



SCALP AT CAHUERMORE

As the impact of failing Irish-potato crops worsened their economic situation, people in Ireland could not cope. On the 29th of December, 1849, *The Illustrated London News* published an article which included this sketch. It depicts Margaret Vaughan, a woman who was living in a makeshift bog home in Cahuermore.

These are the words which the article uses to describe the woman's plight:

On arriving at the bog of Cahuermore, I alighted at the scalp shown in the Sketch, which Mr. Monsel and his companions discovered to their surprise, and found in it a woman dying of the customary fever which attends on want of food and clothing and the ordinary necessities of life. Than this scalp [a name used to describe this type of "dwelling"], nothing could be more wretched.

It was placed in a hole, surrounded by pools, and three sides of the scalp (shown in the Sketch) were dripping with water, which ran in small streams over the floor and out by the entrance. Yet, wretched as this hole is, the poor inhabitants said they would be thankful and content if the landlord would leave them there, and the Almighty would spare their lives.

Its principal tenant is Margaret Vaughan, whose history has found its way before the public, and a more wretched history, even in this country of wretchedness, is scarcely to be found. Not far from her cave is the destroyed village of Kilmurry Strikane, another of those pictures of desolation of which I have already sent you too many.

For the present I will leave them, and turn to a little oasis of humanity in the desert of misery.

Many Irish people, during the years of the "potato famine," endured the same plight as Margaret Vaughan. Click on the image for a better view.

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