Reappraisals in Irish History

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Reappraisals in Irish History offers new insights into Irish history, society and culture from 1750. Recognising the many methodologies that make up historical research, the series presents innovative and interdisciplinary work that is conceptual and interpretative, and expands and challenges the common understandings of the Irish past. It showcases new and exciting scholarship on subjects such as the history of gender, power, class, the body, landscape, memory and social and cultural change. It also reflects the diversity of Irish historical writing, since it includes titles that are empirically sophisticated together with conceptually driven synoptic studies.

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CIARÁN McCabe

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For Anne Maree
There is scarcely a greater plague that can infest a society than swarms of beggars; and the inconveniences to individuals arising from them are so generally, and so severely, felt that relief from so great an evil cannot fail to produce a powerful and lasting effect upon the minds of the public.

Anon., *Arguments in proof of the necessity and practicality of suppressing street begging in the city of Dublin* … (Dublin, 1817), p. 10

[T]he beggar is not in Ireland – as he is in England – an outcast, whose apparent misery is ascribed to imposture or vice – whose contact is degradation to the humblest labourer – and who is relieved, not so much to satisfy his wants as to get rid of his presence. The Irish cottier considers the beggar as his equal – indeed, as acting a part in the great drama of life which he may have to perform ere long himself. The beggar is not an occasional and unwelcome intruder; he makes a part, and probably not the least agreeable part, of the society of the family. He has his regular seat before the potatoe-bowl, his nook near the chimney where a chimney exists, and the corner in which he sleeps, on the straw which he has begged during the day. He brings with him news, flattery, conversation, prayers, the blessing of God, and the good-will of men.

[Nassau William Senior], ‘Mendicancy in Ireland’ in *Edinburgh Review*, lxxvii, no. 156 (Apr. 1843), pp. 400–1

I trouble the gentlemen little; they do not know our miserable condition, when God has made us poor, as well as the very small farmers and labourers, who give us all they have for God’s sake; they know they may soon be in our state, and feel more for us.