

Ex 69



"Roller", A Bay Hunter

was the brother of William Westenra who inherited the title of Lord Rossmore from his uncle, John Cunningham, a distinguished Anglo-Irish soldier, who died without issue. The Westenra family was originally from Holland, and settled in Ireland in the 17th century - interestingly before the arrival of William of Orange.

The setting of the picture is the Westenra family's Curragh stud, Brownstown, which along with the adjacent Lark Lodge Stud, then belonging to William Disney, made up, as it does to this day, the oldest continuously operating stud in Britain and Ireland.

The Curragh Camp can be seen to the left of the composition and across the flat Curragh Plain to the right is Brownstown House. The blankets that the young attendant is packing with a belt bear the Westenra initial clearly picked out in red.

*Freny* had originally been owned and trained by William Disney before they were sold to Colonel Westenra. This seems to have been a commonplace transaction between the two stud farms as the famous *Birdcatcher* or *Irish Birdcatcher* as he was commonly called was owned, trained and then sold by William Disney to Henry R. Westenra, 3rd Lord Rossmore.

*Freny* had a very successful racing career with numerous victories both in Ireland and England and listed below are his 11 recorded Irish wins between 1833-1837 taken from the racing calendar:

The Kings Plate of 100 guineas at the Curragh -April, May, June 1834, April, May, June 1835 and June 1836. The Sweepstakes of 200 sovereigns at the Curragh, September 1834. His Excellency The Lord Lieutenant's Plate of 100 guineas at the Curragh, September 1834, 1835 and 1836.

The second picture in this lot was one of four portraits of horses commissioned by James Hans Hamilton and a receipt from 'Brocas' for £31-10-0 for painting three of these (including the present picture) in the then owner's family's possession was dated 1836.

Considering the depth of Irish involvement in horse breeding and training surprisingly few Irish horse painters and their works are extant. It is therefore of particular interest to exhibit two fine examples of this genre made all the more significant by the fact that *Roller* is the sire of *Freny* (no.17). It is an extraordinary incident of serendipity that a previous collector managed, after one hundred and fifty years, to put father and son together on the same wall!

We are grateful to the Gorry Gallery for their assistance in cataloguing these paintings.

€30,000-€40,000 (£25,210-£33,610 approx.)