

and were neither good-mannered nor affable. The one exception was Toft Chorley, a gentleman with very little appearance of the Quaker about him. He had a country dwelling on the moorlands, but was always at his town house in Leek on Monthly Meeting days to receive and entertain Friends (*Autobiography*, i. 58).

<sup>60</sup> The Friends' Registers for Staffordshire record the burial of Joseph Lay, of Leek, in 1821 and of his wife, Sarah (Martin), in 1816, he aged seventy-nine and she sixty-six.

<sup>61</sup> In the Birth Registers appear several children of William and Hannah Beardmore, of Newcastle, Staffs., between 1815 and 1833, those born before 1828 being non-members, the father being described as "earthenware painter."

---



---

## Distress in Ireland, 1847

"A famine fell upon nearly one half of a great nation. The whole world hastened to contribute money and food. But a few courageous men left their homes in Middlesex and Surrey, and penetrated to the remotest glens and bogs of the west coast of the stricken island, to administer relief with their own hands. To say that they found themselves in the valley of the shadow of death would be but an imperfect image; they were in the charnel house of a nation. Never since the fourteenth century did pestilence, the gaunt handmaid of famine, glean so rich a harvest. In the midst of a scene, which no field of battle ever equalled in danger, in the number of its slain, or the sufferings of the surviving, these brave men moved as calm and undismayed as though they had been in their own homes. The population sank so fast that the living could not bury the dead; half-interred bodies protruded from the gaping graves; often the wife died in the midst of her starving children, whilst the husband lay a festering corpse by her side. Into the midst of these horrors did our heroes penetrate, dragging the dead from the living with their own hands, raising the head of famishing infancy, and pouring nourishment into parched lips, from which shot fever-flames more deadly than a volley of musketry. Here was courage. No music strung the nerves; no smoke obscured the imminent danger; no thunder of artillery deadened the senses. It was cool self-possession and resolute will; calculating risk and heroic resignation. And who were these brave men? To what gallant corps did they belong? Were they of the horse, foot, or artillery force? They were Quakers from Clapham and Kingston! If you would know what heroic actions they performed you must enquire from those who witnessed them. You will not find them recorded in the volumes of reports published by themselves, for Quakers write no bulletins of their victories."—Cobden's *Collected Writings*, i. 494-5, quoted in Morley's *Life of Cobden*, p. 604.

<sup>1</sup> Who were these Friends?