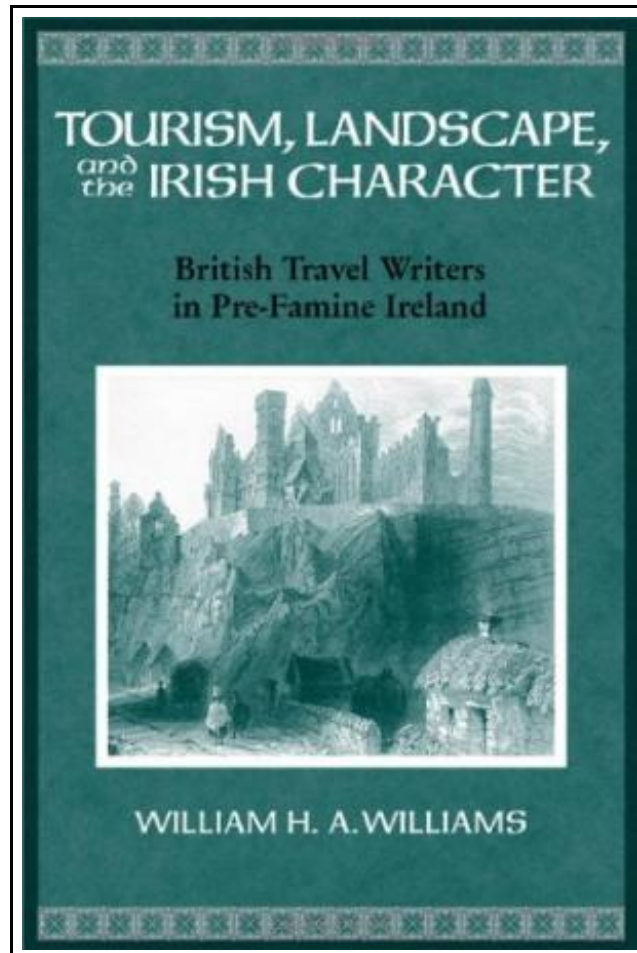


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Reviews

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University of Wisconsin Press. Hardback. Book Condition: new. BRAND NEW, Tourism, Landscape, and the Irish Character: British Travel Writers in Pre-famine Ireland, W.H.A. Williams, British tourists in Ireland in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were both charmed and repulsed. Picturesque but poor, abject yet sublime in its Gothic melancholy, the Ireland they experienced did not fit their British sense of progress, propriety, and Protestantism. "Tourism, Landscape, and the Irish Character" draws from more than one hundred accounts by English, Scottish, Welsh, and Anglo-Irish tourists written between 1750 and 1850 to probe the moral judgments British observers made about the Irish countryside and its native inhabitants. Whether consciously or not, these travel writers defined their own British identity in opposition to a perceived Irish strangeness: the rituals of Catholicism, the seemingly histrionic lamentations of the funeral wake, cemeteries with displays of human bones, the archaic Irish language or the Celtic-infused English that they heard spoken. Overlooking the acute despair in England's own industrial cities, they opined that the poverty, bog lands, and ill-thatched houses of rural Ireland indicated failures of the Irish character. By the eve of the Famine of the 1840s, travel writers were employing stereotypes of Celtic, Catholic carelessness in the south of Ireland and Saxon neatness and enterprise in predominantly Protestant Ulster, even calling for "Saxon" colonization of the west of Ireland. The Famine cleared the land of many of the peasants, but the western landscape, magnificent in its scenery but poor in its soil, eventually defeated most of the British "colonists," leaving the region to an ever-increasing number of tourists who could enjoy the picturesque mountainscapes without the distracting contradiction of an impoverished populace.



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