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Lynn Lees has studied the political, economic, social, family and religious lives of Irish migrants in Victorian London. She presents evidence from ballads, the manuscript census, parish, police and work house records and the Marist archives in Rome as well as parliamentary papers and contemporary reformers' writings. Her arguments are by now familiar. Rural migrants did not leave stable cohesive 'traditional' communities and enter chaotic impersonal urban societies. Both the city and countryside were complex and rapidly changing in the nineteenth century. Migrants' families and communities were altered by the move but ties with kin and neighbours were not less important to the Irish Londoner than to his cousin who stayed behind in rural Leicester. Nevertheless Lees' book is exceptional among urban migration studies. Her analysis of the forming Irish subculture of London goes beyond the usual bounds of historical demography and social historians challenges to the discarded categories of sociologists.

Irish emigrants to London came from prosperous agricultural districts undergoing rapid change rather than from counties where poverty and overcrowding were severe. They were predominantly young and single, more often women than men, lacking urban skills as they entered Britain's largest city during a period when its economy was troubled and in decline.

Lees' census samples from three central London and two suburban districts show Irish migrants to be highly mobile within small areas but rarely venturing outside their own communities, over-represented among unskilled workers by comparison with the English, more likely to be part of the paid labour force as children in London than they would have been in the rural areas from which their kind had come. City and prefamine Irish families were persistently nuclear although often swollen temporarily by children or the elderly in need of shelter. Urban migrants rapidly adapted to the city patterns of smaller households, fewer children and a lower marriage age but like Michael Anderson's migrants in Preston, Lancashire, their practical and emotional ties with extended kin remained strong.

In the spiritual lives of the Irish, Lees sees more change. The Celtic magical elements central to rural observance did not survive the move to the city. Nonetheless she argues that the church gave Irish migrants a national and religious identity in London which cushioned the shock of social and cultural change. Priests won the loyalty of labouring Catholics through their tolerance and helped shape a Catholic workers' culture as an alternative to secularism.

Throughout Lees stresses the particularity of the London Irish subculture--its formation in the interactions between one city and the common class and premigration experience of the Victorian Irish who lived there. Her evocations of the magical in rural Catholicism and the

squalor of life in the London Slums constitute fine "belles-lettres" scholarship. Professor Lees' book is a cheering sign, a clear readable book which combines statistical analysis with careful reflection about behaviour and attitudes borrowing in measure from the social scientists while remaining true to the historian's craft.

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