights after 1770; Granger, in his Biographical History, hoped his work would provide "a speaking chronicle" to excite "the latent seeds of a martial, philosophical, poetic, or literary disposition."⁴⁴ He added that, "no invention had better answered the needs of perpetuating the memory of illustrious men than the modern art of engraving."⁴⁵ Of the 2,500 biographies listed in Granger, approximately 260 were bishops.

Ingamells notes:

Portraits by the masters were almost always immediately engraved; all of Reynolds' and Hoppner's Bishops were published and the majority of those by Lawrence and Beechey. Such reproductions were by now as much advertisements for the masters as for the sitters, but they could also be incorporated quickly into the ever increasing number of private print collections.⁴⁶

The publication in 1768 of Joseph Strutt's Biographical History of Engravers is further evidence of the growth of interest in this medium. Towards the end of the century, with the revival of the practice of illustrating books with copperplate prints, the demand for engraved

⁴³ Ibid., 42.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 38.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

portraits increased enormously. The development of mezzotint during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries also greatly aided the popularity of the portrait print. Mezzotint was uniquely suited to the English taste, and English engravers quickly began to develop its possibilities. The process, based on the gradations of tone, was particularly suited to the reproduction of paintings, and since by far the most predominant genre of painting in England during the eighteenth century was portraiture, the great bulk of mezzotints are portraits. Stuart's portrait of Euseby Cleaver, Bishop of Cork was engraved in mezzotint by J. Grozer in 1790; that of Hugh Hamilton, Bishop of Ossory was engraved in stipple by W. Evans in 1807 as the frontispiece to his Works. Stuart's portrait of William Preston, Bishop of Kildare was engraved in mezzotint by W. Dickinson, and finally Stuart's portrait of Charles, Earl of Normanton, Archbishop of Dublin was engraved in mezzotint by W. Say.⁴⁷

The mezzotint or "half-tone" opened the full range from black to white thereby allowing for a more apt rendering of the gradations of oil painting. Sir Godfrey Kneller as British court painter promoted the mezzotint, and Reynolds, Gainsborough and many other English portraitists benefitted financially from its introduction. Some popular portraits were much copied in mezzotint and were frequently pirated, thereby bringing about a decline in the quality of prints.

⁴⁷ Strickland, Dictionary, 413-417.

It has been noted that the vogue among bishops for collecting and exhibiting portraits of their predecessors is consistent with the development of antiquarian interests in Great Britain and Ireland.⁴⁸ With the publication in 1724 by Bishop Nicholson of his Irish Historical Library, the Irish antiquarian movement became linked with that in Britain. The latter had previously been recorded by Nicholson in two volumes, entitled respectively: the English Historical Library and the Scottish Historical Library. Nicholson, who served as Bishop of Derry from 1718 until 1727, was then translated to Cashel where he became Archbishop. The full title of Nicholson's Irish work, The Irish Historical Library Pointing Out Most of the Authors and Records in Print or Manuscript which may be Serviceable to the Compilers of a General History of Ireland, indicated the intention of his publication. Nicholson compiled substantial information on individual manuscripts, manuscript collections and printed books in three languages: English, Irish, and Latin. In Nicholson's opinion, all were relevant to prospective historians and compilers of the history of Ireland. It has already been noted that along with the pronounced evidence of the pleasure which the author took in scholarship for its own sake, the work is remarkable for its objectivity.⁴⁹ Because of these qualities, and due to Nicholson's comprehension of the Irish

⁴⁸ Ingamells, Episcopal Portraits, 34. A fuller discussion of antiquarianism in relation to Stuart's Irish work occurs in Chapter VIII.

⁴⁹ R.W. Dudley Edwards and Mary Dowd, Sources for Early Modern Irish History 1534-1641 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), 181.

language, the work provided a basis for a more scientific approach to Irish history. It is noteworthy, that in Nicholson and Hervey, the See of Derry remarkably produced two of the most tolerant bishops that Ireland had ever witnessed. Nicholson's mastery of the Irish language is exceptional and worthy of special note, for in that more than anything else, given England's attitude toward the practice of the language, Nicholson displays both courage and insight.

Intellectual pursuit was common among clergymen of the Established Church. The contributions and endeavors of even the lower orders of clergy has been recognized:

The vast majority of parish priests and curates were not quite gentlemen.... The agricultural prosperity brought leisure to the parish priests, for their clerical duties were light, communion three times a year and sermons seldom. Time hung heavily on their hands. Some took to drink, some to fox hunting, some to local government, some to learning. The last is important and impressive: Berkeley and Butler in philosophy; Gilbert White in Natural History; Jethro Tull in Agriculture; Stephen Hales in Chemistry; Sterne in Literature; Stukeley in Archeology; Burn in Law. They devoted themselves to everything but the administrative reform of the institution to which they belonged.⁵⁰

Antiquarianism was also reflected in various parliamentary issues during the latter half of the eighteenth century. In 1755, Walter Harris presented a petition to the House of Commons for financial assistance to publish a history of Ireland, though the project never reached full fruition.⁵¹ The appointment of a permanent Keeper of

⁵⁰ Plumb, England, 44.

⁵¹ Edwards and Dowd, Sources, 184-185.

Records in 1751 is also an indication of the British administration's concern with antiquarian interests. A further development in the expansion of Irish antiquarian interests occurs with the work of Edmund Burke.⁵² Burke supported the production of a philosophical history of Ireland comparable in quality with that of England by David Hume. Burke numbered among his correspondents a group of Irish antiquarians who met in Dublin in the late 1760's and in the 1770's, and included in their ranks was the Catholic antiquarian, Charles O'Connor of Balinagare.

The rise in popularity of episcopal portraits was accompanied in the late eighteenth century by a dramatic effort by the Church of Ireland to repair and renew its holdings, especially its church buildings.⁵³ The wars of the seventeenth century and the agrarian disturbances of the eighteenth had occasioned severe damage and loss to much church property. From 1750 onward, many of the great cathedrals and churches of the Established Church were rebuilt, repaired and enlarged. Among these were the abbey church at Downpatrick and those in Limerick, Cashel, Clogher, Cork, Waterford and Drogheda. At Downpatrick in 1790, the chancel of the great ruined abbey church was converted into a compact cathedral. Bishop Stearne at Clogher built a new cathedral, described by his successors as "a neat respectable parish church." In Limerick, St. Mary's Cathedral was

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ McDowell, Ireland, 158.

repaired and somewhat enlarged. The addition of "three elegant brass branches" to supply light in winter, and the repair of the arches of the choir for warmth, rendered the cathedral "one of the largest and most convenient of the churches in the kingdom."⁵⁴ In Cork the destroyed medieval cathedral was fully replaced by a modern edifice, and in Cashel the ruined cathedral on the rock was replaced by a new building in the town. In Waterford, the medieval cathedral was considered beyond repair and was pulled down to make way for a new structure, "executed with skill and strict economy" according to the parishioners who successfully applied for a government grant to carry out the work.⁵⁵ In Limerick, St. John's was thoroughly repaired, and the medieval church of Saint Munchin's was improved by the addition of a gallery and a vestry room; the addition of stucco work was described as a beautifying element. A traveller in the south of the country was impressed with the "neat appearance of the rising spires" of those churches built by the Archbishop of Cashel.⁵⁶

To serve the population many smaller parish churches were built. Among these were four in Cork and twelve in Dublin. In Dublin, the most striking was apparently the still extant Saint Werburgh's, which, according to contemporary writers Pool and Cash, who extolled the building in their Views of the Most Remarkable Public

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

Buildings, "displayed bold elegance and delicacy."⁵⁷ By 1782 over seventy new churches were built in the belief that "the performance of divine service will contribute to promote virtue and industry and above all extend the Protestant religion."⁵⁸ Parliamentary assistance toward building and refurbishing church buildings was made available through the Board of First Fruits, and this financial commitment advanced the presence of the Established Church over its rivals.

During the last decades of the century notable changes also began to become apparent in Irish Catholicism. Primary among these positive changes for Catholics, as has been stated, were the ever-dwindling effects of the penal laws along with the proceedings that led eventually to the foundation of a large national seminary, the Royal College of Saint Patrick at Maynooth in 1785.⁵⁹ During the seventies and eighties, Irish Catholicism witnessed the growing prosperity of its rising population, (see Chapter IX), and the church renewal that appeared in the Established Church earlier now became evident in the Catholic:

With the penal laws almost gone, with a rising population and growing prosperity, Irish Catholics could throw themselves into repairing the damage of the past and planning for the future. New churches were being built and new methods and agencies

57 *Ibid.*

58 *Ibid.*

59 *Ibid.*

for carrying on the work of the church were being devised. Based in Dublin, the Trinitarian order in the nineties launched an ambitious scheme for the systematic teaching of the catechism. Large numbers of children were to assemble in their parish church ... and be instructed by laymen, working under clerical directors. In Cork, Miss Nano Nagle, a wealthy lay woman... established an Ursuline convent ... and in 1775, she set up the first Presentation house. In Waterford a group of young men about 1790 formed a society for religious and charitable work, it influenced Edmund Rice, a well-off merchant, who at the opening of the nineteenth century, abandoned business and starting with a single school, built up ... the Irish Christian Brothers.... In Carlow, after fund-raising efforts stretching over nearly ten years, a diocesan college was opened in 1793 for the education of both lay pupils and theological students.⁶⁰

Central to the spirit of renewal that appeared within the Catholic Church during the later years of the eighteenth century was the economic rise of the Catholic middle class. The increasing economic independence of the Irish Catholic middle class, as the century progressed, ultimately threatened the economic monopoly of the Ascendancy and changed the structure of patronage. Stuart had avoided contact with this class while in Ireland. So complete was Stuart's identity with the Ascendancy that, when that class was threatened with extinction, Stuart had few options. The one that seemed most appealing was a return to the United States, and a painting of Washington.

Stuart's introduction to Ireland by Rutland carried with it the clear innuendo that association with anything other than orthodox

⁶⁰ McDonagh, *Ireland*, 194.

opinion regarding the Ascendancy was dangerous to his source of patronage. In short, by virtue of his invitation, Stuart was embedded in the center of the Irish Protestant Ascendancy, as their painter, and was never to wander too far from this core, either politically, socially or artistically. Stuart's Irish works, therefore, are a record, not of Ireland in the eighteenth century, but of the Irish Protestant Ascendancy, that elite group who governed supreme for that brief moment in time. When that civilization began to change, Stuart's destiny was clear, for he had identified solely with them, and no other source of patronage was then open to him.

Since the penal laws also disallowed them from accumulating property in the manner of landed gentry, Catholics were driven to trade as the answer to seeking a living. In 1735, a pamphleteer wrote:

The parliament to restrain papist power and suppress clans has incapacitated them (papists) from purchasing estates: it would be therefore too hard as well as imprudent to exclude them from the benefit of employing their money in trade. But then they should be cautious how they extend the reign of policy and by a vehement impulse of self-interest raise themselves into objects of Protestant jealousy.... Their bold monopoly of home and foreign trade will create such popular clamour, that at last they will be controlled by parliamentary restraint. ⁶¹

Catholics were allowed access to this form of economic activity because, as an occupation, it was held in considerable contempt in Ireland in the eighteenth century. Two writers of the period, Samuel Madden and Arthur Young, explored this idea. In 1738, Madden, one

⁶¹ Maureen Wall, Irish Historical Studies, 96.

of the founders of the Dublin Society, and a great promoter of Ireland's prosperity, was extremely concerned about the prevalent attitude toward trade in Ireland with those countries on the continent and even China, "where merchandise is held highly honourable" and where merchants "never retire from business, to buy lands and turn country gentlemen as we do."⁶² In 1778 Arthur Young noted that trade was held in contempt "by those who call themselves gentlemen."⁶³ Given then an atmosphere where trade was shunned by all except by those who were not intimidated by the thought of material gain alone, it is understandable that many Catholics, who were already outsiders to the privileged Protestant landed gentry, should turn to trade to accumulate wealth. This economic well-being combined with the relaxation of the Penal Laws was expressed in the renewed vigor with which church building and renovation was undertaken in the Catholic domain. As early as 1718, Archbishop King of Dublin wrote to the Archbishop of Canterbury that: "I may further observe that the Papists, being made incapable to purchase lands, have turned themselves to trade, and already engrossed almost all the trade of the kingdom."⁶⁴ Wall points out that, despite their accumulation of considerable wealth, Catholic merchants lived unostentatiously in unfashionable areas of Ireland's cities and towns. This lack of

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

ostentation, Wall contends, was one reason why the Catholic population increased their wealth.

Their opportunities for lavish spending and luxurious living were circumscribed. They did not belong to guilds nor attend city jamborees and, shut out as they were from any part in the borough representation in parliament, elections cost them nothing. They could not buy land, and the attractions of the turf were not for them since under a statute of King William they could not possess a horse valued for more than five pounds. There was little outward display in their own lives, nor did the law permit them to build schools or churches, or endow charities of a purely Catholic nature.

The Catholics themselves kept very quiet about their wealth during the first half of the century.... It was not until the 1790's when they were adopting a fighting attitude, that they began to claim they were of considerable consequence in the kingdom because of their wealth.⁶⁵

It was finally this "considerable consequence," derived from the increase in numbers and wealth, that obliged England and the Ascendancy to recognize the Irish Catholic majority as a major political voice. As soon as these proceedings began, the outcome would necessarily result in a decreased monopoly by the Protestant Ascendancy. During Stuart's years in Ireland, these events moved with great alacrity. For the moment, however, Stuart was the most

⁶⁵ Ibid., 102-103.

sought-after and desired society painter in Ireland.⁶⁶

⁶⁶ Dunlap mentions that "Many of [Stuart's] portraits were copied in miniature by Walter Robinson." Though Dunlap refers to the period just after Stuart's return to America, it is most probable that Robinson, who travelled with Stuart from Ireland, had begun the trend of copying Stuart's work in Dublin where Stuart's great popularity would have created the market. Dunlap, History, 1:229-330. Strickland mentions that Stuart also painted some miniatures. None of these have been located or listed.

CHAPTER VII

STUART'S SECULAR IRISH PORTRAITS

IN CONTEXT

Stuart, a portrait painter fit to be mentioned even with Sir Joshua, must wait this account of his works ... as for the works themselves all Dublin is waiting.

The London World
December 27, 1788

Although the exact number of portraits produced by Stuart while in Dublin is unclear, we know that during his first month in the metropolis he had completed at least three, according to Herbert. These seem to have been of Luke White, Jonathan Fisher, and Henry Grattan.¹ Stuart had also been visited by John Fowler, the Archbishop of Dublin, who apparently arrived at Stuart's studio to complain about his daughter's portrait which Stuart had painted. No mention is made of the Archbishop himself as a subject for Stuart, but Herbert's narration of the event is sufficiently nebulous to allow the

¹ Herbert, Varieties, 235-237.

interpretation that Stuart had indeed painted others of the Archbishop's family, including the cleric himself:

Well, Mr. Stuart, I came about my daughter's portrait: I am not quite reconciled to the picture. Now, she is not a bad subject, and I expected she would have made an interesting picture. Now, all these portraits, as far as I know the originals, are not only striking likenesses, but pleasing pictures. I candidly own, I cannot say so much for my daughter's picture.²

The accurate dating of Stuart's Irish pictures is elusive in most cases, given the absence of documentary source material. While Herbert provides substantial information about some of Stuart's sitters, overall his work is not completely helpful in establishing a chronology. Lawrence Park provides few specific dates for Stuart's Irish works and limits his attempts to the general date of c. 1790. Dunlap provides no dates for the portraits of these years, and neither does Mason. Mount attempts a dating scheme, but the sources for his conclusions are not provided. In the case of some important works, we are now in a position to ascribe a date due to biographical information relating to the sitter, and while this is helpful, it is not conclusive. Style is also not a dependable method of dating in Stuart's case, for the Irish pictures do not divide into a chronology of style. Moreover, there is a particular absence of extant correspondence directed to and from Stuart during those years, and with few exceptions, nothing appears to help the dating process. The following letter, however, in which Stuart is

² Ibid., 233.

mentioned, provides an interesting insight and evidence of lost paintings by Stuart.

I received your favour. I fear it will not suddenly be in my power to leave this place. The business of the Port alone, as the collection is confined, requires my constant attention. I saw Mr. Stuart in London: his likenesses are very striking, and had not his affairs obliged him to leave it, I was to have sat for him; however, if he does not leave Dublin soon, probably an interval of business might come, to put it in the business of my power to apply for a few days leave, and maybe I could continue it so as to make business a part of my jaunt to town.³

The above was written by Sir Edward Kingsmill in Belfast on July 29, 1788 to The Honourable Richard Annesley at the Custom House in Dublin. Whether Kingsmill's portrait was ever painted by Stuart remains a mystery, for no record of it exists. The possibility that Kingsmill sat for Stuart is indeed great, since the desire expressed in the letter dates to 1788, and Stuart fulfilled Kingsmill's wishes by remaining in Ireland until 1793. Moreover, Dunlap mentions that, while in Ireland, Stuart "painted most of the nobility, and lived in a good deal of splendour."⁴ Among portraits completed by Stuart in Ireland Lawrence Park lists only forty-four, and this number has been

³ Quoted in Mason, Stuart, 75.

⁴ Dunlap, History, 228. Dunlap also states that he painted "a great many nobles and men of wealth and fashion." Mount states that "on the purely mathematical basis of his average production throughout his lifetime, which comes to 25 portraits per year, it is possible that another forty or fifty of his Irish works remains to be found." Mount, Stuart, 344. In 1867, Tuckerman wrote that "the works of Stuart are too widely scattered on both sides of the ocean to be easily enumerated." Tuckerman, American Artist, 110.

both increased and decreased over the years as scholarship engaged the issue (see Appendix A). However, the number is hardly sufficient to justify the statement of Dunlap, since forty-four is hardly "most of the nobility" that existed in Ireland at the time. The fact is that much of Stuart's work from the Irish years is lost, and much of the loss can be seen as the result of catastrophic changes in Irish political life since Stuart's departure, along with the hasty erasure of his name from the annals of Irish art by Pasquin. Stuart's sitters, it must be remembered, were among the members of the Anglo-Irish Protestant Ascendancy, whose names became synonymous with oppression among the Irish Catholic majority and their Protestant sympathizers. The period from the Act of Union in 1800 until the end of the Civil War in 1923 witnessed the destruction of many seats of the nobility in an attempt to rid Ireland of what was seen to be her oppressor. Unfortunately, this included portraits of that section of Irish society who, in the late eighteenth century, were Stuart's subjects. One example of the kind of change that occurred in Dublin just shortly after Stuart left is presented by the contemporary novelist Maria Edgeworth in The Absentee, 1812. In the character of Sir James, Edgeworth describes conditions in Dublin after the Union:

"I happened," continued Sir James, "to be quartered in Dublin soon after the Union took place; and I remember the great but transient change that appeared from the removal of both houses of Parliament: most of the nobility and many of the principal families among the Irish commoners, either hurried in high hopes to London, or retired disgusted and in despair to their houses in the country. Immediately, in Dublin, commerce rose

into the vacated seats of rank; wealth rose into the place of birth. New faces and new equipages appeared: people, who had never been heard of before, started into novice, pushed themselves forward, not scrupling to elbow their way even at the castle: and they were presented to my lord-lieutenant and my lady-lieutenant for their excellencies might have played their vice-regal parts to empty benches, had they not admitted such persons for the moment to fill their court. Those of former times ... were scandalized at all this: and they complained with justice, that the whole tone of society was altered: that the decorum, elegance, polish, and charm of society was gone. And I among the rest," said Sir James, "felt and deplored their change."⁵

The situation described by Edgeworth was but the first change in society that rendered the portraits of the past outdated and unfashionable, and since "wealth rose into the place of birth," Stuart's subjects and their families were forced to relinquish their privileged position in Irish society. The development of Irish nationalism, with its sometimes violent expression in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, has deprived posterity of much of Stuart's Irish work, for many were destroyed as images of oppression.⁶ Moreover, the Civil War of 1921-1923 resulted in the destruction of great numbers of documents pertaining to the earlier colonial history of Ireland.⁷ These included government, city and parish records during Stuart's period in Ireland. It must, therefore, be emphasized that in the past,

⁵ Edgeworth, Absentee, 83.

⁶ For a history of the rise of nationalism in the nineteenth century see Robert Kee, The Green Flag (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1972).

⁷ Mount, Stuart, 343, also draws attention to this matter.

much of the study regarding Stuart in Ireland has been based on incomplete information derived only from the accounts of his daughter Jane Stuart and others equally unfamiliar with Stuart's life there.

The nature of Stuart's Irish patronage was primarily political, and was in some essential ways a direct extension of his English patronage. Through his invitation by the Duke of Rutland, Stuart could immediately hope for the most prestigious of Irish commissions, though his right to this was not preordained entirely. Other painters, such as Robert Home, practiced in Dublin, and Christopher Pack, as has been discussed, was invited to Ireland at the same time as Stuart. Pasquin mentions that Home found his studio "deserted" on Stuart's arrival, and Pack, as discussed, was a poor rival to Stuart. Mount has greatly emphasized the issues of distinction between the nature of Reynolds' political patronage and that of Stuart's.⁸ As a result of his distinctions, Mount attributes much of Stuart's success in Ireland to his affinity with the supporters of William Pitt there. Mount claims that, during the decade of the 1780's, when the English party was politically divided, Reynolds associated himself too closely with the faction led by the Prince of Wales and Charles James Fox, while Stuart remained politically removed. The success of William Pitt and George III in regaining power, according to Mount, created an opening for Stuart who immediately filled the need and painted portraits of three great English supporters of Pitt: Lord St. Vincent, Colonel Barré and

⁸ Ibid., 134-135.

the Duke of Northumberland. While Mount's one-sided argument is indeed alluring and compelling, it must be remembered that Stuart was invited to Ireland by Rutland, who continued his staunch support of Reynolds and remained an intimate of William Pitt.⁹ Moreover, it is clear that in Ireland there was no competition for Stuart, and political factionalism was not the issue so much as was Stuart's need to set himself up as the painter of the Anglo-Irish Ascendancy, among whom there were many factions. In choosing a portrait painter in Dublin, the matter of whether Stuart, the only real choice, had Foxite or Pittite affiliations, was scarcely an issue.¹⁰ In Stuart's Dublin he was the painter of prominence to whom no other contender came even close. Indeed, if one were to follow Mount's argument to its logical conclusion, there would have been no reason for Stuart to leave London. However, it is fundamentally clear that, at very least, a

⁹ The correspondence between Reynolds and Rutland throughout the decade is rich in evidence of the close relationship between them. On July 20, 1785, for instance, Reynolds wrote the following to Rutland in Dublin: "May I now beg your Grace's indulgence and solicit your interest in a matter which relates to myself. I believe I mentioned to your Grace the reduction of the salary of the King's Painter from two hundred to fifty pounds per annum. As there is great difficulty of having the old salary restored as it would open the door to such numerous solicitations, I thought there was an opportunity of giving me a very honourable compensation in making me secretary and register to the Order of the Bath. Upon this ground, by means of Mr. Elliot, I asked for it, but it was too late; Mr. Pitt had already promised it to Mr. Lake, a gentleman who has some office in the Treasury. Since this negotiation (sic), Mr. Lake has been appointed one of the Commissioners of Accounts, a place of a thousand a year for life, and is supposed to be incompatible with his holding this place of secretary, etc.; at the same time, this latter is only three hundred a year, so that there can be no doubt, if he can hold only one, which he will keep. I have, therefore, to entreat your Grace to procure from Mr. Pitt that in case Mr. Lake relinquishes it, I may be the next oars [sic]." The parliamentary register, or histories of the proceedings and debates of the house of commons of Ireland, 17 vols. (Dublin: 1781-97). 5:229.

¹⁰ This question will be discussed in more detail later in the chapter.

combination of competition from Reynolds, Gainsborough and Romney, together with pecuniary difficulties, contributed to Stuart's favorable view of Rutland's invitation. Indeed, it appears that Stuart, on his first arrival in October 1787, had not finally decided upon Dublin as a venue, for he returned again to London briefly, early in 1788, leaving finally before the end of March. The London World, on April 1, 1788, reported:

Stuart's last trip to Ireland so far answered perfectly, as to establish for his portraits in that kingdom, as in this, a pre-eminent fame for identity.¹¹

The London World continued to support Stuart throughout his tenure in England and Ireland, and the above statement came just prior to Stuart's settling in Dublin. The real apotheosis of Stuart was presented by the World one year earlier, on April 18, 1787, and both presages and accounts for his Irish success. Reserving for Stuart all manner of superlatives the review appeared as follows and was titled "The Van Dyck of the Time":

In the most arduous and valuable achievements of portrait painting, identity and duration, Stuart takes the lead of every competitor. Those who wish to redress themselves of accident, and, independent of time and place as far as eyesight goes and eye service, to have before them the glowing fidelity of friendship and love, may here secure the perpetual presence of the charm they wish.

Not only skin deep, and skimming superficially over complexion and contour, Stuart dives deep ... less deep only than Sir Joshua,

¹¹ The London World, 1 April, 1788, no pagination.

more deep than any other pencil ... Stuart dives into mind, and brings up with him a conspicuous draught of character and characteristic thought ... all as sensible to feeling and to sight as the most palpable projections of any feature of a face.¹²

It is generally recognized that Stuart left England for Ireland while at the summit of his profession, and no reason other than his often quoted "pecuniary difficulties" or competition with his English contemporaries is provided.¹³ On examination, it becomes evident that there was a deeper and more pressing need for Stuart's move from London to Dublin, and this had much to do with the shifting and unsettling state of political affairs in Europe in the late 1780s.

Stuart seems to have been an enigma to most of his biographers, and central issues that affected his life have been submerged in the more easily discernible foibles such as his "conviviality," "abruptness" and frequent "indebtedness."¹⁴ Little is written about the insight provided by Waterhouse and Dunlap regarding Stuart's sharp intellect. In a much neglected passage, substantial insight into Stuart's intellect appears and provides evidence of an active mind sharply aware of the nuances of religion, politics and society during his day.

¹² Ibid., 18 April, 1787.

¹³ This opinion begins with Dunlap who states that "I cannot assert, but feel perfectly convinced that pecuniary difficulties induced him to leave London for Dublin."

¹⁴ All of these are mentioned by Herbert, who gives the most complete account of Stuart's personality. Herbert, Varieties, 226-248 passim.

In conversation and confabulation he was inferior to no man amongst us. He made a point to keep those talking who were sitting to him for their portraits, each in their own way, free and easy. This called up all his resources of judgement. To military men he spoke of battles by sea and land; with the statesmen on Hume's and Gibbon's history; with the lawyer, on jurisprudence or remarkable criminal trials; with the merchant in his way; with the man of leisure in his way; and with the ladies in all ways. When putting the rich farmer on the canvas, he would go along with him from seed to harvest time, he would decant on the nice points of a horse, ox, cow, sheep or pig, and surprise him with his just remarks in the progress of making cheese and butter, or astonish him with his profound knowledge of manures, or the food of plants. As to national character, and individual character, few men could say more to the purpose, as far as history and acute personal observation could carry him. He had wit at will. Always ample, sometimes redundant.¹⁵

The above account presents an image of Stuart that is consistent with the present argument: namely, that his move from England to Ireland at the height of his popularity and fame in London was more probably the result of careful political analysis than either financial embarrassment or artistic competition. It suggests that Stuart was acutely aware of conditions in society that mitigated against long-term peace, and that, while he painted the prominent members of British

¹⁵ Dunlap, History, 1:224. Given this evidence, along with the company which Stuart kept, it is remarkable that some modern writers claim that Stuart "could not have been a thinker or a questioner." See DeLorme, "Stuart," 342. Further evidence of Stuart's intellectual acumen exists in another passage provided by Dunlap. While Stuart was at West's studio, Dunlap relates: "Dr. Johnson called one morning on Mr. West to converse with him on American affairs. After some time, Mr. West said that he had a young American living with him from whom he might derive some information, and introduced Stuart. The conversation continued (Stuart being thus invited to take part in it), - when the doctor observed to Mr. West, that the young man spoke very good English - and turning to Stuart, rudely asked him where he had learned it. Stuart very promptly replied, 'Sir, I can better tell you where I did not learn it - it was not from your dictionary.'" Dunlap, History, 1:216-217.

political life, his own mind worked at finding a personal solution to the political instability of the time. When regarded in these terms, the events of Stuart's artistic life, between his departure from London for Dublin in 1787, and his eventual return to the United States in 1793, assume a more logical framework that is perfectly in keeping with the politics of the time. An understanding of Stuart's position in Ireland, his reasons for settling there and his work must be seen, therefore, in a larger context than the usual focus on personal debts and competition from other painters. An explanation based on that alone is simplistic and clearly unappreciative both of the painter's intellect and of the complex international issues at the time in which Stuart worked. This preoccupation with Stuart's financial difficulty and competition also ignores the immensely complex social and political dangers of the late 1780's in Britain and in the West in general.

The decade of the 1780's brought a growing awareness that America would survive, while each year in Britain brought evidence of fresh disaster, insecurity and increasing national debt.¹⁶ By the middle years of the decade, Britons had experienced ten years of frustration and failure that seems to have accelerated a sense of national decay. Radicals and reformers such as Adam Smith and Jeremy Bentham hastened to offer their views on the state of the

¹⁶ For a discussion of issues relating to America and Britain at the time of the Revolutionary War, see Conor Cruise O'Brien, "Edmund Burke and the American Revolution," America and Ireland 1776-1976, edited by David Noel Doyle and Owen Dudley Edwards, The Proceedings of the United States Bicentennial Conference of Cumann Merriman, Ennis, August 1976 (Westport, Conn., London, England: Greenwood Press, 1976), 3-13.

economy, the political structure, and even the moral state of the Empire. Opposition politicians believed that George III along with his advisors was responsible for national decay, including the disastrous incompetence of government in dealing with America. In 1780, the Gordon riots occurred in London, and proved to be the most savage riots in England during the eighteenth century.¹⁷ Ostensibly the result of Parliament's passing a mild measure of Catholic relief, the upheavals are more generally recognized as the result of the deep discontent of the working classes. By 1782, the long-standing parliament of Lord North collapsed and William Pitt came to power. Despite the fact that peace was made with America, the political world in England was under great stress. The tide of social and economic life appeared to be at all points in flux, fanned by growing discontent in France. The mid-1780's were years of political and social instability, and while William Pitt maneuvered the troubled waters with acumen, there was, it appears, little he could do to thwart the tides of change. In 1784, Pitt set about reorganizing Britain's finances, but public confidence in monetary reform was not easy to restore, and there were no immediate signs of success for Pitt. In 1785, he approached the Irish Parliament with new trade propositions; however, lack of cooperation in Ireland and opposition from the Commons prevented success on this front also.¹⁸ Pitt had been supported by George III,

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 12.

¹⁸ McDowell, *Ireland*, 327-348.

but was threatened in November 1787 when the King suffered temporary insanity. The demented King called for a Regency, but the Prince of Wales was closely associated with the antagonistic branch of the Whigs led by Charles James Fox. Fox and his supporters urged the Prince of Wales to take office, but before he could act, the King recovered. By March 1788, Pitt was finally back in power. This incident serves to underline the precarious position of British politics and internal affairs in the eighties.¹⁹

In contrast to Britain, Ireland in the 1780's was enjoying unprecedented calm and security. In August 1788, for example, a few months after Stuart's final settlement in Dublin, Lord Lifford, who had been Irish Lord Chancellor since 1767, wrote to Buckingham, the Viceroy, that he had never in his long experience known Ireland so quiet.²⁰ By the close of the parliamentary session of 1785, two very important issues with far-reaching implications were concluded. Parliament in Dublin rejected reform and after careful scrutiny had also rejected Pitt's commercial propositions.²¹ The basic facts of political life, where power remained in the hands of the Protestant Ascendancy, was unchanged; moreover, the constitutional status of the Irish Parliament was somewhat improved. Parliament now met

¹⁹ For a discussion of issues relating to the popular press and the Regency crisis see Nicholas Robinson, "Caricature and the Regency Crisis: An Irish Perspective," Eighteenth Century Ireland (Dublin), 1 (1986): 157-176.

²⁰ Lifford quoted in Lecky, Ireland, 11:466.

²¹ McDowell, Ireland, 338.

annually (a fortunate circumstance for Stuart's portrait business). Its activities were extended and its legislative output was considerably increased. The Irish ruling class had prospered on England's difficulties. Overall a spirit of well-being existed in the capital, and the government clearly appreciated its new-found strength. Leading office-holders pored over speeches which were calculated to improve the morale of the government's supporters and to influence outside opinion. As McDonagh notes,

For many Irish politicians the middle eighties must have constituted the happiest epoch in Irish parliamentary history. They performed their duties with dignity, in stately surroundings, they had plenty of useful work to do, fundamental assumptions went unchallenged, yet from time to time there was a grand debate offering opportunities for sparkling oratorical displays in the best parliamentary tradition. For instance, Grattan's "able and animated" 1788 speech on the tithe question was generously described by Fitzgibbon as the most splendid display of eloquence that the House had ever heard. Moreover, though of course contemporaries could not be expected to realize it, Irish public men were enjoying the last years of the true eighteenth century - stable, secure, self-assured, with all conflict kept within bounds.²²

It was part of Stuart's acumen that he seemed to grasp those issues that were difficult for his contemporaries to understand. It must have seemed inevitable to some that Western Europe was moving steadily toward a precipice. Issues of social reform and political readjustment had been debated for half a century, but pragmatically

²² McDonagh, 237.

little had changed. For Britain, it was a period of little resolution, but in Ireland major issues of reform, such as Catholic relief, had been incorporated enough into the political structure that, at least temporarily, tensions were released.

In the 1780's the privileged class in Ireland enjoyed a measure of security and stability absent elsewhere in Europe, and as a result it is understandable that Stuart would have been attracted there. This is even more understandable given the insights Dunlap provides into the artist's character, for he exhibits all the marks of an eighteenth-century dilettante, extremely conscious of the world around him.

Further evidence of this appears when Mason quotes Jane Stuart regarding her father's stay in Ireland:

The moment it was known that he had arrived, he was called upon by his friends and the public, and was soon fully employed by the nobility.... Stuart was delighted with the society he met in Ireland, the elegant manners, the wit and the hospitality of the upper class of the Irish suited his genial temperament. He was so much beloved by them that they tried to claim him as a fellow-countryman...they would say, "oh, nobody ever painted such a head as our Irish Stuart could." I am sorry to say that Stuart entered too much into their convivialities. The fact is, it was his misfortune — I might say, his curse — to have been such an acquisition to, and so sought after by, society: particularly as he felt that he must make some acknowledgement for such incessant attention and cordial hospitality. He consequently gave frequent dinner parties, as was the fashion of the day. He lived at a place called "Stillorgan Park," not far from Dublin. The gentlemen of the surrounding neighborhood constituted his principal society. By all accounts a more genial and elegant set of men could not be found.²³

²³ Mason, Stuart, 22-23.

In attaining the patronage of highly placed men, Stuart immediately was among the privileged section of Irish society, and ideally situated to monopolize the portrait business in the capital. These connections were really extensions of the world of West and Reynolds in London, and it was through them that Stuart entered the privileged circle of aristocratic portraiture there and extended it to Dublin where a whole new market awaited him. Indeed, Herbert writes that shortly after his arrival,

His [Stuart's] portraits were so well reported by the cognoscenti that a rage to possess some specimen of his pencil took place, and a difficulty of obtaining a finished picture became universal, so fond was he of touching the half price.... He was perfectly aware of his pre-eminence in painting: and he, by his manner, exhibited that self-opinion to his visitors. This gave him an air of a coxcomb, although he assumed an independence of mind which scarcely would be endured from another man ... Stuart soon after his arrival, was invited to dine with the Artists of Dublin, on St. Luke's Day. He accepted the invitation and was very communicative to those who sat near him.²⁴

Stuart's associations in London, prior to his move to Ireland, as already stated, included Lord St. Vincent, Colonel Barré, and the Duke of Northumberland, all of whom helped Stuart enormously in his entry to Irish social life.²⁵ They were important members of the Administration of William Pitt, to whom Rutland owed his position,

²⁴ Herbert, Varieties, 226-227.

²⁵ Dunlap, History, 1:223.

and Stuart's alignment with them allowed him immediate privilege and patronage in Dublin. While Mount has claimed that Stuart's association with the supporters of William Pitt fundamentally created Stuart's success in Ireland, it must be remembered, however, that, while, in England, the issue of Fox versus Pitt may have been an important issue in the world of artistic patronage, the matter was internal and not necessarily translated to Ireland. In Ireland, as has been stated, the position of the Ascendancy revolved around one fact: maintaining power, based on the existence of a separate parliament and legislative system from which they derived position and privilege. Clearly, whether this occurred under Fox or Pitt was incidental, and both were regarded in Ireland with skepticism. Announcing the resignation of Lord Temple, Marquis of Buckingham, who had replaced Rutland as Viceroy, the Evening Herald summed up the situation in Ireland on December 10, 1788, and stated the facts:

It is asserted that our present Viceroy intends to resign shortly the government of this kingdom, as he did upon a former occasion — conjecture therefore is on the stretch of invention, to find out who his Excellency's successor may probably be: but it matters very little to the people, what British Nobleman may come over here, or whether he is a Foxite or a Pittite, as the very same uniform measures will be preserved, under the administration of whoever may be sent.²⁶

That he was fleeing to Dublin solely to escape debtors, as has been suggested, seems most unlikely. It is probable that Stuart saw an

²⁶ Evening Herald, December 10, 1788, no pagination.

opportunity to become the first painter of the capital, a position reserved for Reynolds in London, and therefore closed to Stuart despite his ambition. Events that followed in the next few years in London virtually cleared the way for Stuart's return there without competition. Thomas Gainsborough died in 1788 and Joshua Reynolds developed blindness in 1789. Of Stuart's former competition, only George Romney survived. Stuart chose, however, to remain in Dublin, and that alone provides substantial evidence that other issues played an even greater role in Stuart's choice of Ireland than has hitherto been recognized. The more clement political climate in Ireland in 1787, together with promised patronage of the highest order from the Duke of Rutland, added to the attraction of Dublin.

Rutland, who was virtually the same age as Stuart, was an intimate of William Pitt and politically integrated with the Shelbourne-Pitt branch of the Whig party. In 1783, Rutland was prevailed upon by Pitt to accept the post of Lord Lieutenant of Ireland in the place of the Earl of Northington. Upon arrival in Ireland, Rutland became a patron of the arts.²⁷ There, Rutland's death at such an early age undoubtedly shocked Stuart, but so long as the Irish Protestant Ascendancy remained in power, he could rely on a great measure of patronage in the Irish political world. While Reynolds' success in England has been the subject of considerable scholarship, Stuart's success has never been considered in the light of the fact that he was

²⁷ Rutland was in constant correspondence with Reynolds during these years, mainly with regard to the acquisition of works of art. See Parliamentary Register, vols. 5-6.

an American, like Benjamin West, residing and indeed conspicuous in London at a time of greatly strained relations between England and America. For instance, the Duke of Northumberland, who along with Lord St. Vincent and Colonel Barré, kindly helped Stuart, had seen battle in the American war.²⁸ It is to Stuart's credit that he could navigate these waters of intense political and patriotic feeling with success. Indeed, these demanding personal challenges and political maneuvers which attended his success in London most probably allowed for similar success in Dublin, where Stuart met a further set of political issues and where his treatment of them confirmed his further success.

Nothing, however, could really compensate for the loss of Rutland. It is most probable that Stuart knew Rutland in London although no immediate proof exists. Rutland had been painted by Reynolds in 1776, and the Duke had given Reynolds a great number of commissions during his London years. Indeed, Reynolds painted the Duchess of Rutland, wife to the Duke, four times between 1780 and 1789.²⁹ However, of major interest is the position the Duke assumed on the issue of the American war, for here may appear some evidence that would suggest the possibility of a warm relationship with Stuart and from which his invitation to Ireland may have emanated. As a

28 Regarding the visit to Stuart in London, see Dunlap, *History*, 1:223. Dunlap reports Stuart as saying, "I was under pecuniary embarrassment, and (they) offered me assistance, which I declined."

29 Herbert reports seeing "a portrait in crayons, of the Duchess of Rutland by Stoker" in Cork. *Varieties*, 172. This may well have been a copy of one of Reynold's works.

young man of twenty-one, the Duke, newly educated at Eton and Trinity College, Cambridge, opposed the bill to restrain the trade of the southern colonies of America in April 1775, and protested the inequitable taxation of the colonies, which he declared "commenced in iniquity, is pursued with resentment, and can terminate in nothing but blood."³⁰ On November 18, 1777, Rutland's amendment asked that the king might be pleased "to cause the most speedy and effectual measures to be taken for restoring peace in America." Though supported by Burke and Fox, this was ultimately defeated. Stuart, who was in London at that time, must have been aware of proceedings relating so directly to his homeland. He may well have recognized in the Duke a fellow supporter who looked kindly on America.

Barrington reports that Rutland, like Stuart, was an amiable and extravagant man but without any particular talent, except for "conviviality."³¹ According to Barrington, he entertained lavishly at the viceregal court, and the Duke and Duchess "were reckoned the handsomest couple in Ireland."³² With the inevitability of Rutland's death, Stuart proceeded to develop his portrait trade by using all the possibilities the original connection had to offer. In Ireland of the late eighteenth century, that meant defining and refining his relationships with the Irish Protestant Ascendancy. It is worthy of consideration

³⁰ National Biography, 931.

³¹ Sir Jonah Barrington, Historic Memoirs of Ireland, 2 vols. (London: 1835), quoted in National Biography, X11:932.

³² *Ibid.*

that all of Stuart's Irish sitters, as far as can be determined, were members of the Established Church. It was not until after his return to America and, it seems, only after he had achieved fame as George Washington's portraitist, that Stuart painted Catholics.³³ Stuart was, therefore, determined to provide Protestant Ireland with its first virtually complete visual representation in portraiture, and he seems to have gone about the task with the tenacity that reflects his political determination. Indeed, it is clear how Stuart developed an Irish clientele that guaranteed him success among his class, and that he chose his sitters carefully so as to remain in vogue.

Robert Home, on the other hand, did not limit his sitters in this way. We know that Home, who was also Scottish, arrived in Dublin according to Dowling Herbert, with "letters to his countrymen, who are famed for serving their fellow Scots, ... [and] he got into fashion at once."³⁴ It is of great interest here to note the sequence of Herbert's account of Home's decline. The author first gives an account of Home's portrait of Dr. Hutchinson, where he praises the work:

He painted a portrait of Dr. Hutchinson reading by candle-light — a kit-kat size. It was his best picture, well designed, the position natural and easy, the effect of the candle-light very imposing, the drawing good, the general effect strong.³⁵

³³ Stuart painted a portrait of Archbishop John Carroll, the first Roman Catholic archbishop of the United States, and founder of Georgetown Academy. See Park, *Stuart*, 1:143.

³⁴ Herbert, *Varieties*, 122.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

Herbert then goes on to mention that "Were all his pictures equal ... he would have borne a name equal to any painter of his time; but he fell onto a careless manner that sadly depreciated his fame as a great artist."³⁶ The sequence here is notably important and the next statement adds:

A very fine portrait of Dr. Dunne, the famous Presbyterian preacher, from his hand, was the next best picture — kit-kat size. The head possessed great force and character, and seemed to come out from the canvass ³⁷

The context of the above criticism makes it clear that Home undoubtedly painted well, even given the particular bias ascribed to Dowling Herbert as his student. However, the addition of the information regarding Dunne, the sitter, as a Presbyterian, provides clear indication that in Herbert's mind this was important information. It is very possible that Stuart's success may indeed be attributed in part to the fact that he limited his sitters to the Irish Protestant Ascendancy of the Established Church, who were a race apart, and by that alone presented himself as their very own painter, fulfilling the personal stylistic wishes of the small powerful minority. In the context of late eighteenth-century Ireland, this was not unusual for the treacherous political environment often created social cliques.

³⁶ Ibid., 125.

³⁷ Ibid.

Another painter, Thomas Robinson, subsequently discussed, substantially limited his portrait practice to the painting of Northern gentry and merchants.

It is of interest to note that Stuart seems never to have painted Rutland's successor, Westmoreland, who proved unpopular in Dublin and who also had a Catholic wife; the famous James Gandon, architect of Ireland's great official buildings of the period³⁸ and who was of French Huguenot origins; and a host of other very important figures, all of whom were not purely of the Irish Protestant Ascendancy. In the context of this argument, it would seem logical that Stuart may have consciously avoided such subjects for political reasons, and the fear that it might jeopardize his position as painter supreme of the Ascendancy.

Conversely, early in his tenure in Ireland, Stuart seems to have developed a friendship with John Fitzgibbon, Earl of Clare, who in 1789 became Lord Chancellor of Ireland.³⁹ Aspects of Fitzgibbon's public career have been discussed in Chapter II. Herbert provides us with the only information we have concerning Stuart's personal relationship with Fitzgibbon, and based on that evidence Stuart seems to have been an esteemed guest at the powerful residency in Ely Place. Stuart's portrait of Fitzgibbon is certainly one of the most accomplished and elaborate of the painter's Irish works. Fitzgibbon was born in

³⁸ See Chapter V above.

³⁹ Herbert, *Varieties*, 245-246.

1749, the son of a successful barrister. While at Trinity College, he received academic recognition for his translation of the Georgics: "the very rarest honour in our academic course" according to the Dublin University Magazine.⁴⁰ After graduation from Trinity College, Fitzgibbon entered Christ Church, Oxford, from where he received a place in parliament. In his early parliamentary days he gave moderate support to nationalistic claims but gradually removed that support and maintained an uncompromising resistance to all popular movements, and especially to all attempts to improve the position of the Roman Catholics in Ireland.⁴¹ In order to more fully understand Stuart's contact with Fitzgibbon, recognized for his particularly conservative Protestantism, it is important to recognize current revisionist theories regarding religious toleration in Ireland in the late eighteenth century. While it has always been recognized that one of the most important features of late eighteenth-century Ireland was the dilution of traditional religious antipathy, care is now taken not to exaggerate the amelioration of hostility.⁴² In this context it is important here to confirm current historical opinion that during

40 Dublin University Magazine, xxx, p. 692, quoted in National Biography, V11:156.

41 Fitzgibbon's views on this subject are legendary. When he died in 1802, his funeral was followed by a Dublin mob, whose curses violently expressed the hate with which a great part of his fellow countrymen regarded him. Dublin University Magazine, xxvii, p. 559, quoted in National Biography, V11:158.

42 These views are treated in James Kelly, "Inter-Denominational Relations and Religious Toleration in Late Eighteenth-Century Ireland: The 'Paper War of 1786-88,'" Eighteenth Century Ireland (Dublin), 3 (1988), 39-67.

Stuart's time in Ireland, religion remained a primary source of social distinction and political division in Irish society. The efforts of pressure groups, like the parliamentary reformers in the 1780's and the United Irishmen in the 1790's, were unable to overcome these differences or to approach Wolfe Tone's oft-cited objective of substitution of "the common name of Irishmen in place of the denominations ... Protestant, Catholic and Dissenter."⁴³

It is significant here to recognize that conservative Protestantism was particularly invigorated in the winter of 1786-87, just prior to Stuart's arrival in Ireland, with the publication of Patrick Duigenan's Address to the Nobility and Gentry of the Church of Ireland.⁴⁴ Under the pseudonym of Theophilus, Duigenan proved to be an unrelenting upholder of Protestant Ascendancy. In his Address, Duigenan maintained that the Rightboy disturbances were part of a carefully planned pre-meditated Catholic assault on the Protestant establishment. Their purposes, he proclaimed, were to undermine the Church of Ireland, "the main pillar of the constitution," and to reduce its clergy and members to "absolute beggary."⁴⁵ This devious and malicious intention Duigenan maintained was but a prelude to the destruction of the whole structure of government and its replacement

⁴³ Quoted in Kelly, "Religious Toleration," 39.

⁴⁴ Theophilus (pseud), An Address to the Nobility and Gentry of the Church of Ireland as by Law Established (Dublin, 1799).

⁴⁵ Duigenan, Address, quoted in Kelly, "Religious Toleration," 52.

by "popery." Though there was little evidence for these assertions, Duigenan maintained his position and claimed that the Rightboys were "spirited up by agitating fryars and Romish missionaries sent here for the purpose of sowing sedition."⁴⁶

Duigenan's tirade was followed in the winter of 1786-87 by the pamphlet issued by Richard Woodward, Bishop of Cloyne, entitled The Present State of the Church of Ireland.⁴⁷ Though Woodward's writing was more moderate in tone than Duigenan's, it was equally persuasive. Woodward was utterly uncompromising, and stated his message with clarity: "The Church of Ireland is [he wrote] at the present moment in imminent danger of subversion."⁴⁸ Since the Church was incorporated with the State, Woodward concluded that the "subversion of one must necessarily overthrow the other."⁴⁹

The combined works of Duigenan and Woodward captured and reinforced the intolerant mood of conservative Protestant Ireland and the result of these was to delay reform and intensify coercion during

⁴⁶ Ibid., 53.

⁴⁷ Richard Woodward, Bishop of Cloyne, The present state of the Church of Ireland containing a description of its precarious situation and the consequent danger to the public recommended to the serious consideration of the friends of the Protestant interest to which are subjoined some reflections on the impracticability of a proper commutation for tithes and general account of the origins and progress of the insurrection in Munster (Dublin, 1787).

⁴⁸ Woodward, Church of Ireland, quoted in Kelly, "Religious Toleration," 54.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

1787. Moreover, these were followed by other publications during 1787 so that there was no room for backsliding.⁵⁰ Abuse and invective developed as the year progressed and in one work, attributed to a curate, Catholics are described as "bitter enemies of the Church," as "savages" and "blood-hounds." Presbyterians were equally slandered as a "shortsighted ... county of Antrim sectaries" for resisting the divinely appointed tithe.⁵¹ Fitzgibbon steadily opposed a reform of the tithe system such as Pitt advised and as Grattan urged in the Irish Parliament in 1787, 1788 and 1789.⁵² As a politician, Fitzgibbon's talent was considerable in maneuvering a path that allowed him for most of his early political life to remain on good terms with the Protestant nationalists and with the conservative element in government. This political acumen was rewarded when Grattan, in 1783, much to his later regret, pressed for Fitzgibbon's appointment to the post of Attorney-General.⁵³ In Parliament, Fitzgibbon's first conflict was over the question of reform which he obstinately resisted, and in 1785, he supported the government's commercial policy, instigated by William Pitt, with such tenacity that he received a letter of acknowledgement from the king.⁵⁴ However, in the Whiteboy Act of

50 See also Kelly, "Religious Toleration," 58-66.

51 Ibid., 555.

52 National Biography, V11:157.

53 Grattan, Memoirs, 111:377.

54 McDowell, Ireland, 315-317.

1787, the year of Stuart's arrival in Ireland, Fitzgibbon may be said to have begun his consistent policy of repression. He is considered solely responsible for a clause which, later in parliamentary proceedings, had to be abandoned; this gave power to destroy any popish chapel in which an illegal oath had been tendered.⁵⁵ Fitzgibbon, as stated, also steadily opposed a reform of the tithe system. Of interest in the present investigation of Stuart's sitter is the apparent dichotomy in Fitzgibbon's approach to questions of union with Britain, and the manner in which a change of position becomes evident. In 1780, he opposed Grattan's declaration of the legislative rights of Ireland, and at the same time, as a result of an appeal from his constituents, promised to support it on the next occasion.⁵⁶

By 1789, however, his speeches show that the idea of Union with Great Britain was again in his mind, though he spoke of it only as the lesser of two evils. Since "the only security of your liberty, is your connection with Great Britain," he suggested that he would prefer a union to a separation.⁵⁷ In that year, Fitzgibbon succeeded Lord Lifford as Lord Chancellor of Ireland, with the title of Baron Fitzgibbon of Lower Connello, and Stuart painted his portrait in robes of office. In 1793 he received the title Viscount Fitzgibbon and in 1795 that of the

⁵⁵ Ibid., 555.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 555.

⁵⁷ O'Flanagan, Lord Chancellors, 11:200.

Earl of Clare. In 1799, he was made a peer of Great Britain as Lord Fitzgibbon of Sidbury, Devonshire.

It is most probable that Stuart's portrait was painted in 1789 to celebrate Fitzgibbon's elevation as Lord Chancellor. Herbert provides what details are known, although clearly he writes with anecdote, and the accuracy of his statements must be considered warily. The passage on the relationship between Stuart and Fitzgibbon follows one where Stuart makes fun of his debts and his one-upmanship on the bailiffs. The mood is decidedly one of repartee and humor, and is quoted in full here because it is the only real account by a contemporary of Stuart's relationship with the Lord Chancellor. Furthermore, it serves to elucidate both Herbert's style and that of Stuart. It is clear that both excelled in humor and conviviality, but no gap exists between truth and fiction, which is why Herbert is not entirely reliable as a source. Stuart's well-known love of story and bravado must also be taken into account. Herbert, while visiting Stuart at Stillorgan, was invited to dinner, of which he wrote:

I ate of the apple-fed pork, and was greatly pleased with it. I praised it and, and felt vain on the subject. After dinner he entertained me with anecdote: one I will beg to insert here. We were enjoying the bailiff's mistake, and the advantage he (Stuart) possessed of reading character — how it had saved his purse. He gave me credit for naming their trade, and for my acting my part. "Now," said he, "I will relate to you a decision of

mine, made when I was painting the whole-length of Lord Chancellor Clare." I was at his lordship's table, at dinner: he ordered me to sit beside him to have some private chat. Just as the cloth was removed, a gentleman came in and looked rather confused; from not being in time, Lord Clare desired that servant to place a small table and get dinner for him. "You must try and make the best on't: it's your own fault: we waited half-an-hour." His lordship then turned to me. "Now, Stuart, you are so accustomed to look all men that come before you in the face, you must be a good judge of character, do you know that gentleman at the side table?" "No, my lord, I never saw him before." "Well, now tell me what sort of man he is in his disposition." "Is he a friend?" "No." "Then I may speak freely." "Yes," "Why, then my lord, I think if G - d A - y ever wrote a legible hand, he is the greatest rascal that ever disgraced society." His lordship was so tickled with my true development of character, he laughed immoderately. It was a hit. This man, an eminent attorney, had been a great retainer of his lordship, when he practiced as a counsel, and was not forgotten. Lord Clare was grateful, though not ignorant of the delinquency of his quest, and strange, it is yet true, to say, that few attorneys had greater or higher practice. Yet he bore the stigma of over-reaching and perfidiousness. You may form some notion, or opinion, from this one example, that I have been expert at developing character.⁵⁸

Stuart's great portrait of Fitzgibbon as Lord Chancellor of Ireland (Figure 1) exemplifies all the characteristics of the best of Stuart's Irish work, and allows an assessment of those qualities of technique and approach that accounted for Stuart's great popularity in Dublin. It is at once a formal portrait in the great tradition of Van Dyck and Reynolds, and calls on devices from both predecessors. While the pose derives from various "grand manner" portraits by Van

⁵⁸ Herbert, *Varieties*, 244-246.

Dyke, Reynolds and Gainsborough, the addition of architectural elements in the column and swirling drapery together make up the basis of the aristocratic English rococo portrait tradition. The real innovation, however, in Stuart's portrait of Fitzgibbon is in the painting style and technique itself. The portrait tradition in Ireland deriving from Stuart's predecessors, such as Latham, often employed a tighter, more linear, technique that seems congruent with colonial styles in general. In the Fitzgibbon portrait, for example, Stuart magnificently attends to the particular stylistic needs of Dublin society, and in a departure from his softer London style he provided his new patron with a portrait of unrivalled quality and of great suitability. Stuart forges a new style that is in all manner more controlled and tighter in brushstroke than his London pictures. The result is a head and wig that is extremely well-defined with enamel-like precision, but is not too linear, flat or labored. The open and loose brushwork so characteristic of Stuart, with its flourishes of paint, is restrained and reserved here, and only appears in reduced form in the breeches. Otherwise, Stuart maintains a reserve and linearity that give clarity and definition to the robes of office. The gold braid, for instance, on Fitzgibbon's flowing robe is painted with great attention to detail, and the gold chasing on the mace is equally well presented. However, Stuart is never intimidated by his new, restrained style. Throughout he retains control of his characteristic flourish, and the poetry of his brushstroke is controlled in the manner of iambic pentameter. Never is paint allowed to have a life of its own as it has, for instance, in the

sleeve and jacket of the portrait of James Ward, 1779, painted by Stuart in London, and most other English Stuarts. It is as if Stuart returned to a more obvious use of his earlier American style.

The rococo softness and flourish evident of The Skater is absent here and a comparison of the two works illustrates a dynamic ability on Stuart's behalf to suit his style to the needs of patronage. The portrait of William Grant was painted for a more artistically sophisticated audience than that of Fitzgibbon's, and the styles are extremely divergent. The Skater is presented with great softness and subtlety of tone and brushstroke, while Fitzgibbon appears with pragmatic clarity and definition. Indeed, even while William Grant's face appears only in half light, Fitzgibbon's is presented with unrelenting clarity and in full light, in the manner of a politician seeking the limelight. In the last analogy may well be the clue to the development of Stuart's new style in the portrait of Fitzgibbon. The newly-made Lord Chancellor was indeed a public figure, while William Grant was a private citizen who found his recognition by the public, at the academy exhibition where his portrait was displayed, embarrassing. Apart from this distinction, however, other issues remain that might well have determined Stuart's new style in Dublin. These belong to the history of art in that city prior to Stuart's arrival there. Portrait work, along with landscape and other genres in Ireland, retained a somewhat provincial attachment to line, and a certain tightness appears in most Irish work of the century, even

among the more promising artists of the time.⁵⁹ For instance, even in the work of Nathaniel Hone, loose brushwork is rarely found, and certainly one looks in vain for anything in Irish Art of the period that approaches Stuart's freedom. This remarkable accommodation of Stuart to the needs and customs of the Irish Ascendancy provides us with a clearer understanding of the political and intuitive talents of the man. While in Ireland, Stuart was able to combine elements of both his line and painterly approaches determined by the unique commission, but none of his Irish works bears the extreme of his bravura technique. While in Ireland, Stuart painted with great intuitive insight, and seems to have accommodated his style to his sitter with ease and success, for there seems to have been few unsatisfied clients. It is commonly asserted that, "After Stuart found his mature style in the self-portrait of 1778, he painted in that manner to the very end."⁶⁰ Such is the unfortunate result of studies of Stuart that neglect the importance of his Irish years or see them as simply a continuation of his English sojourn. While it is true that Stuart "could not endure Copley's laboured flesh, which he compared to tanned leather,"⁶¹ Stuart also was clearly willing and able to control his desire for overall impression and produce a portrait of substantial

59 For further discussion on this issue see Crookshank and the Knight of Glin, Painters, 83-105.

60 DeLorme, "Stuart," 354.

61 Dunlap, History, 1:256.

finish and great detail. Tuckerman indeed gives the following anecdote:

He once illustrated his views of high finish, as regards the texture of costume, by placing a shawl on the back of a chair, and asking a visitor ... whether, at a distance of a few feet, he received any but a general impression of the hue and form — arguing that minute imitation of drapery was unnatural.⁶²

"Minute imitation of drapery" is, however, what appears in the gold braid on Fitzgibbon's costume, and it may well be that Dowling Herbert, or another assistant who worked for Stuart, was given the task of transcribing the details of Fitzgibbon's elaborate costume. Indeed, in 1789, the year of the portrait, Robert Home left Dublin, and Dowling Herbert, who had been Hone's assistant, came to work with Stuart. As already cited, we even have evidence in Herbert's own, rather inflated opinion of himself regarding his ability to copy Stuart's style.⁶³

The full-length of John Foster (Figure 26) stands alongside Fitzgibbon as one of Stuart's most ambitious Irish works. It is significant that, among Stuart's patrons, those who received full-lengths were among the most vehemently anti-Catholic of the whole establishment. Foster has indeed often been referred to as the "rearguard of the Ascendancy."⁶⁴ Indeed, Foster, who was as stated,

⁶² Tuckerman, American Artist, 110.

⁶³ See Herbert, Varieties, 133.

⁶⁴ A.P.W. Maicomson, John Foster: The Politics of the Anglo-Irish Ascendancy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), 39.

Speaker of the House, was in a key position in Irish politics during Stuart's years in Dublin. Foster was unusual in Irish politics of the period in that his political position and history was absolutely uncompromising. Foster opposed all incursions on the power of the Protestant Ascendancy, and he consistently pursued strengthening the interests of Protestant Ireland of the Established Church. Writing of Foster's intransigence, Malcomson states:

... he was opposed to all incursions on the status quo of 1782 — Place, Pension, and Responsibility measures ... Catholic Relief, parliamentary reform, the Union. Most people, at one time or another, and for different reasons and upon different terms, supported at least one or two of these. Yet these people, too, would have considered themselves in some sense upholders of the Ascendancy; they differed from him primarily because they were prepared to contemplate measures to renovate the Ascendancy, so as to make it less offensive to Irishmen who were not Anglo-Irish (especially the Catholics), and/or to make it more defensible against the British government. Foster stands out, not because he upheld the Ascendancy, since that was more or less common form, but because his definition of the Ascendancy was so narrow and rigid that, on all the political issues affecting the Ascendancy, he could behave only as a rearguard.⁶⁵

Foster was elected unanimously to the Speakership of the Irish House of Commons on September 5, 1785, and continued in a harmonious relationship with Charles Manners, Duke of Rutland. Of great significance here is the fact that, on his election to the office of Speaker, Foster now had access to honors and offices which, despite

⁶⁵ Ibid., 60.

his high political profile earlier in his career, were now opened up to him for the first time.⁶⁶ Chief among these were his elevation to the position of British Privy Councillor and the most dignified office which an Irishman could hold — the Lord Justiceship. In the absence of the Viceroy, or during interregnums, the Lord Justices ruled the country. Usually numbering no more than three, the Lord Justices exercised considerable power. For instance, from December 10, 1788, when Buckingham resigned, until the arrival of Lord Westmorland on January 5, 1790, Foster and his colleague Fitzgibbon, the newly-appointed Lord Chancellor, ruled the country together. It is entirely possible that at this time Stuart painted his portrait of Foster. Indeed, when considered as a pair, the portraits offer more insight than when considered singly. The intention here is not to propose that the portraits were intended to hang as a pair, but to consider the circumstances under which they may have been painted. It has already been established that Fitzgibbon's portrait may well have been painted in celebration of his new-found advance into the forefront of Irish politics and power. In 1789, he had just been created Lord Chancellor. Both Fitzgibbon's and Foster's portraits are very similar in size, and it seems feasible that the two Lord Justices, enjoying unprecedented power and authority in 1789, may well have chosen to have their portraits painted to celebrate their joint good fortune.⁶⁷

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ The dimensions are as follows: John Foster 83-1/2" x 59-7/8", John Fitzgibbon 96-1/2" x 60-5/8".

Indeed, Stuart may well have intended the portraits symbolically as a pair, though never to be hung together. Evidence to support this argument exists in the similarity of size together with the poses. Moreover, on close examination it can be seen that the Fitzgibbon had been turned under, and therefore shortened, along the lower end of the canvas. On measurement, this shortening makes the overall picture similar in height to the Foster, thereby increasing the possibility that both works were exhibited together on their completion during Stuart's time in Ireland. The line remaining on the Fitzgibbon is easily detectable even from the photograph. Attempts to confirm the possibility that the portraits were exhibited as a pair have not yielded results. Following the custom for portrait pairs, the Fitzgibbon faces left, while the Foster faces right, and this formal concession to coupling suggests, along with the size and circumstances of shared power and responsibility during 1789, that both men sat for Stuart during that year. Added to the above factors is the extraordinary similarity in style between the Foster and Fitzgibbon portraits. Both share the grand manner setting as derived from Van Dyck, and developed by Reynolds and Gainsborough. In addition, Foster is depicted against a background of receding columns that directly resemble and suggest the inside of the Parliamentary chamber, as depicted in many other works of the period. Moreover, Foster is painted with the same attention to detail as seen in the Fitzgibbon, so that when considered together, the possibility of grouping is clear. In addition, both works are official portraits in robes of office and,

therefore, balance each other in opulence and splendor. Indeed, when one searches for a precedent for these works, the manner of Pompeo Batoni also comes to mind, and, as mentioned earlier, Stuart's work on at least one occasion hung beside Batoni's in Irish collections. Another less likely, but compelling, relationship exists between Stuart's two full-lengths and some of Copley's American portraits of the same size. For instance, Copley's portrait of Thomas Hancock 1765-66 (Figure 34), bears remarkable similarity to the Foster, especially in detail of execution, background and placement of the figure. The Hancock is, however, a more casual portrait, even in its formality. It is, indeed, entirely possible that Stuart, mindful and familiar with provincialism in the arts, may have looked to Copley's American style for inspiration in seeking a portrait style suitable to his somewhat provincial Irish sitters.

The harder elements in Stuart's Irish style are presaged in his earlier portrait of Lord Dartrey (Figure 35). Stuart painted the Irish peer, in London, in 1785, and the work is a compelling example of how he was able to judge the stylistic requirements of his sitter. Even before his arrival in Ireland, Stuart shows what may well be his innate understanding of a more provincial tradition that is still bound to the linear, and bears out Waterhouse's theory that he could with ease adapt himself to the requirements of patronage. Dartrey is here presented in a form of an Irish icon. Movement in the portrait is frozen, both in pose and setting, but most especially in the controlled, precise rendering of hair, face and drapery. The same is true in

Stuart's pair of portraits of Sir William Barker (Figure 36) and Lady Barker (Figure 37). These, even though substantially more elaborate than Lord Dartrey, illustrate the same controlled style which is to be seen in varying degrees in all of Stuart's Irish works.⁶⁸ That Stuart consciously changed his style to accommodate his Irish sitters is clear from a comparison of any of his English or American works with those completed in Ireland or those of certain Irish subjects painted in London. For instance, a comparison of Stuart's portrait of John Philip Kemble (Figure 38) completed in London, with that of the Irishman Lord Dartrey, also painted in London, is revealing in this regard. Both portraits present a remarkably similar pose, and both are of the same size. In addition, the angle of the sitter is similar, and both are presented against a completely neutral background that eliminates any iconographical features. Both portraits, however, while sharing remarkable similarities, provide for enormous differences in technique and presentation. While Dartrey displays a rigorous control and definition that almost approaches flatness, Kemble has all the softness and deft presentation whereby Stuart provides a total portrait with great economy. This can be best seen in Stuart's treatment of Kemble's cravat, where a few broad brushstrokes become a flowing, convincing essay in fabric. Stuart captures the essence of the material here, not by painting each thread laboriously, but by use of his grand formula of broad brushwork which transforms paint into fabric in a mastery of

⁶⁸ A detailed discussion of these portraits occurs in Chapter VIII.

illusion. By contrast, Dartrey's face, hair and clothing are taken to an extreme of finish that replaces the poetry apparent in the Kemble, and even when areas such as Dartrey's cravat allow an opportunity for Stuart to emerge, the painter carefully conceals the temptation behind a rigidly painted topcoat.

The neutral background in both these portraits is common to Stuart's work overall. Dunlap relates how Stuart, speaking to Neagle about an engraving, advised the latter not only to make the background neutral, but to "make nothing of it."⁶⁹ This clarifies Stuart's propensity for being interested only in the face. While the prosaic term, "face painter" as applied to Stuart, derives from Mather, Allston recognized that when Stuart was touched with genuine inspiration he could become "a philosopher of the face."⁷⁰ Background was rarely of any interest to Stuart and in the Barker portraits, where a view of Kilcooley Abbey appears in both, the view is simply the painter's concession to an attribute of wealth and social station. Indeed, in the Barker portraits, Stuart even misplaced several of the roof shapes in the Abbey's background, thereby providing evidence of his disinterest in topographical correctness.⁷¹

In his portrait of William Robert, Duke of Leinster (Figure 39) and Luke White (Figure 40), Stuart produces softer, less controlled

⁶⁹ Dunlap, Stuart, 1:253-254.

⁷⁰ Mather, Estimates in Art, 9.

⁷¹ See Mount, Stuart, 345 for a discussion of this detail.

and more gently modelled works. This softer approach is also evident to a lesser degree, in the double portrait of Miss Dick and her Cousin, Miss Forster (Figure 18) which is generally considered one of Stuart's best Irish works. The genius of Stuart's Irish style is in his ability to sustain an approach to portraiture that satisfied the needs of his Irish clients, most of whom seem to have desired a style more in keeping with the provincial simplicity and modesty which had been their tradition. As is clear, however, Stuart was able to provide this, and at the same time produce extraordinary examples of refined and cosmopolitan portraiture. It is this blend and adaptation that allowed for Stuart's great success in Dublin where flashes of his painterly bravura emerge in controlled and limited situations, and prove his chameleon nature. A critic, writing in 1914, recognized the variety of approach in Stuart's style:

Stuart developed a surety and directness of touch that was absolutely marvelous. He could produce a bit of lace with the fewest possible strokes, yet have the object as complete in its essentials as the most labored lace collar in a good Dutch portrait.... There are varying moods shown in his work. Some portraits were most carefully and thoroughly done, every bit being made with elaborate caution, but in others he seems to have covered the surface of his canvas with the utmost ease and abandon, apparently finishing the pictures in three or four sittings. In these portraits, his skill in the rapid, sure strokes may be most clearly seen.⁷²

⁷² H.E.T. (pseud), "Gilbert Stuart as a Craftsman," Bulletin of the Rhode Island School of Design, 11 (1914):5.

The explanation for Stuart's Irish style most probably lies in his patronage. Irish portraiture prior to Stuart's arrival was, as stated, provincial in its origins, evidencing linearity and hardness in definition. This quality can be seen in the works of Slaughter, Latham, Hussey, Worsdale and other portraitists prior to Stuart in Ireland. While Latham occasionally departs somewhat from stringent linearity, most of his works, along with those of the others mentioned here, are extremely harsh in treatment. This is evident even in the finer work of Robert Hunter and Nathaniel Hone. Harshness and linearity is also present in the work of Thomas Robinson, who arrived in Ireland in 1790 as a very young man and became a painter of northern gentry.⁷³ Robinson apprenticed under Romney, and while none of his works prior to his arrival in Ireland can be located, his portrait of Barry Yelverton, 1792 (Figure 41) provides evidence of the persistence of a linear technique, especially in the treatment of the mouth, hair and drapery. While Robinson's later work in Belfast is ambitious in its choice of historical subjects, the linearity and provincial nature of his earlier work persists, and indeed becomes more marked.

Of the three most outstanding figures in Irish politics, Henry Grattan may well have been the most challenging for Stuart as a portraitist. Stuart's portrait of Grattan is lost, and all that remains of Stuart's effort is an engraving of the portrait. Few reliable stylistic

⁷³ Crookshank and the Knight of Glin, Painters, 168-169.

judgements can be based on it. From what we know of Grattan the man, however, the work on his portrait must have been challenging to Stuart. Grattan and Fitzgibbon had studied together at Trinity College and together played roles of the highest order in the Irish Parliament. Grattan was Irish-born of aristocratic birth, and from an early age developed an extraordinary love for poetry. According to Madden, Grattan's biographer, Alexander Pope was a major influence upon him.⁷⁴ The views of Madden give us some insight into Grattan as man and as the figure who sat for Stuart. Grattan's political life has been examined earlier. According to Madden, Grattan was:

... naturally given to emotion; his cast of mind was melancholy, poetical, and rather vague: he was besides eager, passionate, and withal reflective in his habits. He loved others intensely, and the warmth of his friendship was universally reciprocated. He delighted in wandering in the open country, and his love of rural scenery had the passion. He was also fitful — rather wayward — and subject to abrupt transition of feelings. On the whole the poetical element largely entered into his composition.⁷⁵

Madden bases his opinion of Grattan, as the possessor of a volatile nature, on a series of letters written to an intimate friend since childhood, one called Broome. In one letter, Grattan writes of himself as possessing: "A breast the slave of a thousand discordant passions: now intoxicated with company — now saddening in solitude:

⁷⁴ D.O. Madden, A Memoir of the Life of the Right Hon. Henry Grattan (London: James Duffy, 1846), 84.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 86.

sometime disturbed with hope — sometimes depressed with despair, and equally ravaged with each: disgusted often, and often precipitately enamoured - all this makes me poor in my own esteem."⁷⁶ Madden is complimentary of Grattan's intellectual development, and states that compared to many figures of his time, "His character was less insular, and his intellect less hampered with provincial modes of thought. If he was an Irish genius, he had given his mind a European education and with the writings of the philosophers, who for good and evil effected the eighteenth century, Grattan was intimately conversant."⁷⁷ Madden proceeds to rank Grattan next to Burke, "in knowledge of the speculative writers who have treated of human nature, and of Man in society...." and adds that Grattan was "incontestably superior to his English Whig contemporary in profound and valuable philosophical accomplishments."⁷⁸ Of all of his Irish patrons, Grattan, because of his prominence, was most assuredly central to Stuart's success in social portraiture.

Regarding the public character of Grattan, Madden notes that whatever difference of opinion might exist regarding his political powers,

Henry Grattan must be classed in the first rank of those famous persons who, partly by extraordinary eloquence, and partly by capacity for affairs, have been the real governors of these

⁷⁶ Ibid., 92.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

islands.... The boldness and grandeur of his imagery; the flight of his imagination, as well as the gorgeous richness of his language, attest the vigour as well as the beauty of his mind.⁷⁹

In the absence of Stuart's portrait of Grattan, and based on the engraving (Figure 14), Stuart seems to have captured the nervous, sensitive, intelligent and personally reclusive figure who most substantially modelled political thought in Ireland of the late eighteenth century.

Apart from Stuart's obvious talent which won him patronage in Ireland, he was also extremely careful to avoid any contact with the United Irish Movement or figures associated with it. As has been previously discussed, the United Irish Society was a radical and extremely influential political club, whose organ the Northern Star promoted the radical philosophy. For instance, on December 5, 1791; the Star issued the following manifesto:

The object of this institution is to make an United Society of the Irish nation to make all Irishmen citizens — all Citizens Irishmen: ... we gladly look forward to brighter prospects: to people united in the fellowship of freedom; to a parliament the express image of the people: to a prosperity established on civil, political, and religious liberty.... We agree, therefore, in the necessity of giving political value and station to the great majority of the people....⁸⁰

79 Ibid.

80 Northern Star, 5 December 1791 quoted in Marianne Elliott, Partners in Revolution: The United Irishmen and France (New Haven, Conn., London, England: Yale University Press, 1982), 23.

The Society, as Elliott points out, could boast a membership impressive in wealth, intellectual ability and social standing.⁸¹ The list included attorneys, barristers, physicians and many successful merchants as well as members of the aristocracy. Notable among the latter were Lord Edward Fitzgerald son of the Earl of Kildare (first Duke of Leinster) and Lady Emily Mary Lennox, daughter of the Duke of Richmond. Members of the Society would certainly have been available as sitters for Stuart, but association with the Society would, it appears, have jeopardized his business among the establishment. In a fascinating series of events, Hugh Douglas Hamilton, whose early career as a student at the Dublin Society Schools has already been mentioned, returned to Ireland in 1791 at the age of 52, and the return of Lord Edward Fitzgerald in late 1792 provided Hamilton with one of his most famous sitters.⁸² Hamilton also painted other members of the United Irish Movement and their sympathizers such as John Philpott Curran and Col. Hugh O'Donnell.⁸³ Stuart, it seems was

⁸¹ Ibid., 24.

⁸² Crookshank and the Knight of Glin, Painters. 92-95 provides the date of Hamilton's return, as derived from Thomas James Mulvany, "Hugh Douglas Hamilton," Dublin Monthly Magazine (January-June, 1842), 69.

⁸³ Park, Stuart, includes a portrait of Lord Edward Fitzgerald which he claims to be by Stuart. Park gives a date of c. 1790 for the portrait, though Lord Edward did not return to Ireland until 1792. Mount does not mention this work in his list, and the present whereabouts is unknown. From Park's photograph, a decision regarding authorship cannot be made. It is in all ways unlikely that the work is Stuart's since it was not in keeping with his political position to paint the popular upholder of the Catholic cause. If, for some reason, Stuart did paint Fitzgerald, then he would have done so during 1792 or early in 1793 just before he left Ireland when he no longer relied on the patronage of the "right."

extremely conscious of the politics involved here, and maintained a distance from any portrait commissions that may have compromised his position of "painter-laureate" to the established order.

CHAPTER VIII

STUART AND ANTIQUARIANISM:
THE BARKER AND CONYNGHAM PORTRAITS
IN CONTEXT

The ruins of medieval Kilcooley Abbey are prominently displayed in Stuart's portraits of Sir William Barker and Lady Barker, 1791 (Figures 36 and 37). Their appearance reflects the rise of interest in Irish history and antiquities which was such an important aspect of the cultural revival in Ireland in the eighteenth century.¹ The rise of antiquarianism among the Anglo-Irish Ascendancy is often regarded as an attempt to justify the privileged position of that class by reference to their history of land ownership and colonization. As the century progressed, the need for such justification seems to have increased in the face of rising nationalism and Catholic power. Consequently, antiquarian studies frequently take on the air of arguments in favor of the continuing claim of the Protestant Ascendancy to landownership

¹ Marilyn Stokstad and Linda Gill, "Antiquarianism and Architecture in Eighteenth-Century Ireland" in Irish History and Culture, Harold Orel, ed. (Wichita: University of Kansas Press, 1976), 165-168.

and political power. The buildings and ruins themselves become symbols of hereditary occupation of the land by Stuart's patrons. In the case of Kilcooley Abbey, a late Gothic structure, the building had been erected during the plantations of Henry VIII in the mid-sixteenth century.²

A number of visiting English antiquaries played an important role in fostering the development of Irish antiquarian interests. The earliest scientific study of Irish antiquities dates to 1698, when Edward Lhuyd, keeper of the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford, made a tour of the British Isles to study the Celtic language. However, the first Irishman to study his native country's past was William Molyneux who in 1725 published A Discourse concerning Danish Mounds in Ireland. The arrival of the French Huguenot Gabriel Beranger in Ireland in 1750 significantly enhanced interest in Irish antiquities. Beranger possessed a talent for outstanding draughtsmanship which was noticed by General Vallancey, the Irish scholar and cartographer of the Board of Ordnance, and by Stuart's patron Sir William Burton Conyngham. They, along with other scholars such as the notable antiquary and genealogist Charles O'Connor of Balinagare and Edward Ledwich, formed a circle that "encouraged and employed a vast number of painters and amateurs who produced a corpus of watercolors of Irish

² The term "plantation" refers to the process by which English and Scottish settlers were given Irish land in order to consolidate the English presence in the country, often in the wake of a military defeat of one or other grouping of Irish chieftains. "Planters" were encouraged to build extensively.

antiquities."³ The most well-known literary and artistic product of this circle is Francis Groce's Antiquities of Ireland, 1791.

Sir William Burton Conyngham was a well-known patron of art and architecture in Stuart's Ireland. In 1787, the year of Stuart's arrival in Ireland, Sir William inherited the family estates in County Clare when he assumed the name and arms of Conyngham. During the next few years, Conyngham proved himself a reliable member of the Protestant Ascendancy and was rewarded with such sinecures as Privy Councillor, Teller of the Exchequer in Ireland and Treasurer of the Royal Irish Academy. During these years, Stuart painted Conyngham (Figure 42) depicting him as a scholar and antiquarian who self-confidently looks up from his literary pursuits, papers in hand, to glance outward at the viewer. Stuart was undoubtedly aware of the antiquarian work being produced in Ireland and some of his Irish pictures reflect these antiquarian trends.

In 1789, Charlotte Brooke, the antiquarian, published a volume of poems entitled Reliques of Irish Poetry.⁴ Her work, along with the other sources mentioned, may have influenced Stuart's antiquarian concession in the Barker portraits. Brooke was the daughter of Henry Brooke, a small Protestant landowner who devoted much of his life to literary pursuits. Charlotte Brooke studied the Irish language and collected Gaelic songs and poems then current in oral tradition. Some of

³ Crookshank and the Knight of Glin, Painters, 47-48.

⁴ Jeffares, Literature, 92.

these she translated into English verse and are the subject of her volume published in 1789. The collection contains both the original and her own translations. It is a characteristic irony that the process of collecting, translating and publishing Gaelic verse, which has gone on ever since, finds its origins in the enterprise of a family that was, in background and position, fairly typical of the Anglo-Irish Protestant middle class. Charlotte Brooke was not singular in her interest in promoting the study of Gaelic literature. She was encouraged in her work by Joseph Cooper Walker, a wealthy dilettante whose broad outlook and interests included Irish antiquities. Brooke's Reliques, 1789 was published in Dublin, and indicates the local demand for such works during Stuart's time there.

Along with the aforementioned developments, Stuart was also probably aware of the work of Thomas Wright of Durham, an astronomer and mathematician who was also an architect, landscape gardener, and antiquarian. Wright arrived in Ireland in 1746 to study prehistoric and historic sites. His biographer, Ralph Allan of Darlington, wrote in the Gentleman's Magazine that:

In 1746, Mr. Wright made a voyage to Ireland, where we find him under the patronage of Lord Limerick and the Bishop of Raphoe. He continued his winter at Dundalk, and returned to England the 16th of June, 1747. During his stay in Ireland, he was engaged in visiting places of antiquity, and collecting drawing and materials for his Louthiana, the first volume of which, with a multitude of curious plates, he published in the year 1748. ⁵

⁵ Gentleman's Magazine, 1793, quoted in Orel, Irish History, 166.

Wright studied ancient and medieval architecture in Ireland and illustrated a large number of Romanesque and Gothic ruins.

Unfortunately, when he died in 1789, his library and collection were dispersed, a circumstance that was both unfortunate and unusual in late eighteenth-century Ireland. Shortly after his death, three copies were made by hand of Wright's unpublished manuscript, Observations on Some of the most Remarkable Remains of Antiquity in Ireland.⁶

It is probable that Wright's work may well have influenced Stuart. One copy of Wright's manuscript was made in 1791 in Ireland, during Stuart's stay, and contained many drawings of ruins. As stated, Groce's Antiquities also appeared in 1791, the date most commonly given for the Barker portraits. To both portraits, as has been noted, the views of medieval Kilcooley Abbey impart a distinctly antiquarian ambience. Both views are picturesque in the fullest sense of the term as used in the eighteenth century. The Abbey is integrated with the natural setting in the manner of a ruin, and provides a suitable environment for the fashionable couple as dilettanti. In presenting such antiquarian allusions in his painting, Stuart was particularly early. In general, the real influence of antiquarianism on Irish painters only becomes evident in the middle of the nineteenth century with the work of Joseph Peacock, John Howard Burgess and George Petrie who present full-scale romantic pictures of Irish antiquities. Since Wright's work had considerable following in Ireland, it is most

⁶ Orel, Irish History, 168-169.

probable that Stuart's inclusion of medieval ruins in his Barker portraits is directly related to the fashionable and politically expedient interest in antiquities brought about by the former's work. Sir William Barker appears in the Stuart portrait with his hands resting on plans for his new residence at Kilcooley. The visual argument is that the planned house is but a refurbished and expanded claim to land long occupied in the name of the Crown. The medieval abbey becomes a symbol of first occupancy, and its visual presence in Stuart's portrait is used to give historical sanction to the new venture. In the pendant, Lady Barker works at a tambour frame, with Kilcooley Abbey also apparent behind her.

Another compelling and fascinating aspect of the Barker portraits has been noted by Pearson DeLorme. Despite the erroneous recognition of the Barker portraits as English, the central concept stated by DeLorme is of great interest and significance:

In the London of Stuart's day the competence of an artist was largely judged by his ability to paint the total figure, thus permitting reference to profession, interests and social class. Although Stuart seemingly shunned it, he did paint a number of full lengths as well as three-quarter lengths of this type ... Sir William Barker ... seated at a table with his hands upon the plans for his country house, with a view of the abbey for which the house was named beyond the inevitable pillar and curtain. Barker's three-quarter length, with the subject seated at a table with a curtain covering part of the background, one hand upon a table, became a favorite formula for Stuart. He used it later for Thomas Jefferson (1805-7, Bowdoin College), and James Monroe (1818-20, Metropolitan Museum of Art), among others.⁷

⁷ De Lorme, "Stuart," 350.

This particular type of portrait had a clear precedent in the Ireland of the 1780s, for Tilly Kettle and William Cuming used a similar arrangement for their portrait of James Gandon ⁸ For this among many other reasons stated, the study of Stuart in Ireland reveals a richly creative period and refutes the idea that Stuart's sojourn there was but one of seclusion from his English debtors.

⁸ See Chapter V above.

CHAPTER IX

THE RISE OF CATHOLIC ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL POWER: THE THREAT TO STUART'S PATRONS

In the study of Stuart's art and patronage, the matter of economic resources is of great significance. It is germane to this study to account for the conditions under which the Catholic middle class achieved financial stability and ultimately became a force that could not be ignored by the Protestant Ascendancy in Parliament during Stuart's last years in Ireland. It is the increased size and economic strength of the Catholic middle class that ultimately caused the downfall of the Protestant Ascendancy, and destroyed Stuart's narrow source of patronage. In Stuart's Dublin, the paradoxes that constituted life in Ireland appeared in microcosm. Besides the wealthy Protestant class who were his patrons, Stuart witnessed the growing wealth of a burgeoning Catholic community whose economic power was in the ascent and with whom he had no artistic or social connection. Finally buoyed by financial success, Catholics, as discussed, sought full political expression, demanding enfranchisement and complete emancipation during the early 1790's.

It is important to define the differences between Catholic and Protestant economic foundations that led to extensive social and political change at the end of the eighteenth century. At the outset it should be noted that there were no insuperable barriers to prevent Protestants from becoming wealthy and socially prominent. Unlike Catholics, Protestants born to poverty could not only achieve economic stability, but could also reach a position of power and influence in politics and matters of State. Richard Baldwin, Provost of Trinity College, is a case in point. Baldwin was apparently a homeless child, educated out of charity, who later attained the notable position. Charles Lucas, M.P. for the City of Dublin, was also raised in poverty before his rise to high municipal office. While such striking changes in fortune may have been rare in eighteenth-century Ireland, the upward movement of Protestant individuals and families occurred frequently enough to suggest a remarkable degree of fluidity in Anglo-Irish society.

For Catholics, on the other hand, social improvement was virtually impossible until the end of the century, and a gain in wealth did not open opportunity to political office or social prominence. A Roman Catholic might attain financial well-being, but access to the upward political and social thread remained barred. As a result, patronage of the arts in Stuart's Ireland was virtually entirely the privilege of the Protestant Ascendancy. Portraiture from the very beginning remained mainly a Protestant indulgence, and its

popularity was built on social prominence. Few Catholics therefore considered it their province.

With increased economic prosperity, however, Irish Catholics, it appears, increasingly sought the services of painters, beginning with painters in miniature. It is not without significance that a great increase occurred in the popularity of miniature painting during the period of Catholic economic improvement. Miniature painters, such as George Place, Horace Hone, John Comerford, Sampson Towgood Roch and Charles Robertson were all working in Dublin in the late eighteenth century. A study of the sitters of these painters reveals that they were patronized predominantly by the rising middle class, and Catholic names abound among them. Moreover, these artists were more peripatetic than other painters, and their lucrative practices in such cities as Cork, Waterford and Kilkenny reveal the more diverse nature of their patronage. Moreover, these towns were those in which Catholics developed their economic base in trade.¹

Lurking behind the issue of economics was the deep sense of outrage and anger felt by all Catholics that even if increased commerce allowed emancipation from grinding poverty, advancement in any

¹ It is also of interest to note that these painters in miniature were all able to retain a substantial practice while the Dublin market seems to have been unable to retain more than one full scale portraitist in business at any given time. Attention is drawn here to the fact that Stuart's arrival seems to have driven Home out of business. For further study of these miniaturists see A. O. Crookshank and the Knight of Glin, Irish Portraits 1660-1860 (New Haven, Conn: Paul Mellon Foundation for British Art, 1969), Exhibition Catalogue. See also Paul E. M. Caffrey, "Sampson Towgood Roch," Irish Arts Review, Vol. III, No. 4 (Winter 1986), 14-20.

other arena was strictly impossible. For instance, Catholics were only admitted to Trinity College for the first time in 1793, the year of Stuart's departure. This engendered a sense of alienation from the state and the ruling world and fostered an understandable sense of grievance. As the Catholic middle class began to rise in economic status during the eighteenth century, they became increasingly resentful of the political and educational barriers in the way to full participation in Irish life. Naturally, Protestant non-conformists suffered the same restrictions and bitterly resented the restrictions placed on them. As can be easily understood, the development of the Irish economy during the latter half of the century led to a growing sense of outrage with the prevailing system that prevented advancement to enormous numbers of the population. It was increasingly clear by 1770, that not only was productivity rapidly increasing in Ireland, but so was population. By the close of the century, Ireland contained one third of the whole population of the British Isles.

Demographics are of particular importance to an understanding of Irish economic development of the eighteenth century, for as discussed earlier, not only were there distinct classes based on economics and religion, but the geographical distribution of these groups is in itself of distinct and great importance. While Catholics could be found in the majority in all but one province, the distribution of Protestants was very uneven. Protestants were concentrated in Ulster, where they actually outnumbered Catholics. The Protestant

population was predictably scarce in Connaught where land was least arable. The southern province of Munster, which contained large tracts of fertile soil, had substantially more Protestants among its population, and in Leinster, especially in the environs of Dublin, the Protestant population was stronger still. In Dublin, Protestants accounted for about half the population of the city. In Ulster, the Protestants were divided equally into two major groups: Scottish Presbyterians and members of the Established Church. In his assessment, Beckett states:

This Scottish and Presbyterian element gave a special character to Ulster life; but it was not until a later period, when landlord power was in decline, when the Church had been disestablished, and when democratic reform had given more weight to Presbyterian numbers, that the full political significance of the difference between Ulster and the rest of Protestant Ireland was clearly revealed. In the eighteenth century, the Ulster Presbyterians though they suffered some deprivations on account of their nonconformity, formed part of the 'Protestant Nation' and thought of themselves as Irishmen. And they contributed increasingly as the century progressed, to the formation of a Protestant popular opinion that the House of Commons, however unrepresentative it might be, could not altogether ignore.²

The last quarter of the eighteenth century brought a rise in Irish economic conditions so that contemporary opinion, both at home and abroad, was that Ireland had never been so prosperous. This prosperity seems to have been directly linked to three major advances:

² J.C. Beckett, The Anglo-Irish Tradition (Belfast: Blackstaff, 1976), 64.

the spread of tillage, the development of manufacture, and the general expansion of trade. Ireland's increased economic welfare benefited Catholic and Protestant alike, and was generated by both in their separate economic endeavors. In such an environment, the business of portraiture could be expected to flourish, and Stuart's attraction to Dublin in 1787 can be easily understood. Moreover, so proud was Dublin of its achievements that some citizens called for the opening of an Irish Museum. On October 13, within days of Stuart's arrival, the Dublin Evening Post carried an announcement of a meeting "of the artists at the Royal Exchange, on Monday the 15th at one o'clock in the afternoon, to take into consideration such a plan, as will be there proposed for carrying the same into execution."

Prosperity was seen also in provincial towns and cities, where landlords and middlemen profited from rising prices and increased productivity. It should be noted, however, that the lower classes of society who formed a high proportion of the population did not directly benefit during these years. Contrasts between wealth and poverty were commonplace in most European countries during the eighteenth century, and these inequities were also more present in Ireland than in any other area of the British Isles. Economic discrepancy led to rising restlessness among the peasantry and was a constant source of threat to the ruling classes, though:

There was little idea of any solution beyond a stricter enforcement of the law. Even the more liberal members of the landed and commercial classes were too much concerned about constitutional and economic issues, about the reform of

parliament, the expansion of trade, the encouragement of industries, to spare much attention for the great social questions that threatened the peace of rural Ireland. They were no less attached to the rights of property than to the rights of the nation; and the Volunteers sometimes assisted in the suppression of agrarian disturbances. The events of 1798 were to show how precarious was the basis on which they had erected their imposing structure of parliamentary independence.³

A significant degree of Ireland's increasing wealth was substantially due to developing agriculture. Stuart was keenly aware of the role agriculture played in Ireland's developing economy. His discussion with Herbert indicated both his interest in and practice of husbandry. On arrival at Stuart's country estate, Herbert relates how:

As I walked up a narrow road that leads to that quarter from the Black Rock, I saw some very pretty pigs: it struck me, at one moment's view, that they belonged to Stuart, and that I could not be distant from his house; to try that I was right in my conjecture, I took up little pebbles, and threw them at them. They ran on, and I followed. They led me to a gate, into which they entered. It lay open, and before the house I saw Stuart tending some flower-pots.

"Ha," said he, "you are come."

"Yes, please the pigs."

Then I told him how they had led me. He was delighted at my recital, and more complimented that at anything I could say in praise of his works. He said, - "You shall taste pork to-day of their kind, and you will acknowledge my plan to be a good one for feeding." He then took me to his garden, which was well cropped, all by his own hands. Walked me over his grounds, and pointed out his skill in farming: he valued himself more on these points than on painting... I candidly confessed I should rather see his works in his painting-room, that I was ignorant of farming, gardening, or feeding of pigs. He pitied me very much, observing, what a loss I sustained by not attending to the

³ Beckett, *Modern Ireland*. 245.

cultivation of that, on which mankind were supported and rendered wealthy and powerful.⁴

The 1791 edition of the Encyclopedia Britannica referred to Ireland's fertility and suggested that once Ireland "felt the happy effects of an unshackled commerce and a general emancipation [emphasis mine] this country will not be inferior to any on the globe under the same parallel."⁵

Since agriculture played a central role in the Irish economy, agricultural improvement received serious attention; it became the focus of two societies: the Dublin Society, whose purpose was "the promoting of husbandry and other useful arts," and the Farming Society, which aimed at raising the standards of breeding and cultivation by education and by encouraging the working farmer.⁶ Agricultural improvement came to be regarded as fashionable and patriotic, since it combined the enjoyment of rural pursuits with the contemporary enthusiasm for applied science and technology. Arthur Young noted that "the gentleman and the farmer are no longer incongruous terms; the necessary appendages of agriculture, botany, chemistry and mineralogy, are become fashionable studies and have superseded the unprofitable levity which too often bore sway in our moments of pleasure, so derogatory to the wisdom and dignity of an

⁴ Herbert, Varieties, 241.

⁵ McDowell, Ireland, 5. McDowell discusses Ireland's economic and social structure at some length.

⁶ McDowell, Ireland, 6.

enlightened nation."⁷ Moreover, it was stressed that agriculture was "the theme of Cicero's praise and afforded to Virgil subjects for the most polished and finished poems of antiquity."⁸ Articles on husbandry abound in the Irish newspapers of the late eighteenth century. For instance, on October 18th, just at the time of Stuart's arrival in Ireland, the Dublin Chronicle published a lengthy article on the subject. Entitled "Reflections on Husbandry," the article continued:

Virgil, a noble philosopher and poet, was himself a most admirable husbandman. With respect to the utility of this art, if we take a retrospect of the most remote ages, we shall find that to the necessity of it, we owe the first foundation of society and order; the establishment of property; the consequent introduction of civilization and all the humanizing arts of life.⁹

Moreover, advertisements were frequently placed in the press by nurseries and seed merchants who promoted their varieties of plants and shrubs. In addition, accounts of rare plants and seasonal flowerings were promptly reported as notable events and curiosities.¹⁰

As has been stated, Gilbert Stuart forayed into husbandry while living in Ireland at his Stillorgan estate near Dublin.¹¹ Ann Stuart

7 Ibid.

8 Ibid.

9 The Dublin Chronicle, October 18, 1787.

10 McDowell, Ireland, 6.

11 Herbert, Irish Varieties, 241.

confirms Herbert's account that he raised pigs, along with geraniums, on the grounds of his large estate.¹² This was not eccentric in the context of the class with whom he associated. Interest in husbandry was common when Arthur Young visited the country in 1776. While in County Cork, Young visited the farm of Lord Shannon, a prominent Anglo-Irishman, whom he described as "a distinguished improver."¹³ It was at this time also, Edmund Burke arranged for "one of the finest bull calves ... of the short-horned Holderness breed," to be sent to his cousin's farm in County Cork.¹⁴ Even bishops and ecclesiastical figures in high offices were involved in the fashion for husbandry. Maxwell, Bishop of Meath, introduced English breeds of cattle to Ireland. The Rev. Thomas Percy "brought the true Berkshire breed" of swine to County Antrim. Moreover, at the same time, Baron Foster, the father of speaker John Foster whom Stuart painted, had in his garden at Cotton in County Louth, approximately one thousand seven hundred European and American plants. At the end of the century the Bellevue conservatories of Peter La Touche, MP for County Leitrim, were famous for the beauty and variety of their foreign plants.¹⁵ By involving himself in husbandry during his Irish years, Stuart was only following the fashionable practice of his clients.

¹² Mason, Stuart, 97.

¹³ McDowell, Ireland, 7.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

With regard to manufacture, foremost among emerging economic developments in Ireland during the latter half of the eighteenth century was the development of the cotton industry. Beckett points out that in 1770 the industry had barely established a foothold in the country. By 1790, however, it proved to be a serious rival to the linen industry. Two issues aided the growth of the new industry: one was the opening of direct trade with North America, which became the main source of raw materials, and the second was the increased encouragement given by the Irish Parliament. The other industry to achieve importance in the Irish economic structure of the late century, was brewing. Henry Grattan championed the brewers, recognizing the substantial political power which they held. As a result, by 1795, there was an enormous increase of home production and substantial decrease in the importation of beer from England. It should be noted, however, that the increase in the production of beer did not curb the rise of distilling, and the business of illegal distilling continued along with legal production of spirits. Drunkenness was sometimes the subject of addresses to the editors of Dublin newspapers. On October 8th, 1788, a letter appeared on the subject, and pointed out that,

There is not in my opinion, to be found in all the catalogue of human vices, one of a more destructive tendency than drunkenness...¹⁶

¹⁶ Evening Herald, October 8, 1788.

The writer lists numerous attributes associated with the vice and after a long discussion finally calls the one debilitated by alcoholic excess "a monster." The letter is signed, "a lover of sobriety."

As McDonagh points out, few aspects of Irish life occupied the attention of social reformers more than the evils of spirit drinking. In December 1793, The Masonic Magazine stated that "whiskey drinking was more destructive than crocodiles of the Nile or tigers of Africa, and was largely responsible for the miseries and vices of the poor."¹⁷ As has already been mentioned, Grattan supported the cause of the brewers, and called many times for proceedings against distillers and "this growth of poison and this decline in nutriment."¹⁸ Grattan wished to replace the consumption of spirits with that of beer. He saw this as "the only means of abridging the numerous vices of the lower orders of the people, and producing industry and due subordination among them."¹⁹ Despite introduction of taxation and other measures aimed at lowering spirit consumption, by the end of the century the use of spirits had actually risen.²⁰ Much of the violence in Irish life was said to be attributed to this. The distilling industry did not respond to the charges of politicians and social reformers, recognizing that it was

17 McDonagh, Ireland, 12.

18 Constantia Maxwell, Dublin Under the Georges, 1714-1830 (London: Faber and Faber, no date), 258.

19 Ibid.

20 Ibid.

too firmly entrenched in Irish life to be seriously weakened by legislative activity.

While the majority of Protestant wealth derived from ownership of land and the collection of rents, Catholic fortunes were almost completely derived from trade. Since this issue has already received some consideration, suffice it to say that since Catholics were prevented from purchasing land or possessing horses to derive a living by agricultural means, many Catholics were attracted to trading as a means of survival. Trading was considered lowly and therefore unfit for Protestants.

At mid-century, the historian Father James White reported that in Limerick the trade, both by land and sea, was in Catholic hands.²¹ Although Protestants gradually began to share in it, the richest merchants in that city during the second half of the century were Catholics. Indeed, it is generally recognized that for the most part Catholic wealth was accumulated quietly. It was not until about 1790 in the middle years of Stuart's stay in Ireland, when they adopted a more aggressive attitude, that Catholics began to claim that their position in the country was one of consequence due to their amassed wealth.

From the time of the earliest confiscations of land in Ireland, and especially dating from the Elizabethan and Cromwellian years, many dispossessed Catholic landowners drifted into the cities and

²¹ Edith Mary Johnson, Ireland in the Eighteenth Century (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1974), 84.

towns where they applied themselves to trade. Even the few who were able to retain land recognized the need to have relatives engaged in trade and commerce. The Blake letters in the National Library reveal the close contact retained between the head of the Blake family, Isidore Blake at Tower Hill, Galway, with his uncle, John Blake, a merchant in Dublin.²² For many years John Blake sent weekly letters to his nephew, for whom he seems to have acted as business agent. The letters deal almost exclusively with matters of finance, and trade, the state of credit, of discounting bills, the price of livestock, auctions, rents and other matters of financial import. Moreover constant reference is made to the great fair of Ballinasloe which is recognized to have been the center of trading in the province of Connaught.

Many younger sons also emigrated to Continental Europe and the New World and carried on a brisk trade with Ireland. The Bellew family of Galway provide an interesting example of the contribution of the Catholic gentry to domestic and foreign trade. Michael Bellew, a wealthy landowner, had a brother, Patrick, who was a Dublin merchant, as well as a partner in the firm of Lynch and Bellew of Cadiz, which carried on an extensive trade with Ireland. Patrick Bellew mentions in 1786 that he sent a nephew to Rouen to learn French and "figures" to prepare him for a career in trade.²³

²² Unpublished Blake Letters in the National Library of Ireland.

²³ Wall, Irish Historical Studies, 96.

The position of Edward Byrne, a Catholic, is of particular interest. Byrne reached the position of "merchant" by rising from the ranks by way of apprenticeship. By 1792, Byrne was regarded as the richest merchant in Ireland, and in that year, it was claimed that he contributed £80,000 pounds to the revenue, a figure that was but a fraction of his annual income. Byrne was in business as a merchant, distiller and sugar-baker and on his death, left an estate worth £400,000. ²⁴ Because of his position as Dublin's wealthiest merchant, Byrne was elected chairman of the general committee of the Catholics of Ireland at the time of the Catholic convention in 1792.

Wall notes that as a class, the merchant section of the Irish population differed in no marked degree from merchants in Great Britain and in other countries during the eighteenth century. Trade depended for the most part on the initiative of individual merchants and on personal contacts, at home and abroad; moreover, commonality of religion tended to be a connecting link, and marriage connections were, as a result, frequent. There was what might be described as a Catholic trading network that operated both at home and abroad, and in the matter of foreign trade, this solidarity among those of the same stock and creed was especially advantageous. Wall adds that:

Belfast must have owed a great deal of its rising prosperity in the eighteenth century to the trade connections it enjoyed with America though the hosts of Ulster dissenters who had crossed

²⁴ Johnson, Ireland in the Eighteenth Century, 84.

the Atlantic in search of opportunity. And the flow of Catholics from Ireland to the continent of Europe on the same quest, had been going on for centuries. Ever since the sixteenth century, Irish merchants had been settling in France and Spain and in the Netherlands, and it was natural that Irish trade with these countries and with the French plantations should be largely in Catholic hands.²⁵

Irish merchants grew in financial status, as a result of trade with Italy, Portugal, Spain, and the Netherlands. Of great importance here is that their association with the middle class elsewhere, especially in France, helped shape expectations of their role within the Irish political framework. Since Dublin was the seat of central government in Ireland, most of the Irish gentry retained homes there in order to attend the annual sessions of parliament. While the city was never in itself an industrial center, it did have some important industries, and also was an important port. Dublin's chief Catholic wealth seems to have derived from both trade and manufacture.

Ireland's increased wealth was reflected in a fine silver manufacturing industry in Dublin which reached its apex during the period of the 1780's and the 1790's. Fine cabinet making and coach building flourished in Dublin, and before the end of the century, Dublin possessed more than forty separate coach factories. In October 1787, the Dublin Evening Post acknowledged that the art of coach building in Dublin had reached such a fine state of development that "it is no

²⁵ Wall, Irish Historical Studies, 97.

unreasonable presumption, therefore that importation in this article, will in a very short time totally cease." The article continued:

From the sketch of the state carriage that is to be built for His Grace the Duke of Rutland, it appears that it will further augment the credit and fame of our artists. All the heavy ornaments that give the present vehicle of the Viceroy such a loitering appearance, will be avoided in the new one, and it will display an air of easy elegance.²⁶

The Lord Mayor's state coach was also apparently one of the most beautiful of its kind, and testified to the high artistic quality of the industry. This elegant carriage made its first appearance during Stuart's tenure in Ireland, on the anniversary of King William's birthday, November 4, 1791. The event was described in the Hibernian Magazine:

The body of the City State Carriage which has four caryatids at the angles, is richly gilt, the panels exhibiting emblematical paintings of very bold and masterly execution. From the roof hang festoons of flowers beautifully grouped, which produce a most pleasing and striking effect over the glasses of the sides and back. Four large figures: emblems of Plenty, Justice, etc., decorate the front and rear, and the roof, which is terminated by two smaller sculptures representing Liberty and Wisdom, is surrounded by various apposite and elegant civic ornaments.²⁷

The writer of the Hibernian article draws comparison between the Lord Mayor's coach and that of John Fitzgibbon, the Lord Chancellor "whose magnificently painted and ornate coach was

²⁶ The Dublin Evening Post, October 4, 1787.

²⁷ Maxwell, Dublin, 106.

manufactured in London." According to the writer, the London-made coach, which was estimated by Faulkner's Journal to have cost 7,000 pounds, was inferior to "the superior elegance of the Irish workmanship."²⁸

The period of Grattan's Parliament witnessed accelerated development in the ship building industry throughout the country. During the eighteenth century, Dublin Bay had been deepened and the harbor improved. In 1791, major improvements were added. A basin and docks which occupied a space of thirty-five acres at Ringsend on the south side of the river was completed. A "grand basin" on the Dublin waterfront was opened by the Earl of Camden in the presence of 60,000 spectators during the same decade.²⁹

The industry was experiencing significant growth during Stuart's years in Ireland.³⁰ There were 234 ships on the Irish register in 1788, and by 1792, the number of Irish registered ships had risen to 1193. There was also an extremely profitable tradition of smuggling carried out between Ireland and continental Europe, most especially France. North County Dublin seems to have been a particularly active area in this regard.

Irish trades and industries were mostly organized into guilds. At least nominally, these guilds controlled the conditions of work,

²⁸ Ibid., 262.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ John deCourcy Ireland, Ireland and the Irish in Maritime History (Dublin: The Glendale Press, 1986), 176.

maintained the quality of the goods, and exercised a strict monopoly over the trade. Maxwell describes the status of the guilds in the 18th century:

During the first half of the century, when religious feeling was strong, no guild admitted Roman Catholic merchants or craftsmen to its membership, but did so, as time went on, both as the result of the growth of toleration and from motives of economic expediency. By 1793, when Catholics were definitely admitted by Act of the Irish Parliament to all corporations, guild opinion had advanced so far that several of them actually declared for Catholic Emancipation. Many of the guilds also voted against the Union (The Act of Union, 1800), as being, in the words of a petition of the Merchant Tailors, "injurious to the rising prosperity of Ireland."³¹

The economic diversity of Ireland as indicated in this chapter contributed to a great variety of social and cultural conditions. It is true that this diversity was apparent in most European countries during the eighteenth century. It might be argued, however, that the particular religious and political structure of Irish society produced an environment of extremes in every facet of eighteenth-century life. Warburton describes the extremes in Dublin when he writes of the various exoduses of the poor in times of monetary stress from their desolate homes to beg in the more opulent parts of the city.³²

The social and political unrest in Ireland during the latter years of Stuart's tenure there, however, were not due to the complications

³¹ Maxwell, Dublin, 266, 111:79

³² Warburton, et al., Dublin, 34.

presented by the poor. Rather, it was the growing exasperation of the prosperous Catholic middle class increasingly demanding a share in government and no longer willing to be silent. Their demands, as has been seen, were adamantly and successfully presented in the early 1790's by the Catholic Convention and by the United Irish Movement. This initiative was fuelled by events in France.

CHAPTER X

THE IMPACT OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION
ON IRISH LIFE, AND EVENTS LEADING UP TO
STUART'S DEPARTURE

The impact of the French Revolution transformed the situation in Ireland. The movement of the United Irishmen, in which the leading spirit was Theobald Wolfe Tone (1793-98), sought to make Ireland a republic on French principles, and to break the connection with England.¹

The French Revolution ultimately propelled the rise of Catholic power in Ireland. The threat to established power and privilege presented by the Revolution in France adversely affected the security of the aristocratic class throughout the whole of Europe. In Ireland this was especially true since political power and privilege rested in the monopoly of franchise held by Protestants of the Established Church, and extensive land grants made to them by successive English monarchs. The rise of the Catholic middle class, therefore, was especially threatening to the ruling Protestant minority who were Stuart's patrons. The social changes that Stuart witnessed in Ireland

¹ Maire and Conor Cruise O'Brien, A History of Ireland (New York: Beekman House, 1972), 89.

involved a complete restructuring of society, whereby substantial political power shifted into the hands of Catholics, who just weeks before Stuart's departure from Dublin gained the franchise.

The outbreak of the Revolution in France in 1789 hastened proceedings in Ireland by providing example and stimulation. During Stuart's years in Ireland, parliamentary representation became the major focus of the Irish Catholic majority. Between the time of Stuart's arrival in 1787 and his departure in 1793, the whole political nature of Irish life changed. The Revolution in France provided the necessary stimulus that united Catholics and Protestant dissenters toward this end. France and Catholic Ireland proved sympathetic toward each other, an alliance in which their shared Catholicism and troubled relationship with England played a significant part. Events in Ireland during Stuart's time there were substantially guided and influenced by what was taking place in revolutionary France. The Irish press carried detailed accounts of events in France, and these were eagerly followed. Stuart's decision to leave Ireland in March 1793 was directly related to the political events in Ireland that made his life there as portraitist untenable. His hasty departure is related to a crescendo of events culminating during the parliamentary session in the opening months of 1793.

In the annals of eighteenth-century history, few events have received as much scholarly attention as the so-called "Atlantic Revolution" from 1770 to 1800. The far-reaching social, cultural, religious and political effects of this period have been a major issue in

eighteenth-century studies. Central to scholarship of the period are the French and American Revolutions; however, the revolutionary tendencies of the age also found virulent expression in Ireland with the United Irish Rising. Commonly known as the Rebellion of 1798, this uprising emanated directly from the revolutionary ethos itself and is but a further European manifestation of unilateral social unrest during the late eighteenth century. The effects of this revolutionary state of emergency were insistently present in Ireland during Gilbert Stuart's residence there, and two years after his arrival in Dublin the French Revolution was in full progress. This cataclysmic turn of events in France instilled Irish society and politics with questions of broad philosophical and pragmatic import that finally and irrevocably broke the power of the Irish Protestant Ascendancy. By 1793, the situation in Ireland had become so untenable that Stuart could no longer hope for further portrait commissions from that class who had been his patrons. It was clear that a new society was in formation, and that Stuart had no place in it. His association with the Protestant Ascendancy had been too complete to allow a shift in his source of patronage that would include the new forces in Irish life. Besides, the leaders of the Ascendancy were now in no position to further patronize Stuart, for the circumstances of wealth and power that brought them to Stuart's painting rooms were being speedily eroded.

A brief assessment of events both in America and Europe will serve as a base from which to investigate the situation in Ireland during Stuart's years there. As early as 1768, agitation began in the

Republic of Geneva, the Swiss Confederation, the Kingdom of Sardinia and also in the North American Colonies. Shortly thereafter the first armed conflict occurred in the American Revolutionary War and the battles of Lexington and Concord pitted colonial insurgents against the armies of George III. These years also saw the Russian peasant uprising known as the "Pugachev Revolt" (1773-1775) and the peasant revolt in France known as the Flour War. Three years later, in 1779, disorders broke out in Ireland when the Irish Volunteers demanded a change in the structure of society. This contributed to upset the social equilibrium in England and led to the Yorkshire movement and the Gordon Riots there during the following years. As the decade of the 1780's progressed, the outbreak of revolution in France rekindled revolutionary tendencies elsewhere and inflamed the situation in Ireland.

It should be recalled that the relationship between Catholic Ireland and France was particularly strong during the eighteenth century, long before revolutionary tendencies began to erupt. Trading between the two countries was substantial and the pamphleteer, Alexander the Coppersmith, complained as early as 1737 that Irish Catholics had captured the bulk of trade with France:

For the French in galleys of four or five hundred ton come hither themselves, always consigned to a popish factor, [emphasis mine], whose relations and correspondence abroad, and union at home; whose diligence being more, and luxury less than Protestants, will at last swallow up the trade, and such the marrow of this city.... By running away with this profitable branch, not only the prejudice they do a Protestant trader, but

the benefit accruing to popish dealers and tradesmen, is destructive of the Protestant interest in this city.²

Moreover, it was in France that a large proportion of the Roman Catholic clergy received their education, and recruitment for Irish regiments in the French army was common. It was even believed that the Irish Whiteboy movement based on agrarian violence had been fomented by French agents, and fear of French intrigue is often cited as the reason for the severe acts enacted against the movement.

While in Ireland the result of revolutionary philosophy, tendencies and events did not overthrow the entire established order with immediate violence, as it did in France, its effects threatened the fundamental tenets of the social order and directly led to the fall of the Protestant Ascendency:

The French Revolution had a remarkable message for all peoples, to the effect that an apparently deadlocked society was not necessarily deadlocked at all, and that a new order to society based on the theory of the people's participation rather than just on their acceptance of their lot was a practical possibility. This excited the minds of political thinkers all over the world, particularly in Britain, and most particularly of all in Ireland, where even more acutely than elsewhere in the British Isles, an urgent need for the reform of the political system along more popular lines was already being widely felt and discussed.³

The most immediate and pragmatic effect of the French Revolution was the formation of the United Irishmen, led by Theobald

² Quoted in Wall, "Irish Historical Studies," 100.

³ Robert Kee, The Green Flag: The Turbulent History of the Irish National Movement (New York: Delacorte Press, 1972), 41.

Wolfe Tone (1763-98), whose aim was to make Ireland a republic on French principles, and to break the connection with England. The north of Ireland, strongly Presbyterian, supported the United Irishmen, and many Catholics also joined the movement. Edmund Burke, as noted earlier, urged that the only way for England to avoid serious threats to its power in Ireland was to extend further concessions to the Catholic cause. This resulted in the monumental decision to grant limited franchise to Catholics in January 1793. While Catholics continued to be barred from parliament, the years between 1787 and 1793 in Ireland, when Stuart was resident there, witnessed profound changes due to the revolutionary impact. While the pragmatic signs of change were evident in the granting of Catholic franchise, other fundamental changes occurred beneath the surface and worked deeply within the structure of Irish society, religion and politics. These changes, relating to the rise of nationalism, were actively at work in Ireland during Stuart's residence, and produced a new generation of political elite with whom Stuart had no contact. They would become the patrons of Hugh Douglas Hamilton, who returned to Ireland in 1791.

The most pragmatic effect of the French Revolution on Irish life is seen during 1791 in the rise of the United Irish Movement. The leaders of this movement became Ireland's new political and social elite, but Stuart's allegiance was to an older order, and he had no place among them. Though the movement was Protestant in its origins, it was radically democratic in its aims and, therefore, derived much of

its political importance from its alliance with Roman Catholic leaders, whose claim to political rights it strongly supported. It will be recalled that most of the Catholic leaders, received their education in France with which contact among the clergy was particularly strong, and the Catholic majority in Ireland remained traditionally pro-French. Ironically however, it was among the Protestant community that revolutionary nationalism first developed during the last two decades of the century:

A movement for greater independence from English control was already far advanced before 1789, but participation of the Catholics in the extended powers of the political nation was not envisaged and those Protestant reformers who argued otherwise were ostracized. As long as the Protestant minority recognized that the basis of its power lay in the conquest and subsequent repression of the Catholic majority and ultimately on the support of English arms, it was unlikely that any movement for greater autonomy within the context of continuing British rule would be extended to a demand for outright independence. It was the situation created by the French Revolution which eventually brought about an alliance between the extreme Protestant reformers and the Catholics, giving the latter the leadership which could alone have turned their passive discontent to revolutionary ends.⁴ [emphasis mine]

The United Irish movement should be viewed in the greater context of the international rise of nationalism during the eighteenth century. Historians generally date the rise of modern nationalism from the American and French Revolutions. Irish patriotism, of

⁴ Marianne Elliott, Partners in Revolution: The United Irishmen and France (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1982), 304.

which the United Irish movement is but one manifestation, was a part of the developing nationalism which appeared both in Europe and America simultaneously during the late eighteenth century. In Ireland the very foundation of the Protestant Ascendancy itself during the successive wars of the seventeenth century almost de facto determined that an Irish Patriot Party would appear in opposition. The Constitution of 1782 is proof of the strength the Patriot party achieved during the last decades of the century and, as has been discussed, the Irish Parliament won a significant measure of autonomy in that year. It is of further interest to note that the very nature of the Constitution of 1782 by withholding enfranchisement inspired a radical minority among Catholics and nationalistically-minded Protestants. From among these ranks, the new Irish leaders emerged after 1791: Wolfe Tone, Robert Emmett and Lord Edward Fitzgerald. The association between Catholic and Protestant in the cause of Irish patriotism is eloquently presented by F. G. James:

Like other colonial elites, the Anglo-Irish desired self-government to enjoy their privileges without British interference, but they were not moved by any broader sense of Irish nationalism. Nevertheless, as in the American colonies, the aristocrats' struggle with the imperial government engendered a national identity and produced a rhetoric which fostered the support of all Irishmen in a common effort to win autonomy. Furthermore, the religious intolerance inherited from the 16th and 17th centuries began to dissipate under the influence of the Enlightenment At the same time, upper and middle-class Roman Catholics, including some clergy, emphasized their loyalty to the existing political system. The constitution of 1782 not only fulfilled the aspirations of the "Protestant nation of Ireland," it also created the framework for

a wider nationalism. Protestant moderates gradually began to lose the "garrison mind" of the past and to feel a responsibility toward the Catholic majority.⁵

During the summer of 1789 reports from France became more and more prevalent in Irish newspapers, and before the end of July the term "French Revolution" had reached the headlines. Beckett points out that news from France was received with great satisfaction. The tradition of the Volunteers, the recent establishment of the "constitution of 1782" and the widespread movement for parliamentary reform, had all prepared the way for a genuine enthusiasm for revolutionary principles. In November 1789, the Theater Royal staged Gallic Freedom or the Destruction of the Bastille. In 1790 the Royal Amphitheater presented "a superb spectacle, called The Civic Oath ... portraying the whole of the business in the Champ de Mars."

The United Irish movement, which began life in 1791, went through sudden transformation as described by Marianne Elliott:

At the outset they were republican in the manner of the classical republicanism of the English 'country' or 'real Whigs,' the eighteenth-century 'Commonwealthmen' or the writers of the Enlightenment, accepting monarchy but seeking to curb the powers of central government, to preserve fundamental liberties and to secure religious toleration. Their transformation into a militantly anti-English, anti-monarchical republican movement was produced by the reaction of a general European crisis upon the peculiar historical situation in Ireland. [emphasis mine] The extent to which thinking men at the end of the eighteenth-century considered themselves cosmopolites is too often ignored.

⁵ F.G. James, "The Church of Ireland and the Patriotic Movement in the Late Eighteenth Century," Eire (Summer, 1982), XVII, ii, 47.

It was this sense of belonging to a wider reform movement, which had spurred the French, the Dutch, the Belgians, the Savoyards and the Poles to revolt against oppression, which made an alliance with France such a natural alternative for the United Irishmen when faced with total suppression at home.⁶

Within this atmosphere of economic and social unrest the ideas of the "philosophes" found a fertile soil in France and spread to Ireland. While they were more numerous in France, they were also active in England and America. All seemed imbued with a spirit of global mission and the issues which they addressed were broadly philosophical, and universally applicable. This accounts for the appearance of Revolutionary tendencies at different locations far removed from each other. Among the issues already mentioned causal to the Atlantic Revolution, must be added the philosophy of the Enlightenment. These ideas were spread in France by the writings of Montesquieu, Voltaire, Rousseau, D'Alembert, Diderot, and others. In England the new ideas were promoted by Locke, Hobbes, Hume, and Smith; in Germany by Kant, Schiller, and Goethe; while Beccaria, Genovesi and Verri were found in Italy. In America, Benjamin Franklin was the prophet of the Enlightenment. The ideas of the "philosophes" clearly ranged significantly from moderate to radical. For instance, Voltaire called for the equality of all peoples before the monarch, while Rousseau advocated the entire sovereignty of the people. These ideas were spread by popular commentators, most notably in the Encyclopedia, which began to appear in France in 1751.

⁶ Ibid., 48.

Because of the cosmopolitan nature of international politics in the late eighteenth century, Ireland as already noted was profoundly influenced by international thought. As Elliott points out:

The United Irish Society can only be fully understood in the wider context of the European crisis in general and French politics in particular.... Early overtures from France permitted them to regard themselves as legitimate combatants ... This alliance with France, and their sense of involvement in an ideological war which knew no national boundaries, helped legitimize their revolt in their own minds... [emphasis mine]. Moreover, the widespread discontent in Ireland and the population's sense of alienation from their rulers was such a universally-known fact that the United Irishmen could plausibly claim to represent the interests of an entire nation in the struggle against a foreign conqueror, rather than those of a revolutionary elite.⁷

From the middle of the century, Ireland, like England, witnessed the rise of local reform groups and reading clubs, and the popular image of the Irish peasants as an illiterate mass needs revision. Despite their exclusion from any formal education, flourishing oral culture and a tradition of "hedge-school" teaching resulted in a relatively high degree of literacy among the Irish people. The image of the Irish cottier as impoverished and degraded derives from the period of the Great Famine. At the end of the eighteenth century, the rural population included solvent tenant farmers, dairymen, artisans, domestic workers and a large number of seasonal migratory workers who found frequent employment in domestic

⁷ Elliott, Partners, xiv-xv.

industry: brewing, distilling, weaving or in construction trades emanating from the building of both the Royal and Grand Canals. Elliott notes the presence of a large mobile work force that bridged the gap between urban and rural society, and she states that both "defenderism" and the United Irish system frequently reached the remote areas through returning tradesmen or laborers, rather than by more official means.⁸ Regarding the reading clubs, Francis Higgins, one of the government's longest serving and most reliable agents, described them as "clubs of journeymen, artificers, and tradesmen ... something ... above the common rabble."⁹ Higgins adds that these groups had learned their revolutionary ideas from reading newspapers, or from "Paine's politics of Liberty and Equality." Such groups were apparently quite numerous and were organized with such names as "Sons of Freedom," the "Philanthropic Society," the "Liberty Boys" or the "Friends of Parliamentary Reform."¹⁰ All were guaranteed to produce profound change among Stuart's elite social class, for ultimately the system of privilege that attended them was at the core of middle-class grievance.

Thomas Paine's Rights of Man had been widely circulated and read in England and Ireland.¹¹ Essentially it was a reply to

8 Ibid.

9 Ibid., 15.

10 Ibid.

11 In March 1791, Paine published the first part of his Rights of Man, and the second part appeared in February 1792. Within a few weeks of the initial publication, an

Edmund Burke's Reflections on the Revolution in France 1790.

Burke considered the Revolution in France a European catastrophe. He advocated a vigorous policy of oppression and called for the use of force by England and her allies to repress the revolutionary movement. Radical clubs had also grown up in England while Burke continued his stringent defiance of radicals and reformers. Paine's book proved immensely popular, and in England, societies such as the "Society of Constitutional Information" were founded. The general aim of these societies was the dissemination of Paine's ideas by reading his works. By 1792, almost every town had such a club and these aimed to impress the government with the strength of the public opinion favorable to France. Unlike the Irish societies, they were not secret, but were composed of members drawn from the working or lower middle class. They corresponded with the National Assembly and with various Jacobin clubs in France. By 1790, the British government had become alarmed at the spread of radical ideas and the foundation of clubs and societies. Parliament responded vigorously, arrests were made, and the Treason and Sedition Acts were enacted and enforced.

By the early 1790's, Thomas Paine had set himself up in Paris as the "political philosopher" of Ireland's "coming revolution."¹² Paine

inexpensive edition appeared in Dublin. By the end of 1791, there were thirteen editions of Paine's work.

¹² McDowell, Ireland, 352-353. Paine was even elected an honorary member of the Dublin Society of United Irishmen.

joined and was among the most prominent members of a group of Anglo-Irish exiles who were promoting the idea of a British Revolution. Other prominent figures in this group were William Duckett and John Hurford Stone. Protestant opposition was equally intense and immediate. Foremost among Protestant fear was the belief that Catholics sought parliamentary representation not as an end in itself, but as a means of reviving James II's Court of Claims in order to confiscate Protestant property. Protestant fears were further intensified by the knowledge that the most outspoken leaders in the Catholic committee were also prominent in the Dublin Society of United Irishmen: Richard McCormick, a poplin manufacturer, John Keogh, a Dublin merchant, and Edward Lewins, an attorney.

Theobald Wolfe Tone, a young Protestant barrister, had been appointed secretary of the Catholic committee in July 1792.¹³ Tone had recently attacked the penal laws in a pamphlet entitled An argument on behalf of the Catholics of Ireland, and Tone's aim was to bring together Irishmen of all creeds in an effort to establish complete religious equality and to carry through a radical reform of parliament. Another United Irishman, Simon Butler, was legal adviser and together with Tone presented a strong and indomitable appearance of power. The nature of the Catholic campaign was such that government thought that the Catholics and the northern "levellers" were in league to topple the whole social structure.¹⁴ Wolfe Tone,

¹³ Ibid., 404-405.

¹⁴ Ibid., 406-407.

though not himself a Presbyterian, but a member of the established church, was in close contact with the Presbyterians of Ulster, and during 1791 had been instrumental in founding a Belfast chapter of the United Irishmen. The alliance between middle-class Protestant and Catholic was thus established, and appeared as a significant threat to the administration both in Dublin and London. Irish reformers, even though some disappointment and alarm seems to have existed concerning French revolutionary policies and actions, were attracted to and guided by the ideals of the revolution. Among those which appealed to the Irish reformers were the call for the widening of the electorate, the abolition of tithe, and the establishment of religious equality. These issues were pertinent both to Presbyterians and Catholics alike. However, the Catholic bishops registered horror at the treatment of the French church by the revolutionaries, and the Catholic upper classes were as hostile to Revolutionary ideas as were upper class Protestants. They were sensitive to embarrassing the government and even to support for relaxation of the penal laws. It is to the more democratic element within the Catholic population, the middle-class core with interest in attaining full civil and religious rights, that is owed the alliance of Catholic and Protestant in the 1790's. This dynamic group arrested the power of the Catholic Committee during 1791, and appointed Tone as its head.

In France, a group committed to Ireland's cause had been formed. These included: Robert Smith, a knighted Englishman;

Colonel Eleazer Oswald, an American; Nicholas Madgett, an Irish exile; and Lord Edward Fitzgerald, who travelled to France from Ireland and spoke to Paine concerning the availability of French military aid for an Irish revolution.¹⁵ Paine apparently communicated to Lebrun a suggestion made by Lord Edward that if 40,000 Volunteers could be financed and kept in the field for three months, Ireland would be liberated. Eleazer Oswald, the American, was apparently "commissioned" to travel to Ireland in order to discover the disposition of the Irish people for insurrection. Meanwhile, Lord Edward Fitzgerald arrived back in Ireland in late November or early December 1792, a few brief months before Stuart's departure. News of Fitzgerald's arrival heralded the growing intensity with which thoughts of revolution were developing in Ireland. By then Catholics of the more radical middle classes had assumed control of the Catholic Committee, and aggression became more pronounced.¹⁶

These events in Ireland had been exacerbated by the passing in England of Mitford's Act in 1791, extending further freedom to Catholics in England.¹⁷ As a result, Irish Catholics expected similar treatment. Attempts, however, of the Catholic Committee to petition the Irish Parliament for further relaxation of the Penal Code were not favorably responded to. As Elliott points out, some Catholics would

¹⁵ Ibid., 504.

¹⁶ Elliott, Partners, 36.

¹⁷ McDowell, Ireland.

have been satisfied to drop the matter entirely, but the more radical and democratic middle-classes were less easily daunted.¹⁸ Finally, as it became mutually clear that agreement could not be reached on fundamental issues within the Committee, the prelates and Catholic aristocracy seceded, leaving its direction to radical members. In December 1791, the Catholic Committee demanded total repeal of all remaining penal legislation and was refused. The passing of Langrishe's Act in the Irish Parliament of 1792, however, ensured that Catholics were admitted to the practice of law, and remaining restrictions on education were for the most part removed. Despite these concessions however, one great impediment remained: an overwhelming majority defeated the proposal to enfranchise Catholics and therefore all political power remained in the hands of Protestants. Predictably, the Catholic Committee refused to accept the finality of this decision and immediately summoned a "Catholic Convention" to meet in Dublin in December of that year. Delegates were to be chosen from all parts of the country and thereby the entire Catholic population would be represented there. In Beckett's words:

This move alarmed and perplexed the executive. It would willingly have prohibited the holding of the convention; but such action would have provoked serious rioting, or even a general insurrection, with which the government forces were ill-prepared to deal: and appeals to the British cabinet for support were coldly received. Pitt recognized the impolicy of yielding to a threat of force: but in the autumn of 1792 relations with France were getting steadily worse, and Ireland might well become a

¹⁸ Elliott, *Partners*, 36-37.

fruitful field for French intrigue; with war now a serious possibility it was urgently necessary to abolish "the bank of discontent," as Burke called it, "upon which every description of seditious men may draw at pleasure." By November the British cabinet had made up its mind, and the lord lieutenant was confidentially informed that further concessions must be granted to the Roman Catholics.¹⁹

When the Catholic Convention met in Dublin in December 1792, it seems to have been an extremely orderly affair. Priority was given to drafting a petition to George III, which was to be presented to him in person. Traditional procedure dictated that such petitions be first given to the lord lieutenant, and then directed to London. Ignoring traditional procedure, and deliberately antagonizing the Irish Administration, the delegates travelled through Belfast and Scotland receiving the support of Northern Protestants along the way. They arrived in London and were received at court. By that time, however, the British cabinet had already decided to press the Irish Parliament and administration to grant further measures of relief. It is generally accepted that the delegation had little effect on this decision. The adoption of the new policy, however, may well have determined the friendly reception of the delegates at court. The reception accorded the Irish delegates also invoked concern among Irish parliamentarians. When parliament was convoked on January 10, 1793, Protestant fears were confirmed: Lord Lieutenant Westmoreland, in his opening speech, expressed the hope "that the situation of his majesty's Catholic

¹⁹ Beckett, Modern Ireland, 249.

subjects will engage your serious attention."²⁰ Three weeks later, the famous Catholic Relief Act of 1793 was passed, admitting Catholics to the franchise on the same terms as Protestants. The remaining obstacle was that Catholics remained barred from parliament. They were however allowed the right to bear arms, hold military posts and civil positions, and hold land without restriction. Opposition to these concessions proved remarkably weak and the measures passed by a large majority although many supported the bill reluctantly. Fitzgibbon for instance was numbered among the Act's supporters, even though he believed that it was "unwise and pernicious." The progress of French revolutionary armies and the outbreak of war between England and France insured that Protestant fear was greater than their obstinacy. The result of this state of affairs was that:

England's actions had destroyed the Protestant ascendancy's veneer of confident security, forcing it to express its fears in increasingly shrill warnings and publicly exposing its ill-will towards the Catholics.... It had undermined the Protestant's authority by showing that they could not ultimately rely on British support The year 1793 accordingly became the Irish Protestants' ne plus ultra at a time when, as they had predicted, Catholic demands had escalated to include full emancipation.²¹

While attention is most often given to the concessions made to the Catholic population during the parliamentary session of 1793, it is significant that these concessions were granted against some

²⁰ Ibid., 250.

²¹ Elliott, Partners, 38.

measures of repression which in fact operated against both Catholic and Protestant alike. These included an arms act which prohibited the importation of arms ammunition and gunpowder. A further act prohibited the holding of representative assemblies. Both these proceedings serve to indicate the great measure of fear that persisted among the Administration during the opening months of 1793.

William Preston, a well-known Dublin dramatist, was inspired to write and produce a play, Democratic Rage, at the Theatre Royal in Spring 1793. Based on the French Revolution and centering around the death of the King, the play apparently attracted much attention in Dublin and on opening night had a large and fashionable audience. The stage manager was praised for staging "the solemn procession of Louis XVI from the Temple to the place of execution, attended by the national guards, officers, Parisians, drums, trumpets, etc., with a representation of the guillotine and scaffold on which he suffered."²² The play contrasted the mild, forgiving christianity of the king and the pathetic sorrow of his humbled family with the unscrupulous determination displayed by Orleans, Robespierre and Marat in engineering the King's death. Orleans is depicted as using Marat and Robespierre as instruments in an intrigue to secure the crown, Robespierre as scheming to rule France through the Duke, and Marat as a fanatic dedicated to revolutionary ideas. In the play, the fate of the queen also attracted attention and sympathetic interest and it was

²² McDowell, Ireland, 352.

stated by one distinguished member of the audience that "the queen appeared very great..... I know not what she was, but they were cruel and cowardly to take the life of this beautiful young woman."²³

The success of Preston's play is indication enough of the fact that the sympathies of the Anglo-Irish Protestant class lay with the established order. Stuart's patrons and their world were completely threatened by events in France, and Preston's play expressed their horror at the regicide, and their fear of events to come.

For the first time the power of the Irish Protestant Ascendency was seriously threatened. As Elliott explains,

The events of 1792-1793 had terminated Ireland's liberal era in one fell swoop. The gulf between the Protestant establishment and the rest of the population was shown for what it was, and before long the Catholic leaders would throw in their lot with the militant republicans to win those rights which the Irish politicians were manifestly determined to withhold.²⁴

The prospects of a French invasion of Britain, using Ireland as a stepping stone, were now more real than ever. In Ireland the threat of revolution came most obviously from the United Irishmen. From the beginning, the United Irishmen, as has been noted, contained a group within its ranks whose purpose was not to reform the political structure of the day, but to destroy the existing power structure and to erect a republic on French principles in its place. The outbreak of war,

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid., 39.

and the possibility of foreign aid which was to be confirmed by Oswald's arrival in May, won over many supporters for this policy. In the midst of these proceedings, in mid-March 1793, Stuart hastily left Ireland to return to America. The timing of his departure indicates a desire to escape hostilities and to depart before what must have appeared to him to be the imminent violent collapse of his patrons.

Stuart's apparently abrupt departure from Ireland is variously accounted for. Jane Stuart, according to Dunlap, reported that, "The love for his own country, and his admiration of General Washington, and the very great desire he had to paint his portrait, was his only [emphasis mine] inducement to turn his back on his good fortune in Europe."²⁵

Conversely, Mason presents the problem of "ever-mounting debts" as the reason for Stuart's hasty departure.²⁶ According to Herbert, Stuart expanded on his plans for leaving Ireland during a meeting at his Stillorgan estate during the latter half of 1792.²⁷ Regarding the new Parliament of 1793, Stuart is reported to have said,

I'll get some of my first sittings finished: and when I can net a sum sufficient to take me to America, I shall be off to my native soil. There I expect to make a fortune by Washington alone. I calculate upon making a plurality of his portraits, whole lengths, that will enable me to realize; and if I should be

²⁵ Dunlap, History, 1:221.

²⁶ Mason, Stuart, 50.

²⁷ Herbert, Varieties, 248.

fortunate, I will repay my English and Irish creditors. To Ireland and England I shall bid adieu.²⁸

When Herbert inquired what Stuart's intention regarding his unfinished works might be, the reply was: "The artists of Dublin will get employment in finishing them. You may reckon on making something handsome by it.... The possessors will be well off. The likeness is there, and the finishing may be better than I should have made it."²⁹

Undoubtedly Stuart had some financial problems while in Ireland. Mason noted that Jane Stuart recalled: "It gave my mother pain, to remember anything associated with reckless extravagance, or what she called his folly."³⁰ To claim, however, that his departure from Ireland was entirely based on either his desire to escape his debts or on an overwhelming desire to paint Washington is to ignore some very important issues. Several matters of extreme significance for Stuart climaxed during 1792, and early in 1793, and these clearly must have influenced his move. To begin with, there was the rising tension in Ireland and quickening pace of revolutionary tendencies as the United Irishmen prepared to greet the arrival of Lord Edward Fitzgerald from France. Fitzgerald had already distinguished himself as a young officer in North America and Canada, but was cashiered

28 Ibid.

29 Ibid.

30 Mason, Stuart 54.

from the army earlier in 1792 after participating in a republican event in Paris where all hereditary titles and distinctions were renounced. In January 1793, this influential member of the aristocracy accused the Irish Parliament and the Lord Lieutenant of being the king's worst enemies. This alienated Fitzgerald from the aristocracy and the establishment, but endeared him to the Irish radicals whose enthusiasm for the French Revolution had become a way of life.³¹ Increased pressure was being exerted from the Catholic quarter. On January 10, 1793, the Dublin Chronicle, on its front page, announced that, "This day is published by James Moore, College Green: The Catholic Claim to the Elective Franchise, discussed in an Essay upon the True Principle of Civil Liberty and of Free Government. By Charles Sheridan."³² On January 22, the same publication carried an excerpt from a parliamentary speech given by the Right Hon. W.B. Ponsonby, who was reported to have said, "I believe that every gentleman will agree with me that this country now stands in a situation in which it never stood before; a situation certainly of much difficulty, and consequently of some danger."³³ The final blow came on February 1, 1793, when France declared war on Britain. This posed a special threat to Ireland, since the positioning of a French occupation there would have dealt a deadly blow to England. Shock waves were soon felt

³¹ Elliott, Partners, 25.

³² Dublin Chronicle, 10 January, 1793.

³³ *Ibid.*, 22 January, 1793.

in Ireland. On March 9th, there was a riot in Belfast. Apparently, the members of the 17th Dragoons, incensed by the playing of "an outlandish tune," lost their tempers and scuffled with citizens.³⁴ Windows were smashed and shop-signs pulled down. Great alarm seems to have attended the event, and Belfast was stunned by the sudden experience of violence. A few days later a proclamation was issued in Belfast warning loyal subjects not to assemble in arms, and the public were advised that it would be "magnanimous to discontinue the use of arms for the present." Other incidents followed and at the beginning of 1793, as McDowell points out, the government's ability to master the volunteers had still to be proved and it was also highly uncertain if it could impose its solution of the Catholic question without yielding to either liberal or ultra-Protestant pressure.³⁵

In a brief Parliamentary session early in 1793, the Catholic Enfranchisement Act was introduced by Chief Secretary Hobart and received the reluctant consent of the Irish Parliament.³⁶ This Act, along with other concessions, gave voting rights to all Catholics who were otherwise qualified. Though some restrictions still remained such as membership in Parliament, the demand increasingly arose for complete emancipation.

³⁴ McDowell, Ireland, 433.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 434.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

Undoubtedly Stuart saw the old order changing in Ireland, and clearly his position, like that of the aristocracy whom he painted and from whom he derived his patronage, was deeply threatened. A return to England was clearly ruled out. Benjamin West, with whom Stuart was not on friendly terms, was the new president of the Royal Academy, having replaced Sir Joshua Reynolds in 1792. This would have placed a serious damper on Stuart's return to England and, moreover, the war with France created great instability there also. Stuart's English patrons had preoccupations other than sitting for their portraits. Stuart's departure from Dublin was reported in the Dublin Chronicle on March 19, 1793: "Mr. Stuart's quitting this Kingdom for America gives fair opening to the abilities of Mr. Pack, who now stands unrivalled as a portrait painter."

CHAPTER XI

THE LEGACY: EFFECTS OF STUART'S TENURE ON IRISH PAINTING AND PATRONAGE

George Washington, Esq., has already been destined by a thousand voices to fill the place of the first President of the United States ... our illustrious hero peaceably retired to his farm after the war, from whence it is expected he will be called, by the suffrage of three millions of people, to govern the country by his wisdom ... Can Europe boast of such a man

Dublin Chronicle, January 8, 1788,
copied from the Pennsylvania Herald,
September 27, 1787

For Stuart, the closing decade of the eighteenth century in Ireland unfolded with a sense of powerful inevitability and witnessed the transfer of power from the Protestant Ascendancy to the Catholic majority. The unsolved problems of the century, the diminishing position of the Protestant Ascendancy, the structure of government and the separatist nature of the Catholic majority all became enmeshed in a complicated and intense social environment. The tensions within

the country occurred against the background of the French Revolution and the implications of a major European war.

Stuart's patrons, who were Ireland's political leaders, became increasingly apprehensive of the immense Catholic majority, which seemed increasingly out of control. For Stuart himself, the painter of the Protestant Ascendancy, the future clearly could not be promising. Indeed, it was Stuart's association with the Protestant Ascendancy, and his persistent limitation of his sitters to that class, that curtailed his success in Ireland. Stuart had identified himself as the portraitist of a class whose life was endangered, and this left him with few alternatives. The Irish world was rapidly changing, and by 1793 it was clear to Stuart that his popularity was about to end. As an example of the times, the older, native-born painter, Hugh Douglas Hamilton, ironically, arrived back for retirement to Dublin late in 1791 and took his sitters equally from among the diverse groups now rising into prominence in Irish life.¹ Hamilton consequently inherited what might have been Stuart's portrait market and became the painter of the new generation. Hamilton indeed even inherited some of Stuart's earlier sitters, as in the case of the Duke and Duchess of Leinster,² and even Stuart's patron, John Fitzgibbon, who appears in a full-length by Hamilton (National Gallery of Ireland) as an older peer, in

¹ Crookshank and the Knight of Glin, *Painters*, 92.

² Hamilton completed two small whole-length pastels of the Duke and Duchess of Leinster. See Crookshank and the Knight of Glin, *Painters*, 93. For the Hamilton portraits see *Illustrated Summary Catalogue of Paintings*, National Gallery of Ireland (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1981), 209.

the Stuart style. Indeed, many of Hamilton's Irish works seem to owe a debt to Stuart, and it is most possible that Hamilton's three-quarter length of Lord Edward Fitzgerald was based on Stuart's of Henry Grattan. A study of the replica of Stuart's work in Trinity College Dublin with the Hamilton in the National Gallery of Art substantiates this possibility, for the unusual pose and design of both works are too compelling not to presume some influence. Stuart had paved the way for Hamilton's return by creating a taste and need for paintings in the Stuart style. Hamilton trained at the Dublin Society Schools between 1750 and 1756 and enjoyed a successful career in London and Rome where he kept company with Flaxman, Canova and other significant figures. Another indication of Hamilton's diversity in patronage is noted by Crookshank and the Knight of Glin who suggest that in Italy, "he seems to have painted the exiled Stuarts, Prince Charles Edward, Cardinal York and Louise de Stolbert."³ It seems somewhat appropriately ironic that the painter who painted the exiled Stuarts should succeed to the legacy of the departed Gilbert Stuart. His return to Dublin was clearly a decision toward retirement, for he was then in his sixties, with a successful career behind him. On his return he maintained his friendship with Canova through correspondence, often complaining that he was bored of painting portraits.⁴ Among those whose portraits he painted in Dublin were Colonel Hugh O'Donnell,

³ Crookshank and the Knight of Glin, *Painters*, 92.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 93.

Lord Edward Fitzgerald and John Philpot Curran, all leaders in the Irish nationalistic movement, and supporters of the Catholic cause. Curran, a lawyer, had fought a duel with John Fitzgibbon, Stuart's patron, in 1785 and both remained arch enemies.⁵ Earlier in his career, after graduation from Trinity College and studies at the Middle Temple in London, Curran was admitted to the Irish Bar in 1775. In 1780, Curran, a Protestant, represented a Catholic priest against Lord Doneraile, an influential member of the Ascendancy.⁶ Curran's fame and notoriety was assured when he motivated a Protestant jury to award the priest damages of thirty guineas for having been horsewhipped by Doneraile. O'Donnell and Fitzgerald have been previously discussed as members of the Irish nationalist movement. In addition, Hamilton painted many society portraits in a style of greater simplicity than his earlier work in London and Rome. That Hamilton was enabled to paint a more diverse group in Irish society may well derive from his willingness to retain independence from the political climate. Unlike Stuart, Hamilton was returning to Ireland after a successful career abroad, and his position in Dublin was not, as in Stuart's case, linked to political and social allies.

Hamilton's patronage was much broader than Stuart's, and that alone, combined with his earlier success and reputation, allowed him to make a late flowering in his career to which Stuart's flight

⁵ Leslie Hale, John Philpot Curran: His Life and Times (Dublin: Cape, 1958), 103.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 149.

contributed.⁷ Hamilton died in 1808, but by then he had provided a visual record of major personalities during the cataclysmic years after Stuart's departure. Flashes of Stuart's style can be detected in Hamilton's late works. A striking example of this is Hamilton's portrait of Hugh O'Donnell (Figure 43). In this work, Hamilton presents a dynamic character study in the Stuart style. With Stuart's penetrating concentration on the face, O'Donnell is shown with exhilarating optimism and idealism. Notes of Stuart appear in overall style, and specifically in the treatment of hair and cravat, where Stuart's fullness and power of suggestion are consummate.

Stuart's departure was not one moment premature, for between Hamilton's arrival in 1791, and Stuart's departure early in 1793 the forces which were to erode the existing social structure of the country were already in full operation. In 1801, Dublin ceased altogether to be the seat of parliament, and union with England was formalized. These events developing out of the failure of the 1798 rebellion, brought about a complete change in the nature of Dublin society. London, and not Dublin, was now the seat of government and center of the Irish nobility and gentry. Before the Act of Union, 269 peers and 300 members of parliament had houses in Dublin. By 1821, only 34 peers, 13 baronets and 5 members resided in the Irish capital.⁸

⁷ For a discussion of Hamilton's late career, see Crookshank and the Knight of Glin, Painters, 93-94.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 173.

Once again the novels of Maria Edgeworth best describe the evolving Irish social life at the time. In her novel Ennui (1809), Edgeworth considers the reaction of a gentleman to the magnificence of the Shelbourne Hotel in Dublin's fashionable St. Stephen's Green:

"Ah! sir," said an Irish gentleman, who found me in admiration upon the staircase, "this is all very good, very fine, but it is too good and too fine to last; come here again in two years, and I am afraid you will see all this going to rack and ruin. This is too often the case with us in Ireland; we can project but we can't calculate; we must have everything upon too large a scale. We mistake a grand beginning to a good beginning. We begin like princes and we end like beggars."⁹

The lack of optimism in this passage, as distinct from the exhilaration of the period of Grattan's Parliament and earlier Dublin society, is clear. Symbolically, visual expression is given to the period after the Act of Union by Caroline Hamilton whose watercolor Society 1801 (Figure 44) expresses all the ennui of Edgeworth's novel. The characters haphazardly engage in a card game, yawn and look bored as they inhabit an elegant drawing room. The work is a caricature which nevertheless gives expression to a period when Dublin was emptied of society, and many of the nobility and gentry retired to the country, and others to England. Social demise followed as many absentee landlords no longer paid attention to their properties in the provinces; as a result, great houses, the former country seats of the parliamentary class, turned to decay. There was indeed little to hold

⁹ Maria Edgeworth, Ennui, vol. 5 of Tales and Miscellaneous Pieces (London: R. Hunter, 1825), 26.

Stuart there for the class who formed his patronage was no more. Fortunately, for Stuart, in America there was Washington and the new government. Throughout Stuart's years in Ireland, the Irish news carried extensive coverage of events in America, and Stuart, as Herbert informs us, could detect a new and burgeoning market there in General Washington and his government officials.¹⁰

Throughout his career, both in Ireland and after his return to America, Stuart had the reputation of generously giving his advice and encouragement to young artists. In his tribute to Gilbert Stuart published in the Boston Daily Advertiser on July 22, 1828, a few days after Stuart's death, Washington Allston wrote of Stuart: "To the younger artists he was uniformly kind and indulgent, and most liberal of his advice; which no one ever properly asked but he received, and in a manner no less courteous than impressive."¹¹

While in Ireland, Stuart seems to have had a very definite effect on the careers of four young Irish painters, all products of the Dublin Society Schools: George Place, William Cuming, John Comerford and Martin Archer Shee. Both Whitley and John Hill Morgan provide information on the nature of Stuart's contact with the miniature

¹⁰ An examination of the periodicals of these years illustrates that events in America were reported with great frequency. The Dublin Chronicle was especially attentive, and in its issue of 6 November 1787 it presented the "Plan for the New Constitution of the United States of America." From that date forward, virtually every issue bore news of American issues.

¹¹ John Hill Morgan, Gilbert Stuart and his Pupils (New York: The New York Historical Society, 1939), 19-20.

painter George Place who entered the Dublin Society Schools in 1775.¹² He was older than the other three and apparently practiced miniature painting in Dublin and apprenticed with Stuart in 1789 before transferring to London where he exhibited miniatures at the Royal Academy in 1791, 1792, 1793 and in 1797. Place later died in India in 1809. It is most probable that Stuart provided Place with the same advice that he gave to Shee who also left Dublin for a significant career in England. How Stuart met Comerford and Shee is unrecorded, however we may presume that acquaintance was made through Francis Robert West who ran the Dublin Society Schools, or through mutual acquaintances, such as Herbert. A meeting between West and Stuart is recorded in Herbert, as noted earlier, and Herbert himself was a young painter during his years as Stuart's assistant.¹³ Herbert was born c. 1762, Cuming and Shee in 1769 and Comerford in 1770. At the time of Stuart's arrival in Ireland, Cuming, Comerford and Shee were about 19 years old and had just completed their training at the Dublin Society Schools. Unfortunately, little information is known about Comerford, and there are but few works extant. Strickland mentions that Comerford had his early training in his native Kilkenny where he copied pictures in Kilkenny Castle. After his training at the Dublin Society schools, Comerford remained in Dublin and it is presumably at that time that he met Stuart. We have evidence of

¹² Ibid., 3. Place is not mentioned in Pasquin.

¹³ Herbert, *Varieties*, 239-241.

Comerford's return to his native Kilkenny in 1793, the year of Stuart's departure from Dublin. On 29 June 1793, the Leinster Journal carried an advertisement for Comerford announcing his arrival in Kilkenny from Dublin as a "portrait painter in oils."¹⁴ Considering that Comerford left Dublin shortly after Stuart, it is certainly possible that Comerford may have subsisted in Dublin as one of Stuart's assistants, and was engaged in finishing Stuart's portraits. Comerford seems to have been particularly known for his portraits of elderly ladies, in which case he would have been no threat to Stuart, who may well have allowed him this privilege while under his influence in Dublin.¹⁵ Also, he apparently painted a portrait of his relative and neighbor Miss Jane Langton of High Street in Kilkenny shortly after he arrived there. Comerford seems to have remained in Kilkenny until his return to Dublin in 1802. In 1800, he apparently sent two portraits in miniature to the Society of Artists of Ireland Exhibition at Allen's in Dame Street, and these were his first works seen by the Dublin public. The influence of George Chinnery is seen in Comerford's work also, but the very open brushwork of Comerford is due to the unmistakable influence of Stuart. The sharp eyes, ruddy skin tones and concise brushstroke apparent in Comerford's portrait of Mrs. Dobbryn, c. 1795 (Figure 45), reveal a series of characteristics that were absent in Irish painting

¹⁴ Leinster Journal, 29 June 1793, quoted in Crookshank and the Knight of Glin, Painters, 174.

¹⁵ Crookshank and the Knight of Glin, Painters, 175.

prior to Stuart's arrival.¹⁶ Comerford, it is interesting to note, forsook the larger portrait formula early in the nineteenth century to become a miniaturist, where he excelled. Mulvany the biographer of Gandon wrote of Comerford that: "...although of sufficiently prudent turn of mind to amass a very handsome fortune...he delighted to relax in the society of his friends, among whom were included all the distinguished artists of the day...."¹⁷ It is possible that Stuart's love of conviviality was absorbed by Comerford.

A writer in the Hibernian Magazine in 1811, reporting on the life of William Cuming, addressed the matter of influence by stating that Cuming attended the Dublin Society Schools when "the reputation of Stuart, De Gray [sic] and Hamilton, was at that time in its full vigour...."¹⁸ Cuming was the artist who had finished the portrait of Gandon mentioned in Chapter IV.. This work could not, as Crookshank and Fitzgerald have noted, been completed before the 1790's, as it shows Gandon holding a drawing of the Four Courts, not commissioned until 1785, and has the completed Four Courts and Customs House in the background.¹⁹ The influence of Stuart is seen

¹⁶ The proximity of Comerford's style in this portrait to that of Stuart led Mount to attribute the work to Stuart. See Appendix No. 32.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ "B" (pseud), "Biographical Sketch of Mr. Cuming." Walker's Hibernian Magazine (June, 1811), 330. Note also that the De Gray referred to here is undoubtedly De Gree, the Dutch painter who acted as agent for Rutland and Reynolds. See Pasquin, Professors, 49-50. Pasquin reports that De Gree "made an attempt at portrait painting in Dublin, but did not succeed." He died in Dublin in 1788.

¹⁹ Crookshank and the Knight of Glin, Painters, 174.

in the Gandon, most especially in the open brushwork of the costume and background. The white cuffs and collar show the economy and deftness of Stuart's touch in the treatment of such areas, and are in marked contrast to the rather more labored and defined brushwork of the head by Kettle. Kettle had visited Dublin in 1783 briefly and painted the portrait of Gandon, but left all but the head unfinished. The more obvious influence of Stuart on Cuming's works is naturally seen in works completed by his own hand. Here the very accomplished portrait of the artist Vincent Waldre (Figure 46) is a case in point. This portrait is painted with a bravura most uncommon at the time in Irish portraiture, and must be considered impossible without the influence of Stuart at this stage in Ireland. In every way, and especially in the treatment of the hair and cravat, is Stuart's bravura technically present. Even the overall ease and air with which the painter is presented belie a debt to the image Stuart the artist must have exuded as confident professional, thereby influencing the way in which artists perceived themselves. Herbert, after all, reminds us that Stuart "had the air of a coxcomb, ... which scarcely would have been endured from any other man."²⁰ Cuming went on to paint numerous Lords Lieutenant, and later became President of the Royal Hibernian Academy. Crookshank and Fitzgerald state that he was "not a prolific

²⁰ Herbert, Varieties, 226.

painter and by no means sustained high quality throughout his oeuvre."²¹

The lingering influence of Stuart is however seen most strongly in the early works of Martin Archer Shee, such as in his portrait of Captain William Moore (Figure 47), painted in the mid-seventeen nineties. Shee's later works become more taut as he moved toward a self-defined style but the influence of Stuart is very obvious earlier. Shee's William Moore is filled with Stuart's resounding pictorial syntax and in every way is it reminiscent of the Stuart style. Here, face, hair, clothing and background are all treated in such a way that imitation of Stuart's looser portrait style is unmistakable. Indeed, Stuart urged the young Shee, his student and protégé, to travel to London in 1788. In 1790, Shee entered the Royal Academy Schools where he also absorbed the influence of Reynolds. Shee exhibited at the Royal Academy from 1789 onward where he showed subject pictures, Biblical and Classical subjects, along with Shakespearean themes. By then, however, the influence of Stuart is difficult to define, since Turner had become an important source, and the field of influence on Shee's later works is very broad. In 1830, Shee succeeded Lawrence as president of the Royal Academy, and was further honored by mention in one of Byron's poems:

And here let Shee the genius find a place
Whose pen and pencil yield an equal grace
.....

²¹ Crookshank and the Knight of Glin, Painters, 175.

Whose magic touch can bid the canvas glow
And pour the easy rhymes harmonious flow.²²

The Dublin Chronicle, in reporting that Stuart's leaving Ireland "gives a fair opening to the abilities of Mr. Pack, who now stands unrivalled as a portrait painter,"²³ failed to take into consideration Stuart's effect on the fine arts in Dublin. It was the accomplished Hugh Douglas Hamilton who replaced Stuart and not Christopher Pack. Clearly, Stuart's tenure in Ireland had significantly raised the level of expectancy in portraiture so that the talents of Pack were inadequate to fulfill the need. Stuart's work had educated and elevated Dublin taste to a significant level, and weaned Irish portraiture from provinciality to accomplished universal standards; therefore, it is truly ironic that his accomplishment would be unmentioned in 1796 when Pasquin's history of the fine arts in Ireland appeared.

Fortunately for Stuart, America awaited him and immortalized him for his work after his return. The evolution of Stuart's style in America is beyond the parameters of this study. However, it might well begin with a study of the extraordinary similarity of style and treatment between Stuart's full-length portraits of George Washington (Figures 48 and 49) and his Irish portraits of John Fitzgibbon and John Foster. A comparison between Stuart's Lansdowne Washington and his John Foster reveals remarkable similarities in style, setting, pose,

²² Quoted in Crookshank and the Knight of Glin, Painters, 187.

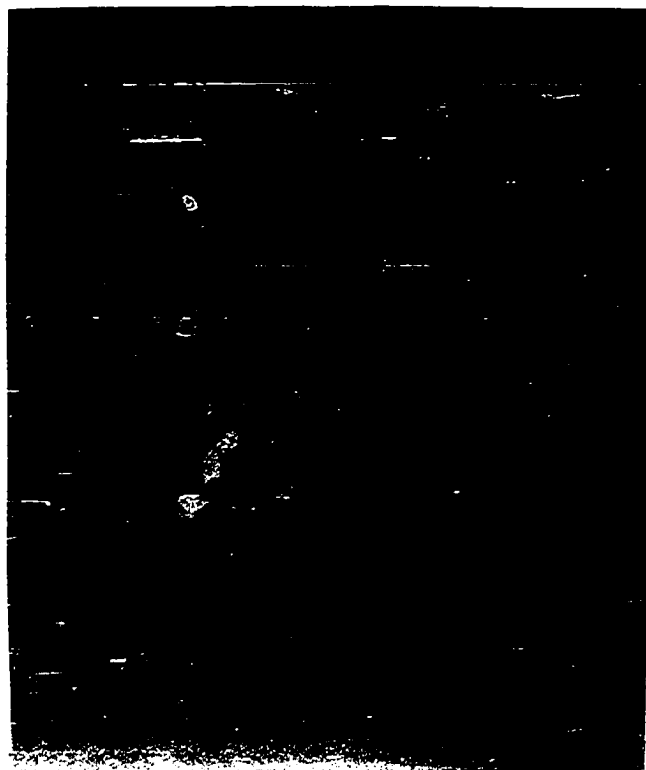
²³ Dublin Chronicle, March 19, 1793.

and overall effect. For this, among many other reasons stated, the study of Stuart in Ireland reveals a richly creative period in his development and refutes the idea that Stuart's sojourn there was but one of seclusion from his English debtors. It is clear, therefore, that some of Stuart's most memorable and important American portraits had their genesis in his Irish works, and owe their existence to this germination of his creativity among the Irish Protestant Ascendancy, who, like his immortalized American heroes, were an intensely political race. Can it be possible that Stuart's portraits of the Irish Protestant Ascendancy provided him with the prototype for his monumental image of George Washington?

ILLUSTRATIONS



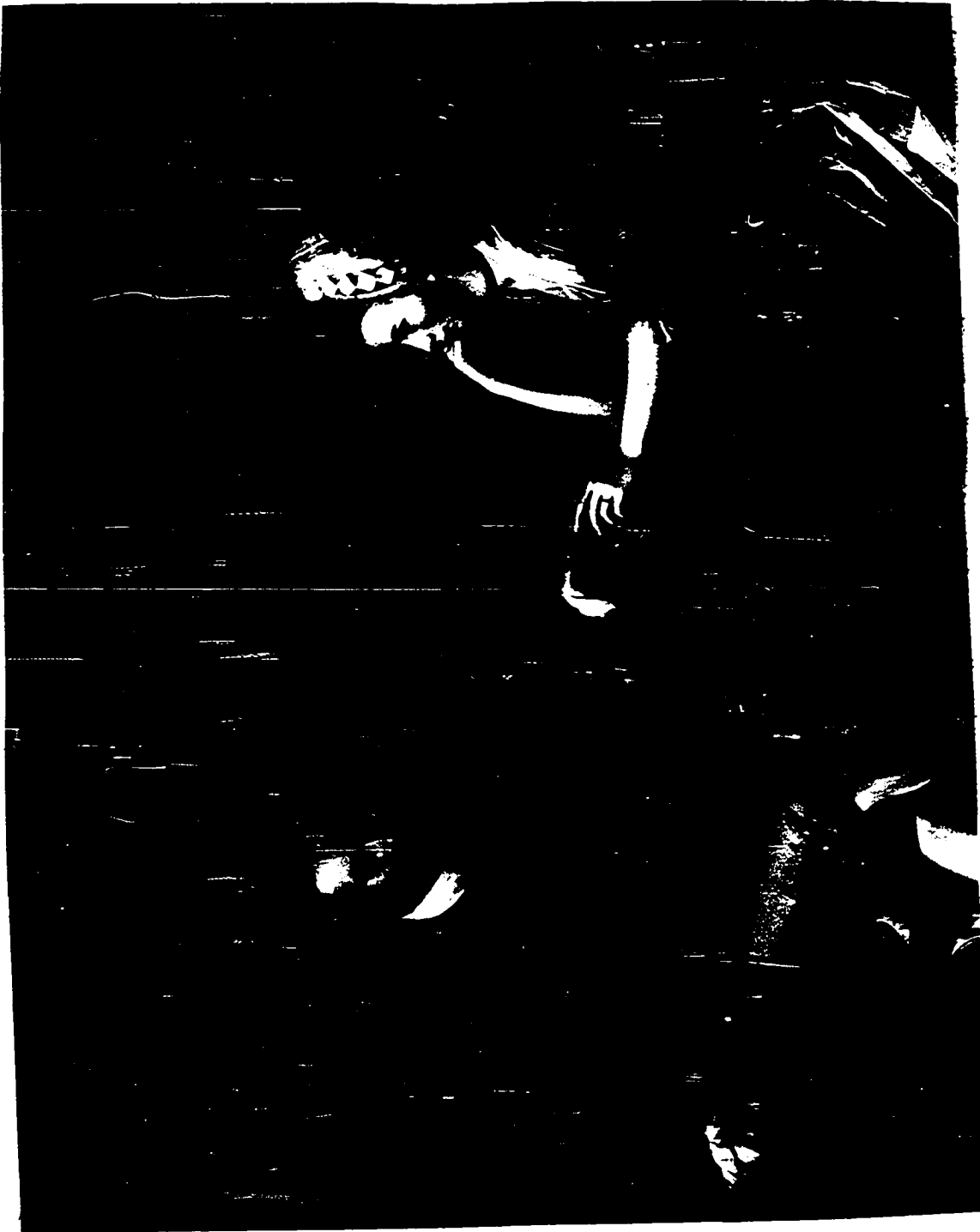
1. Gilbert Stuart, John Fitzgibbon, 1789



2. Meissen, America, 1785



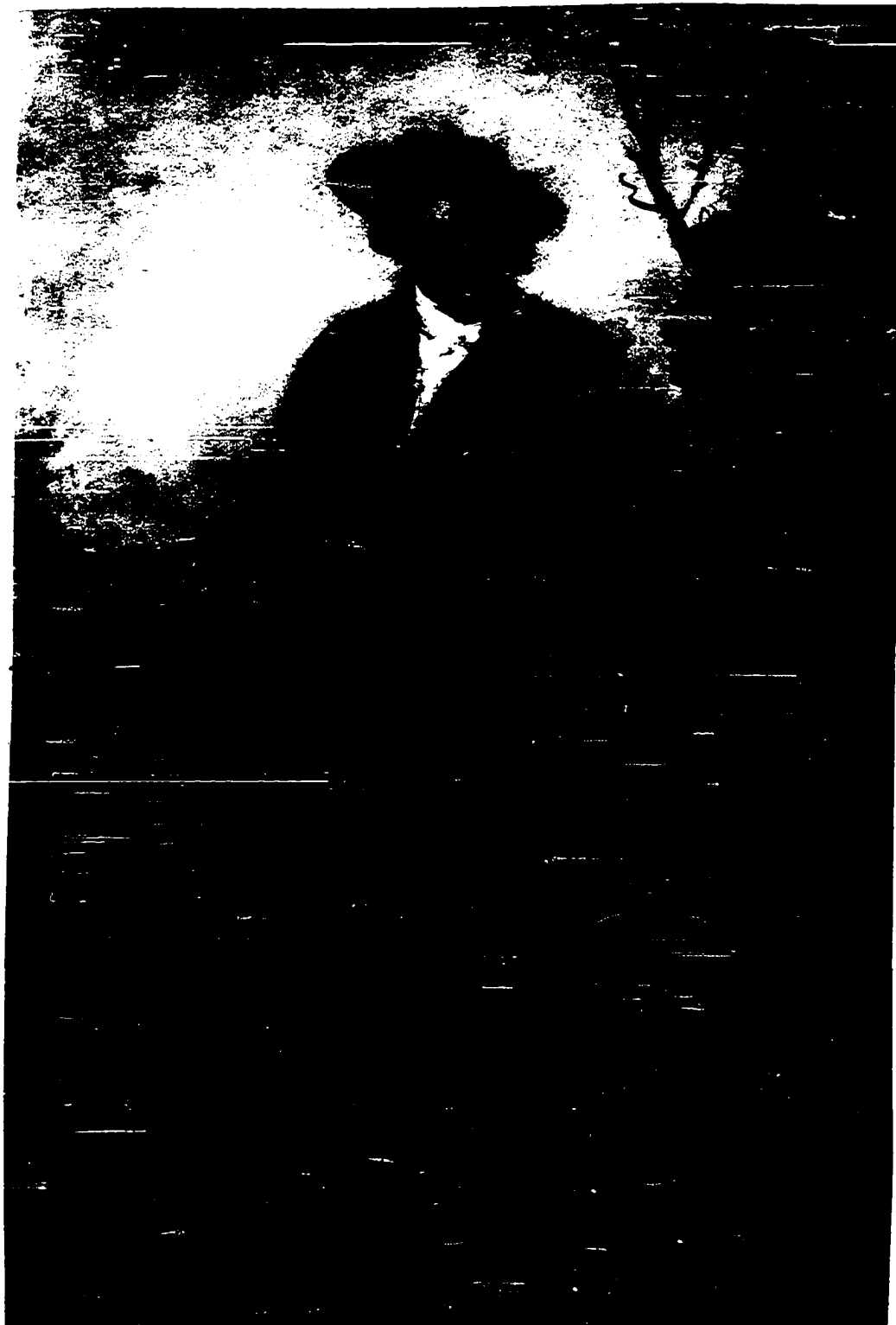
3. Giovanni Battista Tiepolo, America, 1753



4. John Singleton Copley, Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Izard, 1775



5. James Barry, The Phoenix or the Resurrection of Freedom, 1776



6. Gilbert Stuart, The Skater, 1782



7. Joshua Reynolds, Frederick, Fifth Earl of Carlisle, 1769



8. Joshua Reynolds, Omai, 1776



9. Joshua Reynolds, The Honourable Augustus Kepple, 1753-54



10. Joshua Reynolds, Peter, First Baron Ludlow, 1775



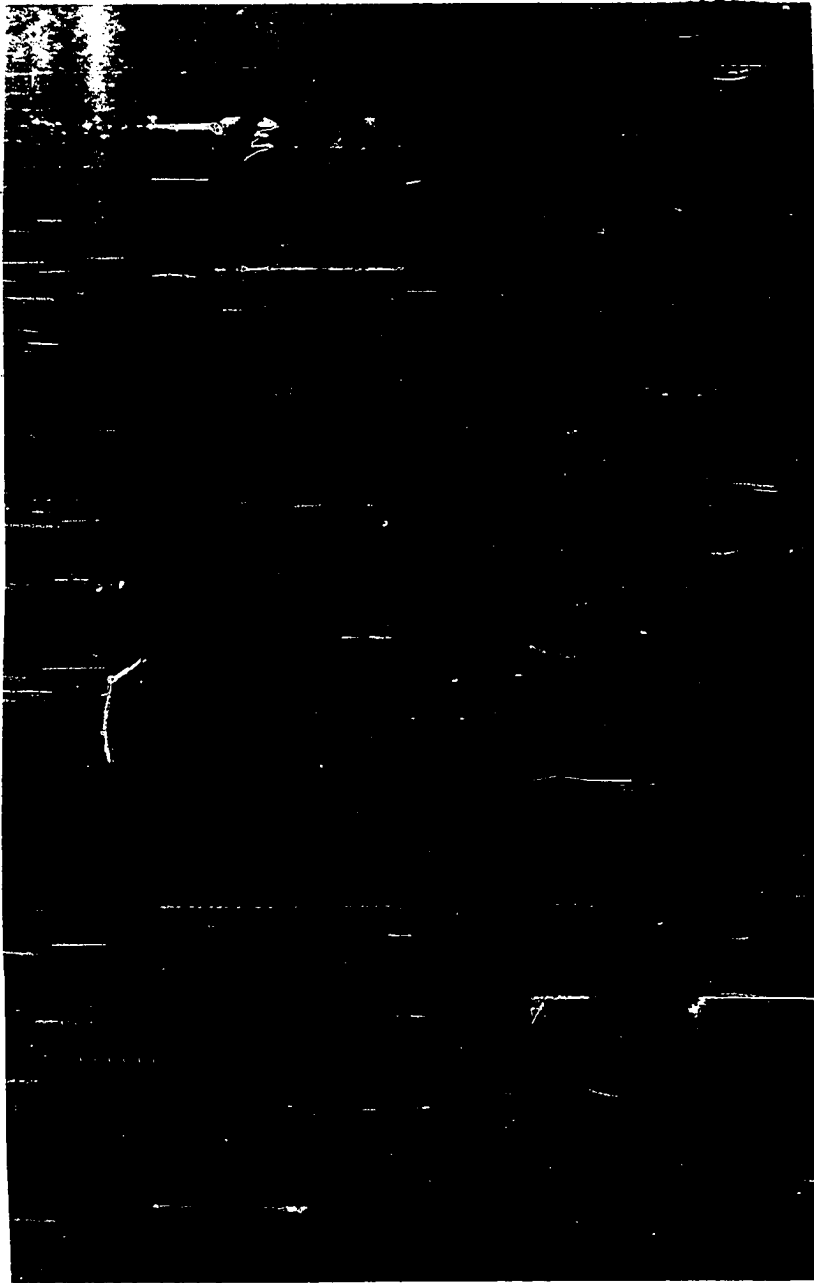
11. Joshua Reynolds, George IV When Prince of Wales, 1787



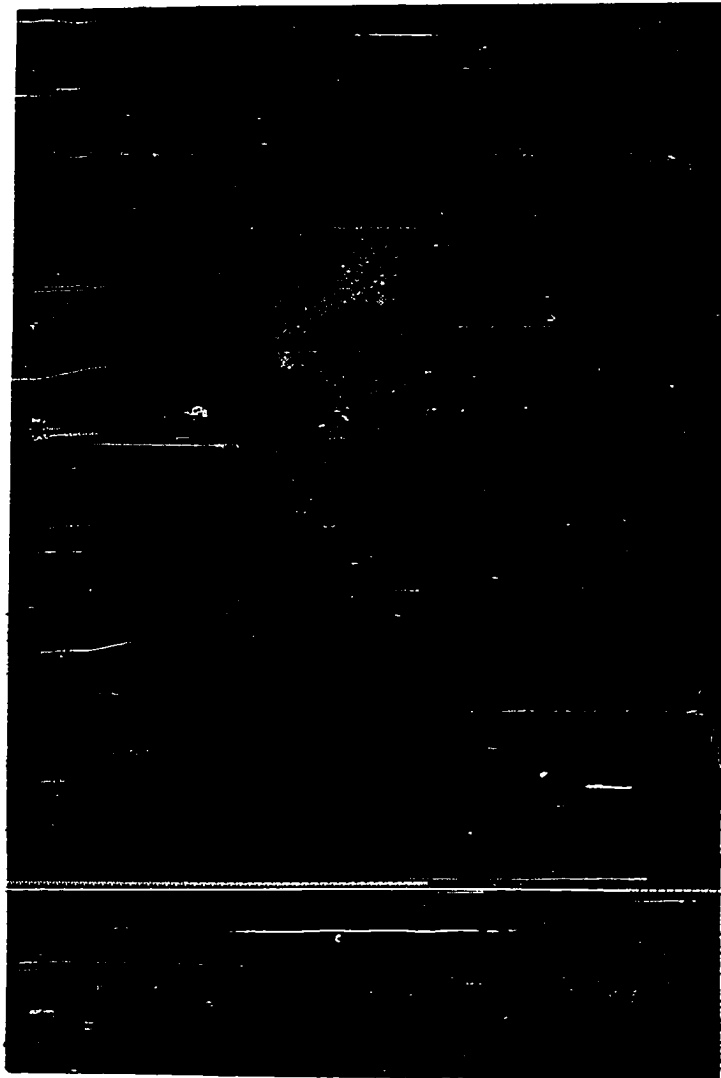
12. John Singleton Copley, The Three Youngest Daughters
of King George III, 1785



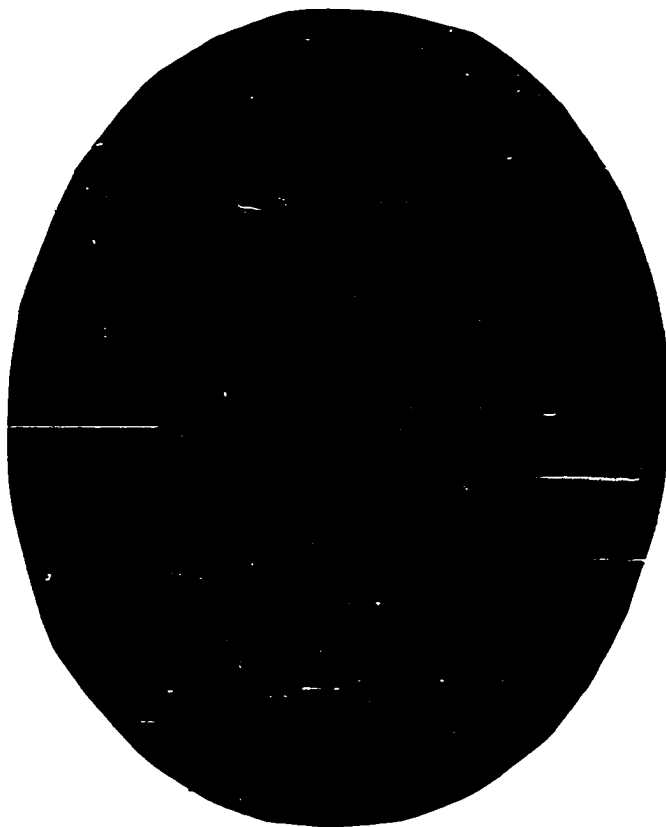
13. Robert Healy, Members of the Connolly Family Skating at
Castletown, 1768



13a. Robert Healy, Detail of Connolly Family



14. C. H. Hodges, Henry Grattan. Engraving after Gilbert Stuart, 1792



15. James Latham, Bishop Berkeley, c. 1740

•



16. James Latham, Sarah Cosby, c. 1740



17. James Latham, Two Ladies of the Leslie Family at the Harpsicord,
c. 1740



18. Gilbert Stuart, Miss Dick and her Cousin Miss Forster, c. 1792



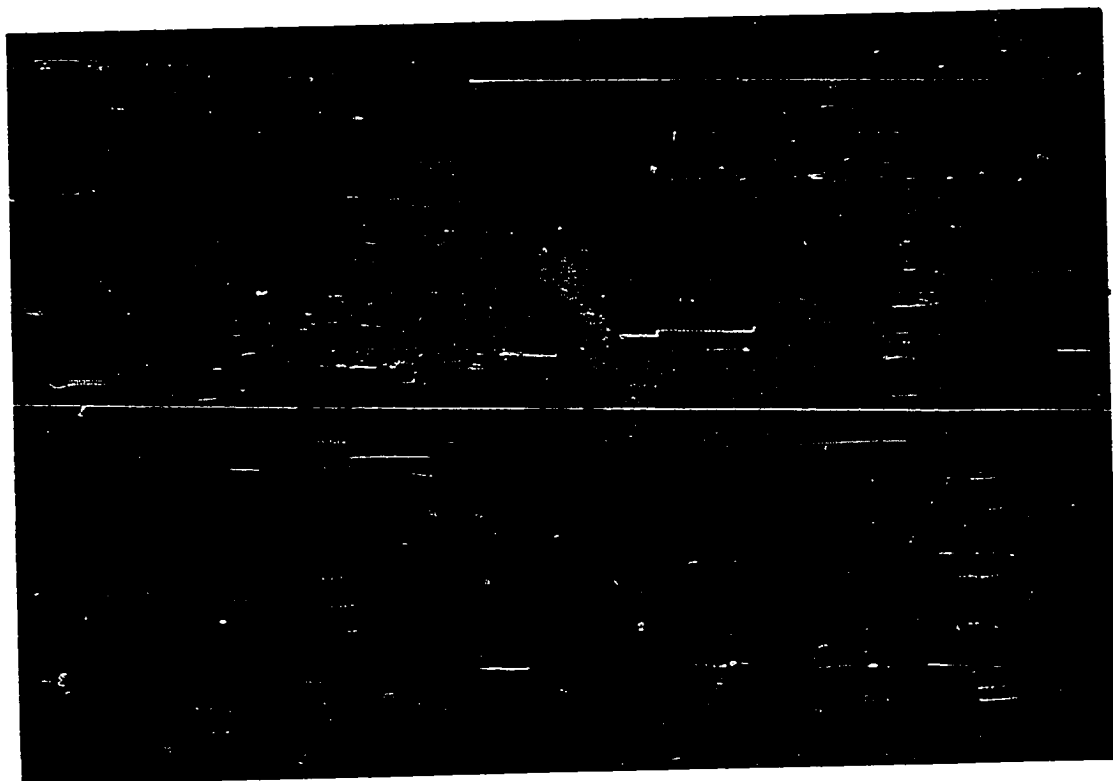
19. Robert Hunter, Lord Newbattle, 1762



20. Hugh Douglas Hamilton, Henry Tresham and Canova Looking at Canova's Cupid and Psyche, exhibited 1801



21. Hugh Douglas Hamilton, The Countess of Aldborough as Hebe,
after 1791



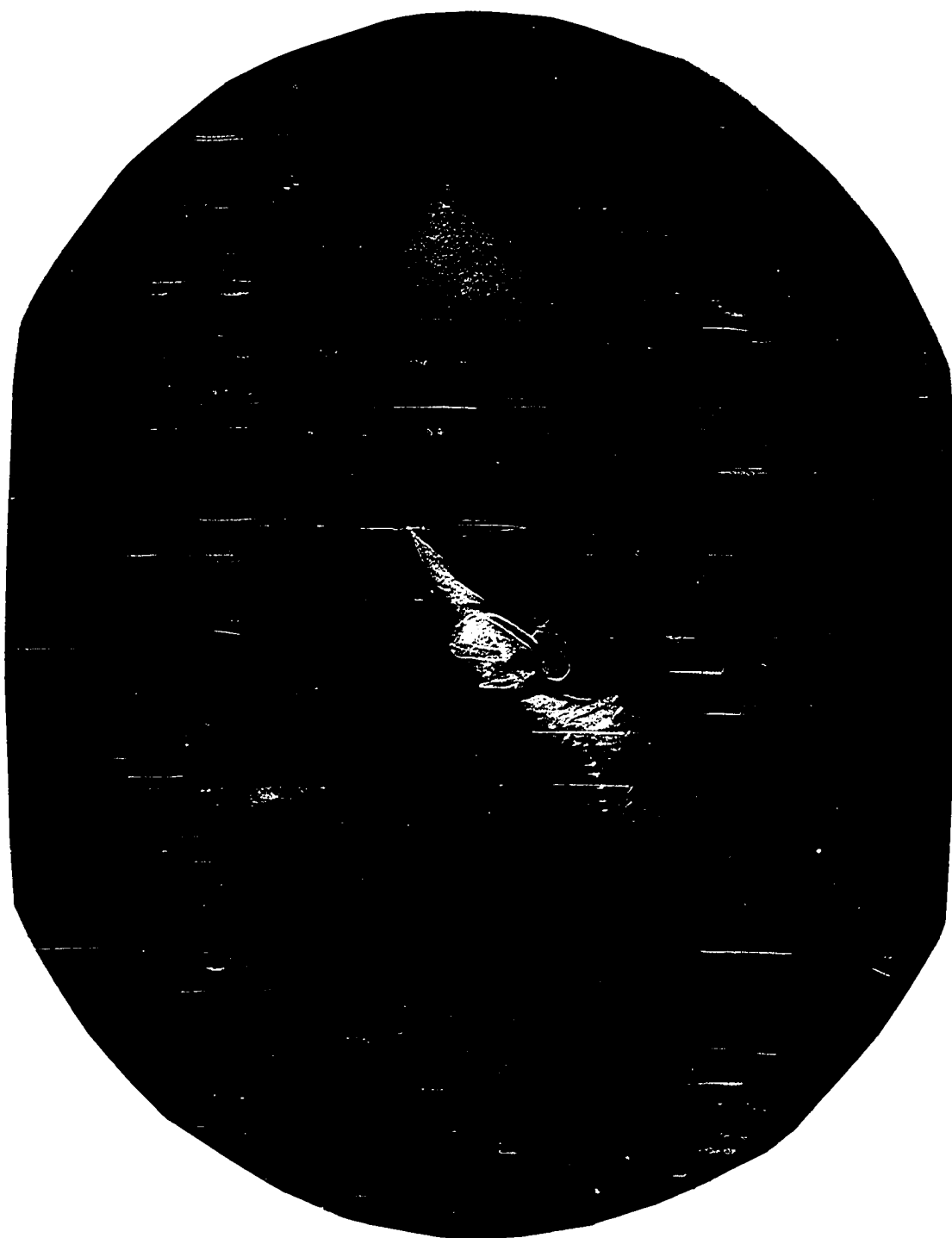
22. James Malton, The Custom House, Dublin, 1792



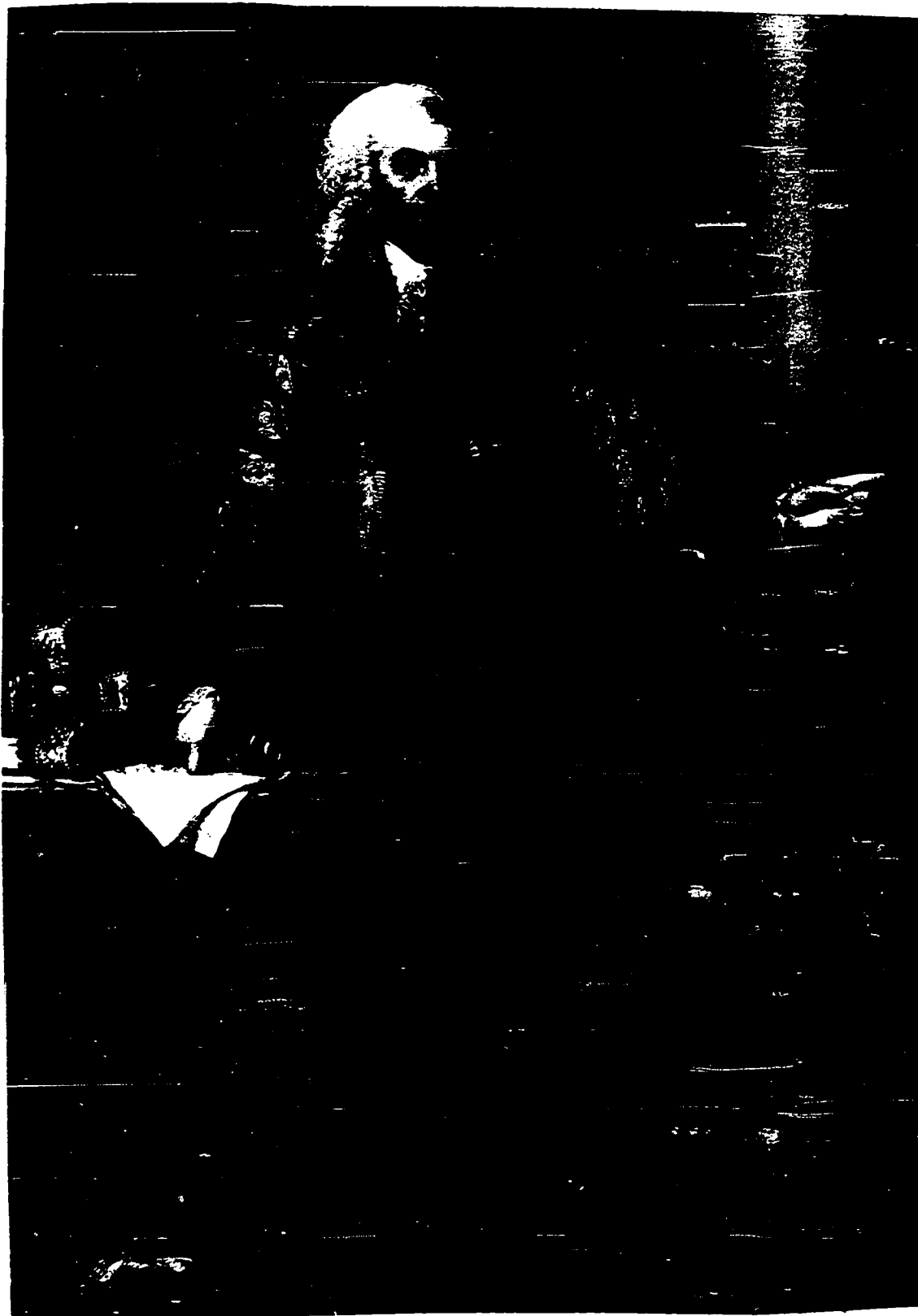
23. James Malton, Forecourt of the Houses of Parliament, 1792-93



24. Tilly Kettle and William Cuming, James Gandon, begun 1783, by
Kettle, completed after 1790 by Cuming



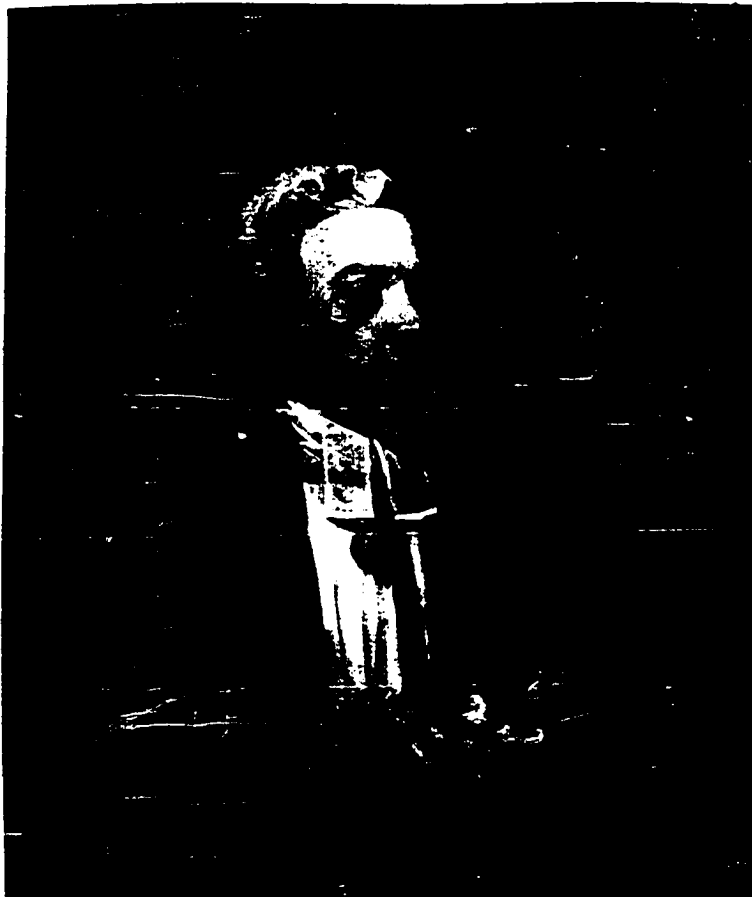
25. Gilbert Stuart, Sir Jonah Barrington, c. 1790



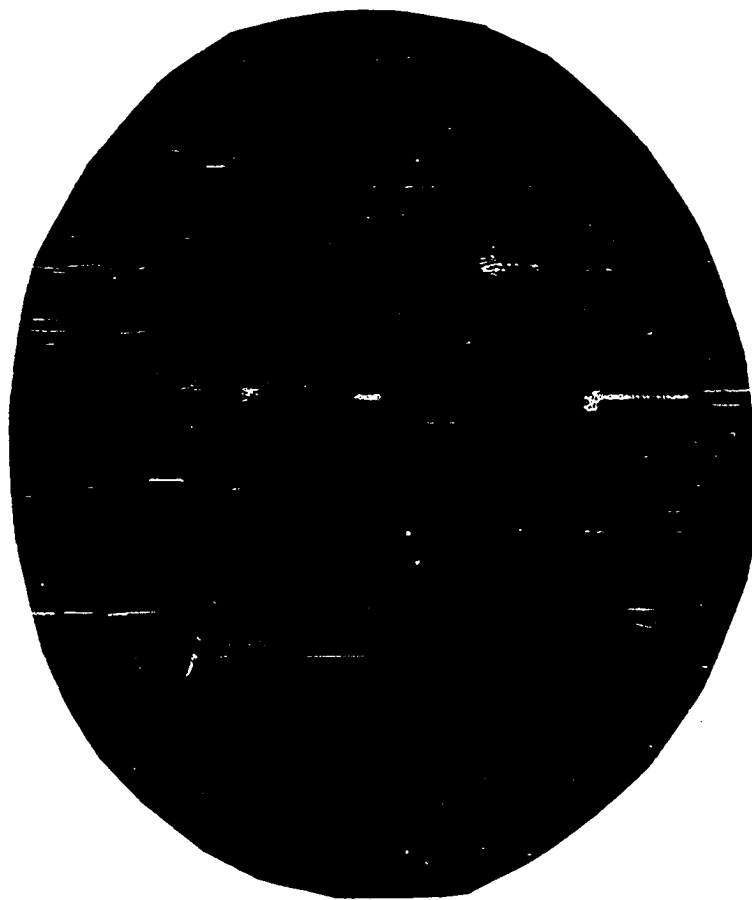
26. Gilbert Stuart, John Foster, 1789



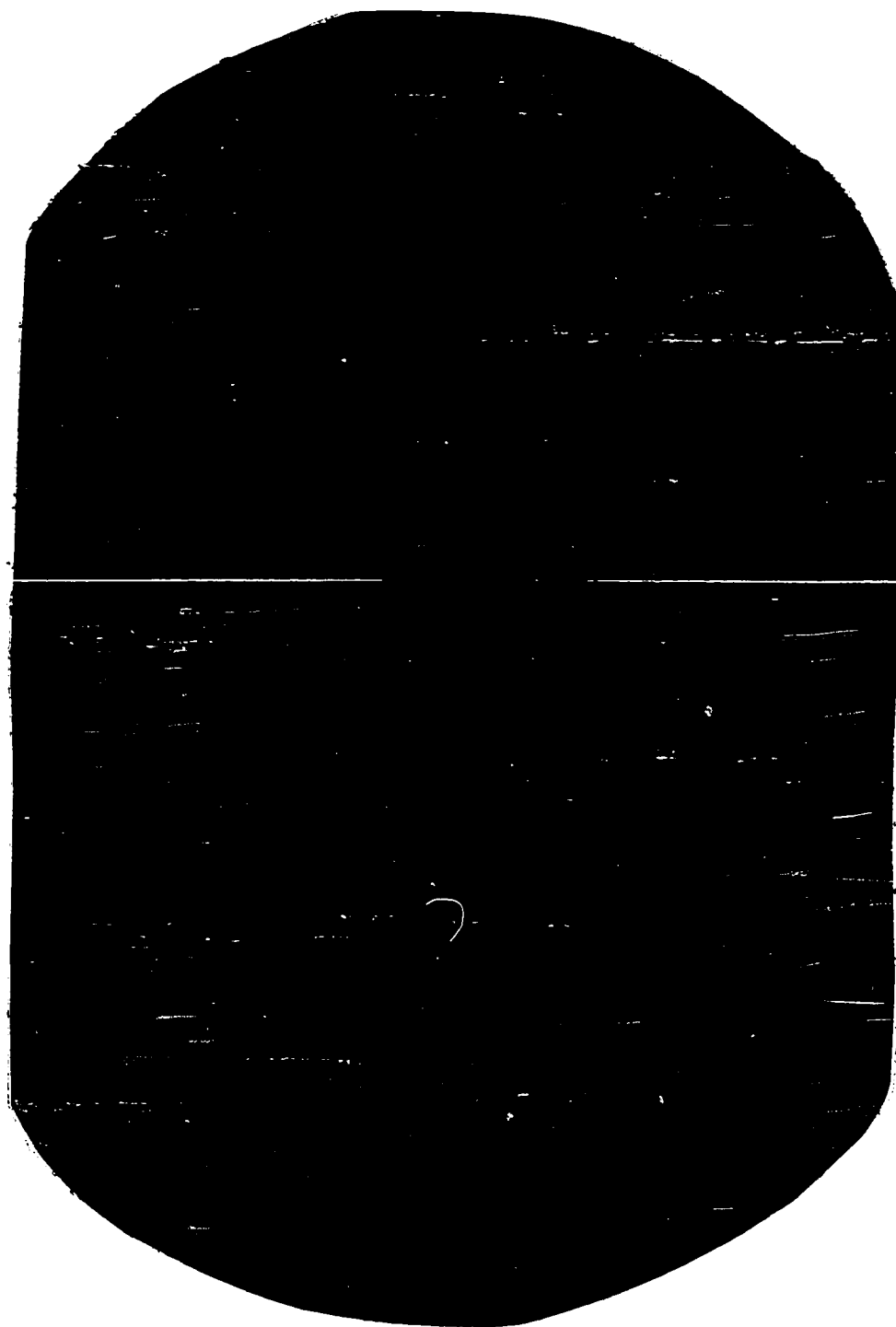
27. John James Barralet, John Foster, His Wife and Their Children,
on the Steps of Oriel Temple, Collon, Co. Louth, 1786



28. Gilbert Stuart, William Bennett, Bishop of Cloyne, c. 1790



29. Gilbert Stuart, William Preston, Bishop of Kildare, c. 1790



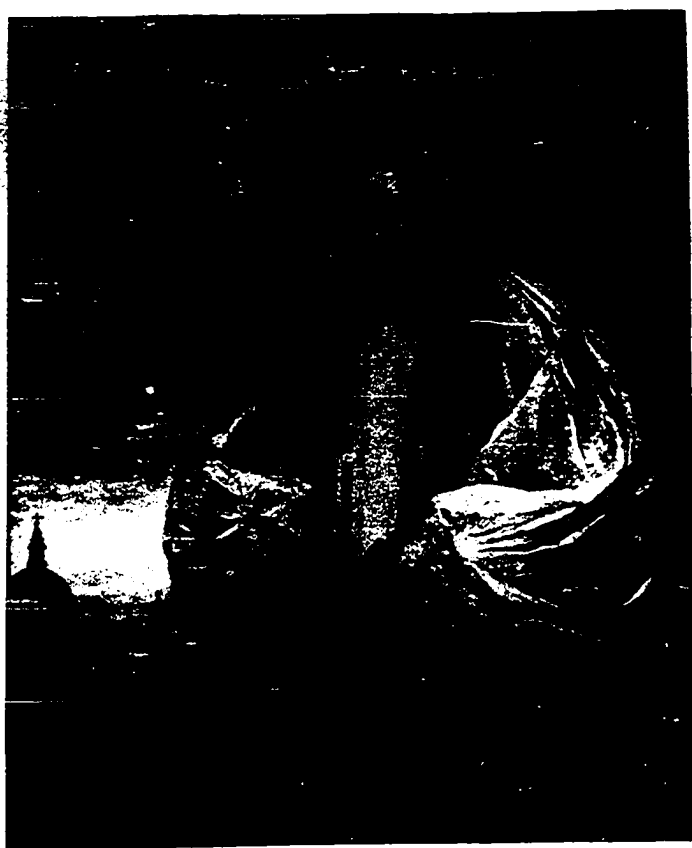
30. Gilbert Stuart, William Beresford, Lord Bishop of Ossory, c. 1790



31. Pompeo Batoni, Frederick Hervey, Bishop of Derry, 1778 .



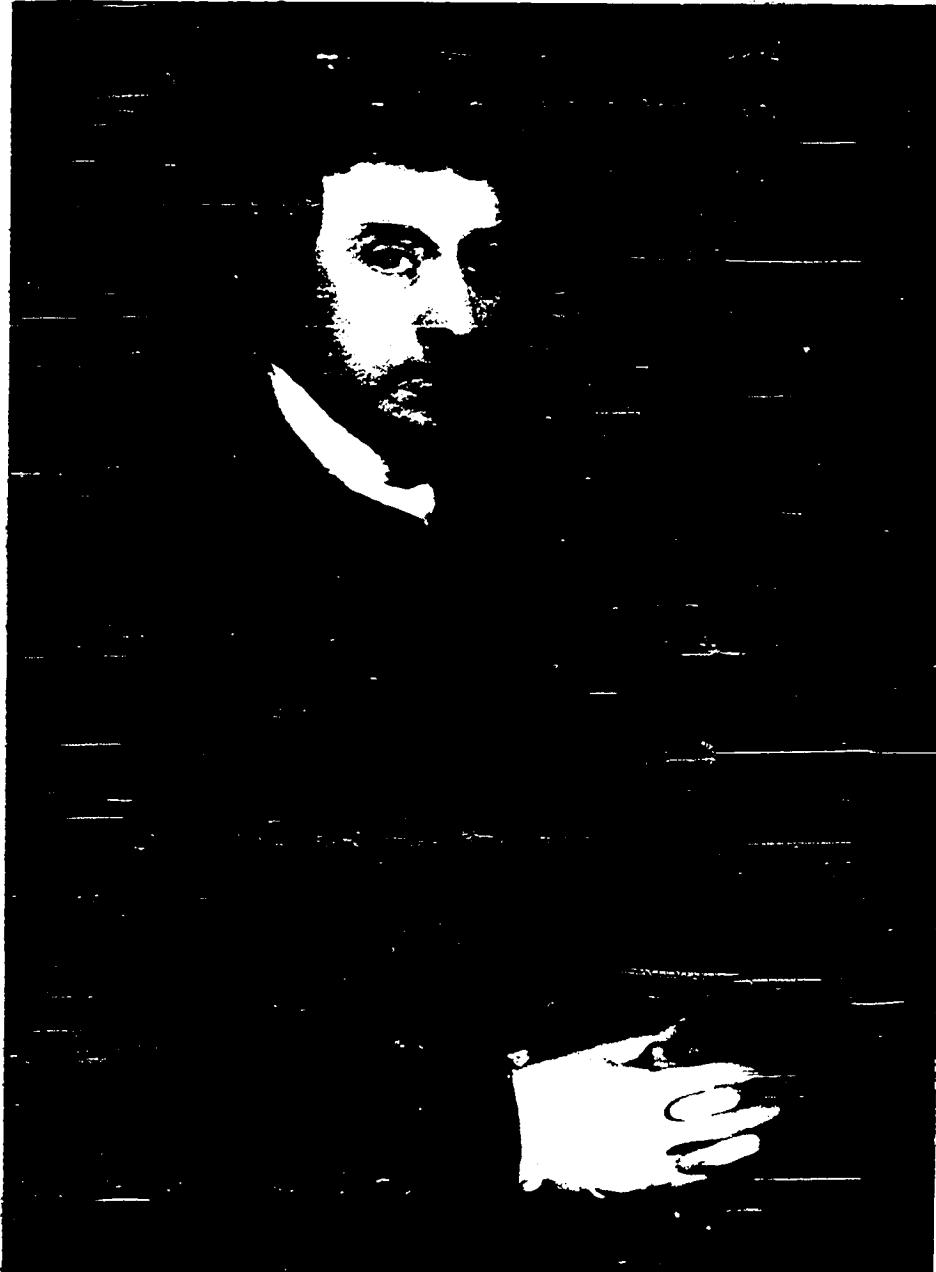
32. John Greenhill, Seth Ward Bishop of Sarum, 1673-75



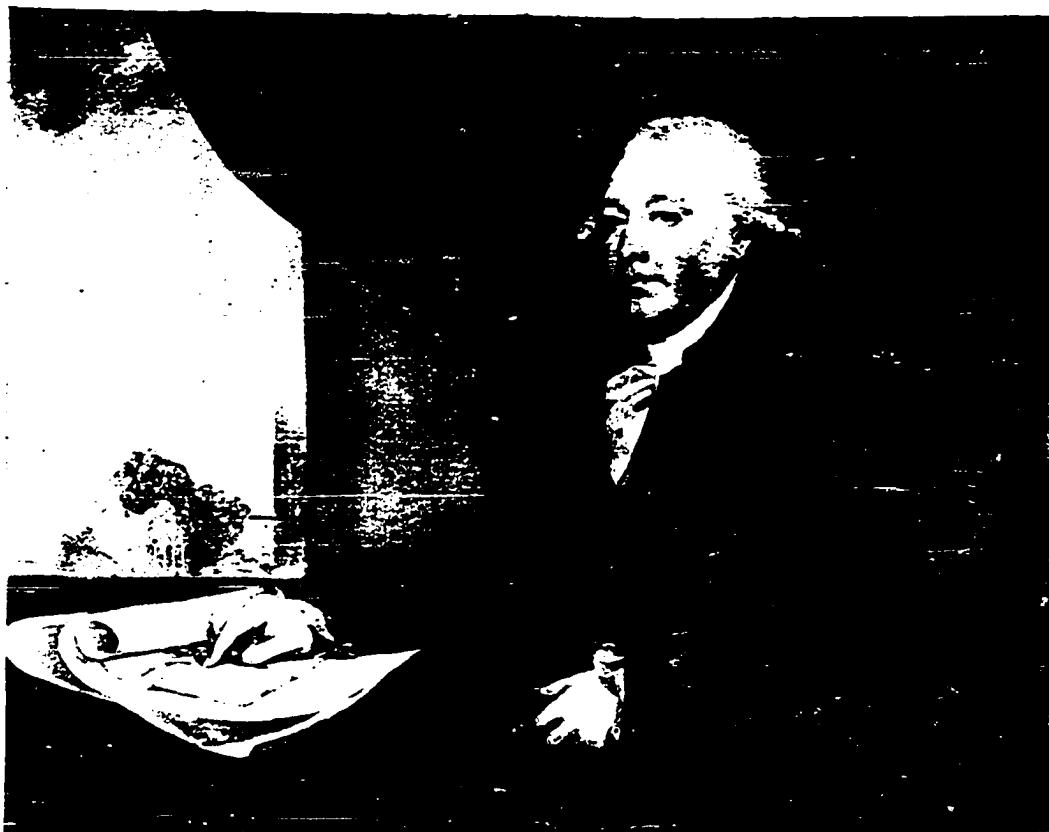
33. Joshua Reynolds, Thomas Newton, Bishop of Bristol, 1761



34. John Singleton Copley, Thomas Hancock, 1764-66



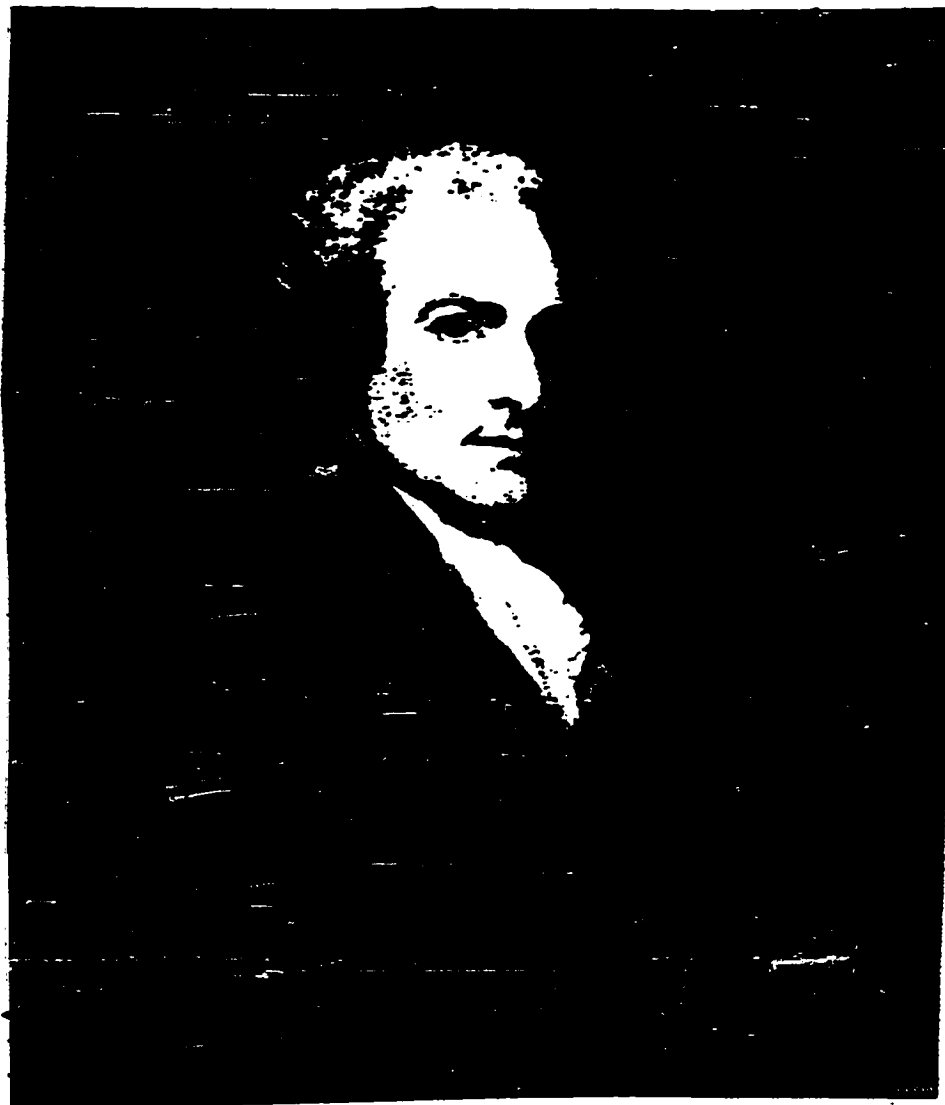
35. Gilbert Stuart, Thomas Dawson, Earl of Dartrey, Viscount Cremorne, 1785



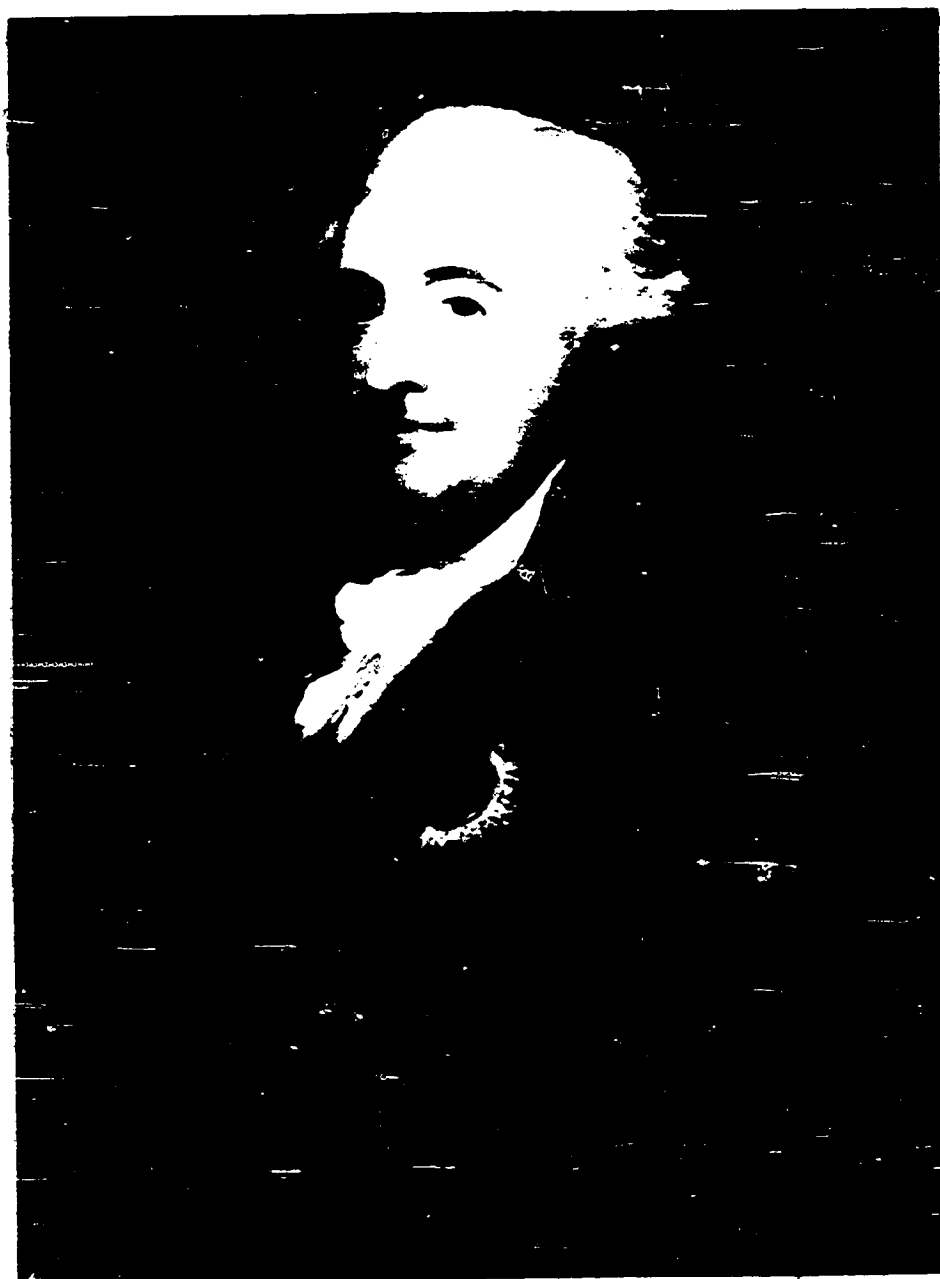
36. Gilbert Stuart, William Barker, 1790



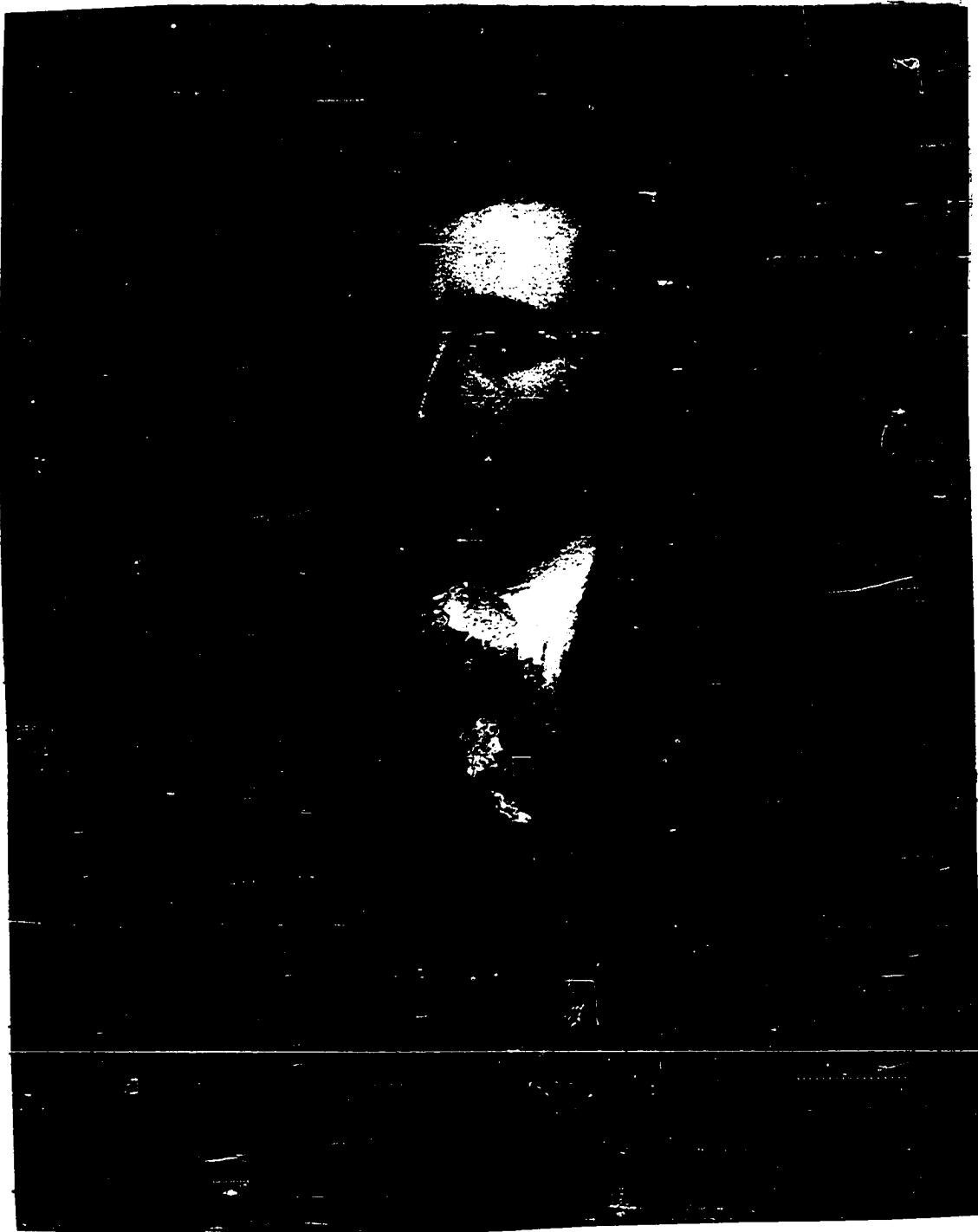
37. Gilbert Stuart, Lady Barker, c. 1790



38. Gilbert Stuart, John Philip Kemble, 1785



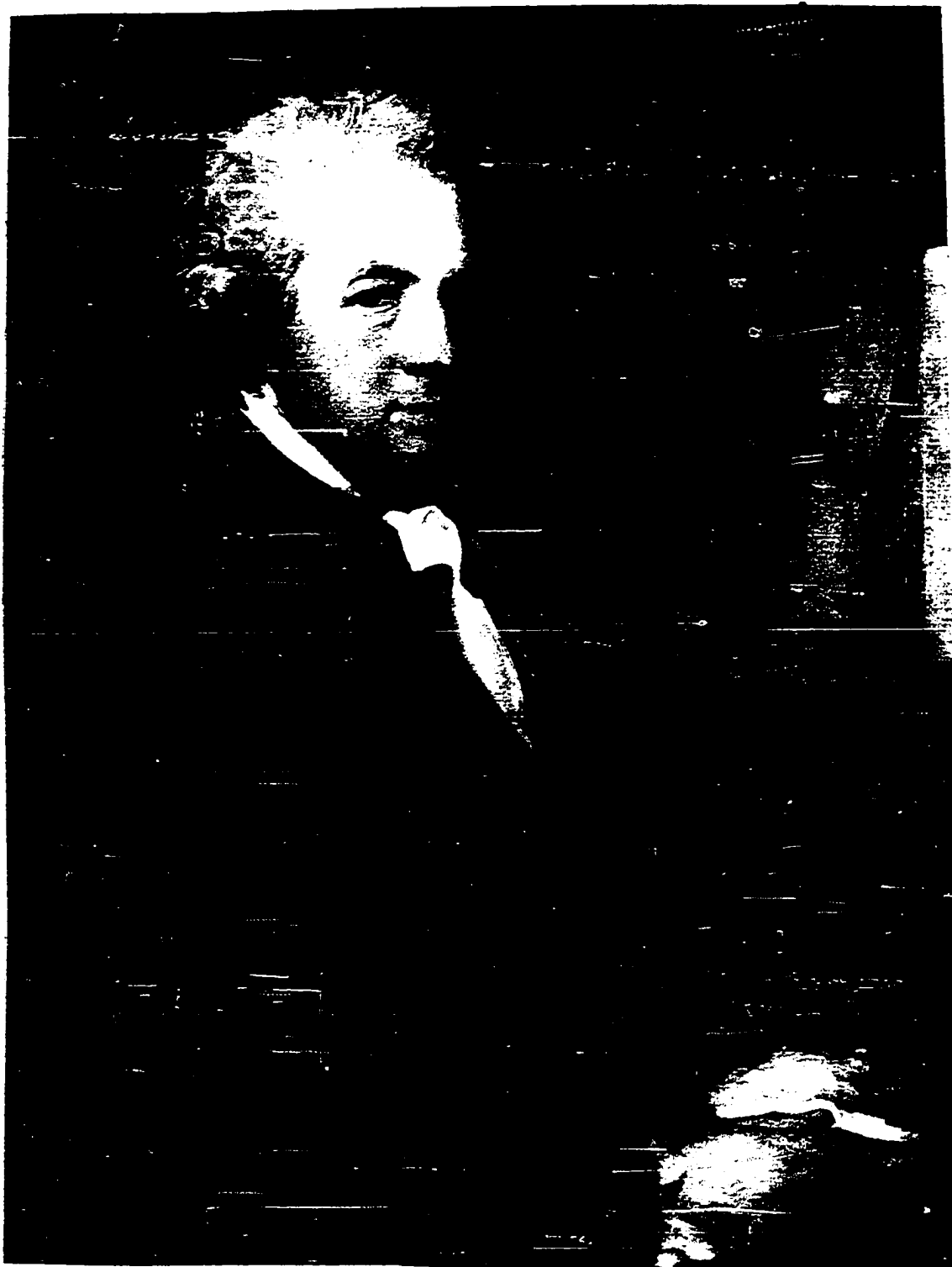
39. Gilbert Stuart, William Robert, Duke of Leinster, c. 1790



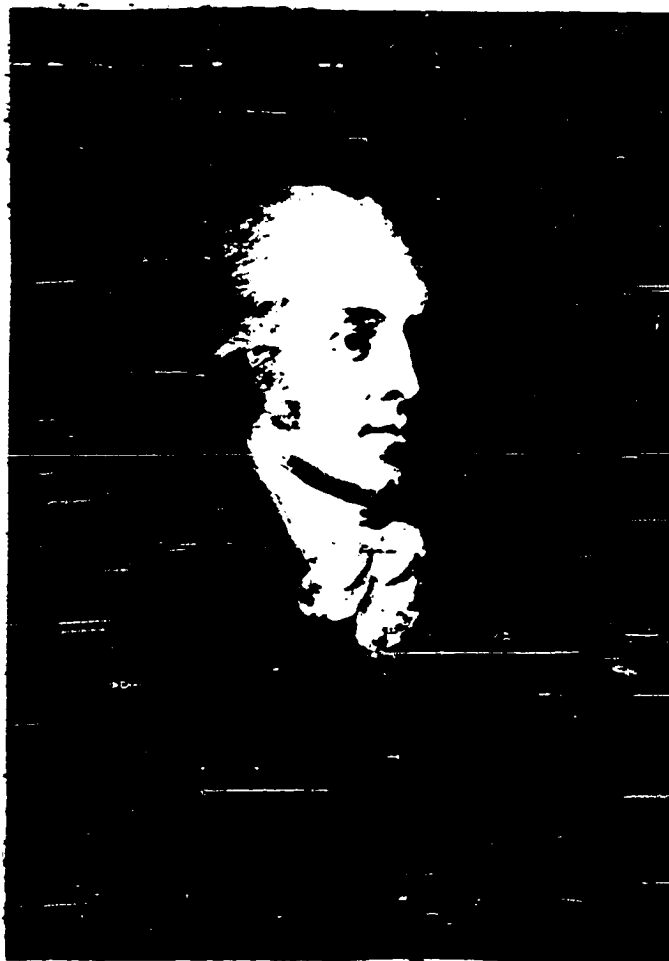
40. Gilbert Stuart, Luke White, c. 1790



41. Thomas Robinson, Barry Yelverton, 1792



42. Gilbert Stuart, Sir William Burton Conyngham, c. 1790



43. Hugh Douglas Hamilton, Hugh O'Donnell, c. 1795



44. Caroline Hamilton, *Society*, 1801



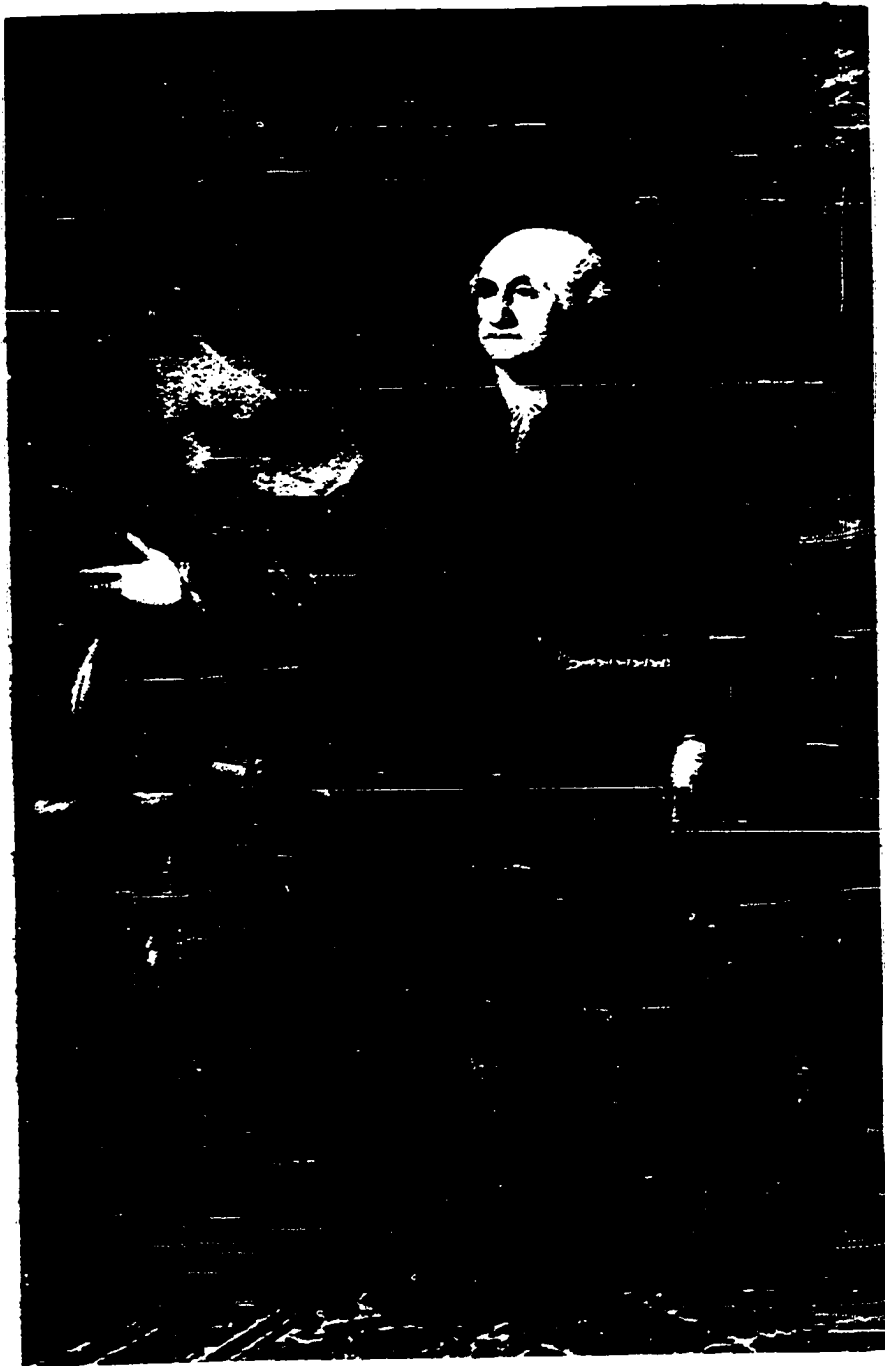
45. John Comerford, Mrs. Dobbyn, 1793



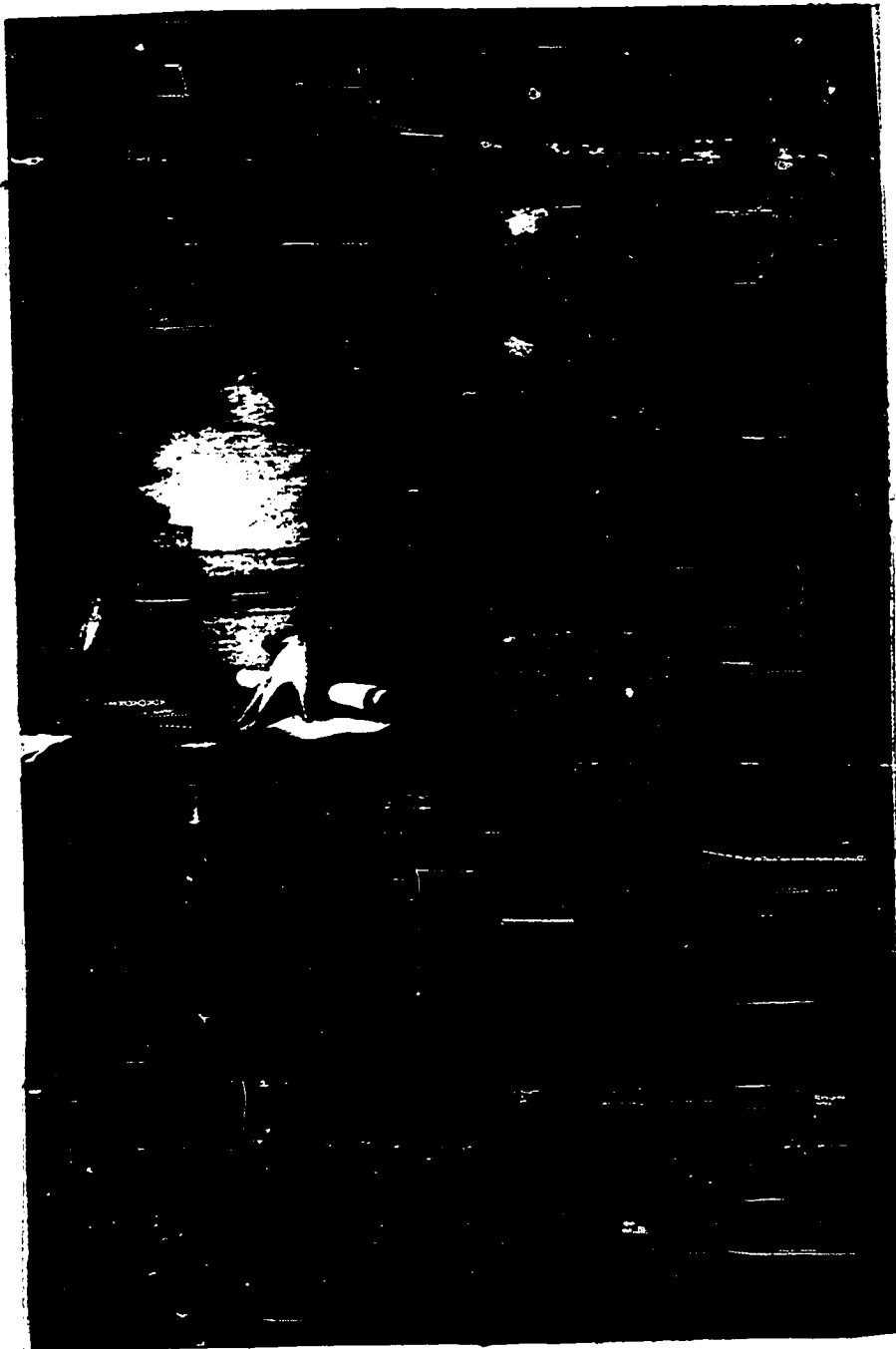
46. William Cuming, Vincent Waldre, after 1800



47. Martin Archer Shee, Captain William Moore, 1794-98



48. Gilbert Stuart, George Washington, 1796



49. Gilbert Stuart, George Washington, 1796

APPENDIX A

PORTRAITS PAINTED BY GILBERT STUART IN IRELAND

Abbreviations:

- S. Strickland, Dictionary, 1913.
- Ma. Mason, Stuart, 1879.
- F. Mantle Fielding, "Paintings by Gilbert Stuart not mentioned in Mason's Life of Stuart," Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography. Vol. 38, No. 1, 1911. pp. 311-334.
- "Addenda and Corrections to Paintings by Gilbert Stuart not noted in Mason's Life of Stuart," Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography. Vol. 44, No. 1, 1920. pp. 88-90.
- "Portraits by Gilbert Stuart not included in Previous Catalogues of his Works," Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography. Vol. 53, No. 2, 1929. pp. 132-136.
- P. Park, Stuart, 1927.

Mo. Mount, Gilbert Stuart, 1964.

Mo. IGS. Mount, "The Irish Career of Gilbert Stuart," Irish Georgian Society Quarterly Bulletin, Vol. VI, No. 1 (January-March, 1963). pp. 6-28.

NGI. Illustrated Summary Catalogue of Paintings in the National Gallery of Ireland. 1981.

The following is an alphabetical listing of portraits painted by Stuart in Ireland. It does not include portraits of Irish subjects painted by Stuart in either England or America. Portraits that are listed in Lawrence Park are identified by Park's numerical system and not by page number. In parenthesis after each title is given the publication where the portrait is listed. For example: Barker, Sir William. (S. P50. Mo.) indicates that the portrait of Sir William Barker is listed in Strickland, in Park as number 50 and in Mount's index. The portraits listed in Fielding's three articles are designated "F" and are not separated by individual source as the articles themselves form a suite.

1. Annesley, Hon. Richard. (Mo.) Not located. Mount believes the subject was painted in Ireland but does not give reasons for this assumption. Annesley was a significant name among the Protestant Ascendancy, and the name lingers in place names in Dublin and elsewhere.

2. Armit, John. (P32. Mo.) Not located. Park gives dimensions for the portrait (30 x 24) and claims that it was painted c. 1790. Mount relates that it was owned by John d. McIlhenny, Philadelphia 1916.
3. Barker, Sir William. (S. F. P 50. Mo.) Collection Major George Ponsonby, Kilcooley Abbey, Ireland. Strickland provides the date 1791. Dimensions are (50 x 40). Mount attributes a small replica (approx. 12 x 14) in the same collection, to Stuart.
4. Barker, Lady. (S. F. P51. Mo.) also known as Miss Lane. Collection Major George Ponsonby. Dimensions (50 x 40).
5. Barrington, Sir Jonah. (Mo.) Indianapolis Museum of Art. Dimensions (30 x 25). See Figure 25.
6. Beatson, Dean. (Mo.) Mount confirms that the picture is in a private collection in Dublin. Dimensions (20 x 24).
7. Beatson, Mrs. (Mo.) Not located. Mount states that she was the wife of Dean Beatson, and quotes a letter from Dean Beatson to Stuart in Mason. Beatson speaks of "our pictures." (Mason p. 75 and p. 153.).
8. Bective, Thomas first Earl of. (S. P74. Mo) Mount claims that the picture is in the collection of Lady Headford. Strickland claimed that it was owned by T.P. Ponsonby, as did Park.

9. Bennett, William, Bishop of Cork and Ross. (Mo.) Emmanuel College Cambridge. Dimensions (29 x 24).
10. Beresford, William, Lord Bishop of Ossory. (Mo. IGS. illustrated) Collection Julian Peck. See p. 218, note 22 above.
11. Beresford, The Right Honorable John. (S. P77. illustrated. Mo. NGI. at no. 1133 illustrated) Park provides the date of c. 1790. Mount claims that this portrait is in the collection of the Marquis of Waterford, and that four replicas exist (two in oval form). Mount does not mention the portrait in the NGI.
12. Beresford, Lady Catherine. (S. Mo.) Not located. Mount provides the information that it was sold in Dublin in 1850.
13. Bowles, General. (S. F. P103. Mo.) Not located. Park provides information on its sale in Dublin in 1843. This information is also in Mount.
14. Brownlow, The Right Honorable William. (S. F. P121, illustrated. Mo.) Park provides date of c. 1790 and dimensions (36 1/2 x 31 1/2). Painting currently in the collection of Lord Lurgan, Ireland.
15. Caldwell, Andrew of Newgrange, Ireland, (Mo.) Mount claims that the work in the National Gallery of Ireland is by Stuart. The work is inscribed and dated "Robert Woodburn pinxit 1793."

Woodburn was active in Dublin from 1792 until 1803. See NGI. Catalogue no. 1136.

16. Carleton, Hugh. (S. F. P141. Mo.) Not located. Mount seems to have relied on Strickland and gives the Earl of Normanton as the owner.
17. Carysfort, John Joshua Proby, first Earl of. (Mo. illustrated; Mo. IGS/ no. 7 illustrated) Mount attributes a portrait in the collection of Jocelyn Proby to Stuart.
18. Carysfort, Countess of. (Mo.) Mount attributes a portrait in the National Gallery of Ireland called "Portrait of a Lady" to Stuart. Which portrait this is is not clear, and Mount does not elaborate.
19. Cleaver, Euseby, Bishop of Cork. (S. F. Mo.) Not located. Strickland adds that the portrait was engraved in 1790. Mount repeats this information.
20. Clonmell, John, first Earl of. (S. F.) Not located. Strickland notes that the "Private Diary" of Clonmell on 14th September, 1790 included an entry: "This day Stuart's pictures came home." Strickland, p. 414. Attention here should be paid to the use of the plural, "pictures."
21. Cobbe, Mr. (Ma. Mo.) Not located. Mason spells the name Cobb. Mount asserts that it might pertain to "the Newbridge House family."

22. Cobbe, Mrs. (Ma. Mo.) Not located. Information as above.
23. Cockburn, Captain George. (P170. illustrated. S.) Not located. Park provides the date of c. 1788 and the dimensions (30 x 25). Mount repeats Park's information that it was acquired by Knoedler's New York in 1924.
24. Conyngham, Sir William Burton. (P184. illustrated. Mo.) Not located. Appeared on the New York art market in 1922, described by Mount as the "life portrait painted in London," Mount and Park give the same dimensions (36 x 28).
25. Conyngham, Sir William Burton. (S. F. P183. Mo. NGI. cat. no. 562 illustrated.) National Gallery of Ireland. Though similar in pose and composition, this version has the addition of papers held in the sitter's hand along with the absence of the quill and inkwell that appears in the former.
26. Conyngham, Sir Francis Nathaniel Pierpont Burton. (S.) Not located. Strickland provides the date c. 1790.
27. Dawson, Lucius. (S. Mo.) Not located. Mount repeats Strickland's location of the work in the collection of B.T. Balfour, Townley Hall, Drogheda, Ireland.
28. Dawson, James Massey. (P233. illustrated) Not located. Park provides the date c. 1788.

29. De Vesce, Thomas first Viscount. (S. Mo.) Not located. Mount follows Strickland and states the work to be in the collection of Viscount De Vesce.

30. Dick, Lady. (Ma. P247.) Not located. Mason and Park state that the portrait was painted in Dublin. Sir John Dick (36 x 28) was painted in London in 1782 (National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C.) Both Strickland and Mount contain information on the latter portrait.

31. Dick, Miss and her Cousin Miss Forster. (McL. illustrated) Collection of Mr. and Mrs. R. Philip Hanes, Jr. Winston-Salem, North Carolina. c. 1792-97. Dimensions (36 x 37).

32. Dobbyn, Mrs. (Mo.) Mount provides the dimensions of the portrait (20 x 24) in the National Gallery of Ireland. The portrait in question is attributed to John Comerford. See Catalogue of the Paintings in the NGI, no. 634. Comerford was greatly influenced by Stuart.

33. Dufferin, Ava, Marchioness of (P255. illustrated. Mo.) Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Park provides the date of c. 1792.

34. Farnham, the Earl of (Mo. P292.) Not located. Mason asserts that the portrait was painted in Dublin.

35. Farran, Charles. (S. F. P293. Mo.) Not located. Mount provides the information that appears to repeat that of

Strickland stating the portrait was in the collection of G.C. Garran.

36. Farran, Mrs. Charles. (S. F. P294. Mo.) Not located. As in Charles Farran, above.
37. Fisher, Jonathan. (Mo.) Not located. Mount correctly points out that the portrait is mentioned by Dowling Herbert as being among the first three portraits that Stuart painted in Dublin. See Herbert, Varieties, p. 235.
38. Fitzgerald, Edward, Lord. (P296. illustrated) Not located. Park provides the date c. 1790 and the dimensions (96 1/2 x 60). It is most unlikely that Stuart ever painted Fitzgerald, especially given Fitzgerald's role in Ireland. Park does not provide a provenance. Moreover, Fitzgerald only arrived back in Ireland in December 1792 and immediately became embroiled in the political situation. Stuart left in March 1793.
39. Fitzgibbon, Lord John. (Ma. S. P29.7 illustrated. Mo. McL. illustrated) Cleveland Museum of Art, 1789, (96 1/2 x 60 5/8). Replica in Trinity College, Dublin.
40. Foster, The Right Honorable John (S. F. P303 illustrated. Mo. McL. illustrated) Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City. 1789, (83 1/2 x 59 7/8) Mount mentions the existence of a "poor copy" at Lisnavagh, Co. Carlow and various engravings in the

National Library of Ireland. There is reason to date the work to 1789.

41. Fowler, John, Archbishop of Dublin. (Mo.) Not located. Mount correctly asserts that the portrait is mentioned by Herbert. See Herbert, Varieties, 232-233.
42. Fowler, Miss. (Mo.) Not located. As in John Fowler, above.
43. Grattan, Henry. (S. P.) Not located. Mount claims that a study for the full-length was sold in 1918 as a Zoffany. A copy exists at Trinity College, extensively overpainted (Mo. IGS. illustrated no. 4) An engraving after Stuart (F58.) exists in the NGI.
44. Grattan, Henry. (NGI. cat. no. 1163 illustrated) National Gallery of Ireland. Dimensions (75 x 63). Mount claims that this is by Dowling Herbert (Mo. IGS. no. 5).
45. Hamilton, George, Baron of the Exchequer. (S. F61. Mo. McL. Illustrated) Willaim A. Farnsworth Library and Art Museum, Rockland, Maine. c. 1790. Dimensions (48 1/2 x 37).
46. Hamilton, Mrs. George. (S. F62. Mo. McL. illustrated) William A. Farnsworth Library and Art Museum, Rockland, Maine. c. 1790. Dimensions (28 x 22 3/4).
47. Hamilton, Hugh, Dean of Armagh. (S. F63. P373. Mo.) Not located. Mount believes two versions exist: 1. John Levy

Gallery 1938 2. In clericals, engraved by w. Evans, 1807 (Also mentioned by Strickland who provides the date c. 1790).

48. Hamilton, Hugh, Dean of Armagh. (Mo.) Not located. Mount provides a location for the work at the John Levy Gallery, 1938.
49. Hamilton, Mrs. Hugh. (S. P374. Mo.) Not located. As in Hugh Hamilton, above.
50. Hartigan, Doctor William. (P379. illustrated) Not located.
51. Holman, Joseph George. (F61.) Not located. Fielding claimed that the portrait of the actor was painted in Ireland and owned by the Garrick Club, London.
52. Leinster, the Duke of. (P486. Mo. McL. illustrated.) The Montclair Art Museum. c. 1787. (32 1/4 x 26 3/4). Mount believes that a portrait of the Duke in the collection of the present Duke of Leinster is also by Stuart.
53. Leland, The Reverend Doctor. (Mo.) Mount believes that the portrait of the subject in the National Gallery of Ireland attributed to Thomas Hickey is by Stuart. See Catalogue of Paintings in the NGL. no. 655.
54. Leslie, Charles Powell. (F78. P489.) Not located. MP for County Monaghan. Malton, Thomas, (P521. Mo.) Not located. Park mentions the work but states that it was unknown to him.

Mount states that the work was engraved by J. Jones in 1790 and W. Barney in 1806.

55. Logan, John. (P504.) Not located.
56. Macartney, George Earl of. (F85.) Not located. Fielding claimed the work was painted in Ireland and owned by the Earl of Normanton, Somerly, Hants.
57. Malton, Thomas. (F86.) Not located. Fielding states that the portrait was painted in Dublin.
58. Montagu, the Honorable John. (Mo.) Mount believes that two versions exist. 1. In the collection of the Earl of Sandwich. 2. In the National Gallery of Ireland. Which picture Mount claims here for Stuart is unclear, for he gives no further information.
59. Montagu, the Honorable Augusta, (Mo.) Mount claims this portrait is by Stuart and is in the collection of Mrs. Booth Tarkington.
60. Normanton, Charles Earl of (Archbishop of Dublin as Lord Somerton). (F96. Mo.) Mount claims that this portrait is in the collection of the Earl of Normanton.
61. Normanton, Jane Countess of. (F97. Mo.) As in the Earl of Normanton, above. Mount claims not to have not seen this picture.

62. Ormonde, Countess of. (Ma. P595. Mo.) Mount correctly states that Mason mentions "Lady Ormand," Mason, p. 233.
63. Ossory, Lord Bishop of. See Hon. William Beresford above.
64. Ponsonby, Chambre Brabazon Sr. (F105. Mo.) Not located. Mount claims that a copy of this work is at Kilcooley Abbey, Ireland.
65. Ponsonby, Chambre Brabazon. (Mo.) Major George Ponsonby.
66. Ponsonby, Lady Harriet. (Mo.) Major George Ponsonby.
67. Preston, Reverend William. (F. P679. illustrated. Mo.) Collection of Preston Davie.
68. Sexton, Edmund Viscount Pery. Two portraits. (P631. illustrated Mo.) National Gallery of Ireland. Park provides a date c. 1788. Dimensions (76 x 63). Mount believes this to be a "studio replica, perhaps by Dowling." For attribution to Stuart, see Catalogue of Paintings in the NGI, no. 822.
69. Sexton, Edmund Viscount Pery. (P632. Mo.) Not located. Mount provides the information that the work was sold at Sotheby's in 1932.
70. Shaw, Robert of Terenure. (S. Mo.) Not located. According to Mount, the picture passed through "Knoedler's (London, 1930-)". Three replicas exist (Mount): 1. George Bernard Shaw.

2. National Gallery of Ireland (it is unsure which picture in the NGI that Mount refers to). A studio replica by Dowling. Here, Mount repeats Park. 3. L.H. Shaw, a studio replica by Dowling.
71. Shaw, Bernard. National Gallery of Ireland (Catalogue no. 1829) Dimensions (76.3 x 63.2 cm.).
 72. Sinclair, Sir John. (NGI. cat. no. 1743 illustrated) National Gallery of Ireland. Dimensions (76 x 63).
 73. Tottenham, Charles of Ballycurry. (Mo. illustrated) Collection Charles Tottenham.
 74. Tottenham, The Hon. Mrs. Loftus. (Mo.) Addison Gallery of American Art, Phillips Academy, Andover, Mass. c. 1790. Dimensions (30 1/16 x 24 7/18).
 75. Waterford, Marquis of. (Mo. McL. illustrated) Collection of the Marquis of Waterford, Curraghmore, Ireland. c. 1791. Dimensions (29 1/4 x 24 1/2) Mount lists five other portraits of the Marquis. 1 Herbert E. Gale 2 F.R. Mayer 3 Micheletti, N.Y. 4 Peacock, New Zealand. (Mount claims to have not seen this portrait) 5 Hugh Maude (in St. Patrick's Robes).
 76. Waterford, Marchioness of. (Mo.) Collection of the Marquis of Waterford, Curraghmore, Ireland. Mount lists a second portrait in the collection of F.R. Mayer.

77. Webbe, Mr. George. (F.) Not located. Fielding provides dimensions (28 1/2 x 24 3/8).
78. Webbe, Sr., Mr. (F.) Not located. Fielding provides dimensions (29 3/4 x 24 3/4).
79. Webbe, Sr., Mrs. (F.) Not located. Fielding suggested that this work was in the National Gallery of Ireland, and provides dimensions (32 x 27).
80. Weldon, The Honorable Mrs. Steuart. (Mo.) Not located. Mount asserts that the portrait was mentioned in the Evening Herald, Dublin 1789.
81. Westmeath, The Eighth Earl (as a child). (F. Mo.) Dimensions (40 x 50). Fielding (P.M.H.B. 1929) provides considerable information on the portrait, and provides a date, 1791-2.
82. Westmeath, George Frederick, Earl of. (F. Mo.) Mount asserts that the work was reproduced by William Sawitzky in The New York Times Magazine, Aug. 12, 1928.
83. Westmeath, Countess of. (Ma. Mo.) Not located.
84. White, Luke. (Mo. McL. illustrated) National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C. c. 1790 . Dimensions (30 x 25).
85. White, Mrs. Luke and child. (Mo.) Not located. Mount mentions that "several copies and partial replicas are known."

There are in addition some unidentified portraits:

86. Portrait of a Man. (Mo) Newark Museum. Mount is of the opinion that the portrait may be that of Sir Desmond Barrington.
87. Portrait of a Man. (Mo) Not located. Copy in the collection of Julian Peck (Mount).
88. Portrait of a Lady. (NGI. cat. no 680) National Gallery of Ireland. Dimensions (70 x 58 cm.).

APPENDIX B

STUART AND PRISON

After a decade of prolific work, at the height of his London career, and aged 32, Stuart left London for Dublin in the fall of 1787. Pecuniary difficulties are usually given as the explanation for this move, but as in all Stuart lore, care must be exercised in following such assumptions. Dunlap mentions that Stuart was "no stranger to parsimony,"¹ and this opinion is supported by Stuart's own account, as reported by Dunlap:

Respecting the practice of demanding half the price at the first sitting, he told Mr. Fraser, that, "Lord St. Vincent, the Duke of Northumberland, and Colonel Barre, came unexpectedly one morning into my room, locked the door and then explained the intention of their visit. They understood that I was under pecuniary embarrassments, and offered me assistance, which I declined. They then said they would sit for their portraits. Of course I was ready to serve them. They then advised that I should make it a rule that half price must be paid at the first sitting. They insisted on setting the example, and I followed the

¹ Dunlap, History, 1:223.

practice ever after this delicate mode of showing their friendship."²

It is probable that this admission by Stuart led in later times to the more exaggerated rumor and misconception about time spent in prison for non-payment of debts in London. Mount's English study failed to find Stuart's name in prison records, and adds that while Stuart may have been pressed by creditors, "that he ever actually was lodged in prison is ruled out by examination of the records of the London prisons, now kept in the Public Records Office, Chancery Lane. Stuart's name nowhere appears in them."³ Mount contends that the rumor of Stuart's imprisonment may have emanated from a remark by Sir Thomas Lawrence, who is believed to have said that Stuart had left London because of a dislike of "some of our goals."⁴ Lawrence's remark may have emanated from hearsay rather than personal experience since he had only arrived as a prodigy in London less than a year before Stuart's departure for Ireland.

The issue of Stuart's imprisonment in Ireland, however, is documented by Herbert, and leaves little doubt with regard to its occurrence, though exaggeration may well play a part. Herbert reports his conversation with Stuart:

² Ibid. Pasquin states that it was James Worsdale who introduced the custom of charging the half-price at the first sitting. Pasquin, Professors, 21. According to Pasquin, Worsdale spent some time in Ireland "at the beginning of his manhood."

³ Mount, Stuart, 115.

⁴ Ibid.

Stuart: So silly am I and so careless of keeping out of debt, it has cost me more bailiffs for my liberty than would pay the debt for which they were to arrest me. I confess my folly in feeling proud of such feats: – don't you know that I have been some time in confinement?

Herbert: No, I never heard of it.

Stuart: I have been, and you will be surprised, when I tell you I painted myself out of jail.

Herbert: How did you paint yourself out?

Stuart: Why, I painted the jailer and his wife, and he was so penetrated at the honour I had done him, that he was glad of an opening that offered for my escape.⁵

Stuart then elaborates on the extraordinary story with characteristic exaggeration:

It was thus: – One lord-lieutenant left the castle, with his suite, to make way for a newly-appointed viceroy, who was waiting at Howth, until they had a meeting and conference; then the new lord came to town, and took his place at the Castle, and was sworn in agreeably to the usage of this great official regal establishment. I knew so much law, that, from the abdication of one, to the investiture of the other, although it took in process but a few hours, the government of the country slept until the great work was accomplished. I therefore demanded my liberty. The jailor knew I was borne out in my demand, and opened the door, permitting me to depart, which, having done, I am unwilling to be locked up again, so submit to be plucked by these vultures—the bailiffs. Now, sir, answer me, – have I not made some advances in the arts?⁶

⁵ Herbert, *Varieties*, 246-247.

⁶ Ibid. R.B. McDowell provides a thorough description of conditions in Irish jails of the period. They were badly constructed, dark, damp, dirty, airless and insanitary. Since there were comparatively few compartments all types of prisoners were

It is most probable that the story told by Stuart was indeed narrated with characteristic exaggeration. Despite Stuart's embellishment, the mention of the two viceroys makes it possible to locate the event between September 1789 and January 1790. This was the only time when a living viceroy was replaced by a successor during Stuart's time in Ireland. The Marquis of Buckingham had replaced the Duke of Rutland on the decease of the latter. Buckingham arrived in Ireland on December 16, 1787, and had announced his resignation from the position one year later on December 10, 1788.⁷ On hearing of Buckingham's plan, William Pitt directed an address to Dublin pleading with Buckingham to rescind his resignation claiming that, given the political situation, such action would be "dangerous."⁸ The effect was that Pitt's request delayed Buckingham's plan, and he eventually left Ireland in September, 1789. On January 5, 1790, Lord Westmorland arrived in Dublin to succeed him. That Stuart exag-

herded together. Debtors were sometimes compelled to rub shoulders with felons and children were locked up with hardened criminals, and consequently exposed to the most extreme degree of corruption and depravity. Slight improvements were evident after the enactment of prison reform acts in 1786 and 1787. McDowell also provides some pertinent statistics, namely that in Dublin in 1785 there were about 1,500 arrests for debt. R.B. McDowell, Ireland in the Age of Imperialism and Revolution 1760-1801 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), 71-73. There were a number of prisons in Dublin during Stuart's time there. Chief among these were the Newgate, situated in the old Corn Market; the Sheriff's Marshalsea, known as the Black Dog in the Newhall Market; the Four Courts Marshalsea off Thomas Street; and the New Prison in Little Green. Constantia Maxwell, Dublin Under the Georges 1714-1830 (London: Faber and Faber, 1936), 126.

⁷ Evening Herald, 10 December 1788.

⁸ McDowell, Ireland, 340-341.

gerated the circumstances is evident from a study of the facts. In Stuart's enthusiastic narrative, he mentions that the process took "but a few hours,"⁹ however, on December 10, 1788, the date of Buckingham's announced resignation, The Evening Herald wrote that: "our present Viceroy intends to resign shortly the Government of this kingdom ... conjecture therefore is on the stretch of invention, to find out who his Excellency's successor may probably be...."¹⁰ Clearly, Stuart's account that his escape took place between the time when "one lord-lieutenant left the Castle ... to make way for a newly appointed viceroy, who was waiting at Howth...." is somewhat exaggerated, but nevertheless his escapade can now be dated with some accuracy.¹¹

Since the above confinement occurred in Ireland, and is the only one which Stuart mentions specifically to Herbert, it is unlikely; being "proud of such feats" as he declares, he would not list other imprisonments if they had occurred.¹² The text of the early discussion is ambiguous, however, since Stuart mentions in the plural his being proud of such "feats." In the absence of more information, unfortunately, there is no conclusive evidence with regard to imprisonment in England. Therefore, though financial pressure may

⁹ Herbert, Varieties, 247.

¹⁰ Evening Herald, 10 December 1788.

¹¹ Herbert, Varieties, 247.

¹² *Ibid.*

well have existed due to Stuart's proclivity for expensive living, other reasons carry more substantial evidence for Stuart's departure for Ireland. Among these would be the mounting tension of political affairs in England at the approach of the French Revolution, and competition from other more patronized artists in London, including Gainsborough and Reynolds as compared to the open market for talent in Dublin. Moreover, in Dublin, the second largest city in the realm, tension was not yet present and Ireland was a country with whom France was friendly. There was, moreover, the strong attraction of the invitation of the Viceroy, the Duke of Rutland, which Dunlap mentions in the following statement:

From the commencement of his independent establishment as a portrait painter in London, success attended him: but he was a stranger to prudence. He lived in splendour, and was the gayest of the gay. As he has said of himself, he was a great beau. I cannot assert, but feel perfectly convinced that pecuniary difficulties induced him to leave London for Dublin, to which city, his daughter, Miss Ann Stuart, in a letter to Mr. James Herring, says he was invited by the Duke of Rutland, and on the day he arrived, the duke was buried.¹³

Dunlap adds that:

From London, Stuart, as we have seen, went to Dublin, and it is probable that English claims followed him to the capital of Ireland. It was currently said, but I can give no voucher except probability, that, being lodged in jail by some of his creditors, he there set up his easel, and was followed by those who wanted portraits from his hand. He began the portraits of a great many nobles, and men of wealth and fashion, received half price at the

¹³ Dunlap, History, 226-227.

first sitting, accumulated enough to enfranchise himself and left the Irish lordships and gentry imprisoned in effigy. We will suppose, that having thus liberated himself, and there being no law that would justify the jailer in holding the half finished peers in prison, the painter fulfilled his engagement more at his ease at his own house, and in the bosom of his own family: and it is probable that the Irish gentleman laughed heartily at the trick, and willingly paid the remainder of the price.¹⁴

The accounts of Dunlap and Herbert regarding Stuart's imprisonment are not concordant and we must accept that truth lies somewhere between. Indeed, as already stated, Stuart's proclivity for exaggeration is most likely the source of both accounts and both may be distrusted.

¹⁴ Ibid., 227-228.

APPENDIX C

VARIANT FORMS OF STUART'S NAME

The announcements in the press of the arrival and departure of Stuart from Dublin spell his name "Stewart." Dunlap provides the following account of changes in Stuart's name:

As Mr. Stuart dropped the middle name of "Charles," we will give our reasons for restoring it to him. He was thus baptised, and it marks the attachment of his father to the worthless dynasty so long adhered to by the Scotch. He bore the three names unto after manhood. Dr. Waterhouse his friend and schoolfellow, in a letter before us, dated 27th of May, 1833, says, "I have cut from one of Stuart's letters his signature of G.C. Stuart, i.e.: Gilbert Charles Stuart. I have some doubt whether his widow and children ever knew that he had the middle name of Charles." When writing his name on his own portrait, in 1778, he omitted the "C." The inscription is "G. Stuart, Pictor, se ipso pinxit, A.D. 1778, aetatis sua 24." His name was frequently written and printed "Stewart."¹

A study by John Hill Morgan in 1941 revealed that Stuart had in fact never been christened with the name "Charles" and that the name had been an afterthought of his father which Stuart held for a time and then dropped.²

¹ Dunlap, History, 1:207.

² John Hill Morgan, "What was Gilbert Stuart's Name," Rhode Island Historical Society Collections, 34 (April 1941), 33-44.

Stuart was born of a Scottish father who emigrated to Rhode Island. Dunlap states that Stuart's father was remembered among those who "had not the appearance of what is generally understood by the term, emigrant, nor yet were they merchants nor seemed to be men of fortune."³ He was, according to Dunlap, part of a group who "came not in companies, but dropped in quietly, one after another. Their unassuming appearance, retired habits, bordering on the reserve, seemed to place them above the common class of British travellers. Their mode of life was snug, discreet and respectable, yet clannish."⁴ What Dunlap does not say is that Stuart's Scottish ancestors, and even his father when he arrived in Newport, were most probably Catholic. The Stuart and Stewart spellings most often refer to Catholic and Protestant origins respectively. In Scotland, the Stuarts were followers of the Pretender, Charles Edward who was defeated by the English at Derby in 1645. In Ireland, the Stuart name also bore Catholic affiliations. For instance in 1727, the Provincial of the Franciscan Order, Francis Stuart, used his influence against Lord Devlin's proposal for a loyal address from the Irish Catholics to George II on his accession.⁵ In this context then, the deliberate action by Gilbert Stuart in dropping the Charles from his name, together with allowing the use of Stewart to replace Stuart as sometimes happens, may

³ Ibid., 194-195.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Edith Mary Johnson, Ireland in the Eighteenth Century. The Gill History of Ireland, vol. 8 (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1974), 22.

indicate a desire to loosen the Catholic affiliation of his name. The name Stewart in Ireland had Protestant affiliations and suggested committed attachment of the established Church. For instance, Sir Robert Stewart, also of Scottish origin, had proven a great defender of the Crown in the Thirty Years War and in subsequent agrarian trouble in Ulster, and he was rewarded for his loyalty with the title Marquis of Londonderry.⁶ Indeed, whenever the Stewart name occurs in eighteenth-century Ireland, it denotes affiliation with the established Church.⁷ Moreover, attachment to the established Church aside, the name Stewart also bore particularly patriotic Protestant overtones that were definitely in keeping with that brand of Irish Protestant patriotism noted among the members of Grattan's Parliament. Patriotism as used here denotes the support of the institutions of the Irish Ascendancy, and is celebrated by the Evening Herald:

We can have no doubt but the patriotic part of Ireland, will arrive at the very zenith of its wishes, so soon as that Pitt, which was dug for their destruction, shall be removed. This intelligence, no doubt, will be rather grating to the ears of a few aristocratic tyrants — but on the other hand, how pleasing will it be to all the good, the just and upright; — to an O'Neill, a Brownlow, a Newenham, a Hartley, a Griffith, a Stewart, [emphasis mine] and a Ward; — be ye always happy good men, in your good deeds ...⁸

⁶ Beckett, Ireland, 11:209-210. See also references to Colonel Charles Stewart in McDowell, Ireland, 635.

⁷ This is clear from a study of Parliamentary registers and municipal directories in the National Library of Ireland.

⁸ Evening Herald, 22 December 1788.

Clearly, in this context, Stuart had much to gain by association of his name with the Stewart spelling.

Because of their religious difference, many emigrating Scots in the eighteenth century seem to have chosen Rhode Island and especially the area of Newport where "diversity continued to characterise the religious life" of the environment.⁹ The arrival of other Scots such as Dr. Moffatt, who began a snuff business and consequently invited Stuart's father to Newport, provides insight into the social and religious character of Newport at the time. Dunlap states:

Several of these Scotch emigrants or visitors, were professional men; among them was Dr. Thomas Moffatt, a learned physician ... but however learned, his dress and manners were so ill suited to the plainness, in both, of the inhabitants of Rhode Island, who were principally Quakers, that he could not make his way among them as a practitioner, and therefore he looked around for some other mode of genteel subsistence, and he let upon that of cultivating tobacco ... but he could find no man in the country who ... was able to make him a snuff mill. He therefore wrote to Scotland and obtained a competent millwright, by the name of Gilbert Stuart.¹⁰

Much is written about the nature of religious difference in Rhode Island during the early eighteenth century, and it is most probable that Dr. Moffat's lack of success in finding adequate practice for his

⁹ Carl Bridenbaugh, Cities in the Wilderness: The First Century of Urban Life in America 1625-1742, Ronald Series in History (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1938), 22.

¹⁰ Dunlap, History, 1:195.

medicine had more to do with religious difference than is suggested by mere "dress and manners" as Dunlap writes. Tuckerman provides important religious information regarding the young Gilbert Stuart. According to Tuckerman:

The record of Stuart's baptism, in the handwriting of Rev. Mr. McSparran, Episcopal Missionary to the Narragansett Church, is preserved in the old register. His father married a daughter of Captain John Anthony, a Welsh emigrant to Rhode Island, a prosperous farmer, who occupied and afterward sold to Dean Berkeley the farm near the Hanging Rocks of the second beach known as Whitehall. Stuart ~~père~~ was a tory, and removed to Halifax, Nova Scotia, where his daughter married Henry Newton, Collector of His Majesty's customs.¹¹

The above reference to Stuart's baptism in the Episcopal Church provides clear proof of his father's desire to raise his children in the established faith. Most probably, Stuart's mother was already a member of the Episcopal Church since she was of Welsh descent, and this allowed the family to maintain those affiliations. While Stuart was in Dublin, therefore, both his desire to affect an English accent and identity, along with diversity in the spelling of his name, may indicate a desire to be more socially acceptable and prominent, by identifying with the religion and origins of the Irish Protestant aristocracy who were his patrons. Thus, Stuart's attention to the ingredients of social and religious acceptance is closely related to his subsequent success in Ireland where these ranks were filled by artists and patrons who shared affiliation in the Established Church.

¹¹ Tuckerman, Artist Life, 107-108.

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