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A
STATEMENT
OF THE
PENAL LAWS,
WHICH AGGRIEVE
THE CATHOLICS
OF IRELAND:

With Commentaries.

IN TWO PARTS.

PART I.

Peut on connoître le vrai génie d'un peuple opprimé, qui voit sans cesse les chatimens levés sur sa tête, et la violence toujours prête à être soutenue par la politique? Peut on juger de la valeur, quand elle est enchaînée, et sans armes?

CHANVALON VOYAGES, &c.

DUBLIN:
H. FITZPATRICK.
1812.

This image depicts a work entitled *A Statement of the Penal Laws, Which Aggrieve the Catholics of Ireland*. Dublin: H. Fitzpatrick, 1812.

The wounds of the potato-crop failure still run deep. The Irish people say the "Great Famine" was really the Great Hunger.

Famines result when most crops fail. Only the Irish potato crop had "the blight." Other crops, produced in abundance but too expensive for penniless people to buy, were shipped out of Ireland.

A contemporary comment by John Mitchel polarizes how many people felt then, and now:

The Almighty Indeed sent the Potato Blight but the English Created the Famine.

In 1997, Prime Minister Tony Blair acknowledged the British government failed to effectively help. On the 150th anniversary of what the Irish call An Gorta Mor (The Great Hunger), Blair said:

Those who governed in London at the time failed their people through standing by while a crop failure turned into a massive human tragedy. We must not forget such a dreadful event.

The Irish aren't likely to forget.

At the time, in 1845, people in Ireland no longer owned most of their land. The Irish countryside, with its green pastures and lush farmland, had been turned into British plantations. Land-owning Irishmen, who worked for

themselves, became rent-paying tenants overnight.

Worse, "Penal Laws" governing the conduct of Irish Catholics were in effect. Over the decades, those restrictive laws diminished the ability of the Irish people to flexibly manage their own affairs. Perhaps the laws were not enacted to render an entire population "ignorant." But the list of what was forbidden makes one wonder how the British expected the Irish to function as a cohesive nation:

- An Irish Catholic was forbidden the exercise of his religion.
- He was forbidden to receive an education.
- He was forbidden to enter a profession.
- He was forbidden to hold public office.
- He was forbidden to engage in trade or commerce.
- He was forbidden to live in a corporate town or within five miles thereof.
- He was forbidden to own a horse of greater value than five pounds.
- He was forbidden to purchase land.
- He was forbidden to vote.
- He was forbidden to keep any arms for his protection.
- He was forbidden to hold a life annuity.
- He could not be a guardian to a child.
- He could not attend Catholic worship.
- He could not personally educate his child.

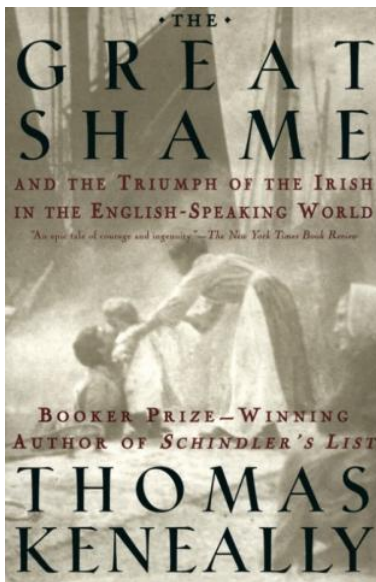
See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/THE-PENAL-LAWS-Wind-that-Shakes-the-Barley>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/THE-PENAL-LAWS-Wind-that-Shakes-the-Barley>

Media Stream



The Great Shame - by Thomas Keneally

Image online, courtesy amazon.com website.

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Irish Countryside and Prehistoric Grave Sites

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Irish Farmlands

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