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'Digne de compassion': female dependants of Irish jacobite soldiers in France, c.1692-c.1730

MARY ANN LYONS

The arrival of thousands¹ of Irish jacobite soldiers and officers, along with their families, in France in the aftermath of the 1691 Treaty of Limerick made this influx 'the first modern, mass immigration experienced in France'.² In the immediate term, the majority of these military and their dependants converged around King James II's court-in-exile at Louis XIV's castle in Saint-Germain-en-Laye outside Paris and joined forces with the French army in opposition to William III. Louis gave James an annual pension of 600,000 French *livres* on which to live and in his *Memoires*, James claimed that he managed to 'relieve an infinite number of distressed people, ancient and wounded officers, widows and children of such as had lost their lives in his services'.³ In reality, however, the conditions of the jacobite soldiers and their dependants, which were uncomfortable from the beginning, became extremely difficult after the Peace of Ryswick in 1697 and the ensuing disbanding of the Irish regiments.⁴

Within the jacobite migrant population as a whole, the large tail of Irish

- 1 Scholars differ in calculating the number of Irish soldiers who went to France after the capitulation of Limerick. According to Nathalie Jenet Rouffiac, 19,000 men along with their families emigrated. See Rouffiac, 'The Irish jacobite exile in France, 1692-1715', in Toby Barnard and Jane Fenlon (eds), *The dukes of Ormonde, 1610-1745* (Woodbridge, 2000), pp. 195-6; idem, 'The Wild Geese. Les régiments irlandais au service de Louis XIV (1688-1715)', *Revue Historique des Armées*, no. 222 (Mar. 2001), 35-48; idem, *Le grand exil: les jacobites en France, 1688-1715* (Vincennes, 2008); idem, 'The Wild Geese in France, 1688-1715: a French perspective', *The Irish Sword*, xxvi, no. 103 (2008), 10-50. By contrast, Colm Ó Conaill estimates that 12,000 men sailed for France after the Treaty of Limerick. See Ó Conaill, 'Ruddy cheeks and strapping thighs': an analysis of the ordinary soldiers in the ranks of the Irish regiments of eighteenth-century France', *The Irish Sword*, xxiv, no. 98 (2005), p. 413. K. Danaher and J.G. Simms in *The Danish force in Ireland* (Dublin, 1962), p. 137 estimate that between 15,000 and 16,000 men and 10,000 women left for France after the Treaty.
- 2 Jean Pierre Poussous quoted in Jean François Dubost, *Les étrangers en France au XVI^e siècle à 1789: guide des recherches aux Archives Nationales* (Paris, 1993), p. 91; for recent studies of the Irish jacobite immigrant population see Patrick Clarke de Dromantin, *Les réfugiés jacobites dans la France du XVIII^e siècle* (Bordeaux, 2005).
- 3 Quoted in Rouffiac, 'Wild Geese', p. 29.
- 4 See Rouffiac, 'Wild Geese'; idem, *Le grand exil*.

military and their dependents was widely recognised by contemporaries, most especially James II and his wife, Mary of Modena, as the group which bore the brunt of the gradual collapse of the Stuart court at Saint-Germain-en-Laye, the disbandment of their regiments in February 1698, and Louis's further scaling down of the French army in 1700.⁵ At a time when military pay in France was not calculated with the support of anyone but the individual soldier in mind, commentators repeatedly remarked the particularly destitute circumstances of the *Irish* population at Saint-Germain whose hardship was exacerbated as the cash-starved Stuarts fell seriously behind in making their army payments.⁶ An especially vulnerable and, in historiographical terms, largely neglected group within this Irish jacobite immigrant population at Saint-Germain, Paris and elsewhere in France, were the women who accompanied these officers and soldiers.⁷ This article focuses on the experiences of a specific cohort within that female population, namely the many females who were left to fend for themselves after their arrival in France, usually because their male relatives were killed in continental wars. The challenges that young Irish girls and women faced whilst endeavouring to adapt to their new life abroad, and the strategies they deployed in negotiating their survival on the margins of their host society, are examined. Unfortunately, the majority of the surviving documentary evidence relates to young girls and women from the middle and upper social strata – the female relatives of the officer corps in the jacobite regiments who asserted their entitlement to a pension from the French crown in recognition of military service rendered by their deceased husbands, fathers, brothers and other relatives. Although little evidence concerning the lives of female dependants of Irish rank-and-file soldiers has survived, anecdotal details can be used to garner fleeting glimpses into the lives of these elusive individuals. The following study, therefore, features cameo profiles of individual girls and women which convey the circumstances and predicaments in which thousands of Irish female dependants of jacobite soldiers found themselves in France during the period c.1692-c.1730.

I

A rare glimpse of the accommodation and living conditions in which Irish jacobite migrant families found themselves following their arrival at Saint-Germain-en-Laye can be gleaned from a contemporary account of two houses which they occupied in the town during the 1690s. The first, a public charity hostel, housed seventy-one Irish people '*dans un état très pauvre*', most of whom were said to have belonged to '*la petite noblesse*' and almost half of whom were soldiers or relatives of soldiers. Among these were Mary Nolan who had four

5 Edward Corp, 'The Irish at the Jacobite court of Saint-Germain-en-Laye', in Thomas O'Connor (ed.), *The Irish in Europe, 1580-1815* (Dublin, 2001), pp 152-3.

6 See Olwen Hufton, *The poor in eighteenth-century France, 1750-1789* (Oxford, 1974), p. 115.

7 Rouffiac, 'Irish jacobite exile', p. 198; idem, 'Wild Geese', p. 20.

grown-up daughters and a son; Mary Bourke and her sister, two young ladies from the '*meilleures maisons d'Irlande*'; Mary and Frances Nolan, two orphaned girls whose father had been a major surgeon, and Cecile Keefe, aged 70, the wife of Leo Lacy, a lieutenant in the reformed Irish regiments. Whole families lived in cramped conditions in this hostel: Robert Plunkett, his wife and children had barely one bed between them. The second premises, a '*Maison des Jeunes Demoiselles*', housed thirty-five girls and young women, all of whom were of '*bonnes familles*'. James II's wife, Mary of Modena, contributed 300 *livres* per month for their upkeep.⁸

While the dependents of large numbers of jacobite soldiers remained resident at Saint-Germain-en-Laye throughout the 1690s, 1700 and 1710s, a significant number of soldiers and their families resided in Paris where the majority converged on the parish of Saint-Sulpice. They also settled in the parishes of Saint-Etienne-du-Mont and Sainte Geneviève in the Latin quarter where the Irish College (*Collège des Lombards*) was located. As might be expected, the quality of married women's lifestyles and their accommodation depended upon the rank and wealth of their male relatives. Typically the families of officers, gentlemen and soldiers (which occasionally included grandparents and wounded adult sons), occupied a single rented room in the homes and business premises of Parisians as the following cases in the parish of Saint-Sulpice during the period 1697-1715 illustrate. Among the forty-six Irish people resident in that parish were Henry Cawley, a wounded Irish captain, his wife and three children. Described as '*fort pauvre*' – they slept on straw – the family occupied one room in a house on the corner of Rue Charpentier. Another officer named Roche, along with his wife and four children, occupied a single room on the second floor of a premises owned by a meat seller. A disabled widow named Sehulton lived in an inn-keeper's premises while another widow of an Irish captain lived with her fourteen-year-old daughter in a rented room in the home a Parisian. Irish families also rented several rooms in the one house. A gentleman lieutenant named MacMahon, his wife and two small children lived in a front room in a house on the Rue de Bourbon while a soldier named MacCarthy, his wife and their three young children, occupied another room.⁹

When it became apparent that their exile would last for a long time, perhaps indefinitely, and particularly after 1697, many soldiers and their dependents decided to leave Saint-Germain-en-Laye and to settle down in western France or in the Bordeaux region. Others left to enter the service of countries such as Spain where they were warmly received while others still went to the Habsburg Empire or Russia.¹⁰

8 List of people in a very poor state, occupying two houses in Saint-Germain-en-Laye (Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS Fonds Français 20866, ff. 106-07); *La cour des Stuarts à Saint-Germain-en-Laye au temps de Louis XIV* (Paris, 1992), p. 206.

9 Irish families in the parish of Saint-Sulpice (B.N., MS F. Fr. 20866, f. 113 r. & v.).

10 Rouffiac, 'Wild Geese', p. 13.

But the traffic was not all one-way: even after Ryswick, soldiers who initially arrived in Nantes transferred their families to Saint-Germain in the late 1690s and early 1700s. These included Christopher Robert Plunkett, a jacobite officer and his wife, Marguerite Tyrrell. While their first two children were baptised in Nantes in 1692 and 1696 respectively, their younger sons, Robert and Patrice, were baptised at Saint-Germain in 1699 and 1702 respectively.¹¹

II

However precarious and difficult the lives of married women might have been, at least in the early 1690s, many of them had husbands, fathers, brothers or other male relatives on whom they could depend for an income, food and a roof over their heads. However, for a very sizeable proportion of young Irish girls and women who either emigrated to France with their male relatives or followed them in the 1690s and early 1700s, their adaptation to life abroad was severely impeded by the loss of their breadwinners during the course of their service in the continental wars of the 1690s and early 1700s. The case of one young Irish woman, Anastasia Cogan, provides some indication of the scale of the losses numerous jacobite military families suffered and helps to explain how many female dependants, who left Ireland with their entire families, quickly found themselves in a vulnerable, isolated and virtually penniless state. In the early 1720s, a representative of Anastasia's wrote to the duke of Orléans's chaplain, seeking an increase in her pension payments. At the time she was described as a poor young girl who came from a good and old Irish family, both her father and mother having always remained Roman Catholics. She had lost her father, her uncle, her older brother with whom she had travelled to France, and a total of twenty-two first cousins (including the two lords Kilmallock) in the service of Kings James and Louis. She had received financial assistance from Mary of Modena until the queen's death in 1718 but in 1723 she was left with no income other than her pension which was not even enough to feed her in the most meagre way.¹² While the scale of Anastasia's losses may have been exceptional, many widows and female dependants lost several soldier relatives which reduced them to penury in the early 1720s. Among these were Mrs Gibbons Burke, widow of a captain in the Burke regiment, who lost her husband, five of her brothers, two uncles and two nephews¹³; a widow named Doyle whose two husbands and two sons died in battle¹⁴ and another widow, Marguerite Dongan, who also lost two husbands.¹⁵ Young girls who were left without a breadwinner included Marie

11 Micheline Kerney Walsh, Alain Loncle de Forville and Madeline Sandra, 'Les Irlandais dans les registres paroissiaux de Nantes, 1601-1793' (unpublished register, Archives départementales de Loire-Atlantique), p. 67.

12 Petitions for pensions from Roman Catholic natives of Great Britain and Ireland in France, 1721-26 (hereafter *Petitions*) (British Library (BL), MS Fr. Eg. 1671, f. 51). My thanks to Professor Tom Bartlett for referring me to this collection.

13 *Ibid.*, f. 29.

14 *Ibid.*, f. 84.

Ellen Condon whose father, two brothers and several close relations were killed in action¹⁶ and Marie Hore, the daughter of a lieutenant colonel, who lost her father and five first cousins.¹⁷

III

Down to her death in 1718, Mary of Modena played an indispensable role in alleviating the plight of a sizeable number of these girls and women of all ages and status. An impression of the extent of her munificence can be gleaned from the fact that the Stuart archive contained five large books detailing her monthly donations to the widows and children of Irish soldiers in her husband's service along with a list of recipients of pensions from the queen in July 1717. Regrettably these books and the list were lost when the archive was destroyed.¹⁸ Nonetheless, based upon anecdotal material it is possible to identify the main ways in which Mary endeavoured to help the Irish in general and these women in particular. Once the jacobite émigrés started to arrive at various destinations throughout France in the early 1690s, she wrote to many French bishops to thank them for the help they gave to Irish families and sometimes specifically Irish gentlewomen recently arrived in their dioceses. For example, in 1696 Mary thanked the bishop of Angers for his 'continued kindness to Madame Wogan, a lady of quality and merit, whose husband died in the service'.¹⁹ She also wrote recommendations in favour of individual women: in 1700 she commended to the bishop of Verdun a Mrs Fitzgerald, whom she styled 'a most deserving object of your compassion, as much on account of her personal merit, being of an old and good family, as because her husband has suffered much in this revolution, and in consequence of the reducement (*sic*) of the army is unable to support his very numerous family'.²⁰ Following the death of her husband in 1701 Mary's dependence on the charitable support of the French bishops and religious for Irish émigré women increased: in thanking the bishop of Verdun in 1704 for his charity towards a Mrs Burke and her child, she acknowledged that she hoped he would continue his charity 'as I am less than ever in a condition to assist her'.²¹

Mary also placed young Irish girls in convents and abbeys throughout France, including Poitiers, Mayenne, Caen, Cremieux, Rouen, Dinant, St Omer, Angers, Montelimar, Bourq, Rennes, Ypres, Saintes and Sens.²² She used her influence with bishops, prioresses and superiors to persuade convents to take in Irish girls,

15 Ibid., f. 85.

16 Ibid., f. 55.

17 Ibid., f. 157.

18 Edward Corp, 'An inventory of the archives of the Stuart court at Saint-Germain-en-Laye, 1689-1718', *Archives*, XXIII, no. 99 (1998), p. 24.

19 Historical Manuscripts Commission, *Calendar of the Stuart papers belonging to His Majesty the king, preserved at Windsor Castle* (7 vols, London, 1902-23), I, p. 114.

20 Ibid., pp. 152, 196, 203.

21 Ibid., pp. 195.

22 Ibid., pp. 109, 117, 124, 136, 140, 150, 152, 154, 167, 182, 183, 195, 203.

many of them the daughters of jacobite officers, and to educate them at the community's expense whilst interceding with the local bishop to moderate the community's capitation tax or subvention in recognition of their generosity.²³ On several occasions, she asked prioresses and abbesses to allow young Irish women whom they had taken into their communities to become sisters in spite of their having no dowries. In the case of one woman, a Miss Wyer, who was refused admittance as a nun to a convent in Poitiers in 1697 because she did not have a dowry, Mary of Modena successfully negotiated her transfer to another convent.²⁴ She remained in contact with the prioresses and superiors of these houses and monitored the conduct and progress of the girls whom she entrusted to their supervision, especially the daughters of jacobite soldiers, routinely using the good conduct of one Irish girl in order to persuade the community to receive in her place 'another young lady of the same nation'.²⁵ When Irish women fell foul of the French police authorities, in exceptional circumstances Mary interceded on their behalf with the French king's officials to have them released from incarceration. For example, in January 1709, she requested that an Irish woman named Byrne be discharged from the *hôpital général* in Paris.²⁶

During the 1710s, the burden of the Irish soldiers and their wives in Saint-Germain-en-Laye weighed particularly heavily on King James's cash-strapped widow. In August 1713 when she received a letter from the Abbé Ronchy, describing how the Irish in Saint-Germain were dying of hunger, not having received any payment for a period of two months, Mary was reported to have been penetrated with sadness, saying 'For my part, I still have some credit on which to live, but these poor people have nothing'.²⁷ Describing the Irish as poverty itself, she lamented the fact that whereas 20,000 men had left Ireland for France, only 6,000 viable men were left. Their wives and children continued to rely on her for their living and consequently later that month, Mary visited Louis XIV and Madame de Maintenon at Marly where she appealed for the back payment of sums due the Irish in order to prevent this crisis situation from prevailing any longer.²⁸

23 Ibid., p. 117; see Carola Oman, *Mary of Modena* (London, 1962), p. 207.

24 HMC, *Stuart papers*, I, p. 127.

25 Ibid., pp. 136, 153, 154, 195, 203.

26 See Secretariat of the royal house collection (hereafter Secretariat) (Archives Nationales, Paris (A.N.), 0153, f. 221 v.). For a discussion of these *hôpitaux* in France, see Hufton, *The poor*, pp. 139-59.

27 Translation of text from Falconer Madon (ed.), *Stuart papers relating chiefly to Queen Mary of Modena and the exiled court of King James II* (2 vols, London, 1889), II, pp. 443-44.

28 B.L., Mackintosh collection, xv, British Museum, Add. MS. 34,501, ff. 75 v., 76 v., 77 v.; Madon (ed.), *Stuart papers*, II, pp. 440, 448; Grace Cantillon, 'Honora Bourke – a wife's story', in B. Dewar (ed.), *Living at the time of the siege: essays in social history* (Limerick, 1991), p. 18. After the French army was reformed in 1698, the Irish and jacobite regiments and companies were reorganised into an Irish force in the service of the king of France. As a result of that reform, the infantry was reduced to eight regiments, leaving a total infantry force of 5,600 men on paper. See Ó Conaill, 'Ruddy cheeks and strapping thighs', p. 413.

In general, the grim reality of the distress experienced by these Irish men and women was apparently kept at a remove from Mary of Modena. On one rare occasion, three days before Pentecost in 1713, a poor Irish woman named MacCarthy, arrived at the court of Saint-Germain, insisting that she be allowed to see the queen from whom she wanted a good pension. She did not, in fact, gain access to Mary. When the queen admitted that she wondered whether she should take this woman into her care, she was actively dissuaded from doing so by her ladies in waiting on the grounds that it would only encourage all such people to come tormenting her. In the end, Mary wrote to the parish priest of Saint-Sulpice in Paris, asking him to find suitable accommodation for Mrs MacCarthy in his parish and she paid a soldier to transport the Irish woman from Saint-Germain. The widow MacCarthy might well have been acting on rumours which were rife at that time that Mary of Modena was in such dire financial straits that she was set to draw down her dowry. Anxious that those rumours were about to attract even more Irish émigrés to France for her to support, Mary instructed her treasurer, Dicconson, to signal very clearly to the Irish at Saint-Germain that nothing would be given to new arrivals.²⁹

IV

The predicament of Irish women less fortunate than Mrs MacCarthy deteriorated even further after the jacobite court moved from Saint-Germain to the papal state of Avignon in March 1716 and, more significantly for these Irish women, Mary died in 1718. While the blow dealt to these women by the loss of their soldier relatives had been somewhat softened by the queen's generosity, when she died, suddenly, these women of formerly privileged status who had never worked, were reduced to the hardship and deprivation experienced by their socially inferior compatriots. Hence, in the 1720s, the full extent of their vulnerability and marginality in a foreign country became all too apparent and resulted in a deluge of pleas for pensions and increases of existing pensions addressed to Monsieur Le Blanc, secretary and minister of state and also to Louis de la Vergne de Tressan, chaplain to the duke of Orléans.

Their applications offer a revealing insight into the extreme depths of deprivation into which many of these former heiresses and gentlewomen had descended. Even allowing for a predictable level of exaggeration in the applications, one is struck by the recurring references to women struggling to survive in 'the greatest misery in the world' – burdened with children, having no pension, no friends, no family, no influence, in danger of dying of hunger, without a home and without clothing.³⁰

The majority who applied for pensions claimed eligibility on the following grounds. Firstly, they had lost at least one male relative in the service of France.

29 Madon (ed.), *Stuart papers*, II, pp. 411-12.

30 See Petitions (B.L., MS Fr. Eg. 1671 (various entries)).

Secondly, they and their families who were of noble standing, had lost all of their wealth, land and possessions in Ireland owing to their support for their king, James II and for Catholicism, and thirdly, after the death of Mary of Modena, they were left without an adequate pension. In addition, certain Protestant girls and women emphasised that they had converted to Catholicism since arriving in France, thereby effectively disinheriting themselves, and leaving themselves with no option but to seek financial assistance from the Catholic hierarchy in France.

On the basis of their petitions it would appear that the most a female dependent of a deceased Irish Jacobite officer could hope for was an annual pension of 300 *livres* (more often, they received in the region of 150-200 *livres*). Even at that, widows of captains complained that 300 *livres* barely allowed them to subsist, some of them being obliged to work to supplement this inadequate income. Their petitions also feature frequent reference to the fact that severe anxiety owing to extreme penury and near starvation caused numerous Irish gentlewomen in Paris and elsewhere to experience serious illness. Among these was Lady Eleanor Campbell, widow of Bernard Campbell, an officer in the Berwick regiment. She was said to be constantly ill and on the verge of dying of hunger in the early 1720s.³¹ Similarly, a young Irish girl, a Miss Hackett, was reduced to such a state of abject misery that she had fallen very ill by the mid-1720s.³² Around the same time, Mary Burke, the daughter of Patrick Burke, a lieutenant in the Berwick regiment, petitioned Monsieur Le Blanc, the French minister and secretary of State, to give her money. She was, she explained, reduced to the most dreadful misery as she had for many years suffered frequent bouts of violent haemorrhages and consequently was too incapacitated and too poor to be able to acquire necessary assistance and food.³³

V

Even as early as the 1690s, at Saint-Germain-en-Laye, this level of hardship was already taking its toll on the health of young Irish women and their children. The parish registers feature many entries for burial of Irish women aged in their twenties and early thirties, including the wives and single daughters of gentlemen, as well as for infants and children. In addition to having to contend with the dislocation of emigrating and the usual hardships of travel and overcrowded living conditions, several Irish women were also heavily pregnant as they fled Ireland with their husbands in the early 1690s. For instance, Agnes Hegarty gave birth to a son at Saint-Germain within two or three days of her

31 *Ibid.*, ff. 41-44.

32 *Ibid.*, ff. 138-39.

33 Request for financial assistance by Marie Burke, 12 Jan. 1725 (Service Historique de Terre, Archives de la Guerre, Vincennes, 1 YE 3545, f. 1); reminder regarding Marie Burke's request, 22 Mar. 1727 (*ibid.*, 1 YE 3545, f. 2 r. & v.); decision on Burke's request (*ibid.*, 1 YE 3545, f. 3 r. & v., f. 4 r. & v.); Marie Burke to M. Le Blanc, 20 Aug. 1727 (*ibid.*, 1 YE 3544).

arrival in the parish in late December 1692.³⁴ Notwithstanding their precarious existence, it is interesting that only a handful of Irish females were admitted to the hospitals and prisons in Paris: between 1702 and 1730, a mere 14 Irish females were admitted to La Salpêtrière. (This is as compared with the 400 Irish men admitted to another of the city's hospitals during the same period and also allowing for the fact that most invalid Irish soldiers were accommodated in the *Invalides*). For Irish women who were alone and ill in Paris, such as fifty-year-old Cecille Magphilby from Dublin or seventy-year-old Elizabeth More, their last resort was the *hôtel-Dieu* where they died alongside the poorest of Parisians, usually within just days of their admission.³⁵ The case of Helen Curtin provides a particularly poignant illustration of the extreme isolation experienced by some Irish women who did not have the resources to survive. Born in Ireland, Helen, who does not appear to have had any immediate family in Paris, and who was described as insane (possibly in the advanced stages of syphilis), was admitted to the *hôtel Dieu*, in February 1724, aged thirty-years-old. She died there a month later.³⁶

That so few Irish women were admitted to Parisian hospitals and prisons can, at least in part, be explained by the remarkable strength of extended familial networks within the Irish cohort of the jacobite immigrant community and here Irish women played an especially important role. In the 1720s many widows and young, single women were living in Paris, managing on their own, nursing not only elderly members of their immediate families, but also having charge of members of their extended family. There are several instances of young Irish women single-handedly rearing several orphaned nieces and nephews who had been entrusted to their charge since their arrival in France. Among these was an only child, Marie Ellen Condon, from a distinguished family who had lost considerable property in Ireland. Her father had brought a company to France to serve James II but he, along with her two brothers and several close relatives, had died in combat and consequently she was left to take care of her aged and infirm mother '*dans la dernière de misères*'.³⁷ Similarly, a Miss Fitzgerald, the daughter of a deceased captain in the Lee regiment, found herself living with her dependent aged and infirm mother in what are described as 'deplorable circumstances'.³⁸ The experience of Marguerite Donegan, who having been twice widowed, found herself in extreme indigence and charged with the care of two orphaned nieces in the 1720s, was by no means unusual.³⁹ The remarkably tight-knit nature of the Irish community at Saint-Germain-en-Laye in particular is

34 Parish register, Saint-Germain-en-Laye, 25 Dec. 1692 (Archives Départementales des Yvelines (A.D.Y.)).

35 David Bracken, 'Piracy and poverty: aspects of the Irish jacobite experience in France, 1691-1720', in O'Connor (ed.), *Irish in Europe*, pp. 30, 32.

36 *Ibid.*, p. 15.

37 Petitions (B.L., Ms Fr. Eg. 1671, f. 55).

38 *Ibid.*, f. 111.

39 *Ibid.*, f. 85.

also very apparent from an examination of the parish registers, which show families were closely bound together through marriage and through acting as godparents to the next generation.⁴⁰

VI

According to Olwen Hufton, in eighteenth-century France 'any married woman whose husband joined the army was as good as abandoned'.⁴¹ The manner in which married Irish women conducted themselves during their husbands' absences on campaign or following their husbands' death determined the treatment afforded them by the French authorities. At one end of the scale individuals such as Anastasie Dillon, the wife (and after 1703 widow) of Lieutenant-colonel Alexander Barnwall, were held in high esteem by French military officials. Anastasie was praised for being 'a lady of great virtue who always went into a convent during her husband's absences and campaigns and [who], since his death, ... has not left the convent where she is bringing up her two daughters'.⁴² In a further illustration of the high regard in which she was held, the marquise de Maintenon, wife of Louis XIV, paid for the education of one of Anastasie's daughters. On the basis of her family pedigree and her virtuous conduct, Anastasie had her pension increased to 1,000 *livres*, she amassed an investment of 20,000 *livres* and, at the time of her death in 1736, she was resident in the royal palace in Paris.⁴³ At the opposite end of the scale, some Irish women who failed to secure pensions in compensation for their dead male relatives and who did not have recourse to an extended family support network, declined into a life of penury and occasionally fell prey to criminals which caused further deterioration in their already straitened circumstances. This was the experience of Murtagh Doyle's widow. Having lost two husbands and two sons in action, she had received a pension from Mary of Modena down to the queen's death in 1718. However, in the early 1720s, advanced in years and suffering several disabilities, she was robbed of what little money she had in the woods at La Fere: as a result she was living on the streets, without any assistance or income whatsoever.⁴⁴

Other women resorted to crime, typically begging and in more exceptional cases, prostitution, despite the fact that they were in receipt of pensions.⁴⁵ David Bracken has identified three young Irish women who were known to the Parisian

40 Parish registers, Saint-Germain-en-Laye (A.D.Y.).

41 Hufton, *The poor*, p. 115.

42 Quoted in Micheline Kerney Walsh, 'Irish women in exile, 1600-1800', *The O'Mahony Journal*, 11 (1981), p. 43 and by Bernadette Whelan, 'The weaker vessel?'; the impact of warfare on women in seventeenth-century Ireland', in Christine Meek and Catherine Lawless (eds), *Studies in medieval and early modern women* (Dublin, 2005), p. 140.

43 Whelan, 'Impact of warfare', p. 140.

44 Petitions (B.L., MS Fr. Eg. 1671, f. 84).

45 Bracken, 'Piracy and poverty', p. 139.

authorities for their involvement in prostitution during the mid-1720s. The *lieutenant général de police* was informed that an Irish woman named Mrs MacMahon, herself the recipient of a pension, had two daughters who 'are prostituting themselves for anyone and everyone'. Concern was expressed that as there was 'a large number of colleges and pensions in this area of the city, they will do a great harm and will seduce a large number of young men'. The girls' parish priest told the lieutenant that 'the complaints made against the MacMahon girls are of a very serious nature and it would appear to me that they are justified'. However, owing to their privileged social status (they were styled '*filles de familles*, in receipt of a pension from the king', '*des delles de condition*', coming from a '*très bonne maison*'), the parish priest urged that they be treated leniently, advising that 'It would be charitable to begin with a severe reprimand which would frighten them'.⁴⁶

One gains an insight into the circumstances that forced some Irish women repeatedly to fall foul of the French police authorities in the cases of two elderly individuals, Madelaine Sarre (aged seventy) and Sarah McDonogh (aged sixty-six), both of whom lived at the same address in Paris in the mid-1720s. Together they were arrested for the crime of begging and imprisoned on 22 January 1725. Madelaine was born in Ireland but had lived in Paris for twenty-two years. Sarah's case demonstrates the dire isolation and distress experienced by some female dependants of jacobite soldiers. Her husband, Maurice McDonagh, was an officer in the *Invalides*. Living with one 'Patrice, an invalid', and reduced to extreme necessity in McDonagh's absence, Sarah became an alcoholic.⁴⁷ Her husband described how she 'drinks wine every day and when drunk blasphemes God's holy name and insults all their neighbours, subjecting them to foul abuse' at all hours of day and night.⁴⁸ Eventually these neighbours, who in fact lived in the same house as Sarah, testified that she was surviving 'with difficulty and only with the help of the good works of persons of piety'. They recognised that her husband 'cannot remedy the situation, is incapable of paying for her board and lodgings and is unable to secure her safety by employing someone to mind her'.⁴⁹ Ultimately he had Sarah admitted to a Paris hospital in 1722 on the grounds of her '*mauvaise conduite*', though she was released in July of the following year after McDonagh petitioned for her discharge.⁵⁰ Writing in 1724 to Archbishop Tressan, Sarah sought financial assistance on the grounds that she had suffered from a deformity of her hands which left her unable to work and she had lost her

46 Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 139.

47 *Ibid.*, p. 140.

48 Anon., Mar. 1722 (Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, Paris, Archives de la Bastille, 10756, Macdonnagh, f. 53).

49 *Ibid.*, f. 54; on the principle for army payments see Hufton, *The poor*, p. 115.

50 Order for Sarah McDonagh's conveyance to hospital, 30 Mar. 1722 (A.N., Secretariat, O166, f. 100); Bracken, 'Piracy and poverty', p. 140.

51 Petitions (B.L., MS Fr. Eg. 1671, f. 192).

three brothers in the service of the king of France. As a result, she found herself in '*les dernières nécessités*'⁵¹ and obliged to resort to begging. Sarah's circumstances continued to deteriorate and early in 1725 she was detained in Salpêtrière for a period of two months. Soon after her release, she was re-arrested for the same crime and admitted to Bicêtre, a prison which formed part of the *hôpital général* of Paris. There she was recognised as a repeat offender and consequently transferred to Grand Châtelet prison.⁵²

The hardship and isolation that Sarah McDonagh experienced was by no means unusual among Irish girls and women who were financially dependent upon their jacobite military relatives. Catherine Waters MacCarthy, whose husband was a lieutenant in the Lynch regiment serving in Germany, lived in Paris but did not work. Instead, she relied entirely upon remittances that her husband sent back home to her. With the result, for the duration of his imprisonment in Germany and following his death, she, like Sarah McDonagh and other Irish wives and dependants, was left utterly penniless in the mid-1720s. The widow MacCarthy's isolation was magnified by the fact that her relatives, all of whom were Protestant, had ostracised her since her conversion to Catholicism.⁵³ It fell to the commander of the regiment in which her dead husband had served to intercede on her behalf for a pension as she was '*une veuve dans la dernière pauvreté*'.⁵⁴ Irish women were also abandoned by their military relatives: in January 1692 space was created within the *Sanitat* in Nantes in order to house the wives and daughters of jacobite soldiers who were left to live without any means of support in the city's streets.⁵⁵ Some women were effectively abandoned when their husbands were court-martialed: Éoghan Ó hAnnracháin has identified at least six married Irish military men who were court-martialed, mostly for desertion, during the period 1693-1714 and sent to work as galley slaves.⁵⁶

For lone Irish girls and women left residing in the vicinity of the Irish College, Saint-Etienne-du-Mont and Saint-Sulpice in Paris, their circumstances were especially precarious. A typical example is one Madame MacDonnell, the young wife of a lieutenant, who was left to support three children in the parish of Saint-Etienne.⁵⁷ Even older women who were formerly of more elevated social status and considerably greater wealth, found themselves alone and struggling to keep their families together. In the early 1700s, one Madame St John, said to have been '*de la premier qualité du royaume d'Irlande*', was left on her own to

52 Bracken, 'Piracy and poverty', p. 140.

53 Petitions (B.L., MS Fr. Eg. 1671, f. 187).

54 Ibid., f. 188.

55 Alice Quiles, 'Recherches sur la mendicité à Nantes à la fin du XVIIe siècle, 1680-1700' (unpublished maîtrise thesis, Faculty of Arts, University of Nantes, 1969), p. 49.

56 Éoghan Ó hAnnracháin, 'Galériens: the Irish galley slaves of France', *The Irish Sword*, XXV, no. 99 (2006), 23-48.

57 A list of names of Irish in Parisian parishes (B.N., MS Fr. 20866, f. 115 r.).

58 Ibid., f. 115 v.

support a son (a former soldier), two adult daughters (both of whom had lost their husbands at war) and a servant.⁵⁸ Of course not all women who accompanied Jacobite soldiers to France and had children with these men were married to them as a handful of entries in the parish registers of Saint-Germain-en-Laye indicate, and these women were undoubtedly in a particularly vulnerable position.⁵⁹

A significant number of Irish women opted to accompany or follow their husbands or indeed if they were widowed, the regiments, on their campaigns in other countries, bringing their children (sometimes as many as four) with them. The wives, daughters and mothers of members of the five regiments who opposed the Austrians in the War of the Spanish succession in 1701 remained at the army post in Grenoble. The commanding officer wrote to Chamillart, the minister for war:

There are at Grenoble more than 60 wives of Irish officers who have remained there in the hope that their husbands' regiments would return to this province for winter quarters. All of them are burdened with children and are in great want and, seeing that those regiments are not returning, they are persecuting me for permits to enable them to go and join their husbands.⁶⁰

These permits would enable them to get food and shelter at army posts along their route. Chamillart was reluctant to give the women any money as an inducement to move on. He feared that 'having received this money, they may not go or may use the money to move to another town of the province; this happens frequently with women of that nation for, in the majority, of cases, the salaries of their husbands is not sufficient for their maintenance'.⁶¹ In December of that year, Mary of Modena wrote to the bishop of Grenoble, Cardinal Etienne Le Camus, thanking him for his charity to the wives of officers of her husband's army who had not been able to follow their husbands who went on campaign into Italy.⁶²

Just how extensively these women travelled is evident from the following two cases. Marie French and her husband, David Sarsfield, a captain in the Burke regiment, were based at Nantes between 1694 and 1697. By 1699 Marie and the couple's three children were among those based at the army camp in Grenoble where she gave birth to their fourth child. In July 1706 she and her children were based at Meung-sur-Loire, where the couple's fifth child was baptised.⁶³ Cecile Sloakes, the widow of a captain in Berwick's regiment, and her children travelled even further. In October they were at the regiment's winter quarters at Monosque

59 See parish registers for Saint-Germain-en-Laye (A.D.Y.).

60 Quoted in Kerney Walsh, 'Irish women in exile', p. 43 and in Whelan, 'Impact of warfare', p. 140.

61 Quoted in Kerney Walsh, 'Irish women in exile', p. 43 and in Whelan, 'Impact of warfare', p. 140.

62 HMC, *Stuart papers*, I, p. 168.

63 Kerney Walsh, Loncle de Forville & Sandrea, 'Les Irlandais', p. 71.

in Provence. Two years later she was living in Málga where the regiment was then stationed.⁶⁴ This peripatetic lifestyle compounded difficulties experienced by many of these émigré women, separating them from their relatives and friends as well as from parish clergy, bishops, and religious who were disposed to helping them, especially at Saint-Germain-en-Laye and Paris. Yet, as Barton C. Hacker has observed, in an age when women's options were so narrow, the military life may have been one of very few real alternatives to pauperism and crime and hence thousands of women such as Cecile Sloakes 'may have been as much attracted by what they headed for as repelled by what they left behind.'⁶⁵

While young girls and women usually made the crossing from Ireland to France in the company of a male relative, some such as Marie MacCabe, were dispatched to France, unaccompanied, on the assumption that their jacobite soldier relatives would take responsibility for their welfare. Inevitably, several of these individuals fell into precarious circumstances soon after their arrival. Marie MacCabe was an only child and belonged to a very distinguished Protestant family. However, by the early 1720s, her father, Alexander, was deceased and her mother Christine Fleming, who intended to remarry, was anxious to remove Marie temporarily from her home. Christine therefore dispatched Marie, then aged twenty, to stay with her brother (the girl's uncle), James Fleming, who was an officer in Paris, for a period of one year. By her own admission, on leaving Ireland, Marie's head was full of notions that she would be able to learn the French language and fine manners. However, on her arrival in Paris, she found her uncle living in extreme poverty and utterly incapable of assuming responsibility for her. She soon fell violently ill and was forced to spend a month in a city hospital. There, she came to the attention of Marie-Christine de Noailles, the duchess of Gramont, and of her uncle, Cardinal Louis-Antoine de Noailles, archbishop of Paris, who encouraged her to convert to Catholicism and to that end, conveyed her to a local convent.⁶⁶ However, according to her own version of events, Marie soon found it impossible in conscience to embrace Roman Catholicism and therefore left the convent. Cardinal de Noailles was incensed on hearing that she had left and promptly had her and her uncle thrown into prison amidst a tirade of scandalous allegations against both parties. She was accused of having fraudulently availed of his charity and that of the duchess of Gramont, of pretending to be a genuine convert to Catholicism when all along she only intended to get sufficient money to enable her to return to Ireland, and of spending all her days along with her so-called uncle in the city's cabarets and cafés. Allegations were made by the cardinal that Fleming was not even related to the girl and that he had forced her into prostitution, taking the profits himself. It

64 Étude liii/152, 163 (A.N., Minutier central des notaires).

65 See Barton C. Hacker, 'Women and military institutions in early modern Europe: a reconnaissance', *Signs*, VI, no. 4 (Summer 1981), pp 663-4.

66 François-Alexandre de la Chenaye-Desbois and Jacques Dadier, *Dictionnaire de la noblesse* (3rd edn.), IX (Paris, 1866), p. 645; XIV (Paris, 1869), pp. 938, 979.

was the superiors of the *Collège des Lombards* in Paris who came to Marie's rescue, and restored reason to the proceedings. On 22 January 1723 they presented the city's *lieutenant général de police* with a certificate testifying that Fleming was indeed the girl's maternal uncle. In response to their intervention, Marie was released from La Salpêtrière three months later.⁶⁷

VII

Having identified the principal challenges that faced young Irish girls and women in adapting to life in Saint-Germain-en-Laye, Paris, and provincial France, what channels were open to them to facilitate their survival and successful adjustment? Firstly, within the wider jacobite community in Paris, there were several sources of support for the newly-arrived immigrants in the 1690s and early 1700s. Notwithstanding the mutual animosity that existed between Irish, English and Scottish jacobite military, several senior Scottish, English and Irish military personnel, aristocrats and gentlemen and women in the city lent practical assistance to newly-arrived relatives and friends, especially their social peers, in the early stages of their settling in. They vouched for the integrity of these people on occasions when the latter were in trouble with the law or when they were applying for financial assistance or for employment.⁶⁸ The protection that the widows of the earl of Tyrconnell (d. 1691) and Patrick Sarsfield (d. 1693) gave to the Irish at Saint-Germain-en-Laye was significant but ultimately inadequate in serving their needs.⁶⁹ Irish immigrant families were also afforded the protection of individual aristocrats, such as the Italian Donna Vittoria Montecuccoli, countess of Almont, who was a friend of Mary of Modena, and they obtained letters of recommendation from members of the French and Italian nobility, which they presented to the Parisian authorities in support of petitions made by their relatives.⁷⁰ Senior-ranking Irish jacobite soldiers and army doctors, based at Saint-Germain and Paris, were especially important advocates presenting female dependants of Irish soldiers from their companies with certificates and letters of recommendation that proved invaluable as they negotiated with the French authorities for pensions.⁷¹

According to Nathalie Jenet Rouffiac, after the jacobite army effectively disbanded following the Peace of Ryswick (1697), a substantial proportion of

67 Bibliothèque de l' Arsenal, Archives de la Bastille, MS 10756, ff. 6-24; David Bracken, 'Irish migrants in Paris hospitals, 1720-1730: extracts from the registers of Bicêtre, La Charité, La Pitié and La Salpêtrière', *Archivium Hibernicum*, LV (2001), p. 27.

68 See various petitions for pensions from Irish women in BL, MS Fr. Eg. 1671. On this animosity see Rouffiac, 'Irish jacobite exile', pp. 198-9; idem, 'Wild Geese', p. 21.

69 Rouffiac, 'Irish jacobite exile', pp. 199-200; idem, 'Wild Geese', pp. 27-9.

70 See various petitions for pensions from Irish women in BL, MS Fr. Eg. 1671; Rouffiac, 'Wild Geese', p. 27.

71 See Petitions (BL, MS Fr. Eg. 1671, ff. 42, 167, 188, 212, 215, 226, 227, 256, 257, 267, 268, 290, 291, 292, 303, 342, 344, 346, 347 r.).

Irish migrants moved to Brittany and the Bordeaux country as they had relatives living there and therefore could readily access a support network.⁷² The Irish College (*Collège des Lombards*), too, acted as a vital nexus between these immigrants and the institutions of the French government, the judiciary, banking agencies and the Church.⁷³ During the 1710s and 1720s, several priests from the college, notably John Merrick, Malachy Fogarty, John Farelly, Felix Cavanagh, and Charles Magennis served as adept and experienced intermediaries in securing assistance for deserted and widowed Irish women in Paris who were handicapped by dint of their ignorance of the French language and in some cases, their illiteracy. They provided practical assistance by furnishing these women with testimonials concerning their illustrious ancestry, their families' steadfast adherence to Catholicism and resultant dispossession in Ireland, and also concerning their deceased husbands' military service. This documentation proved vital to these women in their efforts to obtain pensions or increases to existing pensions from the French state and ecclesiastical authorities.⁷⁴

For those Irish women in Paris who had no family network on which they could call for help, there was no option but to appeal directly to individual Parisian noblemen and women, along with sympathetic members of the Parisian Catholic clergy, both of whom were instrumental in saving Irish women (and men) from destitution. The parish clergy of Saint-Etienne-du-Mont and Saint-Sulpice in particular, along with chaplains to several religious houses in Paris, played a very important role in helping the female dependants of jacobite soldiers obtain the pensions they so badly needed and secure access to convents in the city.⁷⁵ Some Irish girls and women were fortunate enough to be taken in to be educated or to join convents, notably those run by the community of Saint Agnes, the *Filles de St Thomas* on the Rue de Grenelle, and the nuns at Ville Neuve (all in Paris), and the houses run by the *Filles de Saint Joseph* and the Ursulines at Saint-Germain-en-Laye.⁷⁶ This gave them a home, food, clothing, an education and – to the relief of Mary of Modena and that of Catholic ecclesiastics and nobles – prevented them from being lured into the clutches of proselytizers. As

72 Rouffiac, 'Irish jacobite exile', p. 197; idem, 'Wild Geese', pp. 12-13.

73 Éamonn Ó Ciardha, *Ireland and the jacobite cause, 1685-1766: a fatal attachment* (Dublin, 2002), p. 35; Rouffiac, 'Irish jacobite exile', p. 202.

74 See Petitions (BL, Fr. Eg. 1671, ff. 162, 163, 164, 190, 216, 282, 296, 347 v.); Rouffiac, 'Irish jacobite exile', pp. 201-02; Priscilla O'Connor, 'Irish clerics and jacobites in early eighteenth-century Paris, 1700-30', in O'Connor (ed.), *Irish in Europe*, pp. 175-90.

75 See, for example, List of converts receiving pensions in the parishes of Saint-Etienne-du-Mont, Saint-Roch, and Saint-Eustache, 1726 (BL, MS Fr. Eg., f. 376 r.) and Petitions (BL, MS Fr. Eg. 1671 (various)).

76 Petitions (BL, MS Fr. Eg. 1671, ff. 4, 24, 86); Gaëtan Bernoville, *Dans le sillage de Monsieur Vincent: les religieuses de Saint-Thomas de Villeneuve (1661-1953)* (Paris, 1953), pp. 146-7; Nathalie Forteau-Venet and Isabelle Fournel, *Saint Germain-en-Laye: histoire d'un millénaire* (Saint-Germain-en-Laye, 2004), p. 122; Edward Corp, *A court in exile: the Stuarts in France, 1689-1718* (Cambridge, 2004), p. 150; Saint-Germain-en-Laye religious (English and Irish), 1704-67 (A.D.Y., series G8254). On the Irish context see Mary O'Dowd, *A history of women in Ireland, 1500-1800* (Harlow, 2005), pp. 196-7.

was the case in Ireland at this time, it was the expressed wish of many Irish gentlewomen (and indeed gentlemen also) that their daughters or nieces would gain admittance to a convent where they would receive a good education.⁷⁷ However, even when they managed to secure a place in a convent, the position of these women was often very tenuous, as they could only stay if they or some benefactor paid an annual donation to the religious community. The cost of their stay was high. As already mentioned, during the 1690s and early 1700s, Mary of Modena used her influence to secure places for individual girls and widows in convents without payment of any money. By the 1720s Irish girls and women were obliged to pay for their stay and many were simply unable to do so. For example, Marie Eleanor de Strich informed Archbishop Tressan that her pension of 200 *livres* was too small to support her in a convent, while Marguerite Baker likewise found it impossible to make ends meet as she had to hand up her entire annual pension of 300 *livres* in order to remain resident at the convent of the *Filles de Saint Joseph* in Saint-Germain.⁷⁸

Some Irish girls were fortunate enough to secure the financial support of benefactors. At one point, for instance, the parish priest of Saint-Sulpice placed twelve young Irish girls (the daughters of Irish captains and a medical doctor) in the charge of the *Filles de St Thomas* on the Rue de Grenelle and made provision for their clothing and a pension of 50 *écus* for each of them. He also financed the employment of an embroidery teacher to train the girls in the art of embroidery and paid for the purchase of silk, wool and other necessities.⁷⁹ Mary of Modena paid the Irish Ursuline community in Saint-Germain to keep several young Irish girls. Mary was especially anxious that orphaned heiresses such as Louise Marie Magennis, only daughter of Lord Iveagh, would not be raised by Protestant relatives and so she paid the sum of 900 *livres* annually to the English Benedictine nuns at Pontoise for the young girl's upkeep whilst in their charge.⁸⁰

Certain Protestant Irish girls and women found themselves in such financial straits that they had felt obliged to abjure and thereby gained admittance to communities of *Nouvelles Catholiques* or Catholic converts where they were provided with accommodation, food, and a small amount of money. Once they converted, these women were recommended for pensions by the local clergy and their adherence to Catholicism was monitored and reported on by their parish priests.⁸¹ In the hope of strengthening their appeals for financial assistance from Archbishop Tressan in the early 1720s, many of these converts emphasised the

77 See Petitions (BL, Fr. Eg. 1671, ff. 29, 159, 184, 191, 208, 304, 342).

78 *Ibid.*, ff. 71, 4.

79 Names of twelve Irish girls placed by the parish priest of Saint-Sulpice (B.N., MS Fr. 20866, f. 114 r. & v.).

80 Petitions (BL, MS Fr. Eg. 1671, f. 218).

81 List of converts receiving pensions in the parishes of Saint-Etienne-du-Mont, Saint-Roch, and Saint-Eustache, 1726 (BL, MS Fr. Eg., ff 371 r. & v., 373 r. & v., 375 v., 376 r.); Petitions (B.L., MS Fr. Eg. 1671); secretariat (A.N., O154, f. 76, 172, O158, ff 101 v. & 241 v., O159, f. 115 v., O164, f. 280 v.).

loss of family connections and of their inheritance which they endured as a direct result of their abjuration.⁸²

In several respects, many of these females undoubtedly belonged to the category of *pauvres honteaux*, defined by Olwen Hufton as women and men who had once known better times but who had been the victims of disaster, illness, or bankruptcy. In general, this was a privileged élite among the poor. Such people had a roof over their heads, clean clothes, and moral values acceptable to the rest of society. Moreover, 'they had not been accustomed since birth to an unremitting struggle against hunger nor had they had a lifetime in which to acquire the vices and dishonesty necessary to make one's way in the world of the totally destitute'.⁸³ For most of these Irish women, addressing a petition to Archbishop Tressan or to the minister and secretary of state was a last, desperate resort. Almost invariably they stressed that they had never before asked for charity or assistance and only did so as they had slipped into the most extreme destitution. As such, they presented themselves as '*digne de compassion*'. Many were already middle aged when they left Ireland and by the early 1720s they were vulnerable owing to advanced years and declining health. Catherine Tobin, the widow of a jacobite colonel, living on the outskirts of Saint-Germain, was 82 years old when she made her appeal to Tressan. Like so many Irish women, following the death of Mary of Modena, she was left without any income, very infirm and her sight so badly affected that she could barely move about.⁸⁴ Certain women, such as Eleanor Campbell, the widow of an officer in the Berwick regiment, admitted to having been forced to sell all of her possessions in order to survive.⁸⁵ Others, such as Jeanne Walsh, widow of Colonel Patrick Burke, asked Archbishop Tressan for money so that she might buy back her furniture which creditors had taken from her.⁸⁶ A small number of Irish women who were without income or family in France in the 1720s expressed their intention was to return to Ireland. Among these was Helen Carbery, the daughter of the deceased Peter Carbery, an Irish gentleman who worked in the service of King James II until his death. As she had no income, she requested that Tressan grant her money to enable her return home.⁸⁷

In addition to Mary of Modena's vital financial support and her arrangement of placements for Irish females in convents, some of her friends and indeed many of her staff provided support for Irish women who lost male relatives since arriving in France. In many instances the royal wet-nurse, the royal mid-wife, the royal treasurer, Queen Mary's chaplain and several senior members of James II's

82 Petitions (BL, MS Fr. Eg. 1671 (various)).

83 Hufton, *The poor*, pp. 214-15.

84 Petitions (BL, MS Fr. Eg. f. 360).

85 *Ibid.*, ff. 41, 42, 43, 44).

86 *Ibid.*, ff. 22, 23, 24 v., 26, 27.

87 *Ibid.*, f. 45.

regiment endorsed Irish women's applications for pensions addressed to Archbishop Tressan in the years following Mary's death in 1718.⁸⁸

A number of factors inhibited Irish migrants, and specifically Irish women, from adapting to and integrating into their host society. To a significant extent, the manner in which the Irish jacobite immigrants conducted themselves following their arrival in Paris in the 1690s and early 1700s directly contributed to their remaining on the margins of Parisian society. By virtue of their large number, the Irish tended to congregate and to stay together once they arrived at Saint-Germain, Paris, Nantes and elsewhere. The overwhelming majority married within their community in the first generation at least, and their insularity was amplified by the trend for Irish men and women to act as godparents to children born to Irish couples in the parish. It is also very apparent that whether in Ireland or France, the Irish typically married within their social stratum and within the military community. Ironically, the high mortality rate for Irish officers and soldiers made re-marriage very common; hence Irish women played a significant role in re-enforcing and extending kinship bonds within the émigré community in France. The further up the social scale one moves, the higher the instance of marriages between Irish, English and Scottish people of similar status.⁸⁹ Provincial loyalties among immigrants were also replicated in their community in Paris. Bonds of local solidarity were reinforced by the fact that Irish soldiers were assigned to regiments according to their place of origin. Furthermore, exiled clerics such as the bishop of Waterford and Lismore and the archbishop of Tuam in the 1720s lobbied the French authorities in favour of widows of soldiers who were natives of their own dioceses in Ireland and, in some cases, relatives.⁹⁰ As demonstrated in the case of women such as Sarah McDonagh, abandoned wives, partners, widows and their children were especially isolated. Without a dowry, even the daughters of formerly wealthy families back home in Ireland, whether Catholic or Protestant, had little prospect of a propitious marriage or entry into a convent in France. The fact that several unmarried daughters lived with and financially supported their widowed mothers reduced their chances of saving for marriage and increased their social isolation.⁹¹ In many instances, the women's limited literacy and linguistic competencies also acted as impediments to their successful adaptation to life abroad. This is particularly striking when examining the parish registers for Saint-Germain-en-Laye which feature frequent reference to Irish women declaring themselves incapable even of signing the register as witness to marriages or godparents at baptisms. Aristocratic and gentlewomen, in particular,

88 Ibid. (various folios).

89 See parish registers for Saint-Germain-en-Laye (A.D.Y.) and Kerney Walsh, Loncle de Forville & Sandrea, 'Les Irlandais'.

90 Petitions (BL, MS Fr. Eg. 1671, ff. 168, 185, 324); Rouffiac, 'Irish jacobite exile', p. 199.

91 For a discussion of the predicament of widows and those who supported them in early modern Europe see Olwen Hufton, *The prospect before her: a history of women in Western Europe, 1, 1500-1800* (London, 1995), pp. 217-50.

were caught in a social dilemma. Their success in gaining acceptance and admission to the middle and upper strata of French society was contingent upon their ability to win recognition of their social position among their peers. Quite apart from the fact that many were unskilled, it was difficult for these women to countenance engaging in manual work as to do so would effectively undermine their increasingly fragile social position, reputation and chances for advantageous marriage. The reality was that for many of the Irish girls and women who emigrated to France after the Treaty of Limerick, the key to survival was gaining recognition and financial compensation for military service rendered to James II and Louis XIV by the men whom they accompanied abroad.

A great deal of archival research remains to be done before it will be possible to reach a full understanding of the challenges facing Irish females who emigrated to France in the 1690s and early 1700s and the strategies they deployed to survive, adapt and, in some instances, thrive in their host society. This will, in turn, deepen our understanding of the impact of the jacobite exodus on both Irish and French societies. The present article has highlighted a number of salient features that characterised the female experience of this mass migration. It has shown the extent to which several generations and lateral branches of families were abruptly uprooted and forced to emigrate. Irish women's resultant exaggerated reliance upon male relatives, whether they be alive or dead, for an income, education, social connections, influence, status and opportunities for social advancement in a foreign country has been highlighted. Making the transition from being the daughter or wife of a wealthy landed aristocrat or gentleman whose ancestral credentials, reputation and position were widely acknowledged and accepted in Ireland, to being the dependent of men who were now forced to fight for a living in a country that knew nothing of their background, presented particular challenges for Irish females. Unaccustomed to dealing with official government and ecclesiastical agencies at home, in France many of these young girls and women were compelled, through the loss of their breadwinners, to grapple with literacy and linguistic limitations, not to mention their unfamiliarity with the complexities of French military and government bureaucracy, in their efforts to secure the military pensions that were vital to their survival. As has been demonstrated, the challenges they faced escalated significantly after the death of the key figures involved in the transfer of the Jacobite court to Saint-Germain-en-Laye (namely, James I (d. 1701), Louis XIV (d. 1715) and Mary of Modena (d. 1718)). With the Stuarts gone and Louis XIV dead, Irish women were left without their most influential advocates and therefore had to join the thousands of others who petitioned the French regent on an individual basis for assistance. Notwithstanding the dislocation, deprivation and hardship that they suffered, the female dependents of Irish officers in particular capitalised effectively on their connections with the Stuarts and harnessed familial, clerical and aristocratic patronage networks to good effect as mechanisms for ensuring their survival following the deaths of their male

relatives. As wives, single parents, guardians of orphaned relatives and elderly parents, and godmothers, young girls and women played an important role in maintaining a high level of cohesion within the first- and second-generation Irish jacobite émigré community in Saint-Germain and Paris especially. More significantly, by ensuring that they made the best provision possible for the education of the children in their care, the wives, daughters and mothers of Irish jacobite soldiers were instrumental in facilitating the gradual assimilation of this émigré population in French society.