

Tribhuvan University

Alienation of Irish Immigrant Workers in Rebecca Harding Davis' *Life in the Iron Mills*

A Thesis Submitted to the Central Department of English, in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in English

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Letter of Recommendation

Gaurav Adhikari has completed his thesis entitled "Alienation of Irish Immigrant Workers in Rebecca Harding Davis' *Life in the Iron Mills* under my supervision. I hereby recommend his thesis be submitted for the final viva voce.

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Letter of Approval

This thesis entitled "Alienation of Irish Immigrant Workers in Rebecca Harding Davis' *Life in the Iron Mills* Submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, by Gaurav Adhikari has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

Members of the Research Committee:

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Abstract

Migration, across all historical times, has enormously dented an individual's dignity, self and identity. Being displaced and feeling dislocated it creates alien situations, robs off from familiar and places them into the uncanny environment. The consequent effects become difficult enough to bear and come off. The Irish immigrants to the American land suffered a heavy loss of life, dignity and freedom altogether. With the rise of industries in the 19th century America, Catholic Irish were the major manual workers available. However, the discrimination and prejudices against them were high and large. The discrimination was categorical: Irish had an image, a stereotypical image, that was Irish people followed Catholicism and had no skill. They were 'silent citizen', placed at the bottom alongside African Americans. In this paper, my purpose is to understand and explore historical roots of Irish discrimination and injustices inflicted upon them in the land known to be just and democratic. Analyzing the characters and situations from Rebecca Harding Davis's novella *Life in the Iron Mills*, this paper critiques the notion of democratic self in/of America. Along with, it will examine how workers were torn away from their self and culture due to the working conditions and environment in Post-bellum America. The discrimination and segregation against Irish was because of the historical and cultural roots they come from and carry with themselves long after the historical exodus triggered by 'Potato Blight.'