

MacDonald, The Bowling Match at Castlemary, Cloyne

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After Viewing The Bowling Match at Castlemary, Cloyne (1847)

Greg Delanty

I promised to show you the bowlers
out the Blarney Road after Sunday mass,
you were so taken with that painting
of the snazzy, top-hatted peasant class
all agog at the bowler in full swing,
down to his open shirt, in trousers
as indecently tight as a baseballer's.

You would relish each fling's span
along blackberry boreens and delight
in a dinger of a curve throw
as the bowl hurls out of sight,
not to mention the earthy lingo
& antics of gambling fans,
giving players thumbs-up or down the banks.

It's not just to witness such shenanigans
for themselves, but to be relieved
from whatever lurks in our day's background,
just as the picture's crowd is freed
of famine & exile darkening the land,
waiting to see where the bowl spins
off, a planet out of orbit, and who wins.

Daniel MacDonald, The Bowling Match at Castlemary, Cloyne (1847)

Oil on canvas. Crawford Municipal Art Gallery, Cork, Ireland.

