

CHILDHOOD: STUDIES IN THE HISTORY OF CHILDREN IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY IRELAND

incorporating the digital humanities project

‘IRISH CHILDREN IN 18TH CENTURY SCHOOLS AND INSTITUTIONS’

Gabrielle M. Ashford (B.A. Hons)

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Department of History
St Patrick's College Drumcondra
A college of Dublin City University
Supervisor of Research: Prof. James Kelly

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Volume one of two

Abstract

The history of children and childhood in eighteenth-century Ireland has long been overlooked. Yet over the course of the century children were brought more firmly into the centre of eighteenth-century Irish society. The policies, practices and ideologies that emerged during the century provided the essential framework for a more comprehensive inclusion of children in all societal and political considerations by the nineteenth.

The object of this thesis is to construct a picture of childhood among elite, gentry, peasant, pauper and institutional children over the course of the long eighteenth-century. In addition, it incorporates as a separate appendix the digital humanities project 'Irish children in 18th century schools and institutions'. Even though childhood was a dynamic process there was a rigidity reinforced by inter-textualities and hierarchies, so that in many instances childhood remained an abstract yet distinctive process. Parental and societal attitudes shaped the expectations of children and childhood and, though all children experienced childhood, there were significantly marked differences between them based on class. This is more vividly illustrated in some aspects than others. For instance, all social classes promoted children's health, well-being and their education, but for some it remained aspirational. Yet the behaviour and attitudes shown towards children in institutional care were in marked contrast to those operating in the domestic environment.

Children and childhood are examined in separate but related dimensions: the parental and societal view of childhood within the domestic and institutional environment; the attitudes and practices surrounding children's health and well-being, and crucially, children's education and 'the child' as society's hope for the future.

The thesis does not claim to provide a complete history of children and childhood in eighteenth-century Ireland, rather it identifies the impact that public and private policies, and emerging and developing ideologies concerning children had on the experience of children, childhood, parenthood and society across the long eighteenth-century.

I hereby certify that this material, which I now submit for assessment on the programme of study leading to the award of Doctor of Philosophy is entirely my own work and has not been taken from the work of others save and to the extent that such work has been cited and acknowledged within the text of my work.

Signed: Gaye Ashford.

(Candidate) ID no.: 58262709

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<i>Anal. Hib.</i>	<i>Analecta Hibernica</i>
<i>Arch. Hib.</i>	<i>Archivum Hibernicum</i>
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BL	British Library, London
<i>Commons Jn. (Irl.)</i>	<i>Journal of the House of Commons of the kingdom of Ireland, 1613-1800</i> (21 vols, Dublin, 1796-1802)
ESTC	English Short Title Catalogue
FHL	Friend's Historical Library
HMC	Historical Manuscripts Commission
LMA	London Metropolitan Archives
Ms(s)	Manuscript(s)
NAI	National Archives of Ireland
n.d.	no date
NLI	National Library of Ireland
NMI	National Museum of Ireland
NUIG	National University of Ireland Galway
ODNB	<i>Oxford Dictionary of National Biography</i> (60 vols., Oxford, 2004)
PRONI	Public Record Office of Northern Ireland
RCBL	Representative Church Body Library, Dublin
RCP.I	Royal College of Physicians of Ireland, Dublin
RIA	Royal Irish Academy
<i>RIA proc.</i>	<i>Royal Irish Academy proceedings</i>
<i>RSAI Jn.</i>	<i>Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland Journal</i>
TCD	Trinity College Dublin
TNA	The National Archives [Public Record Office]
tr.	translated by
UCD	University College Dublin
WL	Wellcome Library, London

Calendar dates:

Although Pope Gregory XIII introduced a reformed calendar in 1582 this was not adopted in Ireland and Britain until 1752. This resulted in a gap between the old style (Julian) and the new style (Gregorian) calendars of ten days to 28 February 1700 (old style) and eleven days (new style) after. The dates used in this thesis are those as given in letters and documents. However, pre-1752 the Quaker calendar first month occurred in March but after 1752 it fell in line with the Gregorian calendar and first month became January.

Apothecaries' weights:

This was a system of weights used by apothecaries and was based on an ounce being equal to 480 grains and a pound being equal to 12 ounces. It has been largely replaced by measures of the metric system.

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and to our wonderful sons Mark and David.

INTRODUCTION

Although it may be a statement of the obvious, childhood has not always had its historians. Unlike economic and political trends which have long been pored over, children's histories have for the most part remained hidden. This is what made Philippe Ariès's (1914-84) work, *Centuries of Childhood*,¹ published in 1960 so significant; it established the history of childhood as a valid area of historical study and prompted an interest in children's life stories that continues.

The experience of childhood not only shapes children's understanding of themselves as individuals and collectively, but it also establishes the bases of adult attitudes and behaviours towards children, which in turn help to shape public policy relative to children.² For this reason, the study of childhood is important. John Locke (1632-1704) first articulated the importance of childhood experiences to the development of the individual and society in 1693,³ and his views still possess authority. They support arguments for a broadening of historical studies of childhood, and inform the elusive search for an agreed definition of a concept of childhood – a complex, dynamic and contradictory abstraction.

Although there is disagreement amongst historians as to when childhood emerged as a distinct event in human life, it is accepted generally that there was a profound change in attitudes towards children during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. At the beginning of the eighteenth there was no agreed definition of childhood. However, there was a broad acceptance that it encompassed two phases: that of 'infancy' or of adult dependency which extended from one to *circa* six years-

¹ Philippe Ariès, *Centuries of childhood: a social history of family life* (New York, 1962) originally published as *L'enfant et la vie familiale sous l'Ancien Régime* (1960).

² See Priscilla Ferguson Clement, *Growing pains: children in the Industrial Age, 1850-1890* (New York, 1997).

³ John Locke, *Some thoughts concerning education* (London, 1693). There are many editions of this book, but this thesis utilises that of John Locke, *Some thoughts concerning education* (London, 1693), Ruth W. Grant and Nathan Tarcov (eds) (Indiana, 1996).

old; and that of ‘childhood’, lasting from six to *circa* sixteen years-old. During these phases the child was directed to achieve physical and emotional independence. While there were differences of opinion as to their precise duration, these two phases of childhood were applied to children across society. As the eighteenth century progressed however there was a drive to distinguish more clearly between age and stages, which assisted with the development of a more defined view of childhood.

The emergence in the eighteenth-century of a more distinct conception of childhood was encouraged by the publication at the end of the seventeenth century, of John Locke’s major work *Some thoughts concerning education* (1693), and by the publication in the middle of the eighteenth of the more problematical *Émile* (1762) by Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-78). More than any other writer, Locke’s ideas defined the debate surrounding the notion of childhood. His work had a profound influence in Ireland, more so than that of Rousseau, and was a significant milestone in promoting a more engaged approach towards children, child rearing and childhood experiences among elite and gentry social groups in the early eighteenth-century.

Little is known about the lives of Irish children in the past, and it is the historicity of child rearing in eighteenth-century Ireland that this work addresses through an exploration of the relationship between ideas about childhood and parental attitudes and practices refracted through the lens of children’s experiences. Though thinking on children features frequently on its pages, this thesis is not a history of ideas; rather it is an evidentially based qualitative study that taken together with the digital project ‘Irish children in 18th century schools and institutions’ described in volume two,⁴ seeks to paint a more concrete picture of the reality of being a child across all social classes in eighteenth-century Ireland.

While a broad socially bound definition of ‘child’ and ‘childhood’ is applied throughout this work, some parameters have been adhered to. For example, though women were expected to produce children, pregnancy and birth are not addressed but, attitudes towards pregnancy and infancy are.⁵ Neither is the issue of apprenticeship, a

⁴ The current iteration of this project is presented as a separately bound appendix (volume two) to the main thesis and is available online at: <http://dev.dho.ie/~sday/gave/index.html>

⁵ Requests to the Master of Dublin’s Rotunda Hospital (formerly The Lying-in Hospital) and subsequent appeals to the Board of Governors for access to their records (considered the most important and complete extant) for the period 1756-1800 were refused. The Board of Governors informed this researcher that notwithstanding the length of time involved, they owed a duty of care to protect the confidentiality of their patients regardless of their date of death. There are many essays, books and reports assessing the role of the Dublin Lying-in Hospital. For example see: *A copy of his majesty’s charter for incorporating the governors and guardians of the Hospital for the Relief of Poor*

significant, though not standardised point of egress of pauper children and others from childhood. Their omission is consistent with the object of the thesis, which is to focus on the main features of the childhood experience.

An important but unanswerable question is how many children were there in eighteenth-century Ireland? The figures for the population as a whole are unreliable and there are none to identify the number of children. Cullen, Fitzpatrick and Vaughan⁶ have made some calculations, but their results only identify an approximate family size. Still, brief snapshots of children's demography emerge occasionally in the historical record and they have been utilised whenever possible. Furthermore, even though Dublin was a capital city its population does not sustain direct comparison with capitals such as London or Paris. Studies of smaller English provincial cities such as Bristol or Northampton suggest that these make more realistic comparative sites.

As Hugh Cunningham observes, there are today a multitude of books and ideas about childhood and its history but most focus on the ideology of childhood rather than the issues surrounding the lives of, and the actuality of child rearing.⁷ Eighteenth-century Ireland experienced immense economic and political changes that were paralleled in the domestic sphere as family life underwent adjustment and change to accommodate increasing aspirations to privacy. To date Irish historical studies have tended to concentrate on the political history of the eighteenth-century at the expense of its social and personal dimensions. For a long time historians dealt with childhood solely as a stage in life *en route* to adulthood. Authors of more recent

Lying-in Women in Dublin [2 Dec. 1756] (NLI, Ms 7646); Jo Murphy-Lawless, *Reading birth and death: a history of obstetric thinking* (Cork, 1998); eadem, 'The silencing of women in childbirth or let's hear it for Bartholomew and the boys', Ailbhe Smyth (ed.), *Irish women's studies reader* (Dublin, 1993), pp 9-19; Ian Campbell-Ross (ed.), *Public virtue, public love, the early years of the Dublin Lying-in Hospital* (Dublin, 1987); Cormac Ó Gráda, 'Dublin's demography in the early nineteenth-century: evidence from the Rotunda', *Population Studies*, 45 (Jan. 1991), pp 43-54; Mary Kelly, 'The development of midwifery at the Rotunda, 1745-1995: a tribute to Dr W.R.F. Collis and Sister Maudie Moran', Alan Browne (ed.), *Masters, midwives and ladies-in-waiting: the Rotunda Hospital, 1745-1995* (Dublin, 1995), pp 77-117.

⁶ Economic and demographic historians such as K. H. Connell, David Dickson, Cormac Ó Gráda and Stuart Daultrey all agree there is a lack of reliable data for eighteenth-century demographics, and in particular children's. See K. H. Connell, *The population of Ireland, 1750-1845* (Oxford, 1950); J. M. Goldstrom and L. A. Clarkson (eds), *Irish population, economy, and society: essays in honour of the late K. H. Connell* (Oxford, 1981); W. E. Vaughan and A. J. Fitzpatrick (eds), *Irish historical statistics, population, 1821-1971* (Dublin, 1978).

⁷ See Hugh Cunningham, *Children and childhood in western society since 1500* (Essex, 1995); idem, *The invention of childhood* (London, 2006). For an assessment of the historical debates and issues that remain unresolved in the history of childhood, see Margaret L. King, 'Concepts of childhood: what we know and where we might go', *Renaissance quarterly*, 60, no. 2 (2007).

works such as Brian Fitzgerald, Stella Tillyard, Joseph Robbins, Kenneth Milne and A. P. W. Malcomson⁸ have broadened the manner in which it is described, but they are still inclined to present children as passive actors within a biographical narrative. Indicatively, William Lefanu, the editor of *Betsy Sheridan's Journal* (1960), which he described as 'an amusing human document', prioritised the glimpses she gave of her brother Richard Brinsley Sheridan rather than her own life; he omitted completely her comments concerning her 'Dublin news', and 'drastically curtailed' discussion of her moods and 'ailments'.⁹

Although the actuality of children's lives in eighteenth-century Ireland is incisively addressed by T. C. Barnard in *A new anatomy of Ireland*,¹⁰ Irish historical work which engages with children and childhood has tended to follow very narrow parameters, focusing only on 'charity children' and the administrative functioning of institutions charged with their care and education. As a result, many aspects of childhood such as parental attitudes towards pregnancy, childbirth, raising children, children's health, children's experience of education, and the wider role of children in both the public and private spheres have been neglected. Bearing this in mind, this thesis seeks to identify and investigate the historicity of Irish children's lives not only within state institutions but also across social class, and to construct a picture of childhood among elite, gentry, peasant, and pauper, as well as institutional children, over the course of the long eighteenth-century. Drawing on contemporary personal correspondence, official reports and institutional records, the seminal works of Locke, Rousseau and others, and the practical advice manuals that were a significant development of the eighteenth-century, it aspires to unravel the underlying ideologies that informed the behaviours and policies that shaped the experience of childhood, and moulded the adult in eighteenth-century Ireland.

Thinking on the subject of when childhood begins and ends has changed considerably over the centuries.¹¹ As a result, an exact definition of 'child' and

⁸ Brian Fitzgerald (ed.), *The correspondence of Emily, Duchess of Leinster* (3 vols., Dublin, 1949-57), ii, 310 hereafter referred to as *Leinster correspondence*; Stella Tillyard, *Aristocrats: Caroline, Emily, Louisa and Sarah Lennox, 1740-1832* (London, 1994); Joseph Robbins, *The lost children, a study of charity children in Ireland, 1700-1900* (Dublin, 1980); Kenneth Milne, *The Irish Charter schools 1730-1820* (Dublin, 1997); A. P. W. Malcomson, *The pursuit of the heiress: aristocratic marriage in Ireland, 1740-1840* (Belfast, 2006).

⁹ William Lefanu (ed.), *Betsy Sheridan's journal, letters from Sheridan's sister 1784-1786 & 1788-1790* (London, 1960), pp xii, 3.

¹⁰ T. C. Barnard, *A new anatomy of Ireland* (Yale, 2003).

¹¹ Cunningham, *The invention of childhood*, frontispiece.

'childhood' poses its own problems: throughout history, age as a determinant of 'childhood' or 'adulthood' has varied not only between but also within countries and societies. Crucially, there was common agreement on when childhood began, but not on its ending. Egress from childhood differed according to gender, social class, marriage patterns, and/or apprenticeship. Steven Mintz in his history of American childhood has identified the period from infancy to eighteen as forming the boundaries for his history of children and childhood.¹² But as Cunningham observes, does this mean that 'babies are outside the scope of a history of childhood?'. He suggests that for many, childhood and adulthood encompassed different stages at quite different ages.¹³ Thus a significant and crucial dilemma facing historians of childhood is revealed, it is no easy task to arrive at an exact definition of childhood, an agreed age when childhood begins and still more crucially, when it ends.¹⁴

Historically a specific age was not necessarily a determinant of the moment of egress from childhood. Neither was children's physical development. However, the desire to count and to measure that emerged in the eighteenth-century encouraged a more definite numerical delineation between life stages. Indicative of this new interest in defining and categorising childhood, a template for *A weekly bill of mortality for the city of Dublin* by parish in 1681 comprised three relevant age categorisations – under six years-old, between six and sixteen, and above sixteen years of age.¹⁵ So, from the late seventeenth-century there was a recognition that the human life could be said to possess clear and distinct phases: ones that could sustain categorisation between a child's age and specific life stages.

If as Dennis Denisoff has noted, for pauper children 'life on the streets diminishes the relevance of biological age on a person's identity',¹⁶ this was not the case for children in the upper and middle classes. Perhaps reflecting the cessation of wet-nursing and the subsequent embrace of the young child within the family unit, in 1771 William Giles recommended parents 'commanded' children's behaviour from

¹² Steven Mintz, *Huck's raft: a history of American childhood* (Harvard, 2004).

¹³ Hugh Cunningham, 'Childhood in one country', <http://H-Childhood@h-net.msu.edu> (2006) [accessed 14 Aug. 2011]

¹⁴ The age barrier, the definition of childhood and the social curtailment of it are some of the areas identified by Margaret King as worthy of further study: King, 'concepts of childhood'.

¹⁵ [William Petty], *Observations upon the Dublin bills of mortality, MDCLXXI and the state of that city. By the observatory on the London bills of mortality* (London, 1683).

¹⁶ Dennis Denisoff (ed.), *The nineteenth-century child and consumer culture* (Hampshire, 2008), p. 11.

one year-old.¹⁷ In keeping with this perception it was considered appropriate to remove George Fitzgerald (1773-83) from the nursery and women's care when he reached the seven year-old milestone in 1780.¹⁸ Corresponding with Petty's template, and reflecting a widespread acceptance of his age classification throughout the eighteenth-century, children in the Dublin Workhouse and Foundling Hospital were categorised only according to their age, not their physical and emotional abilities and capacities. 'Foundlings' were children below six years of age, including infants; 'young' were children between six but below fifteen years; and 'old' was any person above fifteen years of age. Despite the increased awareness over the course of the century of the crucial importance of children's individual abilities and capacities in defining their development, an age specific approach to the categorisation of childhood survived intact throughout the century. If not already bound apprentice, which usually took place from the age of fifteen years onwards, on reaching twenty-one all 'children' considered 'sound' were dismissed from the 'workhouses' and the responsibility of the governors.¹⁹ Children admitted in the 1770s to the Belfast Poorhouse and Hospital entered at seven and were dismissed at twelve.²⁰ At the close of the century, children in St Mary's Charity school in Dublin were, according to the 'rules of the house', discharged from the school at fourteen years-old.²¹

In keeping with the increased awareness of children's abilities, Rousseau argued that children's life stages were characterised by their emerging faculties, their ability to use and understand reason²² and, in his seminal work *Émile*, laid out five stages of childhood – 'infancy'; 'boyhood'; 'approach of adolescence'; 'adolescence' and 'marriage'. Yet while conceiving of childhood in terms of 'life phases', Rousseau did not hesitate to ascribe an age to each (table 0.1). But if Rousseau's classification was useful, medical opinion superseded him.

¹⁷ William Giles, *A treatise on marriage, being serious thoughts on the original design of that sacred institution ... to which are added scriptures on the education of children* (London, 1771), p. 94.

¹⁸ Lady Sarah Lennox to Duchess of Leinster, 18 Feb. 1780, Fitzgerald (ed.), *Leinster correspondence*, ii, 310.

¹⁹ *Commons Jn. (Irl.)*, 1743, vol. 4, appendix clxxx.

²⁰ R. W. M. Strain, *Belfast and its Charitable Society: a story of urban social development* (Oxford, 1961), p. 97.

²¹ Minutes of the Governors of St Mary's Charity school, Dublin, 25 May, 21 Oct. 1799 (NLI, Ms 2664) hereafter referred to as St Mary's Charity school minutes.

²² William Boyd, *Émile for today: the Émile of Jean-Jacques Rousseau* (London, 1975); Jamie Gianoutsos, 'Locke and Rousseau: early childhood education', *The Pulse. The Undergraduate Journal of Baylor University*, 4, no. 1 (n.d), p. 11.

Table 0.1: Rousseau's age characterisation, 1762

Stage:	Book:	Phase:	Comment:	Age:
Infancy	Book I	First phase of life	Talking eating and walking at the same time	To c. 1 or 2 years
Early childhood	Book II	Second phase of life	Consciousness of self as a moral being	To 12 years
Approach of adolescence	Book III		Disproportion between strength and desire	From 12/13 years to puberty
Adolescence	Book IV	Second birth	Puberty, changing temper and appearances	16 years
Marriage	Book V	End of childhood	The age of humanity	18-20 years

Source: Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Émile* (Middlesex, 2007), pp 39, 41, 122, 163, 164, 302; William Boyd, *Émile for today: the Émile of Jean-Jacques Rousseau* (London, 1975), pp 30, 69, 91; Jamie Gianoutsos, 'Locke and Rousseau: early childhood education', *The Pulse. The Undergraduate Journal of Baylor University*, 4, no. 1 (n.d.).

By mid-century physicians and medical authors provided the clearest rationale for the stages of childhood as they were understood and applied in the eighteenth-century. In 1742, Walter Harris (1647-1732) defined infancy as extending to a child's fourth year, when it gave way to the 'child' phase which extended to fourteen years.²³ Jean Astruc (1684-1766) differed slightly and even deviated from the single sex model identified by Wendy D. Churchill.²⁴ Based on his consideration of illnesses particular to male children aged fourteen and to girls aged twelve, he concluded that once past these ages, they 'cease being children and become liable to the same disorders with adults.'²⁵

James Nelson (1710-94) appealed to the widely recognised seven year cycle of life in 1756 and identified childhood as a period from birth until seven years for, 'according to the custom of familiar life, every septenary is reckoned a stage'.²⁶ He identified infancy as from birth to three years-old, the first septenary from three to ten years-old and 'so on to decrepity'.²⁷ Influenced by Locke's fundamental theories and anticipating Rousseau, Nelson maintained that children's 'understandings' were

²³ Walter Harris, *A treatise of the acute diseases of infants: to which are added, medical observations on several grievous diseases* (London, 1742), p. 8.

²⁴ Wendy D. Churchill, 'The medical practice of the sexed body: women, men and disease in Britain circa 1600-1740', *Social History of Medicine*, 18, no. 1 (2005), p. 21.

²⁵ Jean Astruc, *A general and compleat treatise on all the diseases incident to children from their birth to the age of fifteen* (London, 1746), pp 1-2.

²⁶ James Nelson, *An essay on the government of children under three general heads: viz., health, manners and education* (2nd ed., London, 1756), p. 28.

²⁷ Ibid.

open and ‘capable of receiving more important impressions’ between seven and fourteen years of age.²⁸

The importance of age in the correct medical treatment of children was broadly accepted by 1805, although it was far from universally the case. William Buchan (1729-1805) observed in the 1805 edition of *Domestic medicine* that ‘several attempts have been made to ascertain the proportional doses [of medicine] for the different ages’, but indicated that people still relied on their own ‘judgement and skill’.²⁹ Nevertheless, he suggested ‘general proportions’ suitable to specific ages (table 0.2) though not exact rules, he continued to rely on a classification of children by constitution rather than age in dispensing medicines by dosage. Even though his age categories may be considered outside the historical norm for ‘childhood’ (fourteen to twenty years), Buchan’s conclusions are important because they illustrate that by the beginning of the nineteenth-century ‘childhood’ was deemed to comprise a number of phases directly corresponding to children’s ages.

Table 0.2: Buchan’s medicine/age categorisation, 1805

Age:	Proportion adult dose:		Age:	Proportion adult dose:
< 1 year	$\frac{1}{12}$		6 to 9 year	$\frac{1}{3}$
1 to 2 year	$\frac{1}{10}$		9 to 14 year	$\frac{1}{2}$
2 to 4 year	$\frac{1}{6}$		14 to 20 year	$\frac{2}{3}$
4 to 6 year	$\frac{1}{4}$			

Source: William Buchan, *Domestic medicine: a treatise on the prevention and cure of diseases by regimen and simple medicines with an appendix containing a dispensatory for the use of private practitioners* (19th ed., London, 1805), p. 656.

By 1825 the importance of medical knowledge to age classification had achieved broader acceptance, and life stages or ‘natural epochs’ were defined more comprehensively to include ‘the foetal state’ and ‘old age’. It was noted that each was accompanied ‘in health and disease by an almost unvarying assemblage of distinctive characters’.³⁰ For example, infancy was deemed to close ‘with the seventh year’,

²⁸ Nelson, *An essay on the government of children*, (2nd ed.), p. 28

²⁹ William Buchan, *Domestic medicine: a treatise on the prevention and cure of diseases by regimen and simple medicines with an appendix containing a dispensatory for the use of private practitioners* (19th ed., London, 1805), p. 656.

³⁰ James Kennedy, *Instructions to mothers & nurses on the management of children in health & disease* (Glasgow, 1825), p. 3.

when 'indications of the second dentition commence'.³¹ Thus medical opinion, and the increased involvement of medicine in people's lives, including children's, was a major contributing factor to the emergence of an agreed classification of children and childhood by age.

As the child moved away from infancy, specific physical and social rites of passage assumed more importance. This was particularly true of girls. Menstruation signalled the end of female childhood though it did not, of course, commence at a specific age. According to Samuel Tissot (1728-97) it came on earlier in city than in country girls. Writing of the latter he noted that 'we often see girls of eighteen or twenty years of age, who yet are without terms'; city girls matured sooner, he claimed.³² Generally menstruation commenced between sixteen and eighteen years of age, though Buchan suggested fifteen as the average age of commencement.³³ When sixteen year-old Lucy Fitzgerald (1771-1851) received her first 'visit from the French Lady' in 1787 the news was greeted with a mixture of relief and happiness by the female members of the extended family,³⁴ as menstruation also marked the moment at which a girl was considered physically capable of marriage. Consistent with this, Lady Sarah Lennox remarked that English girls generally married at seventeen and looked 'upon [a girl of] fifteen as quite a child'.³⁵ Yet her sister Emily (1731-1814) married at fifteen in 1747. One can assume that this may have raised some eyebrows, as there was considerable concern for the 'health' of another sister Lady Louisa Conolly (1743-1821) who married aged sixteen in 1759.³⁶ Mary Delany (1700-88) thought twenty an appropriate age for her niece to marry, and the Catholic bishop of

³¹ James Kennedy, *Instructions to mothers & nurses on the management of children*, pp 3-4

³² Samuel August David Tissot, *Three essays: first, on the disorders of people of fashion. Second on diseases incidental to literary and sedentary persons, ... Third, on onanism: ...* tr. from the French, by Francis Bacon Lee, M. Danes, A. Hume, M.D. (Dublin 1772), p. 47.

³³ Samuel August David Tissot, *Advice to the people in general, with regard to their health: ... Translated from the French edition of Dr. Tissot's Avis au peuple, &c printed at Lyons; with all his own notes; ... and several occasional notes, adapted to this English translation*, by J. Kirkpatrick, M.D. (Dublin, 1766), p. 211; Buchan, *Domestic medicine* (19th ed.), p. 484.

³⁴ Lady Louisa Conolly to Duchess of Leinster, 3 May 1787, Fitzgerald (ed.), *Leinster correspondence*, iii, 406.

³⁵ Lady Sarah Lennox to Countess of Kildare, 23 Jun. [1760], Fitzgerald (ed.), *Leinster correspondence*, ii, 101

³⁶ It is a matter of interest outside the scope of this thesis that Lady Louisa and Thomas Conolly remained childless throughout their marriage: Lady Caroline Fox to Countess of Kildare, 21 Feb. [1759], Fitzgerald (ed.), *Leinster correspondence*, i, 195.

Kerry, Nicholas Madgett (1703-74) noted that peasant girls 'often marry around or before their twenty-first year.'³⁷

Behaviour appropriate to a specific age was a matter that aroused increasing parental concern in the course of the eighteenth-century, because it too had a bearing on children's admission into society. According to Riana McLoughlin, Quaker children were introduced into meeting from a young age if their behaviour was acceptable. Betty Bishop was pleased with her three year-old's debut, recording that 'dear Ann was very good considering it was the first time she was ever at meeting'.³⁸ Rousseau's identification of adolescence with that period between twelve and puberty was in marked contrast to parental interpretation and practice. Parents were not so precise, which suggests that the physical and behavioural characteristics of maturation were not wholly understood in eighteenth-century Ireland.³⁹ Lady Louisa Conolly was puzzled by her fourteen and sixteen year-old nieces's behaviour, observing that 'their excessive innocence is very pleasing'⁴⁰ though she considered 'sixteen ... an age where it seems extraordinary to be quite, quite a child, which Louisa [Lennox (d. 1843)] is most completely.'⁴¹ Even though she considered her nieces' innocence 'very lucky and an advantage to them', she feared that 'their extreme innocence will lead them into scrapes', which was a matter of considerable concern given the strict boundaries within which eighteenth-century elite females operated.⁴²

As elite children, especially females, grew and matured, their numerical age mattered less than their accomplishments and behaviour, particularly in public. This was also true of other social groups. By the close of the century institutional apprenticeships were considered when appropriate not only to the child's age but also their ability.⁴³ The point when a parent's obligations to their child ceased, according

³⁷ Angélique Day (ed.), *Letters from Georgian Ireland* [31 Mar. 1759], p. 54; Rev. Michael Manning (ed.), 'Dr Nicholas Madgett's *Constitutio Ecclesiastica*', *Journal of the Kerry Archaeological & Historical Society* (1976), p. 91.

³⁸ Riana McLoughlin, 'The sober duties of life': The domestic and religious lives of six Quaker women in Ireland and England 1780-1820 (unpublished MA thesis, NUIG, 1993), pp 5-6.

³⁹ For an in-depth exploration of adolescence and the transition from 'childhood' to adult life in pre-industrial England see Ilana Krausman Ben-Amos, *Adolescence and youth in early modern England* (London, 1994).

⁴⁰ Lady Sarah Lennox to Duchess of Leinster, 23 Oct. 1776, Fitzgerald (ed.), *Leinster correspondence*, ii, 207-8.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Although apprenticeship is outside the scope of this chapter, a comparison may be made between attitudes towards institutional apprenticeships in the Dublin and London Foundling Hospitals. See for example Ruth K. McClure, *Coram's children: the London Foundling Hospital in the eighteenth-century* (New Haven, 1981), p. 117.

to James Nelson, was twenty-one years, which was generally accepted as the age when parents ceased to have legal responsibility. Children's maturing abilities and capacities, he advised, 'shuts out in great measure our power over them, and sets them loose on the great stage of the world, everyone to act their part just as we have taught them.'⁴⁴

In summation, the age of childhood was not consistent across eighteenth century Irish society. The realities of survival could abruptly end childhood, though this was more likely for peasant or pauper children at an early age, whereas for 'middling', gentry or elite children, childhood might extend until they were fifteen or sixteen years-old, or until they married, all of which serve to illustrate the complexities historians face when defining childhood – one size did not fit all.

Literature Review

There are many books, studies, journals, even societies devoted to Ireland in the eighteenth-century yet few have engaged with the issue of children's lives. By contrast, Britain, Europe and America are better served.⁴⁵ A particularly fine illustration of the state of research and the position the history of children and childhood has attained today is provided by Yale University Press's *History of the European family*, which utilises hard statistical data to identify the historicity of childhood.⁴⁶ This is a feature of many worldwide childhood studies, but unfortunately given the unreliability and paucity of the evidential record, this approach is not possible for the eighteenth-century in Ireland. Even though Eversley utilised Quaker records from 1650 to 1850 to good effect to produce a quantitative historical analysis of infant and child mortality among such families in southern England and Ireland,⁴⁷ Quakers are not representative of the population generally. Nonetheless his work acknowledges the benefits of quantitative historical analysis. The web based project

⁴⁴ Nelson, *An essay on the government of children* (2nd ed.), pp 34-5.

⁴⁵ Although published in 1972, Sommerville's discussion of bibliographic sources concerning the history of childhood remains valuable: Sommerville, 'Toward a history of childhood and youth'.

⁴⁶ For example see the three volumes edited by David I. Kertzer and Marzio Barbagli (eds), *The history of the European family: family life in early modern times, 1500-1789*; *The history of the European family: family life in the long nineteenth century, 1789-1913*; *The history of the European family: family life in the twentieth century* (3 vols, Yale, 2001, 2002, 2003). See also Sommerville's discussion of bibliographic sources concerning the history of childhood in Sommerville, 'Toward a history of childhood and youth'.

⁴⁷ D. E. C. Eversley, 'The demography of the Irish Quakers, 1650-1850', J. M. Goldstrom and L. A. Clarkson (eds), *Irish population, economy, and society: essays in honour of the late K. H. Connell* (Oxford, 1981), pp 80-1.

accompanying this thesis, 'Irish children in 18th century schools and institutions', is an attempt to assemble and present some preliminary quantifiable evidence regarding children's lives that may be expanded in the future.⁴⁸

Though Ariès's seminal work provided the impetus for much research and has generated significant debate, his hypotheses that 'childhood' was the invention of the Renaissance, and that high child mortality discouraged parents from expending time, money or emotion on their children have been found incorrect.⁴⁹ Moreover his engagement was less than complete. He paid little attention to children under seven and relied heavily on iconographic evidence, mainly French, though he did observe perceptively that childhood was neither an essential condition nor constant over time.⁵⁰ These interpretative weaknesses notwithstanding, *Centuries of childhood* is, as Colin Heywood has pointed out, remarkable for its longevity and its usefulness to researchers 'for good or ill'; it is essential reading as a 'landmark' in the study of the history of childhood.⁵¹

In the 1970s, Lawrence Stone in *The family, sex and marriage* and Edward Shorter in *The making of the modern family*, refined the arguments put forward by Ariès without seriously challenging them.⁵² Children's lives were located and examined by them within the familial relationship rather than in terms of the actuality of their lives. It was not until the publication of Linda A. Pollock's, *Forgotten children: parent-child relations from 1500-1900* (1993) that the first systematic analysis of the actuality of children's lives was achieved, though sections of her methodology have been disputed.⁵³ Her research drew on parental and child diaries, autobiographies and newspaper reports of court cases concerning child abuse both in Britain and North America, which permitted comparison across two cultures over an extended time-span. More recently Hugh Cunningham in *The invention of childhood* (2006) has charted the development and re-development of a concept of childhood

⁴⁸ The current iteration is available online at <http://dev.dho.ie/~sday/gaye/index.html>

⁴⁹ See Laurence Brockliss and George Rousseau, 'The history child', *Oxford Magazine* (2003), p. 5; King, 'Concepts of childhood'.

⁵⁰ King, 'Concepts of childhood'.

⁵¹ Colin Heywood, 'Centuries of childhood: an anniversary – and an epitaph?', *The Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth*, 3 (Autumn, 2010), pp 344-5; Brockliss and Rousseau, 'The history child', p. 5.

⁵² Lawrence Stone, *The family, sex and marriage* (New York, 1977); Edward Shorter, *The making of the modern family* (London, 1977).

⁵³ Pollock assigns the century of birth to the evidence provided by a person. Thus the views of a person born for example in 1690 are ascribed to the seventeenth-century rather than the eighteenth which is more realistic: Linda A. Pollock, *Forgotten children: parent-child relations from 1500-1900* (Cambridge, 1993).

from 1500 to 1920, and found more continuity across the centuries than previously acknowledged.⁵⁴ This has provided a framework for more detailed studies of the actuality of the childhood experience; Anthony Fletcher and Amanda Vickery have focused on children's specific relationships within the family, while the sentiment and emotions inherent in parent-child-family relationships are coming under increasing scrutiny.⁵⁵

None of these authors, except Hugh Cunningham, and then briefly, engage with children's lives in eighteenth-century Ireland. Therefore it is to works such as Joseph Robbins' *The lost children* (1980), Kenneth Milne's *The Irish charter schools* (1997) and various articles that we must turn in search of information relative to children's lives in eighteenth-century Ireland. Even though home/institution, work and school set the contexts in which children lived and which shaped their understandings, Robbins, Milne⁵⁶ and others, employed an adult oriented focus and concentrated on the administrative development of institutions responsible for children in eighteenth-century Ireland rather than engaging with the actuality of their lives in broader and more comparative spheres. Robbins combined the concepts of 'children' and 'charity' in his examination of the political philosophies and public reaction to 'charity children', but did not engage in any substantive manner with the effects those policies had on children. Milne adopted a similar approach seventeen years later, though crucially, he engages in more depth with the participants than Robbins. Michael Quane's approach to the history of education is still more institutional. His articles on aspects of education, scattered across various journals, ignore the child such is his focus on the history of the institutions with which he engages.⁵⁷ Nonetheless, their work, and in particular Milne's, presents crucial institutional information which provides an important platform for more specific research, and they have been invaluable in the preparation of this thesis.

⁵⁴ Cunningham, *The invention of childhood*.

⁵⁵ Anthony Fletcher, *Growing up in England, the experience of childhood 1600-1914* (Yale, 2008); Amanda Vickery, *The gentleman's daughter, women's lives in Georgian England* (Yale, 2003); eadem, *Behind closed doors: at home in Georgian England* (Yale, 2009); Ruth Brandon, *Other people's daughters, the life and times of the governess* (London, 2008).

⁵⁶ Joseph Robbins, *The lost children* (Dublin, 1980); Kenneth Milne, *The Irish Charter schools 1730-1830* (Dublin, 1997).

⁵⁷ Michael Quane has written and published an extensive range of articles concerning children's education. See bibliography.

Methodology, sources and research design

A historical analysis of childhood raises methodological and evidential questions, particularly surrounding a 'muted' group such as children in the past.⁵⁸ Linda Pollock legitimately questions how should the history of childhood be approached?⁵⁹ How far is it possible to locate records for the history of childhood? How full a picture of children's lives can be gained from what exists? Can we look beyond the (overwhelmingly male) adult record to a perception of the child's experience of events and, was the child ever anything but a passive actor in the determination of their childhood?⁶⁰

In reaching their conclusions historians and writers have used a variety of primary sources of varying reliability. Ariès relied on an analysis of iconography, whilst others have accepted the content of 'improving manuals' and pamphlets as evidence of the development of a concept of childhood. However, both Pollock and Cunningham are correct in pointing out that the publication of pamphlets and manuals cannot be taken as confirmation of the acceptance of the ideas and practices described within their covers. Yet, pamphlets and manuals, such as William Cadogan's (1711-97) *An essay upon nursing and the management of children* (Dublin, 1771), and Charles Allen's *The polite lady: or a course of female education* (Dublin, 1760),⁶¹ provide valuable insights, and by examining those printed in Ireland one can identify issues that concerned eighteenth-century Irish parents and over time shaped their attitudes towards their children and the experience of childrearing.

Historians in Britain, France and elsewhere have utilised 'tax data', 'notarial documents', diaries, population censi and institutional records to compile quantifiable and qualitative data over extended periods, regions and societies about the lives of children.⁶² Unlike the Museum of Childhood or the 'foundling Museum' in London,⁶³ there are no specific institutions, organisations or archives dedicated to the history of children in Ireland. Indeed, at a fundamental level, a perusal of the National Library

⁵⁸ Heywood, 'Centuries of childhood: an anniversary – and an epitaph?', p. 360.

⁵⁹ Linda A. Pollock, *A lasting relationship: parents and children over three centuries* (New England, 1987), pp 12-3.

⁶⁰ Read, 'A lost age?', p. 309.

⁶¹ William Cadogan, *An essay upon nursing and the management of children* (Dublin, 1771); Charles Allen, *The polite lady: or a course of female education* (Dublin, 1760).

⁶² King, 'Concepts of childhood'.

⁶³ The London Foundling Hospital was established by Royal Charter in 1739 by Captain Thomas Coram (1668-1751) and continues its work today as the children's charity 'Coram'.

of Ireland's subject catalogues reveals a definite bias in favour of political events. Moreover, it is a fact, as Roy Porter remarked of England, that 'too often the past is silent': essential evidence that would assist with the quantitative construction of a concept of childhood⁶⁴ has just not survived. This is still more true for eighteenth-century Ireland.

The paucity and unreliability of quantifiable data for eighteenth-century Ireland has prompted the adoption of a qualitative approach in the preparation of this thesis. Information was extracted from a broad range of primary sources such as family papers – an under-appreciated source – journals, biographies, newspapers (online and extant editions), government and institutional records, and a range of manuscripts, the majority of which have been deposited for safekeeping in Irish repositories. The evidence extracted was set against four indicative sectors of Irish society drawing on T. C. Barnard's social classification model in *A new anatomy of Ireland* (Yale, 2003) namely, those considered elite, the gentry or 'middling sorts', peasant/paupers, and what may be termed for the purpose of this study, 'the unwanted child'.

Linda Pollock's *A lasting relationship: parents and children over three centuries* and Anthony Fletcher's *Growing up in England, the experience of childhood, 1600-1914* have provided the outline structure that this thesis employs.⁶⁵ This has facilitated a linear progression through childhood from pre-natal to *circa* fourteen to sixteen years of age, though as mentioned above, neither the issue of childbirth nor the egress from childhood is addressed. Commenting on current childhood studies, Pollock perceptively observes that there is a concentration on those aspects of childrearing that we consider significant today, rather than 'what past generations of parents held to be vital in the rearing of children'.⁶⁶ It is the latter point, what eighteenth-century parents deemed important within their expectations of childhood that provides the key points of reference of this study.

Primary source documents such as diaries, letters, memoirs, estate and legal papers were surveyed for references to child rearing and childhood experiences. While many of these sources are revealing of the personal experiences of childhood among elite and middling families, information concerning the peasant, pauper and

⁶⁴ Roy Porter, *Disease, medicine and society in England, 1550-1860* (2nd ed., Cambridge, 1993), p. 3.

⁶⁵ Pollock, *A lasting relationship*; Fletcher, *Growing up in England*.

⁶⁶ Pollock, *A lasting relationship*, pp 13-4.

the unwanted child and family is less forthcoming, and has had to be extracted from less personal sources such as parliamentary committee reports, foundling hospital reports, the reports of The Incorporated Society (Charter schools) and so forth, supported by external contemporary accounts.

By examining the private correspondence of elite families such as the Fitzgeralds of Carton, the Portarlingtons, or the O'Hara family of county Sligo, it is possible to explore the actuality of children's lives through their recording of events such as the births and deaths of their children, their education – both the content and cost of – and indeed children's unhappiness at boarding school and their mothers' at letting go. Many eighteenth-century records detail the vulnerability of women and children, particularly the proximity of death, and the steps parents took to safeguard the health and well-being of their children.

In identifying the actuality of children's lives amongst the gentry or 'middling sorts', family correspondence and personal journals such as those of Dr William Drennan (1754-1820) and his family, or, the earlier journals of Elizabeth Bennis (1725-1802) of county Limerick, have proved useful.⁶⁷ They not only added a provincial element to the research, but in the case of the Drennan family, a political aspect, and in that of Elizabeth Bennis, a religious dimension.

While the above sources yielded much valuable information about the elite and the 'middling sorts', information on the actuality of children's lives for the peasant/pauper and 'the unwanted' child is more elusive, reflecting their position in eighteenth-century Irish society. Records dealing with the Charter schools among the papers of The Incorporated Society and reports by Sir Jeremiah Fitzpatrick (c.1740-1810) and John Howard (1726-90) are a valuable source of information on conditions within institutions, while also providing an indication of the expectations of both parents and the authorities. The detail encountered in parliamentary committee reports concerning institutions such as the Dublin and Cork foundling hospitals can be amplified by exploring the experiences of concerned adults such as Lady Arbella Denny (1707-92), Archibald Rowan Hamilton (1751-1834), and from testimony given by children themselves. Records relating to philanthropy, education, and the establishment of private and state institutions such as the Charity schools (from 1695) and the houses of industry (1773) alongside those of patrons such as Teresa Mulally

⁶⁷ Jean Agnew (ed.), *The Drennan-McTier letters* (3 vols, Dublin, 1999-2001); Rosemary Raughter (ed.), *The journal of Elizabeth Bennis 1749-1779* (Dublin, 2007).

(1728-1803) and Nano Nagle (1718-84) assist in building a picture of the actuality of children's lives amongst the largest and most significant class in eighteenth-century Ireland, the peasant and pauper class.

Allied to these sources, the records of the courts and parliament are crucial in identifying the profound impact which these bodies had on the lives of children from all backgrounds. In the patriarchal society of eighteenth-century Ireland, women and children in all sectors were extremely vulnerable, and legal and parliamentary records proved a valuable source in identifying these vulnerabilities, alongside the processes and procedures adopted to protect them.

Mary O'Dowd has observed of her research for *A history of women in Ireland 1500-1800*, that she found no 'long-lost correspondence or diaries lying unrecognised in archives';⁶⁸ similarly this thesis presents no major new primary source discoveries. Rather it has analysed documentary evidence in a more focused manner. Though Roy Porter cautions that 'the dangers of generalising from a few cases are obvious',⁶⁹ if we are prepared to change the way in which we approach the past then, as Hugh Cunningham observes, 'individual accounts brought together give us a picture of aspects of children's lives'⁷⁰ and thus a revealing insight into the expectations surrounding children and childhood in eighteenth-century Ireland.

The thesis is divided into four parts, raising children; children and health in the domestic environment; children in institutional care; and, the education of children. Part one, 'raising children', examines the attitudes and concerns of parents and society towards children and their upbringing, and the influence or otherwise of conduct books on children's lives. While pregnancy and childbirth for eighteenth-century women across all classes was fraught with potential dangers, not only to their own lives but also to their children, once past this stage parents, society and the state held certain expectations and aspirations for children's well-being and futures. Examined in this part are the behaviours, attitudes and roles adopted by adults in the rearing of children such as the relationship between parents and child, both emotional and legal, the identification of the maternal instinct as an increasingly significant component of

⁶⁸ Mary O'Dowd, *A history of women in Ireland 1500-1800* (Harlow, 2005), p. 3.

⁶⁹ Porter, *Disease, medicine and society in England*, p. 3.

⁷⁰ Hugh Cunningham, *The invention of childhood* (London, 2006).

‘motherhood’,⁷¹ and the emergence of leisure activities designed for children and families.

Children were particularly susceptible to death and disease throughout the eighteenth-century, and parents went to great lengths to protect them. Part two, ‘children and health in the domestic environment’, examines the parental role in the administration and development of medicines and diagnostic procedures available to and for children over the course of the century. Moreover, the most significant debate surrounding the health of children in the eighteenth-century was the issue of smallpox and inoculation and combined these developments served to bring the child more firmly into the medical marketplace. The contribution children’s healthcare emerging in the eighteenth-century makes to the history of medicine is crucial to our understanding of ‘paediatrics’ in the nineteenth and twentieth-centuries.

The third part, ‘children in institutional care’ is perhaps the more familiar as it builds on the work of Robbins, Milne and others. It encompasses an investigation of institutions both state and voluntary, such as the foundling hospitals, orphan asylums and Charter schools to identify the actuality of children’s lives within them. Given that the most vulnerable in society are frequently poorly or completely un-recorded, the emphasis here veers more towards the interpretation of official reports than the specific description of individual life experiences. Nonetheless, the care children received in eighteenth-century Irish institutions serves to illustrate the attitudes of those in authority charged with the care of vulnerable children and presents an alternative view of childhood to that emerging in the domestic sphere.

All children had and were expected to follow specific roles in society defined not only by class but also by gender, and education was pivotal in establishing and maintaining that order. Education was a matter of the utmost importance for the majority of parents in all ranks, though for the poorer classes it was sometimes aspirational. Education could be received from a governess/tutor, a private school or academy, abroad, a hedge school, or within the Charter school system. The publication and impact of Locke’s *Some thoughts concerning education* was a significant milestone in promoting a more engaged approach towards children and education, but to what extent did theorists and educationalists such as Locke,

⁷¹ According to the *Oxford English Dictionary* the term ‘maternalism’ was not in use until 1892. Nevertheless it was considered the most appropriate word to use to describe ‘the attitudes and instincts characteristic of a mother; the natural behaviour of a mother towards her child’ that were emerging features of seventeenth-century life and that achieved a recognised status in the eighteenth.

Rousseau and the Edgeworths influence its development and attitudes towards children's learning. Part four, 'the education of children', examines the education available to children over the course of the eighteenth-century, its purpose and quality, and assesses the contribution of church, state and philanthropy to that education and its impact on children and their childhood.

Together these four areas allow for a reasoned judgement to be made of how eighteenth-century Irish society treated its young, its children. It assesses how childhood and parenthood changed and adapted in response to the increasing individuation of children. Thus by identifying the actuality of children's lives in eighteenth-century Ireland and by building on the work of Robbins, Milne, and others, the insight of Stone, Cunningham, Fletcher and Vickery, an Irish dimension can be added to the wider debate surrounding the history of children and childhood.

PART ONE

RAISING CHILDREN IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY IRELAND

Section I Infancy – caring for children

Section II Parental attitudes to older children and childrearing

Section III Children at rest

RAISING CHILDREN IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY IRELAND¹

*'The laws of nature and the voice of reason
have declared the dependence of
the child on the parent.'
Walkers Hibernian Magazine, 1798²*

INTRODUCTION

In a break with seventeenth-century tradition, in 1693 John Locke (1632-1704) publicly recognised the child as an individual human being, determined by their own abilities and capacities, and childhood as a specific stage of development.³ Locke's thesis, expressed in *Some thoughts concerning education* (1693), was hugely popular and remained influential throughout the eighteenth-century in defining a concept of childhood. But did this manifest itself in eighteenth-century Ireland? What expectations did those parents hold and what attitudes did society adopt towards elite, middling, peasant, pauper and unwanted children? Did Irish parents recognise a concept of childhood and how can this be identified?

Traditionally mothers learned how to raise their children from other women. Thus, knowledge of 'childcare' passed down the generations was accompanied as Colin Heywood notes, by a 'certain resignation in the face of its shortcomings.'⁴ This was to change during the eighteenth-century, and parents, in particular mothers, were presented with a barrage of advice and conduct books on childrearing. Print was not the only influence, but by the close of the century there was a more positive image of the child and childhood, and children were more obviously the focus of parents' pleasure. Indicative of this were expressions of parental affection both physical and emotional, and an examination of the manner in which they were manifested across

¹ This thesis does not address the issue of childbirth *per se*. Given the importance of The Lying-in Hospital archive to a study of childbirth in eighteenth-century Ireland, but particularly in assessing practices associated with childbirth and maternal care among pauper women, ignoring them or using secondary sources was not considered appropriate. Thus this part of the thesis deals with caring for children rather than pregnancy and birth.

² [Anonymous] 'On family government', *Walker's Hibernian Magazine*, Jan. 1798, pp 29-30.

³ Locke, *Some thoughts concerning education*; Margaret J. M. Ezell, 'John Locke's images of childhood: early eighteenth century response to *Some thoughts concerning education*', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 17, no. 2 (1983-84), p.152.

⁴ Colin Heywood, *A history of childhood, children and childhood in the west from medieval to modern times* (Cambridge, 2007), p. 72.

the century is revealing of the evolving nature of ideas surrounding children and childhood in eighteenth-century Ireland.

The nature of childrearing practices in eighteenth-century Ireland and the partial nature of the historical documentation, means the evidence available is overwhelmingly elite and 'middling family' based. Nevertheless, since both Lawrence Stone and Randolph Trumbach 'identified the [British] aristocracy as the class that led the way to the modern domesticated nuclear family,'⁵ so their Irish equivalent are worthy of investigation. Part one of this thesis is divided into three sections. Section one addresses the issues surrounding infancy and caring for children such as parent infant relationships and wet-nursing. Section two focuses on parental and societal attitudes to older children and childrearing, while section three examines activities associated with children at rest and how they occupied their 'leisure' time.

SECTION I: INFANCY – CARING FOR CHILDREN

Reactions to childbirth

The primary purpose of marriage for couples of property and wealth was the production of a male heir. The comment of Rev. James Smyth (1683-1759) of his sister-in-law's imminent confinement in 1715 that he 'should not be concerned provided she would give us a boy every year' is not untypical.⁶ The Marquis of Kildare (1749-1804) expressed a hope in 1769 that the childless Lady Louisa Conolly would be 'brought to bed of a son'.⁷ As a result, the successful birth of a legitimate son and heir was a matter of considerable celebration in elite households. The importance of a male heir to the O'Brien and Hyde families is reflected in the fact that Lord Rochester (1641-1711) first informed Edward O'Brien's (1705-65) grandfathers of his birth on 7 April 1705 on the day, but did not enlighten the child's father Lucius O'Brien (1675-1717) for a further five days.⁸ The celebrations following the birth of a second O'Brien son in March 1707 were significantly more muted.⁹ Some seven

⁵ Judith Schneid-Lewis, *In the family way: childbearing in the British aristocracy 1760-1860* (New Jersey, 1986), p. 8.

⁶ Rev. James Smyth to William Smyth, 12 Dec. 1715 (NLI, Smyth of Barbavilla Papers, Ms 41582/2).

⁷ William, Marquis of Kildare to Emily, Duchess of Leinster, 7 Jan. 1769, Fitzgerald (ed.), *Leinster correspondence*, iii, 550.

⁸ See Lord Rochester to Sir Edward O'Brien, 7 Apr. 1705 (NLI, Inchiquin Papers, Ms 45295/7); Lord Clarendon to Thomas Keightley, 7 Apr. 1705 (NLI, Inchiquin Papers, Ms 45296/1); Lord Rochester to Lucius O'Brien, 12 Apr. 1705 (NLI, Inchiquin Papers, Ms 45295/7).

⁹ Earl of Rochester to Lucius O'Brien, 18 Mar. 1707 (NLI, Inchiquin Papers, Ms 45296/6).

decades later, Lord Bellamont (1736-1800) received a congratulatory address 'whose answer is in the style of the King's to the parliament' on the birth of his son in 1778,¹⁰ while Thomas Chapel Whaley (1766-1800) was so delighted at the birth of his first son that he gave the mother a draft on his banker with the following words:

Good Mr Latouche,
Pray open your pouch,
And pay my soul's darling
One thousand pounds sterling,
For Dick Chapel Whaley.¹¹

Most women viewed childbirth as a necessary consequence of married life but were acutely conscious of the attendant dangers. Although deeply religious, the Limerick Methodist Elizabeth Bennis (1725-1802) consistently described it as a 'time of trial', a period of 'distress' and implored the presence of God 'in [her] extremity', while her 'soul rejoiced ... [at] the thoughts of approaching death.'¹² Even so, she joyously and consistently noted the successful births of all her children and grandchildren.

Given the dangers inherent in childbirth, the keenness with which pregnancies were followed, and the importance attached to the production of a male heir in the eighteenth-century, birth announcements and deaths relating to childbirth were a recurring feature in newspapers throughout the century.¹³ This and the detailed recording of individual children's time of birth, which was a feature of elite and gentry childbirth in eighteenth-century Ireland, attests not only to the pleasure parents took upon the arrival of children, male and female, into the world¹⁴ but also the increasing recognition of the maternal instinct, the demonstration of which became a

¹⁰ Charles, Viscount Coote (1778-86) who died at Toulouse, France aged seven. Lady Louisa Conolly to Duchess of Leinster, 22 May 1778, Fitzgerald (ed.), *Leinster correspondence*, iii, 287.

¹¹ Thomas Whaley's companion was Miss Courtney who bore him several children outside wedlock. *The Gentleman's and London Magazine*, Sep. 1780.

¹² Raughter (ed.), *The journal of Elizabeth Bennis*, 20 Apr. 1750; 17 Jan. 1752; 21 Jan., 30 Apr., 14 May 1757; 30 Aug., 1 Oct. 1758; 27 Oct. 1759.

¹³ For instance see *Freeman's Journal*, 14 Jan. 1764; *Faulkner's Dublin Journal*, 19 Mar., 27 Apr., 3 Aug., 10 Aug., 10 Dec. 1765; *The Londonderry Journal*, 3 Aug. 1773; *The Lady's Magazine*, 5 Nov., 11 Nov. 1773; *The Limerick Chronicle*, 27 Apr. 1790.

¹⁴ For example see Leo McNamara (ed.), 'The diary of an eighteenth-century Clare gentleman', *North Munster Antiquarian Journal*, 23 (1981); Patrick Montague-Smith, 'The Dexters of Dublin and Annfield, Co. Kildare', *The Irish Ancestor*, 2, no. 1 (1970).

judgement of 'motherly performance' that was well established among elite and gentry Irish women by the close of the century.¹⁵

Though the birth of a 'brave, very lusty squalling boy' was a crucial first step in ensuring the security of elite and gentry property,¹⁶ the child's survival was not guaranteed.¹⁷ Once his elder brother died, the new heir, Richard Lovell Edgeworth (1744-1817) became the focus of increased parental attention. His education changed, and his 'life was to be preserved by an encreased degree of care and precaution.'¹⁸ Similarly, though a son and heir had been provided three years previously,¹⁹ Lady Louisa Stuart (1757-1851) 'consoled' her sister Lady Carlow (before 1763-1813) following the birth of another daughter in 1784 with the ill-judged observation that 'Lord Carlow (1744-98) will not be so well satisfied' with this arrival.²⁰ Her additional comment that, 'provided you and the little thing are both safe and well, it signifies very little', reflects the fundamentally different foci males and females adopted towards children's births in the eighteenth-century – men required an heir, whereas women were thankful for the mother's and/or child's survival.

In the absence of male issue, heads of elite families sometimes 'adopted' and educated a male relation for their 'estate and title'. Lord Kingsale (1700-59) is a case in point.²¹ Thus there was a pressing need to provide not only an heir, but also 'a spare'. Lady Caroline Holland (1723-1774) considered 'one child ... such an anxiety,' and was visibly relieved that her daughter-in-law Lady Mary Fox (before 1751-78) 'was breeding again'.²² General Charles Vallencey (c. 1724-1812), chief engineer of Ireland was considered 'a man of value to the state in more than one way'

¹⁵ Anthony Fletcher has identified this in relation to raising children in England and it may be similarly applied to eighteenth-century Ireland: Anthony Fletcher, *Growing up in England, the experience of childhood, 1600-1914* (New Haven, 2008), pp 108-128.

¹⁶ Lord Clarendon to Thomas Keightley, 7 Apr. 1705 (NLI, Inchiquin Papers, Ms 45296/1).

¹⁷ For a more in-depth analysis of infant and child mortality see part two.

¹⁸ R.L. Edgeworth and Maria Edgeworth, *Memoirs of Richard Lovell Edgeworth, begun by himself and concluded by his daughter Maria Edgeworth, with an introduction by Desmond Clarke* (2 vols, Dublin, 1969), i, 31-2, hereafter referred to as Edgeworth and Edgeworth, *Memoirs*.

¹⁹ John, second Earl of Portarlington (1781-1845).

²⁰ Lady Louisa Stuart to Lady [Caroline] Carlow, 22 Oct. 1784, Mrs Godfrey Clark (ed.), *Gleanings from an old portfolio containing some correspondence between Lady Louisa Stuart and her sister Caroline Countess of Portarlington, and other friends and relations* (3 vols, Edinburgh, 1895-98), i, 279-80, hereafter referred to as *Gleanings*.

²¹ John McVeagh (ed.), *Richard Pococke's Irish tours* (Dublin, 1995), p. 149. Gerald de Courcy, 24th Baron Kingsale died without issue in 1759 and the baronetcy devolved upon his second-cousin John (c. 1717-76).

²² Lady [Caroline] Holland to Duchess of Leinster, 17 May [1768], Fitzgerald (ed.), *Leinster correspondence*, i, 537.

since, as well as his work, he fathered forty-three children from three marriages.²³ Reflecting the pressing need to provide a living heir, according to Mary Delany (1700-88) in 1744, 'some' in Ireland considered ten a moderate sized family.²⁴

Once the requirements for an heir were satisfied, attitudes towards male and female births remained consistent over the course of the century and families generally greeted female children's arrival with joy. But, given the nature of the aristocratic marriage settlements identified by A. P. W. Malcomson and Deborah Wilson, daughters could prove a financial burden on elite family resources.²⁵ The lack of a dowry and her father's financial instability influenced Catherine Keightley's (1667-c. 1730) marriage prospects.²⁶ According to Lady Louisa Stuart, provided daughters married, they were 'less incumbrance [sic] to a family than sons'.²⁷ However, Malcomson notes that male children did not 'absolutely require cash portions' and could 'earn their own living in one of the approved professions', and thus were less burdensome on their families.²⁸ Nevertheless, Lady Louisa perceptively noted that 'the more of either of them the greater the difficulty will be' and in 1784 wished her sister 'would stop here'.²⁹ It is difficult to ascertain how many children, male and female Lady Carlow had when she received this advice, as female birth dates were not recorded, which is reflective of the secondary role female children played in eighteenth-century inheritance practice and procedure. Although she remained childless, Lady Louisa Conolly 'adopted' and fostered children throughout her life; they were all female, and none inherited anything more than small portions from her.

As long as childbirth was seen as a means solely of producing an heir, there it ended. But as Judith Schneid Lewis has argued, motherhood, formerly 'an ascribed function', now became 'an achieved status'. As a consequence, 'a view of the new

²³ De Latocnaye, *A Frenchman's walk through Ireland 1796-1797* (Belfast, 1917), p. 77.

²⁴ Angélique Day (ed.), *Letters from Georgian Ireland: the correspondence of Mary Delany, 1731-68* (Belfast, 1991), p. 200.

²⁵ A. P. W. Malcomson, *The pursuit of the heiress. Aristocratic marriage in Ireland 1740-1840* (Belfast, 2006); Deborah Wilson, *Women, marriage and property in wealthy landed families in Ireland, 1750-1850* (Manchester, 2009).

²⁶ Despite a number of negotiations with elite families, at her uncle's insistence Catherine married Lucius O'Brien of Clare and the payment of her dowry remained a matter of contention: Gabrielle Ashford, 'Advice to a daughter': Lady Frances Keightley to her daughter Catherine, September 1681', *Anal. Hib.*, forthcoming.

²⁷ Lady Louisa Stuart to Lady [Caroline] Carlow, 22 Oct. 1784, Clark (ed.), *Gleanings*, i, 279-80.

²⁸ Malcomson, *The pursuit of the heiress*, p. 31.

²⁹ Lady Louisa Stuart to Lady [Caroline] Carlow, 22 Oct. 1784, Clark (ed.), *Gleanings*, i, 279-80.

domestic ideal of motherhood'³⁰ emerged requiring the practice and display of the maternal instinct which served to reinforce the attitude and emotions surrounding childhood in eighteenth-century Ireland.

Parent infant relationships

Even though levels of parental affection varied according to region, setting (urban or rural) and class,³¹ parent infant relationships are essential to the identification of the concept of childhood that obtained in eighteenth-century Ireland; the public and private manifestation of those relationships also serve to illustrate the increasingly important role maternalism played by the end of the century. As Valerie Fildes observes, by the close of the century 'women became idealized as mothers rather than as fashionable appendages to their husbands', a conclusion previously reached by Lawrence Stone.³² Nineteen year-old Melesina St George *née* Chenevix (1768-1827) was delighted at the birth of her first child in 1787 and recorded that, 'when I looked in my boy's face, when I heard him breathe, when I felt the pressure of his little fingers, I understood the full force of Voltaire's declaration, '*le chef-d'oeuvre d'amour est le Coeur d'une mere*'.³³ As her husband's delight 'nearly equalled mine', she regarded herself at that point as 'one of the happiest of women'.³⁴ Thomas Moore's (1779-1852) mother had a medal struck with his name and birth date engraved on it in celebration of his birth in 1779, and only parted with it on her deathbed in 1831.³⁵ There is abundant evidence of profound parental affection throughout the eighteenth-century, though the evidence is heavily biased towards mothers from elite and middling society.

Although she did not fully articulate it, Emily Duchess of Leinster (1731-1814) was aware of her own maternal feelings, remarking in 1755 upon the death of her infant that:

I was much more grieved at first than I cou'd have thought it possible to have been for an infant that I cou'd know nothing of. It really convinces me there is

³⁰ Schneid Lewis, *In the family way*, p. 62.

³¹ King, 'Concepts of childhood', p. 372.

³² Valerie Fildes, *Wet nursing; a history from antiquity to the present* (New York, 1988), p. 119; Stone, *The family, sex and marriage* (New York, 1977), pp 431-2.

³³ Translated as 'love's masterpiece is a mother's heart'. [Richard Chenevix Trench] Dean of Westminster (ed.), *The remains of the late Mrs Richard Trench* (London, 1862) cited in Linda A. Pollock, *A lasting relationship: parents and children over three centuries* (New England, 1987), p. 45.

³⁴ [Trench], *The remains of the late Mrs Richard Trench* in Pollock, *A lasting relationship*, p. 45.

³⁵ John Russell (ed.), *Memoirs, journal and correspondence of Thomas Moore*, (8 vols, London, 1853), i.

a great deal more in what is call'd nature or instinct than I ever imagined before, for what else but such an impulse cou'd make one feel so much for a poor little thing that does but just exist.³⁶

Despite her near constant state of pregnancy, the Duchess took great delight in all her children, and her purchase of the villa Frascati at Blackrock, county Dublin, allowed her and the children the intimacy and freedom to indulge that affection. The degree with which Emily described the features and personalities of Caroline (1750-54) (eleven days old), William (1749-1804) (aged one) and George (1748-65) (aged two) in 1750 attests not only to her deep affection for them but also, as John Locke encouraged, an appreciation of each child's individuality. This was tested in 1762 when she failed to recognise her year-old son Henry (1761-1829) after an absence of three months.³⁷ Even so, she was quick to acknowledge an initial maternal and affectionate reaction. Her comment that 'yet my heart warm'd to him somehow or other' is illustrative of what Judith Schneid Lewis identifies as the new ideal of motherhood,³⁸ an instinctive maternal affection. Likewise, her sister Lady Louisa Conolly lavished affection on all her foster children. Acutely aware of the importance of the mother/child relationship, Lady Louisa was hopeful that the birth in 1775 of 'this little girl of hers' would make Lady Emily Fitzgerald (1752-1818) (estranged from her family following her marriage to Lord Bellamont), 'know what a mother's feels with regard to a daughter must be, and perhaps may make her see things in their true light.'³⁹ However, their elder sister Lady Caroline Fox found her maternal instincts difficult to access and her comment that she did not 'yet feel about him [Harry (1755-1811)] as I [do] about Ste[phen (1745-75)] and Charles [(1749-1806)]. I suppose I shall',⁴⁰ suggests that at mid-century not only was there a genuine recognition of the maternal instinct, but also an acceptance that it was a dynamic process.

Unfortunately, the evidence available provides little insight into the levels with which maternal and paternal affection were returned or what effect that affection, or

³⁶ Countess of Kildare to Earl of Kildare, 15 May [1755], Fitzgerald (ed.), *Leinster correspondence*, i, 17.

³⁷ Marchioness of Kildare to Marquis of Kildare, 13 Nov. [1762], Fitzgerald (ed.), *Leinster correspondence*, i, 135.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, i, pp 134-5; Lewis, *In the family way*, p. 62.

³⁹ Lady Louisa Conolly to Duchess of Leinster, 23 May 1775, Fitzgerald (ed.), *Leinster correspondence*, iii, 33.

⁴⁰ Lady Caroline Fox to Countess of Kildare, 12 Feb. [1759], Fitzgerald (ed.), *Leinster correspondence*, i, 194. See also same to same, letters nos 150, 200, 221.

lack of, had on children. The maternal affection and indulgence Thomas Moore received impressed him to the extent that to gain his mother's 'approbation I would have thought no labour or difficulty too hard'.⁴¹ Elizabeth Bennis's maternal reactions were confused, if understandable given her passionate religious convictions, with the result that the effect her swinging emotions had on her children is difficult to assess.⁴² There is no such difficulty in other instances. The depth of affection that bound Emily, Duchess of Leinster and her fifth son Lord Edward (1763-98) was unusual, even within that family. The favouritism Emily manifested throughout her life towards Edward may have derived from the fact that he reminded Emily of herself as a young child, and it serves further to illustrate her awareness of her children's individualities and personalities.⁴³ Even so, the depth of their affection and the complex mechanics of their relationship conforms to some extent to Lloyd De Mause's 'psychogenic theory of history' and familial relationships.⁴⁴

Although there was a clear and definite emphasis on the importance of a mother's role in the supervision of children during the seventeenth-century, by the eighteenth, parents and especially mothers were less hesitant to publicly express their affection for their children and regret at leaving them. Though anxious to visit her ill mother in England, Lady Portarlington (d. 1813) admitted that it would 'cost me a pang' to leave her children in Ireland;⁴⁵ Mary Anne Fortescue (1767-1849), mother of a county Louth gentry family, required regular accounts of her daughter Emily's (b. 1797) progress when apart from her in 1798.⁴⁶ Similarly, Lady Sarah Bunbury admitted her foolishness 'to fancy one cannot leave a child when it's safe and well

⁴¹ Russell (ed.), *Memoirs, journal and correspondence of Thomas Moore*, i.

⁴² For example see entries for 12 Jan. 1765, 9 Sep. 1772, 15 Aug. 1773, 6 Feb. 1776, 10 Feb. 1777, Raughter, *The journal of Elizabeth Bennis*.

⁴³ Lady Louisa Conolly to Duchess of Leinster, 23 Jan. 1770, Fitzgerald (ed.), *Leinster correspondence*, iii, 35-8.

⁴⁴ Emily, Duchess of Leinster to Lady Lucy Fitzgerald, 17 Mar. 1797, Gerald Campbell, *Edward and Pamela Fitzgerald: being some account of their lives compiled from the letters of those who knew them* (London, 1904), p. 128; Pollock, *Forgotten children*, p. 5. One of de Mause's hypothesis is that parents regress to the psychic age of their child and work through the anxieties they experienced at that age. This is complimented and complicated by the child's inherent need for a 'relationship' and thus the combination of the two can lead to an abusive relationship driven by the adult. For example, Duchess Emily was distraught in 1797 when she lost the locket she wore constantly around her neck containing a piece of her son Lord Edward's hair. The degree of affection expressed by Lord Edward towards his mother was far and beyond normal for that time: Lloyd de Mause, 'The evolution of childhood', Lloyd de Mause (ed.), *The history of childhood* (London, 1976), pp 1-72.

⁴⁵ Lady Portarlington to Lady Louisa Stuart, 18 Sep. 1794, Clark (ed.), *Gleanings*, ii, 206.

⁴⁶ Mary Anne Fortescue, 'A journey from county Louth to Bath in 1797', *Journal of the County Louth Archaeological Society*, 5 (1994), p. 306.

taken care of'.⁴⁷ Because of her precarious social position following her divorce, Lady Sarah was reliant on her only daughter Louisa's (1768-85) company and affection.

Given the high death rate among childbearing women, affectionate relationships between first and second family children was a matter of particular significance. Acutely aware of the importance of a harmonious family dynamic, Lady Frances Keightley (1658-1725) advised her widowed daughter Catherine O'Brien when she contemplated a second marriage to a widower:

not to have his children live with you. Visits from them for weeks may do very well, & I do not doubt but that the sweetness of your temper will engage their duty & affection, ... you would find it troublesome to have them constantly, & besides, your children may not agree with them & these would bring sorrow on you & one would have none that can be avoyded [sic].⁴⁸

Writing to her daughter in 1783, Lady Bute (1718-94) likewise acknowledged the inherent difficulties mothers faced in second families, and cautioned that 'there is so much instinct in a mother's affection to her infant ... it must get the better of all resolutions.'⁴⁹

Though maternal/child relationships were sometimes uneven, more were not. However, if the trend was one way, the identification of children as individuals was a crucial factor in promoting maternal and paternal feelings and affection. The awareness and public display of maternal, and paternal, affection visible at mid-century became stronger in the second half and is clearly manifest in personal correspondence. Bishop Syngé (1691-1762) for example, greatly enjoyed his daughter's 'prattle either with tongue or pen',⁵⁰ while Lady Caroline Fox was astonished at the 'coldness and form' of a letter the Duchess of Richmond received from her mother in 1758, 'not the least like the letter of a mother to a daughter.'⁵¹ However, as children acquired an enhanced sense of security and affection as a result of greater maternalism, that maternalism was also the mechanism by which mothers' childrearing methods were judged by wider female society.

⁴⁷ Lady Sarah Lennox to Duchess of Leinster, 28 May 1776, Fitzgerald (ed.), *Leinster correspondence*, ii, 175.

⁴⁸ Lady Frances Keightley to Catherine O'Brien, 9 Feb. 1721 (NLI, Inchiquin Papers, Ms 45348/5).

⁴⁹ Lady Bute to Lady Louisa Stuart, 19 Sep. 1783, Clark (ed.), *Gleanings*, i, 223.

⁵⁰ Edward to Alicia, 9 May 1747, Legg (ed.), *The Syngé letters*, p. 10

⁵¹ Lady Caroline Fox to Countess of Kildare, 7 Sep. 1758, Fitzgerald (ed.), *Leinster correspondence*, i, 181. Lady Mary Bruce (d. 1796) married Charles Lennox (1734-1806), third Duke of Richmond in April 1757. Her mother was Lady Caroline Campbell (1721-1803) wife of Charles Bruce (1682-1746/7), fourth Earl of Elgin.

If the affection with which children's births and children were received was indicative of a developing concept of childhood in eighteenth-century Ireland, why did so many persist in the practice of wet-nursing which was clearly associated with high mortality levels? Furthermore, as Colin Heywood observes, wet-nursing 'flew in the face of advice from the majority of physicians and theologians down the centuries.'⁵³ Yet, elite and gentry families continued to employ wet-nurses. The Tipperary clergyman's daughter Dorothy Herbert (c.1768-1829) commented acerbically that when born she and her siblings were attended by wet-nurses, 'first a bad nurse, 2ndly a mad nurse and 3rdly a sickly nurse ... (it's a wonder poor Miss dolly ever got over such an ordeal) and nurses apiece for all the rest.'⁵⁴

Even though wet-nursing was confined mainly to the elite class who could afford it, Hugh Cunningham argues convincingly that in many cases 'abandonment was wet-nursing at public expense', for the intention was to later re-claim the child from the parish or institution.⁵⁵ Some Irish parents did abandon their children and later attempt to reclaim them, but the frequency with which the increased numbers of abandonments tally with Ireland's economic crises and food shortages strongly suggests a majority of abandonments were desperate acts by despairing parents.⁵⁶ Lower class women of necessity breastfed their children, so the question of abandonment alongside wet-nursing as an indicator of a new mother/baby relationship is difficult to sustain. Indeed, Heywood's caution that the miserable plight of foundling children put out to country nurses 'risks distorting our view of wet-nursing as a whole'⁵⁷ retains credence, particularly in Ireland. Certainly, wet-nursed foundlings fared badly; only the cheapest available nurses were employed by the Dublin Foundling Hospital, they were unsupervised and many nursed multiple infants at the same time.⁵⁸

⁵² For a comprehensive treatment of wet-nursing see Valerie Fildes, *Breasts, bottles and babies: a history of infant feeding* (Edinburgh, 1986); eadem, 'The English wet-nurse and her role in infant care 1538-1800', *Medical History*, 32 (1998), pp 142-73; eadem (ed.), *Women as mothers in pre-industrial England: essays in memory of Dorothy McLaren* (London, 1990).

⁵³ Heywood, *A history of childhood*, p. 63.

⁵⁴ Herbert, *Retrospections*, p. 13.

⁵⁵ Hugh Cunningham, *Children and childhood in western society since 1500* (Essex, 1995), p. 94.

⁵⁶ See part three.

⁵⁷ Heywood, *A history of childhood*, p. 67.

⁵⁸ See part three, in particular the testimony of Rev. Hill, Dr Blackall and Bridget Robinson to the House of Commons inquiry of 1758. *Commons Jn. (Irl.)*, 1758, vol. 6, appendices xcvi, xcvi.

The crucial importance of children's early years to their development was clearly recognised by the eighteenth-century and evidence for the case against wet-nursing is abundant. John Arbuthnot (1667-1735) appreciated the important qualities breast milk supplied and strongly supported breastfeeding in 1731; so too did Jean Astruc (1684-1766) in 1746, William Cadogan (1711-97) in 1748, James Nelson (1710-94) in 1756, Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-78) in 1762, and William Buchan (1729-1805) in 1769.⁵⁹ Buchan averred that 'neither art nor nature can afford a proper substitute for it.'⁶⁰ He stated simply that 'the mother's milk or that of a healthy nurse is unquestionably the best food for an infant.'⁶¹ Alluding to the maternal instinct, Nelson acknowledged that 'mothers, by suckling their children cherish that tenderness which nature has implanted in them towards their offspring.'⁶² Still, all recognised wet-nursing as a fact and accordingly advised on choosing a nurse.

Although theorists and physicians were disposed to favour breast-feeding, many women, particularly among the elite were not. There were numerous factors influencing this attitude. For instance the belief that sexual intercourse during breast-feeding curdled the milk was one factor as husbands were unwilling to forsake their marital rights, even to ensure the safety of their child. Attitudes changed slowly in the second half of the eighteenth-century. Although Emily, Duchess of Leinster wet-nursed each of the twenty-two children born to her between 1748 and 1778, her daughter Emily, Lady Bellamont did not in 1775.⁶³ Indeed, the Lennox sisters were significantly more supportive of maternal breast-feeding than Duchess Emily. On her first pregnancy in 1768 Lady Sarah Bunbury was, according to her sister Lady Caroline Holland, 'determin'd upon [nursing] if she can bring it about'.⁶⁴ Although

⁵⁹ John Arbuthnot, *An essay concerning the nature of aliments and the choice of them according to the different constitutions of human bodies* (Dublin, 1731), p. 95; Jean Astruc, *A general and compleat treatise on all the diseases incident to children from their birth to the age of fifteen* (London, 1746); William Cadogan, *An essay on nursing and the management of children from their birth to three years of age* (3rd ed., London, 1749) (7th ed., London, 1757) (hereafter referred to as *An essay on nursing*); James Nelson, *An essay on the government of children under three general heads: viz., health, manners and education* (2nd ed., London, 1756), p. 45 (hereafter referred to as *An essay on the government of children*); Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Émile* (Geneva, 1762); William Buchan, *Domestic medicine: a treatise on the prevention and cure of diseases by regimen and simple medicines with an appendix containing a dispensatory for the use of private practitioners* (19th ed., London, 1805), p. 14 (hereafter referred to as *Domestic medicine*).

⁶⁰ Buchan, *Domestic medicine* (19th ed.), p. 14.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² Nelson, *An essay on the government of children* (2nd ed.), p. 45.

⁶³ Lady Louisa Conolly to Duchess of Leinster, 17 May [1775], Fitzgerald (ed.), *Leinster correspondence*, iii, 132.

⁶⁴ Lady Caroline Holland to Duchess of Leinster, 19 Aug., 18 Dec., 24 Dec. 1768, 6 Jan. 1769, Fitzgerald (ed.), *Leinster correspondence*, i, letters nos 354, 367, 368, 369, pp 543, 559-62.

she was unsuccessful, her desire to succeed was supported by the extended family. Similarly by 1776, the second Duchess of Leinster determined to breast-feed her first born. Though initially unenthusiastic, her husband was worried that the duchess 'was too delicate' for such a task, reassuring words from his aunt Lady Louisa Conolly encouraged both.⁶⁵

Though attitudes towards breast-feeding were broadly supportive within the extended Fitzgerald household, opposition was still deeply entrenched within society at large. Fearing a combination from 'Lady Kildare ..., Nancy Burgh and twenty more', Lady Louisa Conolly advised Emilia, the young second duchess of Leinster 'not to say a word about' her intention to breast-feed.⁶⁶ By the 1780s, more elite and gentry women such as Lady Caroline Portarlington breast-fed and, consistent with the new vision of motherhood, women's letters were full of self-congratulatory accounts of breast-feeding successes.⁶⁷ In 1798, *Walker's Hibernian Magazine* published an engraving and verse of a mother and sleeping child titled 'Sleeping Innocence', which idealised maternal breast-feeding.⁶⁸

Attitudes were less fixed in the classes below the elite. Though she nursed her first child, the county Kildare Quaker Mary Leadbeater (1758-1826) sent her second born (1794) to a wet-nurse, 'though it caused ...[her] a pinch' to do so.⁶⁹ Similarly, though the Dublin accoucheur William Drennan (1754-1820) had 'no reason at present to question' his wife's ability to breast-feed, she was encouraged to desist in 1801.⁷⁰ His sister Martha McTier (1742-1837) in Belfast claimed tactlessly that 'this [breast-fed] yelping cur of yours in my opinion is starved.'⁷¹ With the backing of more medical knowledge, in 1825 James Kennedy advised that though a mother did not intend nursing her own child, she should at least 'never refuse it her first milk for

⁶⁵ Refers to William (1749-1804) second Duke of Leinster and Emilia Olivia Usher St George (d. 1798), second Duchess of Leinster: Lady Louisa Conolly to Duchess of Leinster, 8 Mar. 1777, Fitzgerald (ed.), *Leinster correspondence*, iii, 234, 256.

⁶⁶ Emilia Olivia St George married William second Duke of Leinster in 1775: Lady Louisa Conolly to Duchess of Leinster, 29 Oct. 1776, Fitzgerald (ed.), *Leinster correspondence*, iii, 234.

⁶⁷ For example see Lady Louisa Stuart to Lady Carlou, 9, 23 Nov. 1784; to Duchess of Buccleuch, 1 Oct. 1787, 3 Dec. 1788, Clark (ed.), *Gleanings*, i, 286, 291-2; eadem, ii, 88, 112.

⁶⁸ The verse read: 'What pleasure fills the mother's breast, Thus nursing over her fav'rite child, With him all doubt is lull'd to rest, And each maternal care beguil'd.' *Walker's Hibernian Magazine*, Mar. 1798, pp 228-9.

⁶⁹ [Mary Leadbeater] '[Diary of] Mary Leadbeater', 11th of 8th month, 1794, Melosina Lenox-Conyngham (ed.), *Diaries of Ireland, an anthology 1590-1987* (Dublin, 1998), p. 97.

⁷⁰ William Drennan to Martha McTier, 25 Mar., 17 Apr. 1801, Agnew (ed.), *Drennan-McTier letters*, ii, 685-6, 697.

⁷¹ Martha McTier to William Drennan [1801], Agnew (ed.), *Drennan-McTier letters*, ii, 698.

which there is no equal substitute'⁷² and was a significant departure from earlier opinions.

Of course breast-feeding was not always possible and crucially, there was a lack of suitable infant foods. In the absence of a wet-nurse a small polished cow's horn 'which will hold about a gill and a half' was used, though George Armstrong (1719-89) preferred a spoon.⁷³ However, hand rearing was dangerous and notoriously unsuccessful which encouraged recourse to wet-nurses. Richard Edgeworth (1744-1817) was given over to wet-nurses because his mother was paralysed on one side following his birth,⁷⁴ and Lady Bute reassured her daughter in 1793 that 'it was certainly better to get a good nurse' for her child as she had little milk.⁷⁵ Also, sore, blocked or infected nipples could cause distress to the nursing mother and child.

By mid-century, a failure to breast-feed was generally attributed (disparagingly by medical opinion) to 'women of fashion', whose delicate constitutions, 'nervous affectations' and 'hysteric fits',⁷⁶ prevented them doing so.⁷⁷ In point of fact, recourse to a wet-nurse was highly popular, but the choice required significant deliberation. According to Lady Caroline Fox writing in 1760, the 'only way one can justify to one's own mind not nursing one's child oneself' was through the timely engagement of a wet-nurse whose character was thoroughly investigated. This was an important consideration given the widespread belief that:

children really suck in the vicious inclinations, and depraved passions of their nurses, which honest parents perceiving in their children, are amazed at such degeneracies, not knowing after whom the child can take those propensities.⁷⁸

These were enduring views. Heywood observes that advice to parents on selecting a nurse 'hardly changed down the centuries' being drawn heavily from Greek and Roman authorship that was repeated in the eighteenth-century.⁷⁹ Thus parents sought

⁷² James Kennedy, *Instructions to mothers & nurses on the management of children in health & disease* (Glasgow, 1825), p. 23.

⁷³ The small end of the horn was perforated and round one notched end two small bits of parchment shaped like the tip of a glove finger and loosely sewn together were fastened. Food poured into the horn was then sucked through the loose stitching: George Armstrong, *An account of the diseases most incident to children* (London, 1783), p. 157.

⁷⁴ Edgeworth and Edgeworth, *Memoirs*, i, 21-2.

⁷⁵ Lady Bute to Lady Portarlington, 30 Jun. 1793, Clark (ed.), *Gleanings*, ii, 189.

⁷⁶ Buchan, *Domestic medicine*, p. 2.

⁷⁷ Nelson, *An essay on the government of children* (2nd ed.), p. 55.

⁷⁸ Astruc, *A general and compleat treatise*, p. 18. See also, Heywood, *A history of childhood*, p. 67; Sally Kevill-Davies, *Yesterday's children, the antiques and history of childcare* (Suffolk, 1994), p. 31; Rousseau, *Émile* [Echo library demand print] (Middlesex, 2007), pp 23-5.

⁷⁹ Heywood, *A history of childhood*, p. 67.

a nurse who would ‘be kind to their child, in good health and likely to produce untainted milk’,⁸⁰ considerations that prompted Lady Louisa Conolly to offer her foster-daughter Harriet’s wet-nurse to her pregnant sister Emily in 1773.⁸¹

First and foremost wet-nursing was a financial transaction and gendered differentiation is apparent in wet-nursing fees. As table 1.1 illustrates, the experience of the Dexter family of Annfield, county Kildare suggests that wet-nurses were paid more to nurse male children than female, and that by the second decade of the eighteenth-century their cost had risen considerably.

Table 1.1: Dexter Family of Annfield, county Kildare, cost of wet-nurses, 1708-16				
Year	Child	Set fee	Annual fee	Nurse
1708	Nehemia	£2 17s.	£5	Nurse Reilly
1709/10	Martha	£2 10s.	£5	Anne Greer
1711	John	£2 8s. 6d.	Died 1711	Anne Greer
1712	James	£1 10s.	£8	
1716	Anne		£7	Nurse Daley

Source: Patrick Montague-Smith, ‘The Dexters of Dublin and Annfield, Co. Kildare’, *The Irish Ancestor*, 2 (1970), pp 39- 41.

Notwithstanding the high mortality among children set to wet-nurses from the Dublin Foundling Hospital,⁸² Mary Leadbeater remarked in 1784 that ‘the affection of the Irish to the children whom they nurse is one of the boasts of our nation’.⁸³ This is corroborated by the 1825 report into conditions in the Dublin Workhouse and Foundling Hospital, which indicates that though many nurses were negligent, some formed deep attachments to the children in their care, attachments that frequently were reciprocated. Yet there is little firm evidence of enduring affection between wet-nurses and their elite charges. This may be because the financial nature of the relationship involving wet-nursing and the short length of time infants stayed with their nurses before moving to ‘dry-nurses’ or weaning, did not allow for the development of an affectionate relationship, as Rousseau recognised.⁸⁴ Ultimately, wet-nursing was purely a function, a passage in time, a period that was subordinate to the perception of childhood as a whole.

⁸⁰ Heywood, *A history of childhood*, p. 67.

⁸¹ Lady Louisa Conolly to Duchess of Leinster, 7 Mar. [1773], Fitzgerald (ed.), *Leinster correspondence*, iii, 76.

⁸² When queried about the high mortality rate among infants, the registrar Mr Baillie replied that it was due to a lack of nurses for the children. *Commons Jn. (Irl.)*, 1797, vol. 17, appendix ccxl.

⁸³ Mary Shackleton Leadbeater, diary 9310 14/8/1784 cited in Riana McLoughlin, ‘The sober duties of life’: The domestic and religious lives of six Quaker women in Ireland and England 1780-1820’ (M.A. thesis, NUIG, 1993), p. xiii.

⁸⁴ Rousseau, *Émile*, p. 13.

Weaning

Jean Astruc recommended in 1746 that children should not be weaned until they were eighteen months or two years-old and argued that 'the longer they suck, the better' as good breast-milk was not only a preventative against illness but 'forwards dentition and prevents its fatal consequences.'⁸⁵ The importance and consequences of early nutrition were little understood in eighteenth-century Ireland. Nutrients containing proteins, fats, carbohydrates, minerals and vitamins are important and have vital functions in building and sustaining good health. For example, without sufficient calcium children are in danger of developing rickets, and an inadequate supply of iron, the requirement for which varies with age, sex and the type of iron being absorbed, leads to anaemia.⁸⁶ Malnutrition shortly after birth affects brain development, eighty per cent of which takes place by the age of three.⁸⁷ Furthermore, children who were undernourished before the age of three to five years (protein-energy malnutrition/PEM) were already underweight and undersized and, according to Clarkson and Crawford would 'in all probability remain small throughout the growing years', becoming small adults.⁸⁸ Thus, weaning was not only 'an important rite of passage'⁸⁹ but also laid the foundations of children's physical and mental development.

In 1651 Nicholas Culpeper (1616-54) suggested that if a child was strong and healthy 'a year is enough in all conscience for it to suck'.⁹⁰ The governors of the Dublin House of Industry concurred; they ordered that all infants be weaned by one year-old, 'except such as may be excepted by the attending physicians'.⁹¹ Despite this, the trend was downwards. Rousseau claimed that children were weaned too soon and identified 'teething' as an appropriate marker.⁹² Buchan suggested supplementing breast-feeding from three or four months,⁹³ while Nelson preferred a medium of nine months breast-feeding and, in keeping with prevailing attitudes, implied that weaning

⁸⁵ Astruc, *A general and compleat treatise*, pp 20-1.

⁸⁶ L. A. Clarkson and E. Margaret Crawford, *Feast and famine, a history of food and nutrition in Ireland 1500-1920* (Oxford, 2001), pp 178-9.

⁸⁷ The effects of intra-uterine malnutrition are not reversible: *ibid.*, p. 162.

⁸⁸ Clarkson and Crawford, *Feast and famine*, p. 162.

⁸⁹ Heywood, *A history of childhood*, p. 70.

⁹⁰ Kevill-Davies, *Yesterday's children*, p. 50 quoting Nicholas Culpeper, *A directory for midwives* (London, 1651).

⁹¹ Governor's Proceedings Book 1783-87, 27 Mar. 1786 (NAI, BR/2006/86 (House of Industry) Box 2).

⁹² Rousseau, *Émile*, p. 35.

⁹³ Buchan, *Domestic medicine*, p. 16.

was determined by the 'affairs of fashion' and not the child's best interests.⁹⁴ Practice varied; James Brownlow of Lurgan was weaned at eight months in 1772,⁹⁵ Thomas Kemmis (1774-1827) of Shaen Castle at eighteen months in 1775, his brother Harry (1776-1857) at a year-old in 1777⁹⁶ and John, Lord Carlow at ten months in 1781.⁹⁷ But Thomas Drennan (1801-12) was weaned at four months, 'his mother's milk having failed her'.⁹⁸ Whenever it happened, weaning was marked by the separation of mother or wet-nurse and child and it was a significant event in both lives. Mothers in the Dublin House of Industry were sent to 'work in some place apart from the nursery' while the infant was 'put into a separate apartment from the mothers'.⁹⁹ Evidentially, the moment of weaning was seen as a point that drew a clear line between infancy and childhood.

Weaning could be a perilous time for the child as they were then exposed to far more germs from fruit, vegetables, and unsterilized utensils such as bowls and 'pap spoons' than when breast-fed. Though Michael Underwood (1736-1820) cautioned that feeding utensils 'must be very carefully cleansed and scalded at least once every day',¹⁰⁰ there is little evidence that this was the practice, and many children failed to make the transition. For example, Mrs Ann Drennan of Belfast, who lost eight out of eleven children in infancy, was of the opinion that 'her little ones ... always dwined [declined] after weaning',¹⁰¹ and her son, William (1754-1820) was reluctant to wean his son Lennox (1806-86) though he was at an age, as they 'lost our last child [John (1804-5)] about this time'.¹⁰²

Panada or pap, a mixture of flour or bread cooked in water or milk, also associated with the sick-room, which was in use from the fifteenth to the nineteenth centuries,¹⁰³ was the food commonly given to small children during weaning. Samuel-Auguste David Tissot (1728-97) advised in 1772 that panada be made with

⁹⁴ Nelson, *An essay on the government of children*, p. 54.

⁹⁵ Diary of Mary Mathew 1772-75, 15 Nov. 1772 (NLI, Ms 5102).

⁹⁶ M. C. M. Davis, 'The upbringing of children in Ireland 1700-1831 from visual and historical sources' (M. Litt., 2 vols, TCD, 1991).

⁹⁷ Miss Herbert to Lady Louisa Stuart, c. 21 Mar. 1782, Clark (ed.), *Gleanings*, i, 187-8.

⁹⁸ William Drennan to Martha McTier, 16 Jul. 1801, Agnew (ed.), *Drennan-McTier letters*, ii, 715.

⁹⁹ Governor's Proceedings Book 1783-87, 18 Nov. 1784 (NAI, BR/2006/86 (House of Industry) Box 2).

¹⁰⁰ Michael Underwood, *A treatise on the diseases of children; with directions for the management of infants from their birth*, (London, 1789), pp 231-2.

¹⁰¹ Martha McTier to William Drennan, 18 Aug. [1801], Agnew (ed.), *Drennan-McTier letters*, ii, 720.

¹⁰² William Drennan to Martha McTier, 31 Dec. 180[6], *ibid.*, iii, 553.

¹⁰³ Kevill-Davies, *Yesterday's children*, p. 51.

hard baked bread.¹⁰⁴ Similarly George Armstrong promoted panada made with old bread, a 'roll' being preferable to loaf bread which was commonly baked with yeast only, whereas loaf bread was sometimes mixed with 'alum'.¹⁰⁵ Great attention was given to identifying foods suitable for children at weaning and after, but apart from the consistent promotion of pap or panada, there was a great diversity of opinion. Tissot suggested that as much attention should be paid to the quality as the 'quantity of aliments', and recommended 'cow's milk', grain, 'above all rice, wheat, maize fresh ground, pulse ... all tender and delicate roots', but frowned on the use of 'new laid eggs boiled soft' or chocolate mixed with milk until children were four or five years-old.¹⁰⁶ Medical authors such as Nelson (1756), Theophilus Lobb (1678-1763) (1764), Buchan (1769) and Tissot (1772) discouraged giving meat to young children, while John Arbuthnot (1731) argued that 'the solidity, quantity and strength of the aliment is to be proportion'd to the labour and quantity of muscular motion' and promoted an 'emollient and relaxing' diet.¹⁰⁷ Drinks were milk, water, barley-water, butter-milk or whey. Some authors suggested sweetening children's drinks with sugar and spices, but equally, others opposed the practice. Significantly, Arthur Young famously noted in 1780 that Irish peasant children were 'nourished with milk' which was 'far preferable to the beer or vile tea which is the beverage of the English infant'.¹⁰⁸ One year-old Thomas Drennan ate 'rice pudding, potato pudding, and sometimes ... the leg of a chicken' and, according to his father, was 'in fine health ... is grown as rosy in his complexion as if he fed on roses.'¹⁰⁹

Once weaned, Buchan recommended feeding a child four or five times a day, a little and often of plain simple food, but never in the night.¹¹⁰ At this point, children moved from infancy and entered fully into a period of childhood more closely defined by age. But if they were further from parental view, they became more entrenched in parental affections and this is clearly manifest in parental reactions to child death.

¹⁰⁴ S. A. D. Tissot, *Three essays: first, on the disorders of people of fashion. Second on diseases incidental to literary and sedentary persons, ... Third, on onanism: ...* Translated from the French, by Francis Bacon Lee, M. Danes, A. Hume, M.D. (Dublin 1772), pp 66-8.

¹⁰⁵ Armstrong, *An account of the diseases most incident to children*, p. 161. Alum in large quantities (an ounce or more) is toxic to humans.

¹⁰⁶ Tissot, *Three essays*, pp 66-8.

¹⁰⁷ Arbuthnot, *An essay concerning the nature of aliments*, p. 96.

¹⁰⁸ Arthur Young, *A tour in Ireland with general observations on the present state of that kingdom made in the years 1776, 1777 and 1778*, Constantia Maxwell (ed.) (Cambridge, 1925), p. 76.

¹⁰⁹ William Drennan to Martha McTier, 6 Jan. 1801, Agnew (ed.), *Drennan-McTier letters*, iii, 4.

¹¹⁰ Buchan, *Domestic medicine* (19th ed.), p. 17.

Death/loss

People were surrounded by constant reminders of the fragility of life and the closeness and inevitability of death in the eighteenth-century. Sermons, graveyards, dead sibling's clothes, even their names all served to reinforce the inevitability and ubiquity of mortality.¹¹¹ Children from all social classes were susceptible to death from a variety of causes – illness, accidents, infanticide, abandonment or even economic hardship. However, it is important to remember that more children lived than died, thus the death of a child was taken particular note of. Death could be sudden or lingering, and invariably brought anguish to parents and family, whose helplessness is noted with striking regularity in family correspondence.

The arguments advanced by Phillipe Ariès in *Centuries of childhood* (1960) that parents did not become attached to children they were likely to lose and that they accepted with inevitability children's deaths and mourned little is not sustained by the Irish experience in the eighteenth-century. It is clear that Irish parents felt a deep sense of loss when bereaved. For example, Constantia Grierson (1705-32) memorialised her first born child George (died 1727) accidentally smothered by his nurse, in poetry in 1727,¹¹² and, in 1760, when Mrs Delany dined with Mr and Mrs Robert Ward of Saul, county Down she noted that they still mourned the loss of their only son who had died three years previously.¹¹³ Nor was grieving confined to those who could afford to indulge it. When Peg Plunkett (Mrs Leeson) (1727-97), the famous courtesan, who had lost four children one after another, was informed of the impending death of her sole surviving child she:

ran like a distracted woman to take a last farewell of my only surviving yet dying darling; but on my entrance into the nurse's house, found he had just departed. I snatched up the infant's scarce cold body in my arms, and wrapping the tail of my gown around it, ran screaming through the street, to my own house, and presented the child to Mr Lawless. He was much shocked at the sight, and was greatly affected at seeing the last of our five children snatched from us.¹¹⁴

¹¹¹ Rousseau, *Émile*, p. 15; Roy Porter, *Disease, medicine and society in England, 1550-1860* (2nd ed., Cambridge, 1993), p. 17.

¹¹² Norma Clarke, *Queen of the wits: a life of Laetitia Pilkington* (London, 2008), p. 30.

¹¹³ Day (ed.), *Letters from Georgian Ireland*, p. 229.

¹¹⁴ Mary Lyons (ed.), *The memoirs of Mrs Leeson, madam 1727-1797* (Dublin, 1995), pp 49-50.

Similarly, the Limerick gentlewoman Elizabeth Bennis was torn between her religious beliefs and maternal instincts when her children were ill and in danger of dying. In April 1753 she wrote plaintively, 'I find nature shrinks at the thought of parting with my child',¹¹⁵ and in 1756 when another son died,

I found it indeed, a heavy trial, the most severe I ever felt – it was taking away the desire of my eyes at a stroke ... in my distress I cast myself before the Lord often, and at last received power to resign him up to the Lord, though my soul is clouded and grievously distressed, but it is my Father's will.¹¹⁶

The intense grief borne by women who lost children, so vividly described by Mrs Leeson and Elizabeth Bennis, is illustrative of the deep and affectionate bonds that existed between mother and child throughout the eighteenth-century, bonds that helped to sustain the emerging pattern of maternal behaviour discussed previously. This possibly led the childless Martha McTier of Belfast to aver in 1799, 'how happy was it for me I never was a mother'.¹¹⁷

Though all grieved and all mourned, the severity of grief and the length of mourning was determined by the parent's social ranking. The peasant or pauper's obligation to earn a living left little time to mourn or grieve for dead children (or indeed adults). Writing to his daughter Alicia (1733-1807) in 1752, Bishop Synge of Elphin observed that his county Roscommon tenants were not inclined to display emotions for too long remarking that:

on the death of child, husband, or wife, there's a great deal of clamorous grief, which is more outside, than from the heart. All is soon over, and they return to their usual employment.¹¹⁸

Although he remarked that the peasantry had 'less room' to display emotion, Synge's rationale that they are 'not agitated with so strong passions as we are', overlooked his earlier observation, that 'they have not leisure to grieve', because the necessity of earning a living allowed little room for grief.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁵ Raughter (ed.), *The journal of Elizabeth Bennis*, 20 Apr. 1753.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 6 Nov. 1756.

¹¹⁷ This remark was made in relation to Mrs James Trail Kennedy, a close friend whose seven year-old son Gilbert died on 8 Sep. 1799: Martha McTier to William Drennan, 6 Jun. [1799], Agnew (ed.), *Drennan-McTier letters*, ii, 509.

¹¹⁸ Edward to Alicia, 28 Jul. 1752, Legg (ed.), *The Synge letters*, p. 447.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

Though parents mourned the loss of all children, the older the child, the more keenly the loss was felt.¹²⁰ Rousseau maintained that 'a child's worth increases with his years', but Buchan warned that 'mankind are too apt to value things according to their present, not their future usefulness.'¹²¹ Accordingly, in 1755 the Countess of Kildare considered it 'much less a misfortune' to lose a new born baby,¹²² while her sister Lady Caroline Holland believed that at twelve years-old, the death of the 'delicate and thin' Lady Emily Fitzgerald 'would be a most irreparable loss'.¹²³ Similarly, the deaths of older children who were the 'fairest blossoms of talent', the 'most highly cultivated', and the 'most valuable fruits of education', were a sore loss to Richard Edgeworth.¹²⁴ The practice of recording the age and death of older children in newspapers, particularly from mid-century¹²⁵ is indicative of the fact that eighteenth-century parents regretted more the loss of older children because of the effort already expended on their up-bringing.

There is scant evidence with which to assess the impact children's deaths had on fathers of all social classes although Martha McTier recollected that her father was deeply affected by the loss of most of his children in infancy in the 1750s.¹²⁶ The Countess of Kildare's letter to her husband following the death of their new-born infant in 1755 contained no acknowledgement of grief on the Earl's part. What appears as indifference on the part of Bishop Synge was in fact his way of dealing with his own sense of helplessness and grief as he watched his son Robert (1725-46) succumb to a fatal illness in 1746. Even when his son was dying, he confessed to his daughter that 'I have resign'd my boy absolutely and quitted all thoughts of his recovery'.¹²⁷ Bishop Synge's rationale was based on his own fears that 'were I to be toss'd to and fro between hopes and fears as I was yesterday and the day before ... I might be destroy'd'.¹²⁸ Laying aside his hopes, embracing his grief was the 'most

¹²⁰ See Pollock, *Forgotten children*, p. 141.

¹²¹ Rousseau, *Émile*, p. 15; Buchan, *Domestic medicine* (19th ed.), p. 6.

¹²² Countess of Kildare to Earl of Kildare, 1 May [1755], Fitzgerald (ed.), *Leinster correspondence*, i, 5.

¹²³ Lady Caroline Holland to Marchioness of Kildare, 20 Dec. [1764], Fitzgerald (ed.), *Leinster correspondence*, i, 424.

¹²⁴ Edgeworth and Edgeworth, *Memoirs*, ii, 302.

¹²⁵ For example see the *Freeman's Journal*, 20 Sep. 1763, 18 Feb. and 7 Apr. 1764, 17 Oct. 1767; *Faulkner's Dublin Journal*, 19 Jan. 1765; *The Shamrock*, 29 Dec. 1810.

¹²⁶ Martha McTier to William Drennan, 16 Nov. 1793, Agnew (ed.), *Drennan-McTier letters*, i, 574.

¹²⁷ Edward to Alicia [Jul. 1746], Legg (ed.), *The Synge letters*, pp 5-6.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*

prudent way. ... thus only I can be prepar'd for it, if it comes,' and it did.¹²⁹ Bishop Syngé's experience demonstrates the desperate self-preservation of an emotional, affectionate and loving father. His vulnerability in the face of death may account in large measure for the pedantic way in which he directed his only surviving child's education, his daughter Alicia.¹³⁰

Clearly upset by children's bereavements, elite and gentry mothers turned to other women for comfort to assist them to come to terms with a child's death. Following the sudden death of her foster-daughter Mary-Anne FitzGerald in 1794,¹³¹ Lady Louisa Conolly sought reassurance from her sisters, noting that 'I had the consolation of thinking that she never missed me from her bedside, and that my voice was the last thing she heard'.¹³² The Lennox sisters wrote words of reassurance and consolation to each other, but particularly to Duchess Emily, at the loss of every child and clearly shared her suffering, though always in private. A distraught William Dickson (d. 1804), Bishop of Down, turned to his wife for support, after the death of another son in 1786, though as Lady Louisa Conolly observed, 'it is a great exertion for her to support him as well as herself'.¹³³ By contrast, though the Earl of Buckinghamshire (1723-93) bore the death of his third son George in 1778 'very tolerably', fears were expressed for his wife. Lady Louisa Conolly observed that 'she is so composed ... that I fear it will last the longer on her mind', and hastened to her assistance.¹³⁴ The fact that so much correspondence was exchanged between women upon children's deaths strongly indicates that there was a genuine recognition not only of the affectionate relationships women had with children of all ages who died, but also of the emotional dynamics of the grieving process when faced with the loss of their children.¹³⁵

¹²⁹ Edward to Alicia [Jul. 1746], Legg (ed.), *The Syngé letters*, pp 5-6.

¹³⁰ See in particular Bishop Syngé's heartfelt admission of the difficulties he faced in Edward to Alicia, 27 Aug. 1751, Legg (ed.), *The Syngé letters*, pp 355-8.

¹³¹ Refers to Mary Anne Fitzgerald, daughter of George Robert (Fighting) Fitzgerald of Turlough House Castlebar, county Mayo. She is buried at Celbridge, county Kildare.

¹³² Lady Louisa Conolly to Duchess of Leinster, 12 Apr. 1794, Fitzgerald (ed.), *Leinster correspondence*, iii, 422-424.

¹³³ Charles Dickson died aged seven years. Lady Louisa Conolly to Duchess of Leinster, 10 Dec. 1786, Fitzgerald (ed.) *Leinster correspondence*, iii, 390.

¹³⁴ John Hobart, second Earl of Buckingham and his wife Caroline Conolly (c. 1755-1817) lost all their male children. Lady Louisa Conolly to Duchess of Leinster, 9 Nov. 1778, Fitzgerald (ed.), *Leinster correspondence*, iii, 327.

¹³⁵ For example see letters of Lady Louisa Conolly to Duchess of Leinster, 8, 25 Jun. 1775, 8 Jul. 1783, 12 Apr., 30 Oct. 1794, Fitzgerald (ed.), *Leinster correspondence*, iii, letters nos 57, 59, 160, 182, 183, 184; Noel Ross (ed.), 'The diary of Marianne Fortescue, 1797-1800', *Journal of the County Louth Archaeological and Historical Society*, 24 (1999), pp 222-48, 24 (2000).

As Linda Pollock points out, many bereaved parents were consoled by their Christian faith and fully resigned to God's will.¹³⁶ Eighteenth-century parents believed that as children were a gift from God, it was his prerogative to take them away, and this conviction helped relieve their feelings of anguish. Her religious beliefs permitted Elizabeth Bennis to accept her child's death in 1752 with 'such a sense of ... love and ... resignation to His will' that she had 'power not to shed one tear.'¹³⁷ Similarly Lady Arbella Denny (1707-92) advised Lady Caldwell (1729-78) in 1756 to 'keep ... as free as you can from setting ... [her] heart' on her daughter (Mary Anne 1755-1841), cautioning her to 'look on her as God's property' and, 'as he gave her to you ... [he] has a right to demand when it's his good pleasure.'¹³⁸ There was, of course, a contrary side to this viewpoint. The courtesan Mrs Leeson viewed the death of her 'illegitimate' children solely as a punishment from God.¹³⁹

In line with Enlightenment ideas and the new vision of motherhood emerging during the eighteenth-century, bereaved parents increasingly sought explanations for infant deaths. In the early eighteenth-century mothers often sought for answers within their own bodies. The Countess of Kildare believed her dead infant's disorder stemmed from an 'inward heat' she suffered during the pregnancy.¹⁴⁰ By the 1780s more enlightened views prevailed; George Armstrong performed at least four post-mortems on children, and when Mrs Hincks's child 'was opened' in 1799 the underlying cause of death was identified as 'an inflamed and diseased liver.'¹⁴¹ Similarly, William Drennan, seeking more rational explanations and significantly reassurance that as parents he and his wife had 'omitted nothing' for a cure, permitted post-mortems on his daughter Marianne in 1803 and son John in 1805.¹⁴² Though post-mortems were a grave matter in their own right, carrying them out on children reflects a serious attempt to understand their physiology and their individuality. They also reflected the greater awareness of children's physical individuality.

Families mourned children in different ways and death practices and funeral costs reveal not only the degrees of respect accorded dead children but also the social

¹³⁶ Pollock, *A lasting relationship*, p. 95.

¹³⁷ Raughter (ed.), *The journal of Elizabeth Bennis*, 14 May 1752.

¹³⁸ Lady Arbella Denny to Lady Caldwell, 17 Jan. 1756, Rosemary Raughter (ed.), "My Dear Lady C": Letters of Lady Arbella Denny to Lady Caldwell, 1754-1777, *Anal. Hib.*, 41 (2009), p. 156.

¹³⁹ Lyons (ed.), *The memoirs of Mrs Leeson*, pp 49-50.

¹⁴⁰ Countess of Kildare to Earl of Kildare, 10 May [1755], Fitzgerald (ed.), *Leinster correspondence*, i, 10.

¹⁴¹ William Drennan to Martha McTier, 15 May [17]99, Agnew (ed.), *Drennan-McTier letters*, i, 502.

¹⁴² William Drennan to Martha McTier, 17 Sep. 1803, 27 Mar. 1805, *ibid.*, iii, 150, 337.

standing of the family. Emily, Duchess of Kildare required funds from her husband following the death of their infant daughter in May 1755 because the costs had ‘altogether ... run away with a great deal.’¹⁴³ The funeral of Molly Flower (c. 1719-31), twelve year-old daughter of William Flower (1685-1746), first Baron Castledurrow, county Laois, cost the not unsubstantial sum of £4 17s. 3d. in 1731 (table 1.2). That of Jane O’Hara (1740-43), three year-old daughter of Sir Charles (1705-76) and Lady Mary (d.1759), which occurred in London in 1743, came to £10 5s. 4d. in total (table 1.3). Both of these were considerably less than the funeral expenses of £22 15s. 8d. paid by the Dublin Huguenot Meliora Adlercron for her son Richard (1777-88) in November 1788,¹⁴⁴ which did not include the costs associated with mourning clothes for the wider family. Children and liveried servants also wore mourning as a mark of respect and as occasion dictated.¹⁴⁵ For instance, a ‘three piece silk suit’ was purchased for six year-old Jeffrey Flower (c. 1717-30) to attend the funeral of his brother Thomas in 1723,¹⁴⁶ while adult members of the Fitzgerald family wore mourning for a fortnight ‘for poor Sally Nicholson’ who died from burns in 1762.¹⁴⁷

Table 1.2: Miss [Molly] Flower’s (c. 1719-1731) funeral expenses, 1731

	£	s.	d.
To a sheet and pinking		15	0
To 19 payr of white lamb at one shilling and one penny [gloves]	1	1	7
For fifteen crayps at 2.2 per Craype comes to	1	12	6
For four white ribbons at 3 yards each at ten pence per yard comes to		10	0
To a deal coffin		2	2
To four yards of Sixpenny ribbon for ye Pall & sheet		2	0
To three yards & a half of Holand		14	0
[Grand total]	4	17	3

Source: M. C. M. Davis, ‘The upbringing of children in Ireland 1700-1831 from visual and historical sources’ (MPhil, 2 vols, TCD, 1992), p. 217.

¹⁴³ Countess of Kildare to Earl of Kildare, 27 May [1755], Fitzgerald (ed.), *Leinster correspondence*, i, 26-7.

¹⁴⁴ Adlercron diary 1782-94, 20 [Nov. 1788] (NLI, Ms 4481).

¹⁴⁵ Máiread Dunlevy, *Dress in Ireland, a history* (Cork, 1999), p. 115.

¹⁴⁶ Accounts of Col. William Flower 1723-31 (NLI, Ms 11450(6)). See also Davis, ‘The upbringing of children in Ireland 1700-1831’, pp 215-7.

¹⁴⁷ Marchioness of Kildare to Marquis of Kildare, 20 Nov. [1762], Fitzgerald (ed.), *Leinster correspondence*, i, 139.

Table 1.3: Miss [Jane] O'Hara's (1740-43) funeral expenses, London 29 September 1743 ¹⁴⁸			
	£	s.	d.
For an elm coffen, covered with fine cloath trimmed with brass nails silvered, 2 prs of handles and a plate of [mercrin?], the coffin hired and ruffled with fine crape, and fine shroud sheet, and ruffled pillow	1	0	0
For a man with the coffine screws and brand used		1	0
For the use of the child's velvet pall 2 days		5	0
For 2 prs of wemens white [skirt?] to ye mourners		4	0
For 2 new silk hoods to ditto		14	0
For 2 broad ribbon favours to ditto		3	0
For the use of 2 silk scarves		2	0
For 2 pr of mens white kidd to Menester & Clark		4	0
For a mourning coach to Adley Chappell		7	0
For a pr of gloves, hatt band, and ribbin favour to ditto		3	6
To the use of mourning cloake to ye coachman		1	0
For a carrier in mourning with a ribbin favour		2	0
Paid the dues of Adley Chappell Valt	3	7	8
For an affedavid and serchers		2	0
For a man and flam[e]boy of the valt		1	6
[Total]	6	17	8
Dec 15, 1743 Rec'd six pounds seventeen shillings 6d. in full of this bill and all demands John Marshall			
Burial fees of the parish of St George in Hanover Square in the valt under Grovener Chappill			
	£	s.	d.
To the ch[urch] warden	1	10	5
To the rector	1	0	0
To the clerk		8	0
To the sexton		6	3
To the grave maker		1	0
To the chappill keeper		2	0
[Total]	3	7	8
Oct 20, 1743 Rec'd the full contents of this bill Job Jeffries, Sexton			
[Grand total]	10	5	4

Source: O'Hara Family Papers (NLI, Ms 36491/7).

Both the Flower and O'Hara children's funerals involved supplying items to mourners in keeping with the privileged status of the families. Although it is clear that professional mourners were employed for the O'Hara funeral, the supply of nineteen pairs of 'white lamb' gloves suggests that these were purchased as 'keepsakes' or mementoes of the deceased Flower child. Poorer families made do as they could often relying on parish funds or the support of their employers; Meliora Adlercron paid 6s. 6d. towards the funeral expenses of her servant John Hatton's child in 1785 and the same amount in 1786. In 1787 she gave another servant, Betty Dawson, £1 2s. 9d. to bury her child, sums substantially less than those paid for the Flower and O'Hara funerals, but are all reflective of each family's social position.

¹⁴⁸ Baptism Register, vol. 2, Aug 1743, p. 155; Burial Register, vol. 90, Sep 1743, St Georges Church, Hanover Square, London.

These sums were however considerably in excess of those expended on Charter schoolchildren (table 1.4). The cost to the Incorporated Society for burying children at Ballycastle school between 1755 and 1757 was 2s. 9d. per child. By 1766 this had risen to 3s. 10d. per child, and it continued to rise thereafter,¹⁴⁹ but the amounts remained inconsistent.

Table 1.4: Ballycastle, Maynooth and Arklow Charter schools funeral costs, 1755-90						
School	Year		Total cost		Single cost	
			s.	d.	s.	d.
Ballycastle	1751	Sheet and coffin for W[illia]m Russell			8	0
Ballycastle	1755	Luke Smith aged 9; Catherine Conolly aged 4; Lucy Hogan aged 7; total	8	3	2	9
Ballycastle	1765	Charles Hall aged 10			6	9
Ballycastle	1766-7	David Hall aged 9; Christopher Tallant aged 7¾; One child unknown	11	6	3	10
Arklow	1767	Mary Whitson			5	5
Arklow	1769	Two children	10	10	5	5
Maynooth	1772	Three coffins @ 9s. each			3	0
Arklow	1786				3	9½
Arklow	1790				1	1

Source: Ballycastle school Roll Book 1752-91 (TCD, Ms 5609); Arklow school Roll and Account Book (TCD, Ms 5598); Committee Book 1771-74, 8 Jul. 1772 (TCD, Ms 5236).

Little respect was afforded the children of the Dublin Workhouse and Foundling Hospital, particularly in death, with perhaps six, eight or twelve children buried at one time.¹⁵⁰ By 1758 the burial place was so full that:

in digging a place, ... bodies are frequently thrown up. That the burying place is at times so overflown with water, as to prevent burying, and frequently the dead bodies are left bare on the ground on account of the water washing away the earth which covered them.¹⁵¹

But these were outside the norm. Significantly more respect was displayed towards burials in Dublin's Hibernian Marine school.¹⁵² Similarly the governors of St Mary's Charity school in Dublin respected children's deaths and paid the burial expenses of their pupils.¹⁵³ Others did likewise, even for victims of infanticide; in 1790 the 'porters on the quay' opposite Swift's Row in Dublin contributed to procure a coffin

¹⁴⁹ Ballycastle school Roll Book, 1752-91 (TCD, Ms 5609); Arklow school Roll and Account Book (TCD, Ms 5598); Committee Book 1771-74, 8 Jul. 1772 (TCD, Ms 5236).

¹⁵⁰ *Commons Jn. (Irl.)*, 1758, vol. 6, appendix xcvi.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵² The by-laws of 1775 stipulated that it was the chaplain's duty to have the children 'attend the corpse' of any child that died in the school precincts 'to the place of interment, singing a solemn psalm.' [Hibernian Marine Society] *By-laws agreed to and confirmed by the Hibernian Society, according to the rules prescribed by their charter* (Dublin 1775), p. 7.

¹⁵³ For example, the governors paid 12s. 7d. for 'an oak coffin and black cloath' in 1797 and 4 ½d. towards the funeral expenses for Oliver Bomford in 1799. St Mary's Charity school minutes, 24 Jun. 1797, 30 Mar. 1799 (NLI, Ms 2664).

for an infant ‘about a month old’ who was taken out of the Liffey with the head nearly severed from the body.¹⁵⁴

Outside urban areas, ‘cilíní’, ‘caldraghs’, ‘ceallúncaha’ or ‘calluraghs’ were used by the peasantry primarily for children’s burials. Patricia O’Hare has identified examples in east Kerry that remained in use until at least the 1890s.¹⁵⁵ It was also recorded that un-baptised children were buried in boundary fences, at crossroads, on the seashore, or under a solitary bush, a practice also noted by Richard Pococke (1704-65) at Enniskeah, county Mayo in 1752.¹⁵⁶ In county Kildare, the funeral of ‘Toole’s child’ in 1794 was attended by ‘boys carrying garlands, flowers and white rods’.¹⁵⁷ Barring the burial practices pertaining to the Dublin Foundling Hospital, the mourning practices and costs involved in children’s burials throughout the eighteenth-century reflect the genuine concern among adults to recognise the life of the child and to treat dead children with the respect their social station allowed them.

Accidents

If they survived birth and infancy, growing up was still an extremely hazardous business for children and parents.¹⁵⁸ The number of receipts for the treatment of burns, scalds, insect bites, and a plethora for the bite of a mad dog contained in family papers, indicate that much of eighteenth-century life – open fires, pots on the stove, pins, guns, rivers and animals – was potentially dangerous to children regardless of social class. Moreover, accidents were newsworthy; newspapers consistently reported accidents that occurred to adults and children. Lady Caroline Fox eagerly anticipated receiving from her sister the ‘account of poor Miss Knox’ whose murder the previous month ‘seems the most shocking story I ever heard’¹⁵⁹ and the two volume scrap-books compiled by Mary Price dated between 1798-99, contain among news of society gatherings, poems and songs, newspaper cuttings of sensational reports of gruesome and chilling crimes, and horrific and ghastly accidents.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁴ *The Dublin Weekly Journal*, 10 Apr. 1790.

¹⁵⁵ Patricia O’Hare, ‘A brief note on a number of children’s burial grounds in east Kerry’, *The Kerry Magazine*, 8 (1997), pp 11-17.

¹⁵⁶ John McVeagh (ed.), *Richard Pococke’s Irish tours* (Dublin, 1995), pp 84-5; O’Hare, ‘A brief note on a number of children’s burial grounds in east Kerry’, p. 11.

¹⁵⁷ Leadbeater: ‘[Diary of] Mary Leadbeater’, Lenox-Conyngham (ed.), *Diaries of Ireland*, p. 96.

¹⁵⁸ Pollock, *A lasting relationship*, p. 94.

¹⁵⁹ Lady Caroline Fox to Marchioness of Kildare, 18 Dec. 1761, Fitzgerald (ed.), *Leinster correspondence*, i, 308.

¹⁶⁰ Mary Price Scrapbooks, 1798 and 1799 (NLI, Ms 35679(2)).

Of the many dangers children were routinely exposed to, fire was a particular hazard and children were especially vulnerable.¹⁶¹ As a baby, James Trail fell into the household fire and was rescued in time by his mother sometime in the early 1690s, but the three daughters of Arthur Chichester, third Earl of Donegall (1666-1706), Jane, Frances and Henrietta, perished when their Belfast house caught fire in April 1707 due to the carelessness of a servant.¹⁶² This event was sensational enough to be recounted in 1718 by James Trail¹⁶³ and by Richard Pococke during his Irish tour in 1752.¹⁶⁴ The four year-old daughter, 'dear little Jane', of Mary Leadbeater died from burns received when her clothes caught fire in 1798.

Dangers lay all around; babies were a particular target of scavenging animals;¹⁶⁵ children were frequently run over by horses and carts in busy streets¹⁶⁶ or crushed under their heavy loads.¹⁶⁷ Their natural inquisitiveness could also be fatal. There are numerous reports of children killed or injured by guns or gunpowder,¹⁶⁸ and three children of Abraham Steers of Mallow-Lane, Cork were playing 'in a large pair of scales' in 1772 when the beam fell on them, killing one and severely injuring the other two.¹⁶⁹ Water was another hazard. A boat ferrying passengers from Dublin to Ringsend in 1726 overturned and many of the passengers, including children were lost. Though some were rescued, the child of Mr Sands of Christ Church-yard, Dublin was lost, 'for he [Mr Sands] in striving to throw it on shore unhappily drop'd it in.'¹⁷⁰ Though in reach of the quay, a young boy drowned when his small boat overturned on the River Shannon in Limerick city in 1772.¹⁷¹

Given the physical labour they engaged in it is unsurprising that there are many reports of accidents occurring to children in the Charter schools. For instance,

¹⁶¹ Lady Keightley to Catherine O'Brien, 3 Oct. 1721 (NLI, Ms 45348/5); *The Munster Journal*, 1 Jan. 1749-50; for an account of the death of Sally Nicholson from burns she received see Marchioness of Kildare to Marquis of Kildare, 15 Nov. 1762, Fitzgerald (ed.) *Leinster correspondence*, i, 136-9; *Finn's Leinster Journal*, 21 Mar. 1772; for a particularly sad account of the death of a child from fire see 'Mary Leadbeater, The account [of 1798]', John D. Beatty (ed.), *Protestant women's narratives of the Irish rebellion of 1798* (Dublin, 2001), pp 227-8.

¹⁶² James Trail diary (PRONI, D1460/1).

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁴ McVeagh (ed.), *Pococke's Irish tours*, p. 38.

¹⁶⁵ In 1771 a sow tore off one arm and part of the belly of a child left in a cradle in a Dublin cabin: *The Hibernian Journal*, 9-12 Aug. 1771.

¹⁶⁶ *Freeman's Journal*, 20 Jul. 1765; *The Hibernian Journal*, 22 Aug. 1792.

¹⁶⁷ *Freeman's Journal*, 6 Dec. 1763.

¹⁶⁸ *The Munster Journal*, 1 Jan. 1749-50; *Freeman's Journal*, 14 Jan. 1764; *The Hibernian Journal*, 18 Jun. 1794.

¹⁶⁹ *Finn's Leinster Journal* 12 Sep. 1772. See also *The Hibernian Journal*, 5-8 Jul. 1771.

¹⁷⁰ *The Dublin Intelligence*, 17 Aug. 1726.

¹⁷¹ *Finn's Leinster Journal* 12 Sep. 1772. See also the *Freeman's Journal*, 11 Oct. 1770.

Edward McGrath fractured his leg in Primrose Grange Charter school in Sligo in 1765, James McDonough his arm at Athlone Charter school in 1773, and in August 1798 the local committee reported the recovery of a boy 'who received a very dangerous wound in the belly by falling on a pitchfork'.¹⁷²

The crudeness of eighteenth-century medical practices meant treating an accident, even a minor one was a dangerous and painful operation, and parents regarded even minor mishaps with great trepidation. The Countess of Kildare was concerned that her son George would not get a cold following a tumble into the horse pond in 1757, and Anne Cooke (1726-1809) spent a weekend in May 1771 anxiously watching her daughter Mary who had 'got a hurt over her eye'.¹⁷³ Lord Portarlington was at pains to reassure his wife that their eight year-old son John would recover from the 'scratch on his knee' which he got by 'falling over a boy's top' in June 1789,¹⁷⁴ while the voluminous correspondence between members of the Fitzgerald family following Charlotte Fitzgerald's (1758-1836) headlong fall from a horse in October 1778 testifies to the warranted fear and widespread concern experienced by families when children were injured.¹⁷⁵

The remedial measures adopted by parents and the authorities throughout the century indicate that there was widespread recognition of adult responsibility for the safety of children in their care, the Foundling Hospital excepted. The practice of swaddling and hanging a child from a peg in the wall, seen by Ariès as a manifestation of cruelty and abandonment, kept children safe from fire and predatory animals. The master of Primrose Grange Charter school was ordered in 1757 to 'imeaditly [sic] get the well cover'd ... for fear of having the children lost' and, to prevent any of the children falling into the fire, 'an iron fender, such as is usual in Nurseries' was ordered placed in the school room in 1789.¹⁷⁶ Similarly, Martha McTier advised her brother in 1805 to purchase 'an iron hoop' for his nursery fireside,

¹⁷² Primrose Grange school, Orders 1757-96, 25 Oct. 1765, 9 Jun. 1779 (TCD, Ms 5646); Committee Book 1771-74, 17 Nov. 1773, 23 Feb. 1774 (TCD, Ms 5236); Athlone Charter school, Orders, Inventories etc., 1795-1807, 31 Aug. 1798 (TCD, Ms 5599).

¹⁷³ Countess of Kildare to Earl of Kildare, 28 Jun. [1757], Fitzgerald (ed.), *Leinster correspondence*, i, 55; T.V. Sadlier (ed.), 'Diary of Anne Cooke 1761-76', *Journal of the Kildare Archaeological Society*, 8 (1915-17), pp 104-32, 205-19, 447-63.

¹⁷⁴ Lord Portarlington to Lady Portarlington, [Jun.] 1789, Clark (ed.), *Gleanings*, ii, 142.

¹⁷⁵ Lady Louisa Conolly to Duchess of Kildare, 30 Oct. [1778], 2 Nov. [1778], 9 Nov. 1778, 13 Nov. 1778, 16 Nov. 1778, Fitzgerald (ed.), *Leinster correspondence*, iii, letters nos 141-5.

¹⁷⁶ Primrose Grange school, Orders 1757-96, 16 Nov. 1757, 21 Apr. 1789 (TCD, Ms 5646).

cautioning that ‘cotton frocks, and servants, are not to be trusted.’¹⁷⁷ Following two near accidents in one day, Mary Leadbeater determined to keep her daughter Elizabeth within sight at all times¹⁷⁸ while Elizabeth Bennis’s reactions alternated wildly between thankfulness and divine retribution.¹⁷⁹ Nevertheless, the increasing eagerness of parents to protect their children from harm is consistent with an increasingly child oriented society.

SECTION II: PARENTAL ATTITUDES TO OLDER CHILDREN AND CHILD REARING

*‘The government of a family must be absolute: mild,
not tyrannical ... The weakness of youth
must be controlled by the hand
of age and experience.’
Walker’s Hibernian Magazine, 1798.¹⁸⁰*

The parental role

After weaning children moved into the second phase of childhood and, though still overwhelmingly cared for by women, both parents took a more active role in their upbringing during this period. Throughout the eighteenth-century parents strove to understand their children, to protect them from the outside world, and to bring them up to the best of their ability.¹⁸¹ Given the increase and availability of prescriptive literature on childrearing that emerged during the eighteenth-century, did parents adopt a uniform approach to raising children or was it haphazard and individually adapted? What was the parental role in eighteenth-century Ireland, and what was their aim, their goal?

Once more it is difficult to locate evidence for the parental role outside the elite and gentry classes. Although advice literature sometimes addressed the parental role expected of ‘poor’ families, they consistently failed to address the underlying

¹⁷⁷ Martha McTier to William Drennan [Jan. 1805], Agnew (ed.), *Drennan-McTier letters*, iii, 310.

¹⁷⁸ Leadbeater, ‘[Diary of] Mary Leadbeater’, Lenox-Conyngham (ed.) *Diaries of Ireland*, p. 95.

¹⁷⁹ See Raughter (ed.), *The journal of Elizabeth Bennis* entries dated 12 Mar. 1755; 27 Jan. 1768; 22 Aug. 1774; 18 Feb. 1777.

¹⁸⁰ *Walker’s Hibernian Magazine*, Jan. 1798.

¹⁸¹ Pollock, *A lasting relationship*, p. 165.

difficulties faced by these families raising children.¹⁸² Institutional children more often than not were without parents and though these children lived within what was termed ‘the family’, crucially the mediating influence of parents and the domestic environment was missing. That is not to state that all institutional children were abandoned to their fate. Parental concern prompted some parents to ‘steal’ children from Charter schools;¹⁸³ concerned citizens such as Lady Arbella Denny attempted to improve the lot of institutional children, and country nurses frequently tried to keep the children they wet-nursed or visit them when they returned to institutions such as the Dublin Workhouse and Foundling Hospital. Peasant parental concern may be seen in their determination to access education for their children and the enthusiasm with which they embraced inoculation when available. Even so, the daily concerns of eighteenth-century parents in Ireland outside those of the elite and gentry classes remain for the most part hidden.

The importance of the parent in shaping children’s affections, manners and beliefs was highlighted by John Locke in 1693. His advice to parents in *Some thoughts concerning education*¹⁸⁴ diverged from earlier religious and scriptural advice literature and clearly demonstrates the expectations of childhood based on nature and nurture, different from that employed by Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s later *Émile* (1762).¹⁸⁵ As Linda Pollock affirms, childhood was a ‘period of profound importance for the formation of a sound character, the development of intellectual skills, and the acquisition of a staunch religious faith’.¹⁸⁶ Thus a significant feature of eighteenth-century advice literature was the continuation of childrearing advice based on scriptural interpretation,¹⁸⁷ though increasingly, and particularly from mid-century,

¹⁸² For example, see William Fleetwood, *The relative duties of parents and children, husbands and wives, masters and servant’s considered in sixteen practical discourses: with three sermons upon the case of self-murder* (1st ed., London, 1705) (3rd ed., Dublin, 1726); Nelson, *An essay on the government of children* (2nd ed.); Buchan, *Domestic medicine* (London, 1769).

¹⁸³ In August 1772 the Committee of Fifteen became so concerned at the numbers requesting the return of children from their schools and nurseries that they brought in specific guidelines to prevent this: see Board Book, 1761-75, 19 Aug. 1772 (TCD, Ms 5225), pp 280-1.

¹⁸⁴ Locke, *Some thoughts concerning education*.

¹⁸⁵ Gianoutsos, ‘Locke and Rousseau: early childhood education’, p. 16.

¹⁸⁶ Pollock, *A lasting relationship*, p. 204.

¹⁸⁷ For example see Nelson, *An essay on the government of children* (2nd ed.); James Mackenzie, *The history of health and the art of preserving it: or, an account of all that has been recommended by physicians and philosophers* (Dublin, 1759); William Giles, *A treatise on marriage, being serious thoughts on the original design of that sacred institution ... to which are added scriptures on the education of children* (London, 1771); Mrs Gother, *A practical catechism or lessons for Sundays* (Dublin, 1786) whose advice differed considerably from that of John Locke.

writers engaged more actively with practical issues such as children's health, wet-nursing and so forth.

Recognising the ultimate authority of the parent over the child, William Fleetwood (1656-1723) in *The relative duties of parents and children, husbands and wives, masters and servants* manifest a definite understanding of children's psychology, the dynamics of the parent/child relationship and, the expectations of childhood.¹⁸⁸ Built on a religious foundation, Fleetwood viewed the parental role as encompassing two particular actions, viz.: that parents 'not provoke their children to wrath' and that they 'bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord'.¹⁸⁹ That is, they were required to encourage children with justness and firmness but not severity, and to bring their children up 'in the Christian religion' that they may know and believe in God.¹⁹⁰

William Blackstone (1723-80), whose *Commentaries on the laws of England* (1765) were designed with general appeal, echoed Fleetwood's interpretation of the role and duties of parents though his views were legally based. Blackstone identified the purpose of marriage as the protection, maintenance and education of children born of that marriage.¹⁹¹ But while Fleetwood in 1705 saw parenting as a reciprocal arrangement between parents and children,¹⁹² Blackstone in 1765, though adopting a similar interpretation, applied it differently to legitimate and illegitimate children.¹⁹³ Three core issues formed the basis of the legitimate parent/child relationship identified by Blackstone, namely:

1. The legal duties of parents to their children.
2. The power of parents over their children.
3. The duties of such children to their parents.¹⁹⁴

¹⁸⁸ Fleetwood, *The relative duties* (1st ed., London).

¹⁸⁹ Ibid, (3rd ed., Dublin), p. 56. A similar upbringing based on scriptural principles was outlined in [Anonymous], *The school of piety, or, the devout Christian's duty. Containing man's duty towards god, and what is required of parents in bringing up their children in the fear of the Lord, together with the duty of children to their parents: also one hundred Divine questions and answers, very fit for all children and servants, for their instruction in the Holy Scripture, with graces before and after meat* (Dublin, 1720), p. 3.

¹⁹⁰ Fleetwood, *The relative duties* (3rd ed., Dublin), p. 65.

¹⁹¹ The exact legal position of children in Ireland as opposed to England is worthy of a fuller investigation than this thesis provides. Sir William Blackstone, *Commentaries on the laws of England* (2 vols, Oxford, 1765), i, p. 443. See also Anna-Christina Giovanopoulos, 'The legal status of children in eighteenth-century England', Anja Müller (ed.), *Fashioning childhood in the eighteenth century, age and identity* (Hants., 2006), pp 43-52.

¹⁹² Fleetwood, *The relative duties* (3rd ed., Dublin), pp 6-8.

¹⁹³ See page 41, part one.

¹⁹⁴ Blackstone, *Commentaries*, i, p. 434.

The legal duties of parents to their children principally consisted of their maintenance, protection and education. As maintenance was a principle of natural law and an obligation brought on parents through the marriage act, a legitimate child had the 'perfect right' to receive maintenance from his/her parents,¹⁹⁵ whereas protection was a natural duty 'permitted' rather than 'enjoined by any municipal laws'.¹⁹⁶ If a mother or grandmother maintained a child and then remarried, the charge of maintaining the child (what is classed as her debt) passed to her new husband. However his obligation to maintain and protect that particular child ceased at her demise. Thus a legitimate child's right to adult protection was in some cases limited by law.¹⁹⁷

The last duty of parents was to provide an education 'suitable to their station in life' – a key consideration in childrearing in eighteenth-century Ireland.¹⁹⁸ Blackstone promoted the apprenticeship system for the 'poor and laborious part of the community' as important, not only in facilitating the development of children's abilities but also as being of 'great advantage to the commonwealth'.¹⁹⁹ However, elite and gentry families operated outside this system and it is interesting to note that Blackstone viewed their education as purely for the family's benefit, not for the common good. With more options open to them, it was the parent's choice whether to 'breed up their children to be ornaments or disgraces' to their respective families.²⁰⁰

But characteristic of the gendered approach to eighteenth-century life, whereas a father's legal power remained intact until a child reached twenty-one, in most instances a mother possessed no legal power and was entitled to no more than reverence and respect,²⁰¹ this despite being the primary care giver through most of childhood. Fleetwood ascribed honour, obedience and respect equally to the mother and father, but crucially, the father held the ultimate authority according to 'both the laws of God and man'.²⁰²

The power of parents over their children derived from their natural duty to maintain them effectively, while the duties of children to their parents, particularly in their old age, were 'a recompence' for that maintenance,²⁰³ a fact Lady Caroline

¹⁹⁵ Blackstone, *Commentaries*, i, p. 435.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, i, p. 438.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, i, pp 436-7.

¹⁹⁸ See part four, the education of children.

¹⁹⁹ Blackstone, *Commentaries*, i, pp 438-9.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, i, p. 439.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, i, p. 441.

²⁰² Fleetwood, *The relative duties* (3rd ed., Dublin), pp 37-8.

²⁰³ Blackstone, *Commentaries*, i, pp 440-1.

Holland recognised in 1764.²⁰⁴ This was a matter of very real concern; the death of his son George at Guadeloupe²⁰⁵ in 1796 left the gentry farmer Massy Stacpoole 'in [his] old days to droop for ever more.'²⁰⁶ Recognising the importance of childhood years in forming the adult character, all advice literature cautioned that parental behaviour set the example for children and that nothing in adult behaviour should undermine the respect due from children to parents.

While Locke saw childhood as a time of 'natural faults'²⁰⁷ and was keen to 'establish parental authority early' though without severity,²⁰⁸ the sterner Christian upbringing exemplified by William Giles in 1771 promoted the 'necessity of conquering the wills of children', and advised parents to give them:

no liberties in their youth, and wink not at their follies; bow down their necks while they are young, lest they wax stubborn, and be disobedient unto thee and so bring sorrow to thy heart.²⁰⁹

Consequently, subordination in childhood permitted greater degrees of control in adulthood by those in authority, either parents or government.

There is ample evidence to show that children were acutely aware of their duty to parents and were reluctant to incur parental disapproval. Henry Tichbourne Blount, President of the English College (1770-81) at Douay defended his pupil Henry Bellew of county Galway from his father's charge of 'idleness and inattention to the instructions of his masters' in 1774 by claiming that:

as it must affect a youth who has any sentiments, to be complained of and severely reproached by a parent for faults which he is not guilty of, I hope your paternal affection will move you soon to send him the agreeable tidings of your being satisfied with him.²¹⁰

Allowances were made according to children's ages. Though Elizabeth Bennis considered her six year-old daughter 'guilty of many childish errors' which 'in the strictest sense might be called a breach of that duty due from a child to a parent',

²⁰⁴ Lady [Caroline] Holland to Marchioness of Kildare, 10 Sep. [1764], Fitzgerald (ed.), *Leinster correspondence*, i, 411.

²⁰⁵ *Guadeloupe* is an archipelago located in the Leeward Islands in the Lesser Antilles and frequently changed hands between Britain and France.

²⁰⁶ Leo McNamara (ed.), 'The diary of an eighteenth-century Clare gentleman', *North Munster Antiquarian Journal*, 23 (1981), p. 62.

²⁰⁷ Locke, *Some thoughts concerning education*, p. 126.

²⁰⁸ Roger Cox, *Shaping childhood: themes of uncertainty in the history of adult-child relationships* (London, 1996), p. 54. Similarly James Mackenzie (1680?-1761) promoted instilling discipline early in children's lives: Mackenzie, *The history of health and the art of preserving it*, p. 255.

²⁰⁹ Giles, *A treatise on marriage*, pp 73, 87-8.

²¹⁰ H. T. Blount to Mr Bellew, 24 Nov. 1774 (NLI, Mount Bellew Papers, Ms 27110(1)).

her mother preferred to view them as 'a natural consequence of her childhood'.²¹¹ Even so, in order to produce orderly, self-controlled adults, it was essential that the parent and not the child should command its upbringing. Accordingly, all advice literature recommended that children should 'see and feel their [parents] affection for them and their power over them, and then regulate their actions, as they find necessary'.²¹² Lady Frances Keightley, who was intimately involved in her daughter's and grandson's upbringing, counselled in 1721 that a 'wise and steady hand is absolutely necessary, ... as in young trees, the more thriving and prosperous they are, the more care must a good gardiner take to keep them in the just and right order.'²¹³

Given the preoccupation with social order, and indicative of the aims of parenthood, the degree to which parents indulged their children during childhood and their subsequent behaviour was a matter of debate throughout the eighteenth-century. In 1802 Martha McTier perkily advised her brother in Dublin to 'pet your wife rather than Thomas' their son.²¹⁴ Lady Frances Keightly warned her daughter in 1721 that 'indulgence seldome answers the end designed',²¹⁵ while Mary Delany had '20 frights for my china, shells and books' when the 'most unreasonably indulged' six year-old Sir John Meade visited her in 1750.²¹⁶ Comparing with pleasure young Meade's behaviour (who she noted was 'under no sort of command')²¹⁷ with that of her own nephews, she indulged the tendency to self-congratulation that is an observable feature of childrearing and maternalism in eighteenth-century Ireland. Her comment that 'had I been his mama I should have been most heartily ashamed of him' reinforces the point.²¹⁸

Thus when John Locke identified 'inner discipline' as an essential component in the development of a rational being, the pressure to instil this meant parenting became 'a desperately serious business'²¹⁹ among elite and gentry families, and it remained so throughout the century. Bishop Synge observed to his daughter Alicia in 1752 that 'it is true the attention of the world is more turn'd to you, because you are my daughter', and confided that 'the child of a more obscure person would not have

²¹¹ Raughter (ed.), *The journal of Elizabeth Bennis*, p. 326.

²¹² Nelson, *An essay on the government of children* (2nd ed.), p. 146.

²¹³ Catherine O'Brien from Lady Frances Keightley, 28 Mar. 1721 (NLI, Ms 45348/5).

²¹⁴ Martha McTier to William Drennan, 3 Jun. 1802, Agnew (ed.), *Drennan-McTier letters*, iii, 49.

²¹⁵ Catherine O'Brien from Lady Frances Keightley, 28 Mar. 1721 (NLI, Ms 45348/5).

²¹⁶ Day (ed.), *Letters from Georgian Ireland*, p. 45.

²¹⁷ Ibid.

²¹⁸ Ibid.

²¹⁹ Cox, *Shaping childhood*, p. 25.

been so much in the way of notice'.²²⁰ As the child was increasingly identified as an individual with their own abilities and capacities, so their upbringing required parental 'skill and subtlety' to address their different temperaments.²²¹ James Nelson (1710-94) advised that a child 'used to get the better of all about it, and convinced it can conquer its parents, is seldom disposed to conquer itself', with the result that 'where self-will is very strong, reason will doubtless be weak'.²²² In 1775, the 'naughtiness' of twelve year-old Lord Edward Fitzgerald (1763-98) was deemed unacceptable and in order to give him 'a habit of governing himself a little', essential to the formation of rational creatures, his 'little ways' were quietly but firmly 'discouraged'.²²³ Though immensely proud of her children and deeply involved in their upbringing, Lady Portarlington accepted full responsibility for their unruly behaviour as she 'went upon the principle of indulging them in everything that would not do them harm'.²²⁴ Still she was aware of the need to exercise parental control and regretted that she 'often let them twist me into things that I find I ought to have been steady in refusing'.²²⁵ Children's inappropriate behaviour, especially in public, was a matter of great concern and a 1764 handbill printed by the governors of Dublin's Lying-in Hospital compelled parents bringing children to the 'Pleasure Gardens' to keep them under control and prevent them committing:

many mischiefs by running up and down the slopes and defacing them, climbing and leaping over the rails, breaking the globes and chairs, running through the flower beds, tearing the flowering shrubs and destroying every appearance of flowers.²²⁶

But there appears to have been little improvement, as later in the century parents were requested not to bring children at all.²²⁷

Indicative of a more controlled though affectionate attitude towards children's behaviour and childrearing that emerged among elite and gentry parents by the close of the century, Lady Portarlington admired her friend Lady Ely's management of her children claiming it was 'exactly the right method', that if she 'has once told them

²²⁰ Edward to Alicia, 12 Jun. 1752, Legg (ed.), *The Synge letters*, pp 410-13.

²²¹ Anthony Fletcher, *Growing up in England. The experience of childhood 1600-1914* (New Haven, 2008), p. 7.

²²² Nelson, *An essay on the government of children* (2nd ed.), p. 149.

²²³ Lady Louisa Conolly to Duchess of Leinster, 9 Oct. 1775, Fitzgerald (ed.), *Leinster correspondence*, iii, 154.

²²⁴ Lady Portarlington to Lady Louisa Stuart, 7 Sep. 1786, Clark (ed.), *Gleanings*, ii, 60-1.

²²⁵ *Ibid.*

²²⁶ Gary A. Boyd, *Dublin 1745-1922. Hospitals, spectacle & vice* (Dublin, 2006), p. 123.

²²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 123.

they should not do a thing, she never yields the point.'²²⁸ So if allowances were made for 'childish' behaviour, there were limits. Even so, many parents clearly enjoyed their children's company; though the higher their social standing the easier it was to do so.

By the close of the century Irish parents had adopted a system of parenting that diverged from that operating in England. The 'ease and confidence' with which many elite and gentry Irish families mingled inter-generationally and their displays of family intimacy and affection noted in correspondences were in marked contrast to family life in England.²²⁹ Illustrative of this, Lady Portarlington remarked in 1791 that though Arthur Brownlow 'looks stiff and old, his daughters run up and put their arms round his neck to bid him good-night, and he looks at them with a satisfaction which is quite enviable.'²³⁰ Similarly, at the more stately duke of Leinster's, the 'great grown-up girls' stole 'an opportunity when they thought the company did not mind them to hug their father and mother with an appearance of affection that did one good.'²³¹

Lady Portarlington's comments support Anthony Fletcher's contention that there was more informality in father/child relations from 1750.²³² Indicative of this new informality, when faced with his own difficulties in 1778, the Belfast doctor William Drennan recalled his father's 'gracious figure smiling at the foolish irresolution of his son, and gently saying ... why should my boy be so fearful? 'Tis but a little matter.'²³³ However, old habits also died hard, and Arthur Young records the continuation of a seventeenth-century custom by Myles MacDermot (1758-1792), popularly styled the Prince of Coolavin, county Sligo, who would not 'admit his children to sit down in his presence' though he had 'not above £100 a year'.²³⁴

Although remaining acutely conscious of societal needs, throughout the century elite and gentry Irish parents negotiated their role according to their particular circumstances until their children reached the age of twenty-one when, as Blackstone

²²⁸ Lady Portarlington to Lady Louisa Stuart, 7 Sep. 1786, Clark (ed.), *Gleanings*, ii, 60-1.

²²⁹ Lady Portarlington to Lady Louisa Stuart, 10 Jan. 179, *ibid.*, ii, pp 167-8.

²³⁰ *Ibid.*

²³¹ *Ibid.*

²³² Fletcher, *Growing up in England*, pp 40-1, 132.

²³³ William Drennan to Martha McTier, 5 Aug. [17]78, Agnew (ed.), *Drennan-McTier letters*, i, 49.

²³⁴ Young, *A tour in Ireland*, p. 70.

and Nelson note, parental obligations were at an end and children were set 'loose on the great stage of the world, everyone to act their part just as we have taught them.'²³⁵

Views on and of children

Comparable to the situation developing in eighteenth-century America and Europe, an Irish child's social class was a key factor in determining the attitude adopted towards its maintenance and protection, its well-being and its survival to adulthood.²³⁶ As orphans, children relied on adults for their physical and financial protection and the appointment of a legal guardian figures consistently in elite and gentry family correspondence. Although the 'power and reciprocal duty of a guardian and ward were the same *pro tempore* as that of father and child', there were four different categories of guardianship; viz: of 'nurture', of 'nature', in 'socage' and 'by statute'.²³⁷ Significantly all were based on age and sex.

Table: 1.5: Definition of legal guardians, 1765

<i>Guardian by:</i>	<i>Person:</i>	<i>Until age of:</i>	
		<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>
Nurture	Father/mother	14	14
Nature	Father	21	16
Socage	Appointed	14	14
Statute	Appointed	21	21

Source: Sir William Blackstone, *Commentaries on the laws of England* (2 vols, Oxford, 1765), i, 449-50.

Where property was concerned, the child's interests required protection until they were twenty-one and it is interesting to note that guardians were legally accountable at the highest level for children's finances. Thus significantly more legal protection was afforded children's property than the child itself. Sir Thomas Southwell's guardians in 1684 directed his education but furnished him with 'a small allowance' only, a matter of some dispute between them considering he was 'in so short a time to handle the whole fortune'.²³⁸ Following the death of James (1722-73)

²³⁵ Nelson, *An essay on the government of children* (2nd ed.), pp 34-5.

²³⁶ See Mintz, *Huck's Raft*; Dennis Denisoff, 'Small change: the consumerist designs of the nineteenth-century child', Dennis Denisoff (ed.), *The nineteenth-century child and consumer culture* (Hampshire, 2008), p. 9.

²³⁷ Blackstone, *Commentaries*, i, pp 449-50. For a discussion of the legal duties of guardians see particularly pp 160-205 in Charles Viner, *A general abridgement of law and equity alphabetically digested under proper titles with notes and references to the whole*, vol. 14 (2nd ed., London, 1793).

²³⁸ Sir Robert Southwell to Mr Pigott, 18 Oct. 1684 (HMC, *Egmont Mss*, 1909), vol 2, p. 141.

the first Duke of Leinster in 1773 the guardianship, both physical and financial, of the younger Fitzgerald children excited discussion amongst the whole family that continued for a number of years.²³⁹

Orphaned 'middling' and peasant children were afforded protection also, though generally through patronage or within an institution. A fundraising performance was held at Mossop's House (Smock Alley Theatre) for the benefit of the orphans of Eaton a butcher and his wife who were killed in an accident in the Crow Street Theatre in 1764.²⁴⁰ Following the death of Molly Leight's mother, Alicia Synge agreed to 'take' Molly into her employ in 1750, though her brother was considered more difficult to place.²⁴¹ The 'manners and disposition' of vulnerable orphan children afforded the protection of elite and gentry families, related or not, was crucial in forming their sponsors' attitude towards them. Acting contrary to his 'dependent situation', Ann Venables dispatched the son of Mrs Crawford whom she had fostered for the previous three years to 'his uncle in Donegal' in 1798, though his sister, 'an endearing little creature', 'quiet and easily managed' remained with them.²⁴² Orphans unable to avail of adult protection, managed as best they could and too often their only recourse was the city's streets.

Peasant and pauper children, especially those eking a living among city streets were particularly vulnerable to exploitation and physical and sexual abuse.²⁴³ The fact that intercourse with 'nearly pubescent' and pubescent children was believed to cleanse men of venereal disease, left female children particularly vulnerable.²⁴⁴ Still, it is important to state that women and children of all ages were assaulted. Though an act of 1711²⁴⁵ stipulated that carnal knowledge of a female under twelve was

²³⁹ In a number of letters Lord Edward Fitzgerald engages in an intimate discussion with his mother concerning the guardianship of his 'illegitimate' daughter Mary (1792-1793) in 1792, while Viscount Sydney outlined in some detail in 1805 what he expected from those appointed as guardians to his children's should he die. Lord Edward Fitzgerald to Duchess of Leinster, Fitzgerald, (ed.), *Leinster correspondence*, ii, letters nos 58-61; Viscount Sydney to Lord Leitrim, 9 Oct. 1805 (NLI, Killadoon Papers, Ms 36032/7)

²⁴⁰ H.F. Berry, 'Notes from the diary of a Dublin lady in the reign of George III', *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquities in Ireland*, 8, 5th series, part ii (1898), pp 141-54.

²⁴¹ Edward to Alicia, 20 Jun. 1750, Legg (ed.), *The Synge letters*, p. 202.

²⁴² Ann Venables to Mrs O'Hara [1798] (NLI, O'Hara Papers, Ms 20366).

²⁴³ See James Kelly, 'A most inhuman and barbarous piece of villainy': an exploration of the crime of rape in eighteenth-century Ireland', Alan Harrison, Ian Campbell-Ross, Andrew Carpenter (eds), *Eighteenth-century Ireland*, 10 (Dublin, 1995), pp 78-107; also Christopher O'Dwyer (ed.), 'Archbishop Butler's visitation book', *Archivium Hibernicum*, 33 (1975).

²⁴⁴ Kelly, 'A most inhuman and barbarous piece of villainy', p. 86.

²⁴⁵ The act of 9 Ann, c. 6 stipulated that carnal knowledge of a female under twelve was a felony punishable with death, but under the act of 23 Geo. II, c. 2 the punishment was reduced to a mere whipping.

punishable by death, by 1749 a more lenient attitude was adopted legally to the same crime, and punishments were not applied consistently. These discrepancies may be a result of the difficulty proving that rape rather than assault took place, as sworn testimony from children under twelve was inadmissible.²⁴⁶ Lieutenant Peter Petit, found guilty of assault on a child (though tried on charges of assault on a number of girls), was ordered to stand an hour in the pillory and fined 200 marks in 1715,²⁴⁷ whereas John Mandeville, convicted of having ‘carnal knowledge of several girls under twelve years of age’ was executed on the 7 March 1750.²⁴⁸ James Dillon of county Carlow was pilloried, confined to prison for three months, ordered to ‘pay one hundred marks’ and to ‘find security for his good behaviour’ in 1766 for the same offence,²⁴⁹ yet Patrick Smyth of Dublin was hanged on the 20 June 1794 for a similar crime.²⁵⁰ The fact that section nine of the 1749 act was specifically directed towards the conduct of charter schoolmasters and mistresses emphasises the dangers and vulnerability of children outside the immediate scrutiny of the authorities. That this was the only safeguard put in place to protect children in the first fifty years of The Incorporated Society indicates that at the highest level, society was little concerned with protecting vulnerable children in its care from physical and sexual abuse.²⁵¹ Emphasizing the point, in 1749, a father and son indecently assaulted three or four very young girls attached to a Waterford Charter school.²⁵²

Notwithstanding the difficulty of obtaining evidence, the inconsistencies apparent over the course of the century in the punishment of offenders for the rape of minors indicates that societal attitudes towards crimes against children were sharply divided, and that a charge of ‘assault’ was more likely to succeed than a charge of ‘rape’ of a minor. Even so, the inadequacies of the legislation protecting children from the sexual impulses of men were left uncorrected. While there was an acceptance of a concept of wrongdoing in all the cases highlighted here and by James

²⁴⁶ Kelly, ‘A most inhuman and barbarous piece of villainy’, pp 88-9.

²⁴⁷ Thomas Proby to Lord Lieutenant [Earl of Sunderland], 5 Apr. 1715 (PRONI, T448 (Transcripts of State Papers Ireland 1715-16)). I am grateful to Neal Garnham of the University of Ulster for this reference.

²⁴⁸ *The Munster Journal*, 5 Apr. 1750.

²⁴⁹ *Freeman’s Journal*, 22 Nov. 1766.

²⁵⁰ NAI, PPC 51.

²⁵¹ See Michael Quane, ‘Mercer’s school, Rathcoole and Castleknock, Co. Dublin’, *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, 93 (1963), p. 20; Robbins, *The lost children*, p. 78.

²⁵² Rev. Michael Manning (ed.), ‘Dr Nicholas Madgett’s *Constitutio Ecclesiastica*’, *Journal of the Kerry Archaeological & Historical Society*, no. 9 (1976), p. 91.

Kelly, the full import of the act on children was not acknowledged, though implicitly it was understood by all concerned.

Kidnapping children from city streets was a recurring feature of newspaper reports throughout the century and any lone child was vulnerable. As late as 1804 William Drennan remarked that if his son Tom behaved with as much friendliness in Dublin as he did in Belfast that he would 'be run away with if his clothes were worth anything'.²⁵³ Not alone were children's clothes of financial value,²⁵⁴ but they were also. *The Munster Journal* warned in 1750 that 'the trade of kid-knapping children still continueth'²⁵⁵ and the *Freeman's Journal* in 1768 noted several instances of beggars, such as Mary Spencer, who made 'a practice of stealing' and maiming children to use them as objects of pity.²⁵⁶ Moreover, the fears expressed by Laetitia Pilkington (circa 1709-50) in 1740 that her estranged husband conspired to sell their children into slavery were confirmed when the affair was investigated and Matthew Pilkington (1701-74) was obliged to refund the master of the 'kid-ship' the *Golden Earnest*, the money he received for them.²⁵⁷ In 1794, *The Hibernian Journal* warned parents that those responsible for 'recruiting women for the American plantations' had re-commenced 'the infamous trade of kidnapping children' and called for 'due inquiry' into the affair.²⁵⁸ Yet few child-kidnappers were brought to justice. In a display of 'popular justice' at work, in a significant number of cases bystanders administered their own immediate punishment. As Kelly argues, the hostility of the crowds to the perpetrators is a 'convincing measure of the growth in public unease' at assaults on children.²⁵⁹

Although the practice was widespread in Europe also, one of the most significant features of eighteenth-century Ireland was child abandonment and infanticide, which was perceived to reach alarming proportions during the century.²⁶⁰ As Linda Pollock observes, from the late sixteenth-century on, 'sexual continence

²⁵³ William Drennan to Ann Drennan, 20 Mar. 1804, Agnew (ed.), *Drennan-McTier Letters*, iii, 208.

²⁵⁴ *Freeman's Journal*, 20 Jul. 1765; *The Hibernian Journal*, 22 Aug. 1792.

²⁵⁵ *The Munster Journal*, 4 Oct. 1750.

²⁵⁶ *Freeman's Journal*, 4 Oct. 1763, 26 Mar., 26 Apr. 1768; Robbins, *The lost children*, pp 102-3; Boyd, *Dublin 1745-1922*, p. 152.

²⁵⁷ Clarke, *Queen of the wits*, p.184.

²⁵⁸ *The Hibernian Journal*, 4 Jun. 1794.

²⁵⁹ Kelly, 'A most inhuman and barbarous piece of villainy', p. 101.

²⁶⁰ See Margaret King for a list of works examining infanticide in the wider European arena: King, 'Concepts of childhood', p. 385.

became a major emblem of respectability and social concern'.²⁶¹ Central to this behaviour was the social and moral judgement of society not only towards 'fallen' women, but also their illegitimate children. Blackstone defined a 'bastard' as 'one that is not only begotten, but born out of lawful matrimony' and their rights under English law few, only such as he might acquire.²⁶² Similarly, the Dublin House of Industry in 1785 stipulated that 'all children shall be considered illegitimate whose mothers cannot prove ... that they were really married when said children were begotten'.²⁶³ As the 'son of nobody', 'filius nullius' or 'filius populi' the child can inherit nothing, not even a surname, a necessity under civil policy.²⁶⁴ A bastard could only be made legitimate by an act of parliament or by what he earned.²⁶⁵ Linda Pollock correctly avers that 'illegitimacy was of such import because of the type of household the birth of an illegitimate child created' – that is, one lacking a male head, financial security and good governance.²⁶⁶ Moreover, a pregnant unwed woman was a blot on the moral fabric of an increasingly critical society.

Similar to legitimate children, the principal duty of parents by law to bastard children was that of maintenance. Even though bastards were 'not looked upon as children to any civil purposes', yet Blackstone admitted that the 'ties of nature' of which maintenance was one, were 'not so easily dissolved'.²⁶⁷ These ties were easier to maintain among male members of the elite and gentry classes. Though aware that 'owning it one's child, and not giving it one's name is stamping it with what the vile world calls infamy', Lord Edward Fitzgerald was willing to sever all ties with his natural daughter Mary (1792-93) by Elizabeth Sheridan (1754-92) so that her maintenance was assured.²⁶⁸ Even though she would be 'bred up as [a] younger child, while it is older', and consequently 'may subject it to many unhappy moments', he

²⁶¹ Linda Pollock, 'Childbearing and female-bonding in early modern England', *Social History*, 22 (1997), p. 301.

²⁶² Blackstone, *Commentaries*, i, pp 442, 447.

²⁶³ Governors Proceedings Book, 17 Jan. 1785 (NAI, BR/2006/86 (House of Industry) Box 2).

²⁶⁴ Blackstone, *Commentaries*, i, p. 447.

²⁶⁵ Ibid.

²⁶⁶ Pollock, 'Childbearing and female-bonding', p. 302.

²⁶⁷ Blackstone, *Commentaries*, i, p. 446.

²⁶⁸ Though a matter of some dispute between the parties concerned it was agreed that Betsy Sheridan's husband Richard and her friend, Mehitabel Canning would raise Mary and Lord Edward would have no contact with her. Richard Sheridan became extremely fond of Mary and Tom Sheridan's tutor recorded that 'it was piteous to hear Sheridan's moans as I lay in the next room' as Mary died from a convulsion in 1793. See Giles Hunt, *Mehitabel Canning, a redoubtable woman* (Hertfordshire, 2001), pp 113-115; Lord Edward Fitzgerald to Duchess of Leinster [Jun.-Jul. 1792], Fitzgerald (ed.), *Leinster correspondence*, ii, 68-9.

was primarily concerned for Mary's welfare and future security.²⁶⁹ Similarly the gentry farmer William Stacpoole (1743-96) of Edenvale, county Clare provided for his natural children's maintenance in his will though they were obliged to 'retain their mother's name Lynch.'²⁷⁰ Discretion and prudence were considered essential in such cases among elite and gentry families who had the resources to deal with these situations in a more humane and considerate manner.²⁷¹ For those without, the situation could be grim.

Pregnancy combined with illegitimacy deprived women, especially domestic servants who bore the brunt of unwanted sexual attentions from masters, their sons and fellow servants, of their primary means of livelihood. They faced dishonourable dismissal and certain poverty. As Saur notes, the sense of shame, the fear of humiliation and the censure of society and family facing unmarried pregnant women drove them to desperate measures to conceal the pregnancy and the infant. Many saw their situation as so acute that 'even murder became a feasible means to avoid opprobrium.'²⁷² Even so, not all cases of abandonment or infanticide were related to illegitimacy. Near famine, food scarcity, economic hardship and familial desertion also contributed to child abandonment and institutional care.²⁷³ Thus as Margaret

²⁶⁹ Lord Edward Fitzgerald to Duchess of Leinster [Jun.-Jul. 1792], Fitzgerald (ed.), *Leinster correspondence*, ii, 68-9. See also Fitzgerald (ed.), *Leinster correspondence*, ii, letters nos 58-61 and R. B. Sheridan's letters to Mrs Mehitable Stratford Canning in Bath Central Library. Mrs Canning was Elizabeth Sheridan's best friend and played a crucial role in the discussions concerning who should raise Mary.

²⁷⁰ It is interesting to note that the gaps in the children's ages directly correspond with the dates and lengths of William Stacpoole's two marriages: Leo McNamara (ed.), 'The diary of an eighteenth century Clare gentleman', *North Munster Antiquarian Journal*, 23 (1981), p. 63.

²⁷¹ Lord Edward Fitzgerald to Duchess of Leinster, Jun.-Jul. 1792, Fitzgerald (ed.), *Leinster correspondence*, ii, letters nos 58-61. See also the negotiations Lady Sarah Napier's family entered into following her affair with Lord William Gordon.

²⁷² The issue of abandonment and infanticide are closely allied: R. Saur, 'Infanticide and abortion in nineteenth-century Britain', *Population Studies*, 32 (1978), p. 85. See also James Kelly, 'Infanticide in eighteenth-century Ireland', *Irish Economic and social History*, 19 (1992), pp 5-26; Anne O'Connor, 'Women in Irish folklore: the testimony regarding illegitimacy, abortion and infanticide', Margaret MacCurtain and Mary O'Dowd (eds), *Women in Early Modern Ireland* (Edinburgh, 1990), pp 304-317; Robbins, *The lost children*. For a recent extensive analysis of child murder see Josephine McDonagh, *Child murder and British culture, 1720-1900* (Cambridge, 2003); Mark Jackson (ed.), *Infanticide: historical perspectives on child murder and concealment 1550-2000* (Aldershot, 2002); R. W. Malcomson, 'Infanticide in the eighteenth-century', J. Cockburn (ed.), *Crime in England 1550-1800* (London, 1977); Jessica Nelson, 'Gender, age, and the abandonment of children in eighteenth-century Dijon, France', *Journal of the History of childhood and Youth*, 4.1 (Winter, 2011), pp 116-135; Olwen H. Hufton, *The prospect before her: a history of women in western Europe, 1500-1800* (London, 1998).

²⁷³ For example see William Wilde, 'Table of Irish famines, 900-1850', E. Margaret Crawford (ed.), *Famine: the Irish experience 900-1900* (Edinburgh, c.1989), pp 11-17. There were difficulties with food supplies in various parts of the country in 1690, 1728, 1729, 1739, 1740-1, 1756, 1766, 1782, 1798, 1799, 1800, 1801 and 1817. See also L.A. Clarkson and E. Margaret Crawford, 'Life after death: widows in Carrick-on-Suir, 1799', MacCurtain and O'Dowd (eds.), *Women in early modern Ireland*,

King observes, 'in pre-modern times the markers between these different forms of foetal and infant death were blurred', even if 'all were deplored', they were 'not universally barred.'²⁷⁴

By the mid-1690s the number of children abandoned, particularly in Dublin parishes, had increased substantially and become a considerable burden on parish funds.²⁷⁵ In 1696 alone, Dublin's St Michan's parish cared for fifteen new foundlings.²⁷⁶ By the early 1760s the abandonment and desertion of children by army fathers was a recognised problem. In Dublin's St Paul's parish there were 'no fewer' than 392, of whom 100 were under the age of six in 1762.²⁷⁷ Similarly, Cork's Foundling Hospital was 'over-burdened' in 1761 by the 'great number of soldier's children left by the army lately embarked there'.²⁷⁸ Though the establishment of the Dublin Workhouse and Foundling Hospital in 1703/30²⁷⁹ was designed to relieve the situation, the Armagh Curate Thomas English, who claimed that 'sixty children were sent from south Ulster to the Foundling hospital in the space of a year', maintained that:

no motive whatever operated so strongly to produce so extensive and abandoned a licentiousness, as the facility of getting immediately free from the troublesome fruit of illicit amour by means of that institution.²⁸⁰

The view expressed by Rev. English was given credence and fanned the debate regarding the care of abandoned children throughout the eighteenth-century. The increasing number admitted to the Foundling Hospital indicates that more children were abandoned than were victims of infanticide.²⁸¹

Though the cultural and historical data is not complete, it is possible to discern the severity with which Irish society viewed unmarried mothers, illegitimate children

pp 236-54; their figures indicate that widows, of whom more than half were under fifty-five years of age, formed a significant category in Carrick-on-Suir in 1799. The lack of a male head and wage earner left many families vulnerable to poverty.

²⁷⁴ King, 'Concepts of childhood', p. 391.

²⁷⁵ For a more extensive examination of child abandonment, parish relief and the establishment of the Dublin Workhouse and Foundling Hospital as a response, see part three.

²⁷⁶ Henry F. Berry (ed.), *The Registers of the Church of St Michan, Dublin 1636-1700* (Dublin, 1909).

²⁷⁷ Board Book, 1761-75, 12 May 1762 (TCD, Ms 5225).

²⁷⁸ Ibid.

²⁷⁹ The Dublin Workhouse was established in 1703 but by 1729/30 it had become a Foundling Hospital, therefore the two dates are normally given.

²⁸⁰ Thomas English to [Dublin Castle], 20 May 1797 (NAI, OP 27/9).

²⁸¹ Kelly, 'Infanticide', p. 10.

and the crime of infanticide.²⁸² Although child abandonment can be seen as 'removing the child from the family's responsibility' but 'not from life',²⁸³ there is no ambiguity about the intention of infanticide. Nonetheless, it is also important to consider that not all infanticides were deliberate. Some abandoned infants may have died from exposure before discovery as in the case of Mary Ann Aikels whose body was found in a ditch on the roadside near Swords, county Dublin in November 1775. The fact that the mother tied a note to the infant's breast and named her strongly suggests that this was a case of abandonment by a desperate mother who had the interests of the child at heart.²⁸⁴

All the same, does infanticide demonstrate a dis-respect for human life and the requirement to nurture children which was central to the concept of childhood in eighteenth-century Ireland? Were socio-economic factors so powerful that they overrode the natural bonds between mother and child? Given the recognition of the maternal instinct, how were perpetrators of infanticide viewed? In discussing these issues it is crucial that infanticide is located in the context of the range of societal practises concerning children and adults in eighteenth-century Ireland.

Legislation against infanticide that appeared at Westminster in 1624 (but not ratified until 1707 by the Irish parliament), was 'to a large extent to ensure sexual morality ... as much as to preserve infant life',²⁸⁵ an attitude also identified by Kelly in early eighteenth-century Ireland. Unmarried pregnant women faced the severest societal disapproval while those found guilty of infanticide could incur the death penalty. But there was a clear distinction between infanticide and more contingent forms of 'child-murder'. At Limerick assizes in August 1779, Margaret M'Coy was found guilty of 'destroying her new-born infant' and was 'strangled and burned' the following week at Gallows Green.²⁸⁶ Yet Bridget Farrell, a wet-nurse convicted of 'starving the child of ... Mr Tobin' in 1783, was only sentenced to three months in jail, fined twenty pounds and 'whipped three times from Kilmainham gaol to Mount Brown'.²⁸⁷

²⁸² Though issued with a caveat, James Kelly has used eighteenth-century newspaper reports of infanticide to build a picture of societal attitudes and approaches surrounding the practice: Kelly, 'Infanticide', pp 5-26.

²⁸³ Stephen G. Post, 'History, infanticide and imperilled new-borns', *The Hastings Center report*, 18, no. 4 (Aug.-Sep., 1988), p. 15.

²⁸⁴ *The Hibernian Journal*, 24 Nov. 1775.

²⁸⁵ Pollock, 'Childbearing and female-bonding', p. 304.

²⁸⁶ *The Londonderry Journal*, 3 Sep. 1779.

²⁸⁷ *The Hibernian Journal*, 5 May 1783.

Prominent among those guilty of infanticide were single women and female servants who faced instant dismissal if found pregnant.²⁸⁸ The 'otherwise good servant' Molly Fleming was promptly discharged from the Wynne household in county Sligo in 1764 when it was discovered she was pregnant, though the father Jammed Johnston, another servant was forgiven having promised 'he never will be guilty of the like again.'²⁸⁹ Given the inequity of these situations, many servants attempted to conceal their pregnancy and dispose of the infant as soon as possible. The means of disposal adopted by mothers such as the 'nearest available water source' or 'public place',²⁹⁰ suggests that many infanticides were hastily carried out and given the restricted environment servants operated in, these were probably the speediest recourse open to them. Although the act of infanticide appears ruthless and the means of disposal opportunistic, not all cases can be seen like this. A 'neat and clean dress'd' woman, clearly unable to separate herself from her child even in death, was found drowned in the river Liffey at George's Quay, Dublin in 1739. The infant was found in 'its mother's arms' and 'they had fast hold of each other.'²⁹¹

By the second half of the eighteenth-century the expansion in the Irish population and the 'consequent problems of prostitution, vagrancy and child abandonment' led to a heightened concern with the plight of poor single girls.²⁹² Kelly has identified the emergence of a more tolerant and sympathetic attitude towards infanticide from the 1750s.²⁹³ Even though William Fleetwood recognised the 'natural' bonds of affection between parent and child as early as 1705,²⁹⁴ the words used to describe the mother who engaged in infanticide such as 'wretched', 'inhuman' and 'divested of every maternal affection',²⁹⁵ served to place these women firmly and irrevocably outside the normal and acceptable limits of eighteenth-century society. Allied with the emerging trend towards display of the maternal instinct, the increased moral strictures, and the economic difficulties of the poor in eighteenth-

²⁸⁸ Kelly, 'Infanticide', p. 9. Pamela Horn has also identified the difficulties maintaining servant/servant and servant/master spatial segregation in English country houses: Pamela Horn, *Flunkys and scullions: life below stairs in Georgian England* (Stroud, 2004), pp 37-43.

²⁸⁹ Winston Guthrie-Jones, *The Wynnes of Sligo & Leitrim, the powerful family of Hazelwood and Lurganboy* (Manorhamilton, 1994), pp 44-5.

²⁹⁰ Kelly, 'Infanticide', p. 12.

²⁹¹ *The Dublin Gazette*, 22 May 1739.

²⁹² Mary O'Dowd, *A history of women in Ireland 1500-1800* (Harlow, 2005), p. 193; Kelly, 'Infanticide', pp 19, 21, particularly table 4.

²⁹³ Kelly, 'Infanticide', p. 12.

²⁹⁴ Fleetwood, *The relative duties of parents and children* (3rd ed., Dublin), p. 55.

²⁹⁵ *The Limerick Journal*, 8 Jul. 1784.

century Ireland, infanticide or child abandonment was a last desperate solution for mothers with few options and one which shaped a fundamental aspect of the debate on childhood in eighteenth-century Ireland – the vulnerability of children.

Advice and conduct books

As society evolved from lineage and kinship towards the nuclear family, new rules of engagement were required to negotiate family and societal relationships. Lawrence Stone has perceptively noted that the Elizabethan and early Stuart view of human character and conduct, exemplified by Sir William Wentworth's 1604 *Advice to his son*,²⁹⁶ was characterised by 'distrust' and 'alienation'.²⁹⁷ Loyalty, including that of husbands, wives and family, was increasingly based on self-interest, and as a result, the 'exercise of extreme self-control' and 'conformity to external rules of conduct',²⁹⁸ outlined in parental and other advice books was widely acknowledged as the only 'safe way to manoeuvre through the world'.²⁹⁹

Most early advice books were written for private consideration, but by the mid eighteenth-century an increasing number appeared in print. Reflecting the intensified complexity of the debates about acceptable societal behaviour, advice was proffered on such diverse subjects as bills of fare and table settings, diet and regimen, medical matters, servants' duties, and crucially, the education, manners and conduct of children, particularly females.³⁰⁰ Frequently, men's advice to their children (usually male) appeared in epistolary series. John Locke's letters to Edward Clarke esq. of Chipley, England,³⁰¹ and those of Philip Dormer Stanhope fourth Earl of Chesterfield (1694-1773) to his son achieved particular renown. While Locke engaged with the debates surrounding the education of children, Chesterfield's detailed letters dispensed advice concerning political advancement and social pleasures. As David Roberts has observed in his introduction to Chesterfield's *Letters* (1998), 'manners

²⁹⁶ Sir William Wentworth, *Sir William Wentworth, advice to his son* (1604).

²⁹⁷ Stone, *The family, sex and marriage*, p. 95.

²⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 96.

²⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰⁰ See Virginia Maclean, *A short-title catalogue of household and cookery books published in the English tongue 1701-1800* (London, 1981) for a comprehensive list of advice books published during the eighteenth-century. Subjects range from 'Bills of fare and table settings', to cookery methods, to household compendiums and include a substantial number of books outlining servant's and household duties.

³⁰¹ John Locke wrote a series of letters to Edward Clarke outlining his views on raising and educating children but specifically Mr Clarke's son that were subsequently collected and published in 1693 as *Some thoughts concerning education*. See Locke, *Some thoughts concerning education*.

fulfil for Chesterfield an ideal not of civilized or even socialized conduct, but of ready self-advancement: they are tools for achieving private ends'.³⁰² Charles Allen in *The polite lady* (1763) also set his advice in the form of a series of letters, though in this case letters written by a mother, Portia, to her daughter, Sophie.³⁰³ Following the now familiar pattern, each letter dealt with a question regarding the correct social behaviour in a specific situation. Similarly William Giles addressed his 1777 *Guide to domestic happiness* in a series of letters.³⁰⁴ By contrast, women usually wrote their advice privately to their children (generally female).³⁰⁵ This is the case with two Irish ladies who penned advice books in the seventeenth and eighteenth-century, Lady Frances Keightley³⁰⁶ and Eleanor Trant.³⁰⁷

The broadening scope of eighteenth-century advice books is illustrated by the publication in 1753 by James Nelson of *An essay on the government of children*.³⁰⁸ Although indebted to earlier conduct books Nelson also drew on the experience of tutoring seven of his own children and observations of others;³⁰⁹ his principal design and focus was to 'regulate the manners of children'.³¹⁰ Consistent with Stone's argument outlined earlier, Nelson remarked that:

every thing else is secondary to ... [the regulation of manners]. Health, it may not be in our power to secure; and school education all cannot reach to in any considerable degree. The government of our children is indeed an universal obligation.³¹¹

Mirroring the progressive child centredness of Irish, English and Scottish society, by the latter part of the eighteenth-century advice and childrearing books constituted a recognised genre that formed a significant part of the book publishing trade.

³⁰² Philip Dormer Stanhope, Earl of Chesterfield, *Letters written by the late right honourable Philip Dormer Stanhope, Earl of Chesterfield, to his son, Philip Stanhope, ...* (4 vols, Dublin and London, 1774); Lord Chesterfield, *Letters to his son* (1774), David Roberts (ed.) (Oxford, 1998), p. xviii.

³⁰³ Charles Allen, *The polite lady: or, a course of female education in a series of letters, from a mother to her daughter* (Dublin, 1763).

³⁰⁴ William Giles, *The guide to domestic happiness in a series of letters* (2nd ed., London, 1777).

³⁰⁵ A closely written forty page homily addressed by [Eleanor Trant?] to her daughter [Maria?] on how she should conduct her life, the importance of religion etc. dated 9 Nov. 1783 (NLI, Trant Papers, Ms 31558).

³⁰⁶ Ashford, 'Advice to a daughter' (NLI, Inchiquin Papers, Ms 45720/1).

³⁰⁷ Eleanor FitzGibbon, sister of John, first Earl of Clare, married Dominick Trant of Dunkettle, county Cork and had three children, John Frederick (d. 1838), William Henry and Maria, who married Henry, second Lord Dunalley.

³⁰⁸ Nelson, *An essay on the government of children* (2nd ed.).

³⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

³¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

³¹¹ *Ibid.*

While parents and children read conduct books, responding to their advice was a challenging exercise.³¹² The social recognition of a woman determined her position in society³¹³ and as Pollock observes, ‘the bonds of womanhood were not all embracing: rather, they operated as evaluators of another’s behaviour and were acute sensors of departures from the norm.’³¹⁴ Thus it was crucial that elite and gentry girls were presented as accomplished, genteel and polished, and behaved according to the social and cultural norms of eighteenth-century Ireland. Consequently the basic tenet of advice and conduct books was ‘the requirement for social training to add polish to a girl’s essential inner purity.’³¹⁵ As Nelson cautioned, a girl ‘should be taught to know that the world has its eyes upon her, and that in proportion as she increases in merit, so much nearer will she approach to gaining universal admiration and esteem.’³¹⁶

The mother’s role was essential in overseeing her daughter’s training in the social graces, what Fletcher terms ‘the upper-class ritualization of social behaviour’,³¹⁷ and the advice book penned in 1681 by Lady Frances Keightley serves to illustrate this behaviour and attitude. Although connected at the highest social and political levels, the broad issues – religion, propriety and marriage – addressed by Lady Frances in her advice to her daughter Catherine O’Brien highlight the contemporary issues that were most relevant to females of all classes in the late seventeenth and eighteenth-century. Their expectations however differed significantly by class.

Although grounded in a religious, ethical and moral belief system, reflecting Lady Frances’ deep Roman Catholic convictions, the purpose of the advice was primarily to enable Catherine ‘to live with eas[e] & credit in ye world’.³¹⁸ Throughout, Lady Frances addressed these important issues at a fundamental level and made practical suggestions concerning, and pertinent observations regarding female life in the late seventeenth-century. At mid-century Bishop Syngé advised his daughter Alicia similarly,³¹⁹ as did Eleanor Trant at the close of the century.³²⁰ Like

³¹² Fletcher, *Growing up in England*, p. 36.

³¹³ Schneid Lewis, *In the family way*, p. 41.

³¹⁴ Pollock, ‘Childbearing and female-bonding’, p. 292.

³¹⁵ Fletcher, *Growing up in England*, p. 29.

³¹⁶ Nelson, *An essay on the government of children* (2nd ed.), p. 168.

³¹⁷ Fletcher, *Growing up in England*, p. 31.

³¹⁸ Presumably a reference to her separation from her husband: Ashford, ‘Advice to a daughter’, p. 7.

³¹⁹ See Edward to Alicia, Legg (ed.), *The Syngé letters*, but particularly the letters of 22 Sep. 1747 (no. 41), 11 Jun. 1751 (no. 138), 12 Jun. 1752 (no. 187).

³²⁰ NLI, Trant Papers, Ms 31558.

Bishop Syngé, Lady Frances recognised the frailty of the human spirit but her warnings were tempered by a confidence in her daughter's ability to overcome life's adversities.

A tangible sense of pathos percolates the advice especially when Lady Frances drew on her own experiences, as for example when she observed self-critically that, 'one unhappy temper' – her own – 'has brought me first or last into all ye great inconveniency's of my life'.³²¹ In urging 'truthfulness' and maintaining a 'well govern'd tongue',³²² Lady Frances starkly echoed the distrust identified by Stone and the pitfalls a young girl faced when engaging with society. For the social historian, Lady Frances' advice concerning men, marriage and female friendship provides a rare insight into female lives in Ireland and England at the turn of the seventeenth-century.

It is clear from her comments that Lady Frances was deeply concerned for the welfare of her daughter and of the challenges that awaited her as she set out to negotiate her way through life – a life that became increasingly bound by the strictures of society as the eighteenth-century progressed. It highlights the role mothers and close family relations played in the upbringing of children especially daughters, and is revealing not only of the character of Lady Frances Keightley, her remarkable self-analysis and critical exploration of seventeenth-century societal behaviour, but also of a mother's love for her child.

Social skills such as dancing, music, drawing and deportment, were initially acquired by both boys and girls in the home; girls later polished their skills during a period of instruction in polite society – usually in Dublin³²³ (boys attended boarding schools). Though satisfied that her niece Mary had '*uncommon* advantages at home for the improvement of what is *most* material', Mary Delany still advised that:

there is a grace and a manner which cannot be attained without conversing with a variety of well-bred people, which when well-chosen cannot efface what is certainly more necessary, but will give a polish, and by an agreeable recommendation render all the good part more useful and acceptable to those she converses with.³²⁴

³²¹ Ashford, 'Advice to a daughter', p. 10.

³²² *Ibid.*, p. 12.

³²³ For example see Herbert, *Retrospections*, pp 44, 46, 48, 50; NLI, Adlercron diary 1782-94, Ms 4481.

³²⁴ Day (ed.) *Letters from Georgian Ireland*, p. 537.

The fact that girls were expected to appear in society with ‘propriety and delicacy’ between sixteen and eighteen years of age³²⁵ necessitated an early attention to the acquisition of these social skills. Significantly, boys of the same age would not be admitted to society until older when it was considered they had developed enough to behave appropriately.³²⁶ Re-iterating Locke’s precepts, Mary Delany viewed the years between seven and fourteen as crucial ‘in forming a gracious manner’.³²⁷ Lucy Fitzgerald (1771-1851), ‘Mimi’ Ogilvie (1778-1832)³²⁸ and Louisa Staples all came to Dublin in 1783 to avail of instruction from ‘masters’ there.³²⁹ Similarly Dorothea Herbert was sent to her Dublin aunt when she was twelve years-old to complete her training.³³⁰ Small intimate house parties, under the strict supervision of mothers and reflecting the parent’s select social circle, provided a training ground before children entered adult society with all its inherent dangers, and was a custom in both Ireland and England.³³¹ Boys were given an extended time to grow-up however and elite males invariably embarked on the Grand Tour where they were expected to absorb the cultural experiences and polish their social skills in European society.

Therefore children were at the forefront of ‘polite urban culture’ in eighteenth-century Ireland. And even if children’s social education was gendered and age restricted, each sex was given significantly different goals to strive for and different periods within which to achieve them. Significantly, the prerequisite for appropriate female behaviour served a multitude of purposes. Though a concept of childhood was inherently acknowledged, the manifestation of female ‘gentility’ and ‘propriety’ served to reinforce the social and gendered hierarchies; it blurred the distinction between dependent girlhood and independent womanhood; while the desire to please men ‘at the expense of developing their intellects and capacity for virtue’ stifled female nature by the time they were women.³³² As James Nelson forewarned, a ‘young lady of quality’ must be ‘taught to maintain a spotless innocence’, to ‘suffer

³²⁵ ‘The female advocate’, *Walker’s Hibernian Magazine*, Aug. 1779, p. 466.

³²⁶ *Ibid.*

³²⁷ Day (ed.), *Letters from Georgian Ireland*, p.219.

³²⁸ Emily Charlotte, known in the family as Mimi, the third and second surviving daughter of Emily, Dowager Duchess of Leinster and her second husband, William Ogilvie.

³²⁹ Lady Louisa Conolly to Duchess of Kildare, 27 Sep., 6 Oct., 29 Oct. 1783, Fitzgerald (ed.), *Leinster correspondence*, iii, letters nos 162-4.

³³⁰ Herbert, *Retrospections*, p. 50.

³³¹ For the custom in Ireland see Day (ed.), *Letters from Georgian Ireland*, p. 107; Herbert, *Retrospections*, p. 50. For England see Miss Herbert to Lady Portarlington, 28 Apr. 1789, Clark (ed.), *Gleanings*, ii, 131; Lefanu (ed.) *Betsy Sheridan’s journal*, p. 144.

³³² Corinne Field, ‘Made women of when they are mere children’: Mary Wollstonecraft’s critique of eighteenth-century girlhood’, *Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth* (Spring, 2011), p. 201.

anything, however great, rather than disgrace her birth and quality by any action unworthy of herself³³³ – a heavy burden indeed for any child to carry.

SECTION III: CHILDREN AT REST

Leisure, play, recreation

As discussed above, Irish children engaged in pursuits such as dancing, singing and drawing that today would be considered leisure or play activities but in eighteenth-century Ireland were designed as social accomplishments. Yet evidentially there was a clear concept of leisure. But what types of play did children, rich and poor engage in; was it spontaneous or constructed? And what effect did these leisure activities have on contemporary ideas of childhood and family life respectively? As Peter Burke and Joe Frost caution, it is dangerous to pluck terms such as leisure, play or sport from their 'social contexts or from the discourses of which they form a part',³³⁴ or of importing our own ideas of what leisure and recreation mean to children.³³⁵ Even though there is a similarity in 'the basic nature of play across centuries, countries and cultures', the type of play engaged in 'reflects the beliefs, occupations, pleasures, and state of technology of the time and culture'.³³⁶ Furthermore, the gendered aspects of children's play such as dolls, household tasks and war games also prepared children for their adult roles, and children's books were frequently designed to impart a moral and improving message. Thus leisure or play was closely integrated with education in eighteenth-century Ireland. While remaining cognisant of the cross-over between educational instruction and play, leisure in the context of this study is the time spent by children and adults outside formal 'improving' instruction, education and work.

From antiquity, play was seen as essential to the proper development of children and consequently 'useful' and 'productive' adults, and this premise applied to both sexes. Play was viewed as beneficial to the development of the mind and

³³³ Nelson, *An essay on the government of children* (2nd ed.), pp 271-2.

³³⁴ Peter Burke, 'The invention of leisure in early modern Europe', *Past & Present*, no. 146 (Feb., 1995), p. 146.

³³⁵ Joe L. Frost, *A history of children's play and play environments. Toward a contemporary child-saving movement* (New York, 2010). See also Burke, 'The invention of leisure' pages 139-46 for an interesting European based historical discussion surrounding the meanings of words connected with leisure, play and sport.

³³⁶ Frost, *A history of children's play*, p. 16.

emotions and the physical well-being of the child. John Locke formulated a philosophy based on learning through play and the use of 'play-things' (though only one toy was to be allowed the child at a time and that preferably home-made).³³⁷ Physical play and exercises such as running, jumping and climbing trees were promoted by Locke (1693), Nelson (1756), Rousseau (1762) and Buchan (1769), though Nelson wisely cautioned that 'a distinction should be made between play and mischief'.³³⁸ Nevertheless, play and 'childish actions' were considered essential to allow children reach their full potential as rational adult beings, which further demonstrates the acceptance of a philosophical and theoretical concept of childhood.

Peter Burke identifies at least four different 'discourses' within treatises dealing with leisure which reflected contemporary debates affecting children and society that can equally be applied to Ireland. Firstly, an educational discourse that concerned the training of children; a legal and political debate about the uses of recreation; a theological-moral discourse that sought to contain leisure within strict limits, and a medical discourse which concentrated on the positive features of leisure.³³⁹ These issues all figure in eighteenth-century Irish correspondence concerning children, and beg the question, was a concept of leisure a direct challenge or even a response to the eighteenth-century ideology of productiveness?

Locke argued that 'all plays and diversions of children should be directed towards good and useful habits, or else they will introduce ill ones,' and he applied this to formal education and physical recreation for all children.³⁴⁰ Bishop Syngé sought only those that were 'innocent and prudent' for his daughter Alicia in 1747,³⁴¹ a wish also expressed by Mrs Delany in 1753.³⁴² Exercising his moral and theological judgement, Anthony Blunt the Mayor of Kilkenny city banned the 'scandalous custom of throwing at cocks' and gambling that occurred during the Lenten festival in 1771 which children attended.³⁴³ But there were recognised limits to the degrees with which children were encouraged to engage in leisure activities, particularly among the elite. The passion Lord Ophaly [George Fitzgerald] (1748-65) displayed for hunting

³³⁷ Locke, *Some thoughts concerning education*, pp 99-100.

³³⁸ Nelson, *An essay on the government of children* (2nd ed.), p. 142.

³³⁹ Burke, 'The invention of leisure', pp 143-4.

³⁴⁰ Locke, *Some thoughts concerning education*, p. 100.

³⁴¹ Edward to Alicia, 9 May 1747, Legg (ed.), *The Syngé letters*, p. 9.

³⁴² Day (ed.), *Letters from Georgian Ireland*, p. 112.

³⁴³ *Finn's Leinster Journal*, 9 Feb. 1771.

and Lord William Fitzgerald for drinking caused serious disquiet in the extended Fitzgerald household in 1764 and both boys were firmly discouraged.³⁴⁴

Fletcher and Vickery both comment on the important role 'field sports' played in promoting the sense of manliness in children³⁴⁵ and there is frequent reference to Irish children of all social classes attending horse-races. A horse-race, including a race by girls took place on Leixlip's new racecourse in 1731 alongside a 'leaping match for men' with prizes for all.³⁴⁶ Ten year-old Lord Edward Fitzgerald (1763-98) and his siblings attended the races at Booterstown, county Dublin in 1773,³⁴⁷ while Thomas Drennan (1801-12), son of a Dublin accoucheur, attended his first race at three years of age in 1804.³⁴⁸ Outdoor team sports such as cricket and football also fulfilled the same objectives.³⁴⁹ Richard Pococke observed 'young men playing at hand tennis' at Clonck, county Wexford in October 1752,³⁵⁰ while a contented Lady Caroline Fox watched her sons and nephews 'play at quoits upon the green before the house' in 1759.³⁵¹

Gardening was a popular leisure pastime for children, combining as it did fresh air and exercise with the rudiments of horticulture.³⁵² The enthusiasm with which all the Fitzgerald children engaged from a young age in gardening and farm-work in Ireland and France reflects their mother's personal adaptation of Rousseau's childrearing principles, though the children enjoyed the experience immensely.³⁵³ Similarly, Thomas and William (1802-73) Drennan were encouraged to work in their own little gardens, while also assisting in bringing in the hay.³⁵⁴ Although horses and ponies formed a fundamental part of eighteenth-century life, children were strongly

³⁴⁴ Lady [Caroline] Holland to Marchioness of Kildare, 20 Dec. [1764], Fitzgerald (ed.), *Leinster correspondence*, i, 424.

³⁴⁵ Fletcher, *Growing up in England*, p. 144; Amanda Vickery, *Behind closed doors: at home in Georgian England* (London, 2009).

³⁴⁶ *Faulkner's Dublin Journal*, 9 Oct. 1731.

³⁴⁷ Lord Edward Fitzgerald to Duchess of Leinster [1773], Fitzgerald (ed.), *Leinster correspondence*, ii, 5.

³⁴⁸ Martha McTier to William Drennan, 6 [Apr. 1804], Agnew (ed.), *Drennan-McTier letters*, iii, 213.

³⁴⁹ These pursuits were recommended by the physician Dr Adair in [1761], and locate the game of cricket earlier in Irish history. Marchioness of Kildare to Marquis of Kildare, 17 Aug. [1761], Fitzgerald (ed.), *Leinster correspondence*, i, 103.

³⁵⁰ McVeagh (ed.), *Richard Pococke's Irish tours*, p. 120.

³⁵¹ Lady Caroline Fox to Countess of Kildare, 5 Jul. 1759, Fitzgerald (ed.), *Leinster correspondence*, i, 239.

³⁵² Kevill-Davies, *Yesterday's children*, p. 242.

³⁵³ See Marchioness of Kildare to Marquis of Kildare 23 Nov. [1762], Fitzgerald (ed.), *Leinster correspondence*, i, 149; Lord Edward Fitzgerald to Duchess of Leinster [1773], *ibid.*, ii, 3, 20; Lord Edward Fitzgerald to William Ogilvie, *ibid.*, 21-3.

³⁵⁴ William Drennan Dublin to Martha McTier, 9 Aug. [1805], Agnew (ed.), *Drennan-McTier Letters*, iii, 351.

urged to care for other animals as pets, and tales such as ‘The history and adventures of a cat’ by Dr Aiken (1747-1822) and Mrs Barbauld (1743-1825)³⁵⁵ promoted not only children’s involvement with animals, but also lent a moral dimension to this discourse.

Indoor leisure activities such as card playing, commerce, loo and chess were complemented by sewing, singing, music and dancing, while writing and answering riddles was also a popular pastime engaged in by all ages. Luke Dillon collected a volume of riddles in 1794, examples of which are:

My first carries my second.	My first is descended from Heaven
My second carries my first.	My second may come from your eye.
And my whole carries them both.	My tout is by Providence given
What am I? [<i>A chairman</i>]	to tell us that summer is nigh.
	What am I? [<i>A snowdrop</i>] ³⁵⁶

Many elite and gentry families staged amateur dramatics, though as a pastime this was not widely accepted as being quite appropriate and appeared to have been age specific. The older Fox and Fitzgerald children performed two plays at Holland House in 1762 under the direction of Lady Caroline Fox, *Creusa* and *The Revenge*³⁵⁷ but Lady Ranelagh (d. 1812) was reluctant to let her daughters act in 1771, possibly because she considered them too young.³⁵⁸

As Joe Frost highlights, pastimes such as these, common among elite and gentry children, did not apply equally to the poor; games that required specialist equipment such as chess or tennis were more common among the rich.³⁵⁹ Undoubtedly, peasant and pauper children adapted sticks, stones and string as playthings but there is a paucity of evidence detailing their exact play activities. While the area in which urban and country, elite, gentry and poorer children could roam was similarly large, the areas in which urban children played were fraught with

³⁵⁵ For example see John Aiken and Anna Laetitia Barbauld, *Evenings at home; or the juvenile budget opened: consisting of a variety of miscellaneous pieces for the instruction and amusement of young persons* (London, 1792) (Cork, 1794) (London, n.d.), pp 49-56, also ‘The little dog, a fable’, pp 56-58. The extended Fitzgerald family cared for chickens, tame birds, dogs, hounds and horses.

³⁵⁶ NLI, Ms 22297 (Volume of riddles and epigrams belonging to Luke Dillon). See also a notebook belonging to the O’Hara family of county Sligo containing riddles and charades (NLI, O’Hara Papers, Ms 36483/9).

³⁵⁷ Lady Caroline Fox to Marchioness of Kildare, 19 Jan. [1762] [Apr, 1762], Fitzgerald (ed.), *Leinster correspondence*, i, 309, 323.

³⁵⁸ Lord Edward Fitzgerald to Duchess of Leinster [1771], Fitzgerald (ed.), *ibid.*, ii, 1. In 1771 Lady Ranelagh’s children were aged between eleven and seven.

³⁵⁹ Frost, *A history of children’s play*, pp 13, 16-7.

more dangers and this reflects a fundamental difference between elite and gentry children's play, those of the poor and those living in urban areas. According to Teresa Michals, eighteenth and nineteenth-century parents increasingly tried to make 'child-safe spaces' – 'cultural and physical spaces in which children were encouraged to play'.³⁶⁰ Indicative of this trend, William Drennan was pleased to hear in 1804 that Lord Donegall 'intends enclosing the Parade' in Belfast as it would make 'a good play-place for children to run about in'.³⁶¹ But apart from the Phoenix Park there were few open play-areas available for the daily use of the thousands of children living in Dublin's lanes and alleys.³⁶²

Even so, pauper children availed of the free entertainment offered by shop windows, races, public amusements, military reviews and displays, and by the 1770s it was accepted that Dublin children gathered to play football, cards, dice, shuttles, nine-pins, nine-holes and all-fours.³⁶³ Arthur Young (1741-1820) commented on the enthusiasm country peasants displayed for music and dancing in 1776, noting that in county Kerry:

a ragged lad, without shoes or stockings, has been seen in a mud barn, leading up a girl in the same trim for a minuet: the love of dancing and music are almost universal amongst them.³⁶⁴

Bowling Greens provided space for diversion and amusement, particularly during religious festivals.³⁶⁵ Martha McTier organised egg throwing at Cabin Hill in Easter 1804, and afterwards formed the children into 'a company of volunteers ... with drum, sword, gun, car and baions [sic]'.³⁶⁶ Furthermore, the French traveller De Latocnaye remarked that during a religious festival in 1796-97 he had seen children make a 'fire of bones' and amuse themselves by 'dancing' round it and even 'running over it with their bare feet', though he did not identify where or what festival.³⁶⁷

Thus by mid-century a totally different cultural atmosphere had emerged to that enjoyed by children's grandfathers. As Plumb notes, the 'emphasis was on marvels [and] curiosities that were new and remarkable' that promoted the modern

³⁶⁰ Teresa Michals, 'Experiments before breakfast: toys, education and middle-class childhood', Dennis Denisoff (ed.), *The nineteenth-century child and consumer culture*, p. 29.

³⁶¹ William Drennan to Nancy Drennan, 20 Mar. 1804, Agnew (ed.), *Drennan-McTier letters*, iii, 208.

³⁶² Jacinta Prunty, *Dublin slums 1800-1925, a study in urban geography* (Dublin, 2000).

³⁶³ *The Hibernian Journal*, 5 Jul. 1771.

³⁶⁴ Young, *A tour in Ireland*, pp 120, 153, 202.

³⁶⁵ John Tennent, *Diary of John Tennent*, Lenox-Conyngham (ed.) *Diaries of Ireland*, p. 71.

³⁶⁶ Martha Mc Tier to William Drennan, 6 [Apr. 1804], Agnew (ed.), *Drennan-McTier letters*, iii, 214.

³⁶⁷ He did not specify what festival it was: De Latocnaye, *A Frenchman's walk through Ireland 1798-1797* (Belfast, 1917), p. 82.

and changing world awaiting children.³⁶⁸ The 'New-Gardens' in Great Britain Street in Dublin laid out by Dr Bartholomew Mosse (1712-59) in 1749 offered entertainment to all, though from different sides of the fence, and were well supported by young and old. Alicia Synge visited them in 1749, Mary Delany in 1751, and Dorothea Herbert in 1779.³⁶⁹ Astley's Circus, established in Derby Square, Dublin in 1787 was another popular venue and Astley's was a frequent supporter of charitable organisations, particularly 'the orphans and destitute children of distressed free and accepted Masons' who memorialised it in song.³⁷⁰ Though Dubliners were well used to attending theatres, the display by Astleys in 1793 was considered 'the best he ever laid out'.³⁷¹ With what wonder did children view 'the new Custom-house, College-green, Light-house, and Giant's Causeway ... the dresses and music' and 'the most surprising part of the whole ... the ascent of the ca[r] over the lakes of Killarney, as the cause of its motion is undiscoverable.'³⁷²

Still children's attendance at the theatre was not uncontentious. Archbishop Synge recommended any of Shakespeare's plays running at The Theatre Royal, Smock Alley, Dublin as suitable for his daughter Alicia in 1750,³⁷³ while Mary Delany sought plays that exerted a moral judgement, that 'expose and punish vice and distinguish and reward virtue' in 1759.³⁷⁴ Given that the theatre was a controlled environment, it was therefore usually suitable for children, though they were often removed before the farce. Despite the fact that she was fifteen years-old, Lady Louisa Conolly considered Lady Harriet Hobart (1762-1805) still 'on the footing of a child' and deemed a visit to the Crow Street theatre, Dublin in 1777 as most appropriate.³⁷⁵

³⁶⁸ J. H. Plumb, 'The new world of children in eighteenth-century England', *Past and Present*, no. 67 (May, 1975) p. 86.

³⁶⁹ Legg (ed.), *The Synge letters*, p. 135; Day (ed.) *Letters from Georgian Ireland*, p. 264; Herbert, *Retrospections*, p. 46.

³⁷⁰ Br Connel, 'No 27, Song and chorus' in *A selection of Masonic songs* (Dublin, 1802). Derby Square proved too small and in 1794 Astley moved to a larger and permanent building erected in the grounds of the Molyneaux Asylum, Peter Street, Dublin. When Astley's closed the building was converted into a chapel, in communion with the Church of Ireland in 1815. W. J. Chetwode Crawley, 'The craft and its orphans in the eighteenth century' in *Ars Quatuor Coronatorum*, 23, (1910), pp 180-1, 183.

³⁷¹ *The Hibernian Journal*, 9 Jan. 1793.

³⁷² *Ibid.*

³⁷³ The tragedies performed were Richard III, Hamlet, Othello, Macbeth, Julius Caesar and Romeo and Juliet. *The Dublin Courant*, 9 Aug. 1750; Synge to Synge, 16 Oct. 1750, Legg (ed.), *The Synge letters*, p. 264.

³⁷⁴ Day (ed.), *Letters from Georgian Ireland*, p. 258.

³⁷⁵ Lady Harriet Hobart, eldest daughter of the second Earl of Buckingham, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland and niece on the Conolly side: Lady Louisa Conolly to Duchess of Kildare, 28 Jan. 1777, Fitzgerald (ed.), *Leinster correspondence*, iii, 249.

The experience of attending her first play, *The Beggars Opera*, launched eleven year-old Dorothea Herbert alternately into laughter and tears for which she was berated by her chaperone Mrs Fleming who declared 'it was quite against the rules of polite decorum' and 'betrayed a vulgar rusticity to laugh or cry at a Play House.'³⁷⁶ But crucially, there was a clear distinction between a girl attending leisure functions as 'a girl' who was 'not at present in the world', and one who had fully entered into society through their presentation at court or at Dublin Castle. As Peter Borsay observes, the former's function was to observe, not to participate.³⁷⁷

From mid-century the evidence indicates that adults and children spent more time engaging in leisure activities as a family or as a group, and that adults enjoyed it, a trend also identified by Plum and Borsay in England.³⁷⁸ The Marchioness of Kildare, some of her children (including six year-old Charles Fitzgerald (1756-1810)), and her sister all attended 'one of the prettiest pantomimes' at the Crow Street theatre in December 1762 and, delighted with their evening, they all later 'dined upon minced pies' at Lord Powerscourt's.³⁷⁹ Parents such as the gentry Mary-Anne Fortescue (1767-1849) frequently walked in company with her children Matt (1791-1845) and Anna (d. 1848) or brought them with her visiting, while William Drennan enjoyed the delight of his year-old son Thomas as they drove round the Phoenix Park in a jaunting car in celebration of his father's birthday.³⁸⁰

*Commercialising childhood, toys*³⁸¹

One of the most significant features of the nineteenth-century was the movement from a society with consumers to one defined by consumer culture and this included

³⁷⁶ Herbert, *Retrospections*, p. 48.

³⁷⁷ Peter Borsay, 'Children, adolescents and fashionable urban society in eighteenth-century England', Anja Müller (ed.), *Fashioning childhood in the eighteenth-century* (Aldershot, 2006), p. 56.

³⁷⁸ Plum, *The new world of children*, p. 85; Borsay, 'Children, adolescents and fashionable urban society', p. 62.

³⁷⁹ Marchioness of Kildare to Marquis of Kildare, 16 Dec. 1762, Fitzgerald (ed.), *Leinster correspondence*, i, 155-6.

³⁸⁰ Ross (ed.), 'The diary of Marianne Fortescue, 1797-1800' (1999), p. 373; William Drennan to Martha McTier, 25 May 1802, Agnew (ed.), *Drennan-McTier letters*, iii, 45.

³⁸¹ Few Irish children's toys have survived from the eighteenth-century. The 'Petticrew doll' purchased for Anne Petticrew (1724-1814) of Dublin and held in the National Museum of Ireland (NMI) is a fine example, but the quality and preservation of the dress suggests that it was for display and not played with. Two other eighteenth-century wooden dolls held by the museum are undressed and the crudeness of the decoration and carving of the faces suggest that they were of significantly lesser value and were played with. I am grateful to Alex Ward of the NMI for permitting access to these and many other 'childhood' artefacts.

children.³⁸² The commercialised and urbanised public leisure activities and newspaper advertisements that expanded during the eighteenth-century facilitated the development of this consumer culture in Ireland. Linda Pollock has observed that 'great progress was made in the manufacture and sale of toys during the sixteenth and seventeenth-centuries' and that more toys were specifically made and designed for children's use and sold in toy shops during the eighteenth.³⁸³ However, up until the eighteenth-century in Ireland, the word toy had no essential connection to childhood. Rather it was any petty or pretty commodity of little value.³⁸⁴ As late as 1791 Sam Birch advertised for the return of a 'small toy-set locket' with 'family hair' lost in a post-chaise.³⁸⁵ However, by the nineteenth-century the word 'toy' was clearly associated with childhood.³⁸⁶ Therefore, in line with Ireland's expanding economy a characteristic of eighteenth-century Ireland, there was the emergence and growth of toy shops, particularly from mid-century.

This is not to say that 'children's toys' were unavailable earlier. Clearly toys specific to children were. Quaker schoolboy Henry Pearce asked his aunt to send him 'a few casting tops, battle-boards and shuttle cocks' in 1745, as did Lady Sarah Bunbury in 1762, while Dorothea Herbert recalled a 'large alabaster doll' christened Miss Watts she played with when nine years-old in 1777.³⁸⁷ Similarly, young Elizabeth Leadbeater was so astonished and delighted with a present of a 'dressed' alabaster 'baby' in 1794 that 'she soon bit off its nose', much to her mother Mary's amusement.³⁸⁸ During the 1780s Meliora Adlercron consistently listed in her accounts payments for 'playthings', books and toys for her children.³⁸⁹

According to Gilbert, the passage known as Hell in Dublin was 'full of shops where toys and fireworks and kites ... were exposed for sale' and where Mary Ogle plied her trade as toy-seller in 1751.³⁹⁰ Similarly James McMullen opened a 'toy'

³⁸² Denisoff, 'Small change: the consumerist designs of the nineteenth-century child', p. 6.

³⁸³ Pollock, *A lasting relationship*, p. 135.

³⁸⁴ Michals, 'Experiments before breakfast', p. 32; The Victoria & Albert Museum http://www.vam.ac.uk/mochildrens_lives/education_creativity/educators_pre19/index.html [accessed 25 Oct 2007].

³⁸⁵ *Freeman's Journal*, 7 Apr. 1791.

³⁸⁶ Michals, 'Experiments before breakfast', p. 32.

³⁸⁷ Henry Pearce to Elizabeth Fuller, 14 Dec. 1745, Portf. 8 no. 27 (FHL); Lady Sarah Bunbury to Marchioness of Kildare, 18 Aug. [1762], Fitzgerald (ed.), *Leinster correspondence*, ii, 109; Herbert, *Retrospections*, p. 33.

³⁸⁸ Leadbeater, 'Diary of Mary Leadbeater', Lenox-conyngham (ed.), *Diaries of Ireland*, pp 95-6.

³⁸⁹ For example see entries for 29 May, 4 Aug., 24 Aug 1787, NLI, Adlercron diary 1782-94, Ms 4481.

³⁹⁰ Hell was a passage leading to the old Four Courts from Christ Church Lane, Dublin: Sir John T. Gilbert (ed.), *Calendar of ancient records of Dublin*, 7 (Dublin, 1898), i, 142.

shop outside North Gate in Cork city in 1751.³⁹¹ Even though these early shops advertised toys for sale, significantly they formed just one part of an eclectic mix of merchandise that embraced fabrics, handkerchiefs, fans, necklaces and ribbons, hardware, kitchen goods, 'sporting tacklway', pistols and, toys.³⁹² In 1764, John Baker of Dublin was not only a 'tooth-drawer' but also a 'dealer in toys'.³⁹³ By 1787, shops had become more specialised. That at 'No. 103 Grafton Street, Dublin' sold smaller, 'luxury' items such as jewellery and toys, dressing, writing and backgammon boxes, combs and tooth-brushes, and by 1798 George Binns opened The Pantheon Phusitechnikon, a toy and fancy goods store at 25/26 Stephen's Green, Dublin where he aggressively marketed his products including those for children.³⁹⁴

The fact that Lady Sarah Lennox ruefully remarked to her sister Emily living in France in 1778, 'so Lucy sighs for English dolls and the children in England sigh for French ones' highlights the influence children exerted on the growing consumerism that surrounded childhood during the eighteenth-century. The practical uses of 'play-things' that began with John Locke in 1693 was brought to fruition by Richard and Maria Edgeworth (1767/8-1849) in *Practical education* in 1798 who argued that toys be used to exercise children's senses and experiences.³⁹⁵ Rousseau, by contrast, disdained toys' for toys sake. The growing popularity of children's toys is also reflected in the official attitude adopted towards them. For example, in 1783, 3744 'toys for children' were imported into Ireland from Scotland and there was no duty payable on them.³⁹⁶ But by 1785, British toy goods imported into Ireland were rated at ten and a half per-cent on the value of the toy, while Irish toy goods exported to Great Britain incurred a duty of thirty-three per-cent, despite the fact that 'toy-making' provided employment to children in the Dublin Workhouse and Foundling Hospital.³⁹⁷ By 1806 Martha McTier remarked of her foster-son Thomas Drennan,

³⁹¹ *The Munster Journal*, 28 Jan. 1750-1.

³⁹² *Ibid.*; see also the *Freeman's Journal*, 6 Mar. 1764, 8 Sep. 1767.

³⁹³ *Freeman's Journal*, 6 Mar. 1764.

³⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 11 Jan. 1787; Adrian Le Harivel and Michael Wynne, *National Gallery of Ireland acquisitions 1982-1983* (Dublin, 1984), pp 46-7, Le Harivel and Wynne incorrectly attribute the establishment of The Pantheon Phusitechnikon to William Binns. See clarification in *Freeman's Journal* 5 Jul. 1806 and 4 Mar. 1809.

³⁹⁵ See Mary Clare Martin, 'Marketing religious identity: female educators, Methodist culture, and eighteenth-century childhood', Mary Hilton and Jill Shefrin (eds), *Educating the child in Enlightenment Britain, beliefs, cultures, practices* (Farnham, 2009), p. 68; R. L. Edgeworth and Maria Edgeworth, *Practical education* (3 vols, 2nd ed., London, 1801).

³⁹⁶ *Commons Jn. (Irl.)*, 1783, vol. 11, appendix dclxxxvii.

³⁹⁷ *Commons Jn. (Irl.)*, 1785, vol. 11, appendix dclxi; *ibid.*, 1798, vol. 17, appendix dxxxiii.

that he 'has a great number [of playthings], and he very proud of them'.³⁹⁸ By the nineteenth-century children had irrevocably entered the market as significant and persuasive consumers. This movement towards material possessions however also raised concerns and set the battle lines between parent and child and 'want' and 'need', the moral aspect of which was addressed by among many others, Maria Edgeworth in 'The purple jar' (1796).³⁹⁹

Although adults increasingly enjoyed children's company, correspondingly there was an identification of the child and their leisure or play-things as being separate from the adult world. But crucially, as Borsay observes, and it is an important point, 'far from widening the gap between childhood and adulthood', the participation of the young in the new world of urban social culture meant that 'the space that constituted the early years of a person's life was increasingly taken up in preparation for later life'.⁴⁰⁰ Within this framework therefore, the close integration of leisure and education as a concept of childhood within elite and gentry circles was not a direct challenge to the eighteenth-century ideology of productiveness, though the growing consumerism surrounding children and childhood as a market force in the nineteenth and twentieth-centuries would necessitate a re-ordering of the fundamental parent/child dynamics, their ideas about childhood and the commercial marketplace.

Reading books

Jean-Jacques Rousseau claimed that 'reading is the greatest plague of childhood',⁴⁰¹ yet a significant development during the eighteenth-century was the publication of books written and marketed specifically for children. Following on from an increase in the number of books available *about* children, were books *for* children. Thus books written for children and books chosen for children to read are both important markers in identifying the expectations of childhood in eighteenth-century Ireland, albeit only among those literate and able to afford the cost. As Roger Cox observes, though children's books were written by adults, they addressed their stories to children and within their literature expressed their views, hopes, fears and expectations of childhood.⁴⁰²

³⁹⁸ Martha McTier to William Drennan, 12 Mar. [1806], Agnew (ed.), *Drennan-McTier letters*, iii, 442.

³⁹⁹ Denisoff, 'Small change', Denisoff (ed.), *The nineteenth-century child and consumer culture*, p. 11.

⁴⁰⁰ Borsay, 'Children, adolescents and fashionable urban society in eighteenth-century England', p. 62.

⁴⁰¹ Boyd, *Émile for today*, p. 51.

⁴⁰² Cox, *Shaping childhood*.

According to Mary Hilton and Morag Styles there are ‘two highly significant dates for historians of children’s literature’; one the publication of John Locke’s *Some thoughts concerning education* in 1693, the other John Newbery’s (1713-67) publication in 1744 of *A little pretty pocket-book*, which is believed to be the first children’s book.⁴⁰³ However, Victor Watson has suggested that the controversy and debate provoked by Samuel Richardson’s (1689-1761) *Pamela* (1740) (which contained a long discussion of Locke’s *Some thoughts concerning education*) and the subsequent success of Richardson’s *Aesop’s fables* (1740) only occurred because people were already interested in obtaining story books specifically for children,⁴⁰⁴ the market was ready. Thus there was a movement towards a commercialised market for children’s literature that Newbery did not animate, only capitalised upon.

Locke proposed that children should read books ‘when their *minds* are *in tune and well-disposed* to it,’ that it should be a joy to them,⁴⁰⁵ a view endorsed by Rev. and Mary Delany in 1745.⁴⁰⁶ Reflecting the emphasis placed upon the work ethos Locke also cautioned that reading books should not be an excuse for idleness.⁴⁰⁷ Drawing heavily on Locke, children’s books were increasingly related to their developmental abilities and capacities but crucially they were still chosen by parents until the successful marketing strategies inaugurated by Newbery. Bishop Synge judged his fourteen year-old daughter Alicia ready to engage with ‘usefull books’;⁴⁰⁸ and at sixteen when, in his estimation she was sufficiently developed to ‘read for something more than present amusement’, he supplied a list of suitable books.⁴⁰⁹ But significantly, he also suggested she continue to read for pleasure. Synge’s justification for permitting Alicia to read books ‘in which may be found a multitude of things, of which I should be sorry you did approve’ is Lockean in motivation, his rationale being that by ‘knowing what they are’, Alicia ‘may like them the less.’⁴¹⁰

When Lady Frances Keightley advised her daughter in 1681 to read religious texts first and then books concerning history, classical literature and philosophy, she

⁴⁰³ Mary Hilton, Morag Styles and Victor Watson (eds), *Opening the nursery door, reading, writing and childhood 1600-1900* (London, 1997), p. 2.

⁴⁰⁴ Victor Watson, ‘Jane Johnson: a very pretty story to tell children’, Hilton, Styles and Watson (eds), *Opening the nursery door*, pp 41-3.

⁴⁰⁵ Locke, *Some thoughts concerning education*, pp 51-2, 114.

⁴⁰⁶ Day (ed.), *Letters from Georgian Ireland*, 17 Aug 1745, p. 192.

⁴⁰⁷ Locke, *Some thoughts concerning education*, p. 96.

⁴⁰⁸ Edward to Alicia, 28 Jul. 1747, Legg (ed.), *The Synge letters*, p. 63.

⁴⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 15 Aug. 1749, pp 151-2.

⁴¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 30 Jun. 1750, pp 209-10.

did not mention any titles particularly suitable to her childhood abilities and capacities.⁴¹¹ Similarly Locke suggested only two, Aesop's *Fables* and *Reynard the fox*, admitting that he was unaware of other books. Their views may reflect an unawareness on their own parts of children's literature, or that there was a paucity of books suitable for children entering the century.⁴¹² Crucially Locke saw the value of accompanied reading, whereby a child's interest was encouraged and their questions answered, hence children would find pleasure in reading and encouragement to do so.⁴¹³ The idea that books should 'delight and entertain a child' while also serving to educate them formed a crucial part of Locke's philosophy of childhood, though this aspect only came to full fruition fifty years later when it formed the rationale for the marketing cleverly exploited by Newbery. Newbery's books were specifically designed to appeal to children both in their production, marketing, and storyline and were widely available in Ireland.⁴¹⁴ Indeed, it has been speculated that Oliver Goldsmith wrote one of Newbery's best-selling books, *The history of little Goody Two-Shoes*, which went through numerous editions and remained in print until the nineteenth-century.⁴¹⁵ Indicative of their impact, Richard Edgeworth recounted spending Christmas 1752 at the Dewes house where the children spent their evenings reading Newbery's children's books.⁴¹⁶

Many earlier books such as the popular Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719)⁴¹⁷ were not written for children. However, children no doubt enjoyed the tales. Despite his mother's appreciation of Locke's philosophy, as an adult Richard Edgeworth felt his first reading books, the *Old Testament* and Aesop's *Fables*, were inappropriate to his ability and capacity as a six year-old and thus his understanding

⁴¹¹ Ashford, 'Advice to a daughter', pp 8-9, 22-3.

⁴¹² Locke, *Some thoughts concerning education*, pp 116-7. Aesop's *Fables* was published as a Latin/English translation schoolbook.

⁴¹³ Locke, *Some thoughts concerning education*, p. 117. However, Patricia Crain's on-going American research indicates that the practice of 'bedtime' reading did not emerge until the 1890s: Patricia Crain, H-NET List for History of Childhood and Youth discussion board, 20 Aug. 2011.

⁴¹⁴ See for example advertisement for 'the greatest variety of Newbery's entertaining books for children ever imported into this Kingdom': *Hibernian Journal*, 3 May 1771.

⁴¹⁵ Giles Jones, Griffith Jones, John Newbery, Oliver Goldsmith, *The history of little Goody two-shoes* (York, 1785). See also [Anonymous], *Goody two shoes; or the history of little Margery Meanwell in rhyme* (London, 1825).

⁴¹⁶ Edgeworth and Edgeworth, *Memoirs*, i, 54.

⁴¹⁷ Although commonly referred to as *Robinson Crusoe* the book's original title as it appeared on the title page of the first edition is: *The Life and Strange Surprizing Adventures of Robinson Crusoe, of York, Mariner: Who lived Eight and Twenty Years, all alone in an un-inhabited Island on the Coast of America, near the Mouth of the Great River of Oroonoke; Having been cast on Shore by Shipwreck, wherein all the Men perished but himself. With An Account how he was at last as strangely deliver'd by Pyrates* (London, 1719).

of them was confused.⁴¹⁸ But as the century progressed, children increasingly enjoyed the escapades of Tommy Merton and Henry (Harry) Sandford in Thomas Day's (1748-1789) *The history of Sandford and Merton* (1783)⁴¹⁹ and probably skipped over the philosophical and moralizing parts. It is interesting to note that this bestselling children's book began as a contribution to Richard and Honora Edgeworth's collection of short stories for children, *Harry and Lucy*⁴²⁰ which were based on their experiences raising their family in Ireland.

Though *The history of Sandford and Merton* appeared in three volumes, like the children's books increasingly entering the market, they offered their child readers an 'approved' interpretation of the social and physical world around them. Consistently, the point of the story was the character's transition into adulthood bound within a moralizing tale. Reflecting the popularity of the story and a shift in emphasis within children's literature to more child centred storylines, subsequent reprints of *The history of Sandford and Merton* were condensed and abridged, and the sections on educational philosophy (based on Rousseau's principles) removed. The relationship between the children Tommy and Harry took centre stage, and the book remained in print until the end of the nineteenth-century.

But was reading confined to elite and gentry children only? What books were available to peasant or pauper children? As Máire Kennedy observes for certain classes in eighteenth-century Ireland, 'reading was functional' and not a leisure activity⁴²¹ and this applied particularly to peasant and pauper children. Although Antonia McManus⁴²² has identified books in use by children of all ages in hedge schools such as *The life and adventures of James Freney* (1754),⁴²³ *Irish rogues and rapparees*,⁴²⁴ *Fair Rosamond*,⁴²⁵ and *The seven champions of Christendom*,⁴²⁶ these

⁴¹⁸ Edgeworth and Edgeworth, *Memoirs*, i, 22-3.

⁴¹⁹ Thomas Day, *The history of Sandford and Merton, a work intended for the use of children* (3 vols, 10th ed., London, 1801).

⁴²⁰ Honora Edgeworth died in April 1780. Richard L. Edgeworth, *Harry and Lucy: a tale for instruction and amusement of youth* (1805) was continued and added to in later years by his daughter Maria.

⁴²¹ Máire Kennedy, 'Women and reading in eighteenth-century Ireland', Bernadette Cunningham and Máire Kennedy (eds), *The experience of reading: Irish historical perspectives* (Dublin, 1999), p. 79.

⁴²² Antonia McManus, *The Irish hedge school and its books, 1695-1831* (Dublin, 2006).

⁴²³ *The life and adventures of James Freney, commonly called Captain Freney. From the time of his first entering the highway, in Ireland, to the time of his surrender, ... Written by himself* (Dublin, 1754).

⁴²⁴ J. Cosgrave, *A genuine history of the lives and actions of the most notorious Irish highwaymen, tories and rapparees, from Redmond O Hanlon, ... to Cahier na Gappul, ... to which is added, the gold-finder: or, the history of Manus Mconiel,...* (3rd ed., Dublin, 1747).

⁴²⁵ *The history of fair Rosamond, mistress to Henry II and Jane Shore, concubine to Edward IV. ... Extracted from eminent records, and the whole illustrated with cuts ...* (London, 1775).

were not books designed for children and cannot be seen as manifestations of the development of a concept of childhood outside the educational field. Thus given the scarcity of evidence concerning peasant and pauper children's lives it must be presumed that they continued to rely on the oral tradition, only reading whatever became available to them for reading's sake.

Although different genres of children's books emerged as the century progressed, as Hilton and Styles remark 'novels for and about children were increasingly written to both describe and define their proper roles, upbringing and conduct.'⁴²⁷ Most notable is Sarah Fielding's (1710-68) *The governess*, first published in London and Dublin in 1749.⁴²⁸ The necessity for submissiveness in children, especially female children was outlined and reinforced in books such as John Aiken and Anna Letitia Barbauld's *Evenings at home* (1792)⁴²⁹ which the Edgeworth family read and admired,⁴³⁰ and Sarah Trimmer's (1741-1810) *Fabulous histories* (1786)⁴³¹ which were not only available in Ireland, but also printed there. Being 'highly Lockean in style' and read in 'easy stages,' these books also serve to illustrate the enduring appeal of Locke's educational philosophy.⁴³²

The lack of references to children's books in early eighteenth-century Irish correspondence strongly suggests that not much literature was then available specifically for children. But by the beginning of the nineteenth-century, Martha McTier could write knowledgeably of suitable books her nephews engaged with. For example in 1803 she berated her sister-in-law for expecting her son Thomas to be

⁴²⁶ Richard Johnson, *The most famous history of the seaven champions of Christendome: Saint George of England, Saint Dennis of France, Saint James of Spaine, Saint Anthonie of Italie, Saint Andrew of Scotland, Saint Patricke of Ireland, and Saint David of Wales. Shewing their honourable battailes by sea and land: their tilts, jousts, and turnaments for ladies: their combats with giants, monsters, and dragons: their adventures in forraine nations; their inchauntments in the holie land: their knighthoods, prowess, and chivalrie, in Europe, Affrica, and Asia, with their victories against the enemies of Christ* (part 1, London, 1596); Richard Johnson, *The second part of the famous history of the seaven champions of Christendome. Likewise shewing the princely prowess of Stain Georges three sonnes, the lively sparke of nobilitie. With many other memorial atchivements worthy the gold spurres of knighthood* (part 2, London, 1597). The first Dublin edition listed in the ESTC was printed by Luke Dillon in 1735 and *The seven champions of Christendom* remained in print until 1800.

⁴²⁷ Mary Hilton, 'Introduction', Hilton, Styles and Watson (eds), *Opening the nursery door*, p. 5.

⁴²⁸ Sarah Fielding, *The governess; or, the little female academy, being the history of Mrs Teachum, and her nine girls, with their nine days amusement. Calculated for the entertainment and instruction of young ladies in their education* (London, 1749) (Dublin, 1749).

⁴²⁹ Aiken and Barbauld, *Evenings at home*.

⁴³⁰ Maria Edgeworth to Mrs Ruxton, 8 May 1794; Maria Edgeworth to Sophy Ruxton, 27 Feb. 1796, Augustus J.C. Hare (ed.), *The life and letters of Maria Edgeworth in two volumes*, (New York, 1971), i, 35, 46.

⁴³¹ Mrs [Sarah] Trimmer, *Fabulous histories, designed for the instruction of children, respecting their treatment of animals* (London, 1786) (Dublin, 1786).

⁴³² Fletcher, *Growing up in England*, p. 8.

interested in 'moral' tales and 'old Aesop', remarking that 'they may suit your doctor's taste but will never bring on my boy or any other in reading'.⁴³³ Demonstrating a clear understanding of children's abilities and capacities and a well-defined understanding of childhood, she recommended tales that began, 'there was a little boy – a very little boy, for if he had been a big boy ...', using language that children understood and words they could spell.⁴³⁴ Even though children's literature had come a long way from the religious texts of the early eighteenth-century, through Defoe's tales of wonder and adventure, to stories written and marketed specifically for children, in line with the emergence of a consumerist culture, by the nineteenth-century the moral was inextricably interwoven with the tale of amusement. As the anonymous author of *Goody two-shoes in rhyme* anticipated in 1825:

the history of Mrs Margery may continue to instil precepts of activity, gentleness, and morality; that it may enliven and animate the rising generation, and lead them forward in the practice of those virtues that at once ensure respect and success through life.⁴³⁵

CONCLUSION

It is evident that there was both change and continuity in the concepts of childhood and raising children that operated in Ireland throughout the eighteenth-century. In the first half of the century the influences flowed from parent to child and thus the adult world defined the child's, but by the second half, the child was becoming increasingly its own agent of change, albeit still reliant on adult protection and maintenance.

Maternalism or, the maternal instinct linked to maternity and biological reproduction identified by Patricia Crawford, was visible in the seventeenth-century and entering the eighteenth⁴³⁶ but became more defined as the century progressed. Significantly, within this maternalism women took the initiative in creating an important role for themselves and it is clear that 'for many motherhood was imbued with great joy and fulfilment,' breast-feeding became the 'touchstone of maternal virtue' and mothers expected to 'revel in the joy of their children' and their time with

⁴³³ Martha McTier to Sarah Drennan, 4 Nov. [1803], Agnew (ed.), *Drennan-McTier letters*, iii, 167.

⁴³⁴ *Ibid.*, 167-8.

⁴³⁵ *Goody two shoes; or the history of little Margery Meanwell in rhyme*, p. vi.

⁴³⁶ Patricia Crawford, 'The construction and experience of maternity in seventh-century England', Fildes (ed.), *Women as mothers in pre-industrial England*, p. 3.

them.⁴³⁷ As Linda Pollock observes 'children cemented a match, bonding the couple more firmly and making separation and the disruption of family alliances more unlikely.'⁴³⁸ Even if maternal breast-feeding was favoured in response to the increasing displays of parental affection evident from mid-century, yet ambivalence towards wet-nursing remained.

Though there was a clear and legal concept of childhood – the legal protection and maintenance due all children under common and civil law – by mid-century, not only was it determined by age and sex, but more importantly societal attitudes frequently militated against its implementation. Crucially, Blackstone's legal treatise re-categorised childhood and sub-divided children into legitimate and illegitimate heirs and beings, which categorisations served to reinforce the moral judgement of a class bound society towards those beneath and above them.

The social, moral and economic hardships of eighteenth-century life left many destitute pregnant single women little choice but to engage in abandonment or infanticide and while James Kelly argues that infanticide 'was first and foremost a means of controlling 'illegitimacy' rather than fertility,'⁴³⁹ even so the economic hardships many families operated under and the decisions forced on them as a result cannot be ignored when exploring these gendered phenomena. Even within the higher social orders, unlike men most women could not acknowledge their illegitimate children without risking their social and financial positions. Undoubtedly vulnerable children were exploited, particularly on city streets, but the alacrity with which the populace dispensed their own punishment suggests a concern and desire to afford children some protection.

The ideology of parenthood and the expectations of childhood were inextricably linked and both developed slowly over the course of the century in line with the proliferation of childrearing manuals which was a significant development of the Enlightenment. The expansion of the print trade in Ireland during the eighteenth-century facilitated the articulation of and clarification of new ideas about parenting and as members of the Anglophone world Irish parents had ready access to these ideas. Thinkers and writers such as Locke, Rousseau, Buchan, Nelson and the Edgeworths, 'whose account of the nature of childhood went through specific stages',

⁴³⁷ Fletcher, *Growing up in England*, pp 39, 101.

⁴³⁸ Linda Pollock, 'Embarking on a rough passage: the experience of pregnancy in early-modern society', Fildes (ed.), *Women as mothers in pre-industrial England*, p.40

⁴³⁹ Kelly, 'Infanticide', p. 7.

defined, redefined and heavily influenced parenting and societal attitudes towards children over the course of the century.⁴⁴⁰ As Fletcher astutely observes, from 1600 to 1914 parental responsibility was viewed as training the child for ‘manhood’ or ‘womanhood’ – thus what Locke and others made explicit permitted parents to form and mould the child.⁴⁴¹ As a consequence, parents had progressively higher standards to be measured against and their parenting skills, particularly mothers, were increasingly judged by the social performance of their children, especially their daughters. Consequently, as the eighteenth-century progressed childrearing operated more and more in the public arena.

As S. J. Conolly observes, the growth of landed and commercial wealth and ‘the penetration of a provincial society by metropolitan standards of taste and refinement’ helped develop a ‘new concept of gentility’ and a retrenchment from provincial recreation and cultural forms.⁴⁴² Though Locke urged parents to shield children from the evil and vices of the world, the expansion of leisure activities and the display of females meant children acquired a far more public role than before. But crucially the role between observer and participant was strictly maintained, reinforcing the notion of the separateness of childhood.⁴⁴³ The expansion of girls’ ‘schools’, particularly in the latter half of the century, filled the gap between domestic instruction in the ‘arts of polite living’ and the observation and practise of those arts.⁴⁴⁴ The ultimate aim of parental endeavour was the production of a ‘marriageable’ son or daughter. As Borsay remarks, ‘marriage was after all, the single most important mechanism in Georgian Britain for establishing status.’⁴⁴⁵ For eighteenth-century Irish parents and children, should they survive childhood, this was their goal.

The expansion of leisure from mid-century facilitated the emergence of the consumerist culture of the late eighteenth-century, and one of the most significant developments was the identification with and absorption of children within that culture. The increasing publication of children’s books served to provoke or revive an interest in children and by the close of the century children’s literature was a

⁴⁴⁰ Fletcher, *Growing up in England*, p. 50.

⁴⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴² Sean Conolly, ‘Ag deanamh commanding:’ elite responses to popular culture, 1660-1850’, James S. Donnelly Jr. and Kerby A. Miller (eds), *Irish popular culture 1650-1850* (Dublin, 1998), pp 22-3.

⁴⁴³ Borsay, ‘Children, adolescents and fashionable urban society’, pp 58-9.

⁴⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pp 57-8. See also part four, The education of children.

⁴⁴⁵ Borsay, ‘Children, adolescents and fashionable urban society’, p. 61.

recognised and extremely marketable genre. In this respect, eighteenth-century children were slowly but irrevocably becoming their own agents of change while laying the foundations for the child as consumer apparent in the nineteenth.

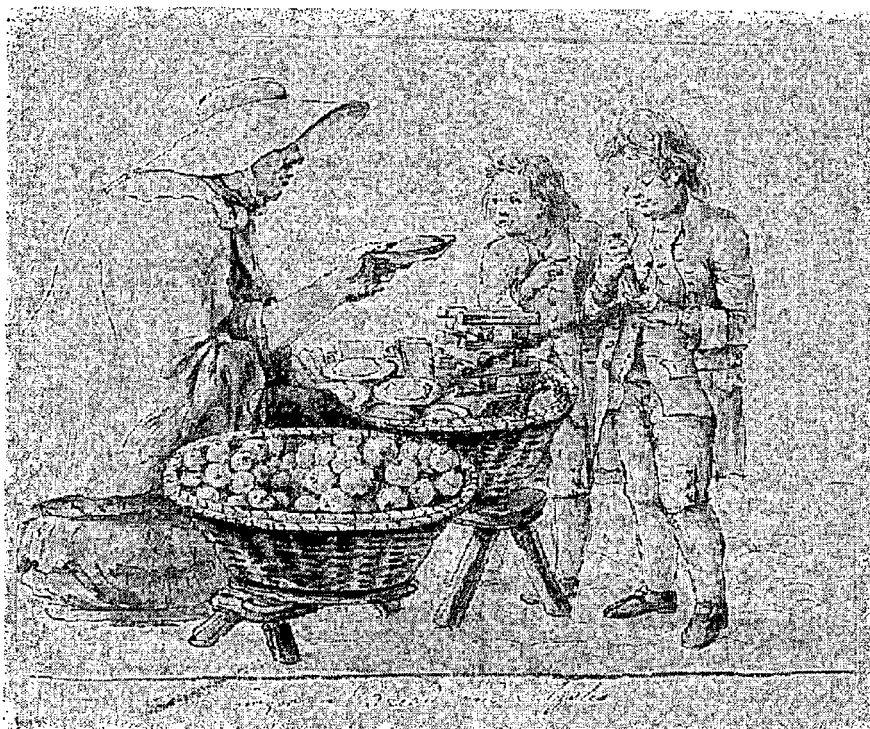


Fig. 1.1: Ginger bread and apples, 1760, Hugh Douglas Hamilton (1740-1808)
Source: William Laffan (ed.), *The cries of Dublin*, (Dublin, 2003), p. 155.

PART TWO

CHILDREN AND HEALTH IN THE DOMESTIC ENVIRONMENT

Section I Promoting children's health

Section II The medical treatment of children

Section III 'Diseases most incident to children'

CHILDREN AND HEALTH IN THE 'DOMESTIC ENVIRONMENT'

*'I terrify her with the fear of illness as much as possible,
and hope to save her from it'*

Lady Sarah Bunbury

12 August 1776.¹

INTRODUCTION

Lady Sarah Bunbury's comment concerning her eight year-old daughter captures the fear with which eighteenth-century parents regarded ill-health, and the particular concern expressed with respect to children. While it is adults who dominate the historical record, and indeed the majority of academic works dealing with this period, children as a demographic group were more susceptible to ill health. At the end of the seventeenth-century, children's disorders were little addressed, but by the mid eighteenth-century, writers such as William Cadogan and William Buchan² commented specifically on the numbers of children that died young. As a result, though children's health was a major preoccupation for parents in eighteenth-century Ireland, it operated in a less than informed environment and families faced formidable health issues when negotiating childhood. Parents worked hard to keep their children healthy but children became ill and medical knowledge was crucial to their survival. But who provided it and how did parents access it? How did parents and families respond to children's disorders such as fevers and smallpox?

Using examples from letters, medical books and official reports this part examines parental and 'medical' attitudes towards children's disease, the diagnoses, prognoses, treatments and preventions that were available to and accessed by elite, middling, peasant or pauper families. Evidence is provided from across Ireland's eighteenth-century social order and geography, from elite families such as the Leinsters, gentry families such as Cooke and Adlercron, and professional middle class

¹ Lady Sarah Bunbury to Duchess of Leinster, 12 Aug. 1776, Fitzgerald (ed.), *Leinster correspondence*, ii, 193.

² Buchan, *Domestic medicine*, (6th ed., Dublin, 1777). To identify Buchan's changing attitudes, three editions of *Domestic medicine* were referred to for this part, the 3rd 1774 and the 6th 1777, both Dublin editions, and the 19th London edition of 1805, hereafter referred to as *Domestic medicine* (6th ed.), *Domestic medicine* (3rd ed.), or *Domestic medicine* (19th ed.).

families such as the Drennans, while smallpox inoculation is illustrative of peasant families' slow but sure absorption into the wider medical model.

It cannot be claimed that the picture painted is complete. Medicine in eighteenth-century Ireland was hierarchically structured and there are significant gaps in the historical record. Nevertheless, with the exception of childbirth in the Lying-in Hospital, as children's medical care was home based, many of the points made are relevant to those less well off. As William Bynum has noted the eighteenth-century was 'a time of impressive medical entrepreneurialism',³ but how relevant is this judgement when applied to children in Ireland?

SECTION I: PROMOTING CHILDREN'S HEALTH

Children's health – 'God's precious gift'

Despite the ubiquity of childhood death and disease, parents went to great lengths to keep their offspring healthy during the eighteenth-century. As early as 1693 John Locke stressed the advantages of good health and outlined his own rules for

Fig. 2.1: John Locke's rules for good health in children

Plenty of open air, exercise, and sleep.
Follow a plain diet, no wine or strong drink.
Very little or no physic.
Clothing not too warm or straight.
The head and feet especially to be kept cold.
The feet to be often used to cold water and exposed to wet.

Source: John Locke, *Some thoughts concerning education* (1693), Ruth W. Grant and Nathan Tarcov (eds) (Indiana, 1996), p. 25.

promoting this in children (figure 2.1).⁴ Echoing the sentiments of Locke and Rousseau, William Buchan argued that it was within childhood that the foundations of adult health were laid.⁵ Indicative of the

seriousness with which parents, from the elite Leinsters to the professional middle-class Drennans took their children's health are the therapies they pursued to maintain it. These included fresh air, exercise, cold baths and sea bathing, and it is these health-promoting regimes that are explored in this section.

All families, elite, gentry, middling, peasant or pauper were acutely conscious not only of how illness could become a financial burden and 'a very great addition to

³ William Bynum, *The history of medicine, a very short introduction* (Oxford, 2008), p. 41.

⁴ Locke, *Some thoughts concerning education*, p. 25.

⁵ Buchan, *Domestic medicine* (6th ed.).

their [children's] expense',⁶ but also of the physical vulnerability of their children, and in the main sought proactively to maintain and promote their children's healthy development. In 1756, James Nelson advised parents to 'have an eye to their [children's] health, at the same time that they study their interest and prosperity'.⁷ As Tony Farmar notes, the non-naturals, diet, sleep, exercise, calmness of mind and control of the passions, were the essential 'bedrock of health',⁸ and throughout the eighteenth-century writers as varied as John Locke, Thomas Moffet,⁹ William Buchan and A. F. M. Willich (fl. 1776)¹⁰ consistently drew parents' attention to them in their medical works.

Fresh, open air, even in winter, was considered to be of 'great advantage to everyone's health', especially children's, and girls – 'without prejudicing their complexions' – would be 'stronger and healthier' for it, claimed Locke.¹¹ Well aware of the social and financial constraints many eighteenth-century parents operated under, Buchan excused the ill health of the poor who were bound by necessity to live in towns or institutions where the confined, unwholesome and pernicious air was 'destructive' and poisonous to children. But he refused this excuse to elite and middling families. Instead, elite mothers such as Emily Duchess of Leinster were encouraged to see that their children obtained a daily and sufficient airing.¹²

Moving children to lodgings in the country was deemed especially beneficial either during or after an illness, and there are numerous references to this in family correspondence. William Drennan observed in 1799 that Thomas, nephew to Mrs Orr was sent to the country to recover fully from the measles,¹³ while his own son William, suffering from a severe cough and debility, was taken by his mother and nursemaid Betty to 'cheap, dry and convenient lodgings' in Marino outside Dublin.

⁶ Lady Louisa Conolly to Duchess of Leinster, 23 May 1775, Fitzgerald (ed.), *Leinster correspondence*, iii, 133.

⁷ Nelson, *An essay on the government of children* (2nd ed.), p. 126.

⁸ Tony Farmar, *Patients, potions & physicians: a social history of medicine in Ireland* (Dublin, 2004), p. 3.

⁹ Thomas Moffet, *Health's improvement: or rules comprizing and discovering the nature, method and manner of preparing all sorts of foods used in this nation* (London, 1746).

¹⁰ Anthony Florian Madinger Willich, *Lectures on diet and regimen: being a systematic inquiry into the most rational means of preserving health and prolonging life* (London, 1800).

¹¹ Locke, *Some thoughts concerning education*, p 14.

¹² Buchan, *Domestic medicine* (3rd ed.), p. 24.

¹³ William Drennan to Martha McTier [8 Jun. 1799], Agnew (ed.), *Drennan-McTier letters*, ii, 511.

Here they remained for the month of August 1803 recuperating and taking the fresh sea air.¹⁴

Yet, in England, according to James Nelson writing in 1756, sending a child to ‘recuperate’ in fresh country air was an excuse often availed of by fathers to banish their children from their city homes. There is no evidence however that this particular attitude was widespread in Ireland.¹⁵ Still, Nelson highlighted the real danger that a country situation could easily become ‘a worse evil than what the child has left behind’, because of the negative effects of bad nursing in the absence of parental supervision.¹⁶

The perceived benefits of fresh country or sea air for children remained a constant throughout the eighteenth-century and became so popular, and the benefits so apparent that by the latter part of the eighteenth-century even institutional governors adopted the practice with significant benefits to children’s health.¹⁷

While fresh air was seen as advantageous, Buchan promoted children’s exercise as both a preventative and a cure. James Mackenzie (1680?-1761) cautioned that it should be moderate, for ‘too little would bloat ... and make [children] short breathed’ while too much would ‘waste their strength’.¹⁸ By contrast, Nelson extolled its many virtues:

exercise affords the most natural and the most comfortable warmth to our whole frame that can be. Exercise makes the blood and other juices circulate with freedom; prevents the mischief too often arising from stagnation, and throws off the redundant matter through the pores of the skin by insensible perspiration. And exercise too, greatly contributes to the flow of spirits, that lively pleasing air and chearful [sic] countenance so essential to our happiness.¹⁹

Given its perceived health benefits, Irish parents actively encouraged their children to engage in some form of outdoor physical exercise such as dancing, walking, riding and even playing cricket.²⁰ Nevertheless not all children were enthusiastic participants. Trying to clear twelve year-old Lord William Fitzgerald of ‘bad

¹⁴ William Drennan to Martha McTier, 31 Aug. [1803], Agnew (ed.), *Drennan-McTier letters*, iii, 138.

¹⁵ Nelson, *An essay on the government of children*, pp 87-8.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ The improvement and consequent reduction in institutional child mortality is addressed in part three.

¹⁸ James Mackenzie, *The history of health and the art of preserving it: or, an account of all that has been recommended by physician’s and philosophers* (Dublin, 1759), p. 257.

¹⁹ Nelson, *An essay on the government of children*, p. 90.

²⁰ Marchioness of Kildare to Marquis of Kildare, 17 Aug. [1761], Fitzgerald (ed.), *Leinster correspondence* i, 103; Edward to Alicia, 3 Jun. 1747, Legg (ed.), *The Synge letters*, pp 34-5.

humours in his blood', Surgeon Adair urged the Duchess of Leinster to encourage him to 'use exercise and eat less', suggesting that a horse be kept for him since 'he don't use the common exercise of boys in running about and playing at cricket, ball or any of those stirring amusements'.²¹

Besides exercise, elite and middling families in Ireland also used the cold bath as a means of strengthening children's constitutions. First promoted by John Locke in 1693,²² belief in the merits of cold baths persisted throughout the eighteenth-century. Suggesting that this was already an established practice among Irish but not English families in the late seventeenth-century, Locke observed that Irish infants:

as tender as they are thought, may without any danger endure bathing not only of their feet, but of their whole bodies, in cold water.²³

Both Buchan in *Domestic medicine* and Michael Underwood in *Treatise on the diseases of children* (1789) also promoted the cold bath as a regime beneficial to children's overall health, whereas James Nelson recommended it in 1756 as a treatment for rickets.²⁴ Three month-old Thomas Drennan 'although thin', was dipped each morning in a bucket of cold water in 'the open air' by his nurse Betty,²⁵ and following his birth, his brother, William was also quickly introduced to the cold bath. All medical writers cautioned against cold bathing when a child was feverish, and indicative of parental fears of inducing ill-health, Thomas Drennan's cold baths were halted but swiftly resumed when his teething 'fevers' finished. Thomas probably objected loudly to these immersions as it was only in 1803 that his aunt and foster-mother Martha McTier reported approvingly that 'he is now completely ducked and with very little reluctance every morning just once'.²⁶ The hardy Thomas would then go 'beyond the middle' into a bucket of cold water every morning 'without a whimper'.²⁷

To prevent the child taking cold, Underwood recommended adding salt to the cold bath water. Acting as a 'stimulus on the skin', it would, he counselled,

²¹ Marchioness of Kildare to Marquis of Kildare, 17 Aug. [1761], Fitzgerald (ed.), *Leinster correspondence*, i, 103

²² Locke, *Some thoughts concerning education*, p. 25.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

²⁴ Nelson, *An essay on the government of children*, pp 92-3.

²⁵ William Drennan to Martha McTier [18 Aug. 1801], Agnew (ed.), *Drennan-McTier letters*, ii, 722.

²⁶ Martha McTier to William Drennan [2 Aug. 1803], *ibid.*, iii, 133.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

strengthen the constitution and also help to cleanse the pores.²⁸ The Fortescue children of Drumcar, county Louth began their lives being bathed at home in a tub of salt water, a routine that continued into their teenage years when they began bathing in the sea.²⁹ If circumstances such as teething, sickness and so forth prevented recourse to the cold bath, drinking ‘a little salt water mixed with fresh (a teacupful) every second morning’ was considered beneficial.³⁰

It is noteworthy that proactive interventions like cold baths and inoculation both generated heated debate among physicians concerning the proper age or season for them to be carried out. Underwood recommended that cold baths should only begin when children were between three to four months old, not from birth as some nurses insisted, and only in accordance with the child’s constitution and in the proper season.³¹ Noting that some nurses considered ‘three, seven, nine, or the like’ dips proper, Buchan suggested that the ‘child should be dipt [sic] only once at a time, taken out immediately and have its skin well rubbed with a dry cloth’, a view endorsed by Underwood.³² While these debates may have undermined some parents’ confidence in their own medical capacities and decision-making processes, they were also indicative of increasing attempts by physicians to centralise medical advice and gain more patient control among their emerging profession.

Although, according to Lady Caroline Holland writing in 1763, Irish doctors were not generally in favour of sea bathing,³³ it was an exercise extensively engaged in and promoted by many Irish parents as evidenced by the development of bathing resorts, such as that at Irishtown.³⁴ Despite medical reservations, sea bathing among elite and gentry families gained in popularity during the second half of the eighteenth-century. Before proceeding to Bath to take the waters there, Lady Portarlington rested at Swansea for six weeks so her children could bathe in the sea.³⁵

²⁸ Michael Underwood, *A treatise on the diseases of children with general directions for the management of infants from their birth* (London, 1789), p. 88; William Drennan to Martha McTier, 15 Jul. 1803, Agnew (ed.), *Drennan-McTier letters*, iii, 126-7; Martha McTier to William Drennan, 13 Jul. [1804], *ibid.*, iii, 237.

²⁹ Ross (ed.), ‘The Diary of Marianne Fortescue’ (1999), pp 360-61 (2000), p. 492.

³⁰ William Drennan to Martha McTier [n.d., 1803], Agnew (ed.), *Drennan-McTier letters*, iii, 122.

³¹ Underwood, *A treatise on the diseases of children*, pp 85-7.

³² Buchan, *Domestic medicine* (3rd ed.), pp 23-4.

³³ Lady Holland to Marchioness of Kildare, 8 May 1763, Fitzgerald (ed.), *Leinster correspondence*, i, 371; Lady Louisa Conolly to Duchess of Leinster, 27 Sep. 1783, *ibid.*, iii, 368.

³⁴ NAI, Pembroke Estate Collection, 97/46/1:97/46/2; James Kelly, ‘Drinking the waters: Balneotherapeutic medicine in Ireland, 1660-1850,’ *Studia Hibernica*, 34 (2007-8).

³⁵ Clark (ed.), *Gleanings*, ii, 153.

Like the cold bath and sea bathing, sea air was also encouraged as an aid to restoring the constitution and promoting good health. In 1803, James Kennedy took matters into his own hands and brought his ailing second son who had been given up on by his physicians to Hollywood, county Down. The bracing sea air of the county Down shoreline had the desired effect and James was soon eating oysters and beef.³⁶ During the summer, the Drennan family in Dublin either took lodgings for a fortnight or a daily jaunting car to Marino to bathe the children in the sea,³⁷ while the Leinster family repaired to their villa Frascati at Blackrock in south county Dublin to avail of sea-bathing there, a tradition continued by the second duchess, Emilia.³⁸

Lady Leitrim also took her children on a regular basis to stay in Marino, county Dublin.³⁹ She wrote delightedly to her husband in October 1809 how 'very thankful' she was to see her four children so well and happy following their stay, 'their colds nearly gone ... a little stuffing in their heads, but no cough'.⁴⁰ Accompanied by their mother, the Leitrim children were brought daily to the beach and despite the cold October weather 'went into the sea with great delight' returning home to eat 'immense dinners' after their day.⁴¹

Although there are infrequent references to children visiting spas to bathe or drink the waters, the Duchess of Kildare brought her consumptive seven year-old son Lord Charles to Malvern in Worcestershire for a month in June 1763 to take the waters there⁴² before moving to Bristol so that her ten year-old daughter Lady Harriet (1753-63) could bathe in its waters.⁴³ The expense incurred in making such journeys was considerable, but is indicative of the level of concern and anxiety the Duchess had for her children. Even if the best treatment was to visit and bathe in spa waters, the alternative – bottled spa water – was also considered beneficial to health; seventeen year-old Alicia Synge took salts and drank 'the German spa' to counteract the 'little eruptions, to which [she] was subject' in 1750.⁴⁴

³⁶ Martha McTier to William Drennan, 18 Jul. [1803], Agnew (ed.), *Drennan-McTier letters*, iii, 128

³⁷ See letters Mar. to Jun. 1802 and Jun. to Jul. 1803, Agnew (ed.), *Drennan-McTier letters*, iii.

³⁸ Lord Edward Fitzgerald to Duchess of Leinster, 8 Sep. 1783, Fitzgerald (ed.), *Leinster correspondence*, ii, 42.

³⁹ Her brother-in-law Lord Charlemont had a residence there and this no doubt influenced her choice.

⁴⁰ Lady Leitrim to Earl Leitrim, 27 Oct. 1809 (NLI, Killadoon [Leitrim] Family Papers, Ms 36033/1).

⁴¹ Lady Leitrim to Earl Leitrim, 26 Oct. to 30 Oct 1809, *ibid.*

⁴² Lady Holland to Marchioness of Kildare, 4 Jun., 25 Jun. 1763, Fitzgerald (ed.), *Leinster correspondence*, i, 374, 379.

⁴³ Lady Holland to Marchioness of Kildare, 15 Jul. [1763], *ibid.*, i, 382.

⁴⁴ Edward to Alicia, 28 Jul. 1750, Legg (ed.), *The Synge letters*, p. 223.

To cleanse her recuperating son's blood, Mrs Cherry Price brought him, 'a sweet boy between five and six years old', to 'The Goat's Whey', a dreary wild spot with no tree, hedge or bush about five miles from Mount Panther in the north of Ireland in 1760 where he not only drank Ballynahinch Spa Waters – 'a chalybeate in this neighbourhood' – but also embarked on a course of goat's whey⁴⁵ which was described flatteringly as 'the greatest sweetner of the blood that can be'.⁴⁶

But despite the obvious benefits of these health-promoting therapies the experience was not universally positive. Eighteenth-century children were still vulnerable to sickness and disease. Marianne Fortescue spent an anxious night watching over her eight year-old son Matt who was unwell having had 'too much exercise'.⁴⁷ Yet the majority opinion was represented by Martha McTier who wrote enthusiastically from Cabin Hill near Belfast to their father about the exuberant and healthy delight Thomas and William Drennan took in playing in the surrounding fields during haymaking. The fresh air and sunshine had made five year-old Thomas look 'like a Creole' while four year-old William, just recovered from hives, was, she remarked ruefully, covered with insect bites from spending time playing and hiding under the hay!⁴⁸

Thus throughout the eighteenth-century parents worked proactively to ensure their children remained healthy. But despite these measures, children did become ill. Although eminent physicians such as Hermann Boerhaave (1668-1738) increasingly challenged the previously 'sound' Galenic theory, parents themselves were acutely aware of the fallibility of the available medicines and medical advice. As Ginnie Smith notes, 'prudence dominated the latter half of the eighteenth-century';⁴⁹ health promotion measures were encouraged and parents and physicians were 'prepared to take few risks like using unknown potions',⁵⁰ especially in relation to children. Despite these views, the eighteenth-century saw a closer involvement of medical men in the diagnosis, prognosis and treatment of children's illnesses. The emergence of a significant body of medical works dedicated to children's needs (from mid-century

⁴⁵ Day (ed.), *Letters from Georgian Ireland*, 11 Jul. 1760, p. 229.

⁴⁶ James Kelly (ed.), *The letters of Lord Chief Baron Edward Willes to the Earl of Warwick 1852-62. An account of Ireland in the mid-eighteenth century* (Aberystwyth, 1990), p. 40.

⁴⁷ Ross (ed.), 'The Diary of Marianne Fortescue', pp 222-48.

⁴⁸ Martha McTier to William Drennan [5 Jul. 1806], Agnew (ed.), *Drennan-McTier letters*, iii, 503.

⁴⁹ Ginnie Smith, 'Prescribing the rules of health: Self-help and advice in the late eighteenth century', Roy Porter (ed.), *Patients and practitioners: lay perceptions of medicine in pre-industrial society* (Cambridge, 2002), p. 264.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

increasingly published in Ireland), and the emergence of the childrearing manual in mid-century were in direct response to parental demands for information that would assist them to negotiate the challenges of rearing healthy children.

Paediatric⁵¹ foundations – writing children into medicine

Although there is a discernible emphasis placed on health promotion therapies by parents throughout the eighteenth-century, medical and parental attitudes to children's illnesses underwent fundamental change. At the beginning of the century the deficit of paediatric books and the lack of a medical vocabulary ensured that parents did not have access in print to information to correctly assess and treat their children's ills. By the end of the eighteenth-century this situation had changed dramatically with the increased publication of medical books dedicated to the 'preservation', 'management', and 'physical education' of children, and significantly they were written specifically for the layperson's use.⁵²

As Walter Harris pronounced in the preface to his book *De morbus acutis infantum* published in London in 1689,⁵³ because of the medical 'profession's' unwillingness to attend to ailing children he was treading an 'unbeaten and almost unknown path' in addressing the subject of the treatment of sick infants.⁵⁴ However, contemporaries greeted the inclusion of advice about children's physical welfare in John Locke's *Some thoughts concerning education*,⁵⁵ with approval.⁵⁶ The fact that these two books were translated and reprinted over many years is indicative of a growing awareness of children's needs, and of an increased demand for childrearing advice by the beginning of the eighteenth-century. Even though Harris sounded a very positive note in his attitude towards the treatment of children, both his and Locke's works were in fact short on detail. In the section on children's health, Locke addressed only the 'non-naturals', diet, sleep and exercise. Illustrating the lack of

⁵¹ The term 'paediatric' and 'paediatrician' were not in use until the late nineteenth-century but the structures were laid in the eighteenth and thus the use of the word was considered appropriate here.

⁵² Benzaquén notes this development in Europe from the late 1740s. Adriana S. Benzaquén, 'The doctor and the child: medical preservation and management of children in the eighteenth-century', Müller (ed.), *Fashioning childhood*, p. 13.

⁵³ Walter Harris, *De morbus acutis infantum* (London, 1689) translated into English and published as *A treatise of the acute diseases of infants, to which are added, medical observations on several grievous diseases* (London, 1693).

⁵⁴ Idem, *A treatise of the acute diseases of infants* (London, 1742), p. 3.

⁵⁵ *Some thoughts concerning education* was printed in Dublin in the 9th ed., 1728 twice; the 10th ed., 'at the request of several of the nobility of this kingdom' in 1737; by R. Reilly for G. Risk, G. Ewing, and W. Smith, booksellers in 1738; and as the 15th ed., in 1778.

⁵⁶ Ezell, 'John Locke's images of childhood', p. 144.

confidence in early eighteenth-century medical assistance, Locke, although a doctor, counselled parents ‘not to be too forward in making use of *physic* and *physicians*’.⁵⁷

Although medical information on children’s health expanded during the eighteenth-century, physicians remained unsure how best to treat children. Respected medical authors such as Harris, Tissot and Buchan consistently criticised their colleagues for their lack of interest in children’s diseases. As George Armstrong observed, children’s inability to relate their symptoms often left doctors feeling as though they were working in the dark. Many genuinely sought to relieve children’s ills, but they were acutely conscious of the likelihood of making a mistake. As Armstrong himself remarked, ‘while you endeavour to relieve them, perhaps you may do them a mischief instead of any service’.⁵⁸ Despite this, as the eighteenth-century progressed medical authors increasingly addressed their writings towards children’s disorders and the impact of this development on Ireland can be tracked by the increased number of Irish editions of English medical works directed towards children. As a result, the constructive methods of diagnosis, prognosis and treatments advanced in this emerging body of work laid the foundations of modern paediatrics.

As part of the Anglophone world, Ireland had access to its books, and these included medical books and pamphlets relative to children. While it is interesting to note that Viscount Molesworth (1656-1725) writing in 1696 suggested that Irish doctors’ treatment of children was ‘better than’ their equivalent in England,⁵⁹ it was not until the 1760s that Irish editions of children’s medical books such as James Nelson’s *An essay on the government of children*⁶⁰ began to be published in Dublin.⁶¹ Theophilus Lobb’s *The good Samaritan*,⁶² originally published in 1761 was published in Dublin in 1764 and reprinted there in 1774,⁶³ while William Buchan’s extremely

⁵⁷ Locke, *Some thoughts concerning education*, p. 25.

⁵⁸ Armstrong, *An account of the diseases most incident to children*, p. 4.

⁵⁹ Viscount Molesworth to Lady Molesworth, 3 May 1724, HMC, *Reports on manuscripts in various collections*, viii (London, 1913), p. 369 cited in James Kelly, ‘The emergence of scientific and institutional medical practice in Ireland, 1650-1800’, Greta Jones and Elizabeth Malcolm (eds), *Medicine, disease and the state in Ireland, 1650-1940* (Cork, 1999), p. 26.

⁶⁰ Nelson, *An essay on the government of children* reprinted in Dublin in 1763 and 1764.

⁶¹ James Kelly, ‘Domestic medication & medical care in late early modern Ireland’, James Kelly and Fiona Clark (eds), *Ireland and medicine in the seventeenth- and eighteenth-centuries* (Aldershot, 2010), pp 109-36.

⁶² Theophilus Lobb, *The good Samaritan: or, useful family physician: containing observations on the most frequent diseases of men and women, infants and children* (Dublin, 1764).

⁶³ Two handwritten cures for jaundice, one dated 22 Feb. 1770 and numerous cures for worms in children cut from newspapers and carefully pasted into the book, alongside a recipe for a cough dated

popular *Domestic medicine* went through fifteen editions and remained in print for ninety years.⁶⁴ The influential Swiss physician Samuel Tissot's narrower *Advice to people in general*⁶⁵ was printed in Dublin in 1766, 1769 and 1774. Consistent with the increased demand, William Cadogan's *An essay upon nursing and the management of children*⁶⁶ first published in London in 1748, was published in the ninth edition in Dublin in 1771. Thus in common with what Ginnie Smith has observed of England, by mid-century there was a definite increase in the availability of medical advice books including those relative to children⁶⁷ in Ireland.

Jean Astruc's systematic analysis of children's disorders in his 1746 work, *A general and compleat treatise*⁶⁸ illustrates that from mid-century medical authors displayed a more comprehensive awareness of children's diseases. Yet it was only in the second French edition (published in Ireland in translation in 1776) that Tissot, in *Advice to people in general*, felt compelled to add two new chapters specifically in relation to women and children. Michael Underwood's 1789 *A treatise on the diseases of children*⁶⁹ was so well respected that it is credited with laying the foundations of modern paediatrics and remained popular for more than sixty years. Even so, it is noteworthy that, though published in Philadelphia, *A treatise on the diseases of children* was not published in Ireland.⁷⁰

Responding to demands for information, throughout the eighteenth-century children's medical books were written in English not Latin; this ensured their accessibility to parents, albeit those who could read and afford the cost of books. As Astruc observed in 1746, previous children's medical books were 'either too confused or imperfect', not sufficiently comprehensive or basically 'unintelligible' to their users.⁷¹ In an attempt to reach a wider audience, Astruc began his book with a glossary designed for the layperson or parent to assist them to understand the 'scientific' terms he used. Nevertheless the user required a certain degree of Latin, as

September 1832, is evidence that this book, although well preserved, was made use of for more than sixty-eight years.

⁶⁴ The Dublin editions of William Buchan's *Domestic medicine* were: 2nd ed., 1773; 3rd ed., 1774; 6th ed., 1777; 7th ed., 1781; 9th ed., 1784; 12th ed., 1792; 9th ed., 1796; 15th ed., 1797.

⁶⁵ S. A. D. Tissot, *Advice to the people in general with respect to their health: translated from the French edition of Dr Tissot's avis au peuple, ... Printed at Lyons; with all his notes; ... and several occasional notes, adapted to this English translation by J. Kirkpatrick, M.D.* (Dublin 1766).

⁶⁶ Cadogan, *An essay upon nursing*.

⁶⁷ Smith, 'Prescribing the rules of health,' p. 251.

⁶⁸ Astruc, *A general and compleat treatise*.

⁶⁹ Underwood, *A treatise on the diseases of children*.

⁷⁰ <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/cgi/content/abstract/46/1/15> [accessed 26 Jun. 2009].

⁷¹ Astruc, *A general and compleat treatise*, pp iii-iv.

each chapter heading identifying illnesses utilized the Latin name of the disease. As such the lay reader was presented with a rather intimidating format. Although this work only ran to one edition, Astruc did highlight the need to provide a medical vocabulary suitable for a parent's or laypersons use.

While the 1764 Dublin edition of Theophilus Lobb's pocket sized book, *The good Samaritan* was 'delivered in so plain and easy a manner that any person of tolerable sagacity may be his own physician, or direct for others with propriety and success',⁷² the Swiss physician Tissot in his popular and influential work, *Advice to people in general* (1766), built not only on a parent's need for a medical vocabulary, but more importantly, their need for a more comprehensive understanding of children's diagnoses, prognoses and treatments. Tissot included for the first time a list of 'questions absolutely necessary to be answered exactly by the patient who consults a physician', including questions specifically addressed to children.⁷³ In highlighting physiological differences between adult and child, old and young,⁷⁴ Tissot's detailed list of questions to be asked by parents or healers concerning children's ailments⁷⁵ not only provided parents with an invaluable framework to assess the severity of their child's illness (an assessment that could easily be made in the home before deciding on treatment and/or medication), but also provided a degree of competence and confidence to self-diagnosing mothers such as Catherine O'Brien in county Clare or Charlotte O'Hara in county Sligo.⁷⁶ These questions were also particularly apt for those who sought medical assistance at a distance either through correspondence or another person, an option many parents in eighteenth-century Ireland were forced to take. In any event, as the eighteenth-century progressed, when faced with childhood disorders, Irish parents had access to an expanding range of children's medical texts, and crucially to texts specifically designed for domestic use.

In recognising the correlation between a child's physical health and their mental well being, William Cadogan addressed his pamphlet *An essay upon nursing* towards all aspects of childrearing such as breast-feeding, teething, clothing and speech. First published in London in 1748, and (as the ninth edition) in Dublin in 1771, as Alysa Levene notes, Cadogan's proposal that all children should follow a

⁷² Lobb, *The good Samaritan*, p. title page.

⁷³ Tissot, *Advice to the people in general*, pp 347-9.

⁷⁴ Ibid., pp 24, 223.

⁷⁵ Ibid., pp 347-9.

⁷⁶ NLI, Inchiquin Papers, Ms 14786 or see Charlotte O'Hara's medical recipe book c. 1808 (NLI, O'Hara Papers, Ms 16724).

simple plain lifestyle⁷⁷ predated Rousseau's *Emile* (1762) by fourteen years.⁷⁸ As well as his expertise gained as physician to the London Foundling Hospital, Cadogan also drew on his personal experience of fatherhood to produce a work that had widespread appeal. The significance of Cadogan's work lies not only in the fact that he centred the child in the text, but that he accurately reflected the aspects of childrearing that were coming under increasing question and pressure from parents in Ireland and England during this period; these included the benefits and practice of swaddling and wet-nursing, both subjects that had significant and often detrimental effects on children's constitutions.

While *An essay upon nursing* is not strictly a medical book, it is indicative of changing requirements in mid eighteenth-century parental culture that can be tied in with the emergence of the childrearing manual. What is identifiable in Cadogan, in Nelson's 1756 *Essay on the government of children*,⁷⁹ and later in Buchan's 1769 *Domestic medicine*, is the emergence of a clear delineation between the recognition and treatment of children's diseases, and the raising of healthy children. From the outset Nelson emphasised that his work was about children's 'health'. Parents wishing to know about children's 'sicknesses' were advised to look elsewhere.⁸⁰

Buchan however devoted not only a whole chapter to the rearing of children in his 1769 *Domestic medicine*, but also included their diseases, placing it firmly at the beginning of the book. As James Kelly has observed, the popularity of Buchan's work in Ireland was immense.⁸¹ Its appeal may be judged from the number of Irish editions, eight Dublin editions, and the fact that William Drennan, a Belfast accoucheur and doctor quoted from it as late as 1805.⁸² The appeal and popularity of this work was exemplified by Lady Sarah Lennox who sent her sister in Ireland a copy:

I hope I have done her [Lady Louisa Conolly] a piece of service by having put a physical book into favour with her, which she studies very much. And if it gives her a little more attention to her health it will be of great use. ... It is so sensible a book it cannot fail of pleasing those who will take the trouble to read it. It is wrote by a Doctor Buchan, and gives one a short and plain idea of

⁷⁷ Cadogan, *An essay upon nursing*.

⁷⁸ Alysa Levene, 'Reasonable creatures' a common sense guide to childcare', *History Today* (Dec., 2006), pp 30-36.

⁷⁹ Nelson, *An essay on the government of children* (2nd ed.) (Dublin, 1763), (4th ed., Dublin, 1764).

⁸⁰ *Ibid.* (2nd ed.), p. 12.

⁸¹ Kelly, 'Domestic medication'.

⁸² Martha McTier to William Drennan, 12 Jan. 1805, Agnew (ed), *Drennan-McTier letters*, iii, 304.

the nature of all disorders; so it ought to prevent one from hurting oneself by a false method of going on, which is at least one great point gained.⁸³

As Ginne Smith observes, Buchan's *Domestic medicine* was 'a model for liberal reforming advice books after that date',⁸⁴ and, similar to Cadogan, Buchan promoted an all-inclusive approach to childrearing and children's health. Echoing the sentiments of Locke and Rousseau, Buchan argued that it was within childhood that the foundations of all adult health were laid.⁸⁵ Thus, in Buchan, Cadogan and Nelson's mid-century childrearing manuals not only was the importance of childhood publicly identified, but also the obstacles parents, children and society faced in negotiating the way to adulthood.

It is apparent that there was significant repetition of advice and indeed large-scale plagiarism in many of these works consulted. For example, James Mackenzie in *The history of health*⁸⁶ published in Dublin in 1759, followed Locke's 1690 advice in relation to cold baths for infants and the need to instil discipline and virtue in youths. Underwood repeated the same advice in 1789, as did the well-respected Tissot in 1766, while there are strong echoes of Lobb's 1761 work *The good Samaritan* in Buchan's 1769 *Domestic medicine*. At the same time, Michael Underwood in *A treatise on the diseases of children*⁸⁷ (1789) revisited the deliberations of earlier eighteenth-century medical writers such as Arbuthnot in the 1730s and Astruc in the 1740s. On the one hand this repetition is indicative of the continuity and endurance of what was obviously considered by publishers and parents throughout the eighteenth-century good, sound, practical and saleable advice in relation to children, and on the other of the significant impact of the newer scientific methods emerging at the end of the eighteenth-century.

Notwithstanding the increased publication of children's medical books in Ireland during the second half of the eighteenth-century and the enhanced recognition and diagnosis of children's diseases throughout the century, when Dr John Cheyne (1777-1836) published his *Essays on the diseases of children*⁸⁸ in 1801 he

⁸³ Lady Sarah Lennox to Duchess of Leinster, 18 Jul. 1776, Fitzgerald (ed.), *Leinster correspondence*, ii, 189.

⁸⁴ Smith, 'Prescribing the rules of health,' p. 275.

⁸⁵ Buchan, *Domestic medicine* (3rd ed.).

⁸⁶ Mackenzie, *The history of health*.

⁸⁷ Underwood, *A treatise on the diseases of children*, pp 293-296.

⁸⁸ John Cheyne, M. D., *Essays on the diseases of children with cases and dissections* (Edinburgh, 1801).

acknowledged the earlier and popular work of Walter Harris (1689). Sadly Cheyne could comment that more than a century after Harris' intervention:

still this department is strangely overlooked. Children are not admitted into public hospitals, and their diseases are ill understood, and superficially treated, or slurred over, by those who profess to teach medicine.⁸⁹

Thus for many Irish children throughout the eighteenth-century, responses to their illnesses and diseases were determined by the vagaries of parental knowledge and their parents' confidence in their own abilities to deal adequately with them. In the absence of good medical assistance from trained practitioners, parents were thrown back on their own resources, diagnosing, self-medicating and treating their sick children. No doubt many mothers referred to the medical books already discussed, but still they relied more completely on friends, family and their own 'domestic receipt books' for medical information, treatments, and indeed reassurance.

SECTION II: THE MEDICAL TREATMENT OF CHILDREN

Domestic Receipt Books – children's disorders

The frequency with which family members admitted their concerns in their correspondence attests to the fact that children's health was a major concern throughout the eighteenth-century. There are numerous letters detailing the anxieties of parents with respect to the health of their children. Apart from his family in March 1804, the Earl of Leitrim (1768-1854) openly confided to his wife his concerns for their daughter Caroline (1802-69):

God knows my ideas today have been melancholy enough. I long most anxiously for Tom's return tomorrow, when I trust in God I shall receive a favourable account of the dear little angel.⁹⁰

William Drennan kept in weekly correspondence with his sister Martha McTier in Belfast, who was fostering his eldest son Thomas. In her letters Martha related every change in Thomas's constitution, and although he was a doctor and the child's father, Drennan poured forth diagnoses and advice in return without actually seeing the

⁸⁹ Cheyne, *Essays on the diseases of children*, pp 1-2.

⁹⁰ Earl of Leitrim to Lady Leitrim, 2 Mar. 1804 (NLI, Killadoon Family Papers, Ms 36034/1).

child.⁹¹ Aware that a written record could be helpful in identifying medical remedies, the cautious Mrs Sinclair (also in Belfast) kept a record book in which she 'entered an account of every complaint her children had',⁹² while the county Limerick farmer and agent, Nicholas Peacock considered his son's illness in 1748 important enough to remain at home with him and to enter the fact in his diary.⁹³

Sickness could strike children swiftly. As a result, many parents, but especially women, were frequently faced with immediate and frightening dilemmas concerning their children's health. As women they were expected to be self-reliant and to play a central role in alleviating family illnesses. But access to medical books did not preclude parents seeking medical information and reassurance elsewhere. As Olga Kenyon notes, and the voluminous correspondence of the Lennox sisters firmly attests, women's medical knowledge, gained from shared experience, was appealed to by other women more than that of men.⁹⁴ They were encouraged in this by the fact that seventeenth-century diagnostic medicine was 'so rude the population was obliged to look for medical assistance wherever it could be procured'.⁹⁵ Moreover, the lack of a comprehensive medical structure, indeed in some cases any structure at all entering the eighteenth-century forced women to rely on their own devices, which in turn encouraged the maintenance of the domestic medical receipt book and obliged recourse to self-diagnosis and self-medication.

Surviving Irish domestic receipt books are of varied types and formats; from large foolscap sized leather bound books to small coverless pages. Some have been painstakingly indexed, but the majority were not. Some remain in good condition but others are well thumbed, indicative of their frequent use. Demonstrating the value attached to their contents, domestic receipt books were passed down from one female generation to another. Lady Frances Keightley intensely concerned with her only surviving daughter's welfare, commenced a receipt book in September 1681 containing household, cookery and medical preparations. Lady Frances subsequently passed this on to her daughter Catherine [O'Brien] when she married.⁹⁶ Catherine then added her own prized receipts to the book. Other women such as Jane Burton of

⁹¹ William Drennan to Martha McTier, 27 Oct. 1806, Agnew (ed.), *Drennan-McTier letters*, iii, 536-8.

⁹² Martha McTier to Sarah Drennan [n.d., c. Jan. 1807], *ibid.*, iii, 562.

⁹³ This entry refers to Pryce Peacock born 1748: M. L. Legg (ed.), *The diary of Nicholas Peacock 1740-1751: the worlds of a county Limerick farmer and agent* (Dublin, 2005), 6 Nov. 1748.

⁹⁴ Olga Kenyon, *800 years of women's letters* (Stroud, 1995), pp 230-3.

⁹⁵ Kelly, 'Domestic medication'.

⁹⁶ NLI, Inchiquin Papers, Ms 14786.

Buncraggy, county Clare diligently extracted remedies from books such as Sarah Jackson's, *The director or young woman's best companion* (London, 1759), while other receipts were taken from newspapers and carefully transcribed or pasted in.⁹⁷ Ascriptions to various ladies such as Lady Katherine Conolly or Lady Featherstone of medical preparations in the early eighteenth-century Inchiquin receipt book clearly indicates that recipes were passed around within social circles and were considered valuable enough to be written into a book for reference.⁹⁸

Irish domestic receipt books however provide a few anomalies. Even though some books contain receipts denoted as being specifically for the poor such as a particular type of *Daffy's Elixir*,⁹⁹ very few are addressed towards children *per se*.¹⁰⁰ An undated receipt book, but probably late eighteenth-century, in the Leitrim papers – details a receipt for a child's worm powder based on 'Hisa pichsa [*Hiera picra*]' which was to be 'given in small quantities proportion'd to their ages', besides being 'an excellent medicine for the poor'.¹⁰¹ Men feature rarely as the source of receipts other than prescribing physicians. Medical information and tips are found in men's personal correspondence rather than in dedicated receipt books and this distinction between male and female attitudes to medical remedies is an interesting observation on the attitude men adopted towards health promotion.

Indicative of parents' constant search for reassurance a record was often made of the effectiveness or not of a particular cure. The success of the early eighteenth-century 'infallible cure for the bite of a mad dog' adapted for use by children entered in the Inchiquin receipt book, was attested to by 'AO'B' who noted that they had seen it 'tried successfully'.¹⁰² However, where newer more effective remedies were identified, original receipts were frequently superseded.¹⁰³

Although not specifically highlighted as such, children's illnesses were implicitly addressed in early domestic receipt books by reference to the particular illnesses to which they were susceptible such as worms or rickets, but it was not until mid-century that their illnesses were distinctively addressed. The receipt book

⁹⁷ NLI, Leitrim Papers, Ms 9928, p. 36; Charlotte O'Hara's medical receipt book, c. 1808 (NLI, O'Hara Papers, Ms 16724).

⁹⁸ NLI, Inchiquin Papers, Ms 14786; NLI, Smythe of Barbavilla Papers, Ms 11689.

⁹⁹ NLI, Gormanston Papers, Ms 44417/6.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁰¹ NLI, Leitrim Papers, Ms 9928.

¹⁰² NLI, Inchiquin Papers, Ms 14786, p. 12.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

compiled by Elizabeth, Countess of Thomond (1685-1734) circa 1720 contained only one prescription for children and this on a loose sheet of paper,¹⁰⁴ while the 1740-60 receipt book once owned by the Plunketts of county Meath contained no prescriptions for children, and only one relating to a woman, and that for 'a woman in labour'.¹⁰⁵ By contrast, the Leitrim receipt book¹⁰⁶ and Charlotte O'Hara's receipt book (circa 1808), contain numerous children's remedies, some even ascribed to particular children such as her granddaughter Miss [Charlotte] Digby, and an 'opening mixture' for young C[harles] O'H[ara].¹⁰⁷ While it might be assumed from this that, mirroring the pattern of medical publications, children's illnesses were neglected in domestic receipt books until the latter half of the eighteenth-century, it would be incorrect to assume so. In the early part of the eighteenth-century children's remedies and in many cases their complaints were viewed as being the same as adults, the medicine dosage only being the difference; children were given medicines in a 'smaller quantity in proportion to their ages'.¹⁰⁸ As the eighteenth-century progressed, children's illnesses were increasingly identified and recorded in domestic receipt books as such. In early receipt books, named physicians' remedies were addressed only towards adults, by the latter part of the century they were also applied to children.

Thus for elite and middling families, in the absence of a physician, surgeon, apothecary and indeed hospital, medical knowledge within the family was crucial and especially so when required to administer to a sick child. As such, in Ireland women's domestic receipt books were highly valued, and are indicative of the crucial role women played in the domestic medical care of children across the length of the eighteenth-century

In general, the ingredients of domestic receipts for children, especially those of early date largely consisted of garden herbs, though animal items such as snails, 'live millepeeds' or cooked chicken skin were also included. Lady Treman's receipt for 'Snayle Water for children', a decoction of snail shells, 'raysons of the sun stoned', liquorice, spearmint, borage and milk 'sweetened with loaf sugar' is included in the early eighteenth-century receipt book of the Inchiquins, but without reference to a

¹⁰⁴ Domestic receipt book, c. 1720 (NLI, Inchiquin Papers, Ms 14887).

¹⁰⁵ Domestic receipt book, 1740-60 (NLI, Fingall Papers, Ms 8041).

¹⁰⁶ NLI, Leitrim Papers, Ms 9928.

¹⁰⁷ Charlotte O'Hara's receipt book, c. 1808 (NLI, O'Hara Papers, Ms 16724).

¹⁰⁸ NLI, Ms 13603.

particular ailment.¹⁰⁹ In county Sligo, Charlotte O'Hara treated 'green gripes of stools in infants' with three grains of rhubarb and three of magnesia.¹¹⁰ Meanwhile, Jane Burton of Buncraggy, had a choice of remedies 'to take off warts' a common childhood affliction. They could be touched 'with five leaves' or be rubbed 'with the heart of a pigeon'. If either was unsuccessful, 'a head of a live eel' was cut off and the wart rubbed with the blood. Failing these, the foot of a hen could be laid:

over a quick fire, till the skin peels off from the bone, and with that skin rub the warts twice or thrice, while it is hot and it will effect the business.¹¹¹

While these early receipts were unlikely to do any long or short-term damage to children, by mid-century new, hazardous, metal-based remedies such as 'extract of lead',¹¹² 'quick-silver water' and calomel were recommended by medical authors and were advertised for sale as proprietary medicines for both adults and children. This shift towards the use of more hazardous medicines is also reflected in Irish domestic receipt books and may have contributed to the debate from mid-century on the merits of self-medication and diagnosis.

William Buchan loudly proclaimed that self-medication, including children's, was a task safely and easily undertaken in the home, while others 'cautioned' repeatedly against it.¹¹³ Indeed Tissot warned that 'maladies which in themselves would have been gentle have proved mortal from unskilful treatment'.¹¹⁴ Armstrong¹¹⁵ echoed Tissot's sentiments, though his priority was the incorrect medical intervention by physicians in children's diseases.¹¹⁵ His cautious approach is also manifest in a Leitrim family receipt for scurvy, a frequent consequence of children's worm treatments, which included the warning, 'N. B. This medicine shou'd not be taken without the advice of a physician'.¹¹⁶ This was good advice, but not all heeded it. According to William Drennan, having the care of children and a certain degree of medical knowledge did not necessarily make a good parent. He observed testily of a lady of his acquaintance that:

¹⁰⁹ Snail water was used to treat bronchial conditions particularly consumption. NLI, Inchiquin Papers, Ms 14786.

¹¹⁰ Charlotte O'Hara's receipt book, c. 1808 (NLI, O'Hara Papers, Ms 16724).

¹¹¹ Jane Burton's cookery recipes and medical prescriptions, 18th Century (NLI, Ms 19729).

¹¹² NLI, Townley Hall Papers, Ms 9560.

¹¹³ Kelly, 'Domestic medication'.

¹¹⁴ Tissot, *Advice to the people in general*, p. 26.

¹¹⁵ Armstrong, *Account of the diseases most incident to children*, p. 4.

¹¹⁶ NLI, Leitrim Papers, Ms 9928.

Mrs B[ruce] is a very ignorant woman, and I believe a harsh parent. She affects to know everything and something of medicine, and knows the least of that that I have seen in a mother of many children.¹¹⁷

A doctor's attendance late in an illness might lead to a confrontation between a self-diagnosing and medicating mother and the attending physician. Believing her son John was suffering from a cold, Lady Portarlington 'gave him physick and cooling things' over the course of a week. When his condition deteriorated and her daughter also began to show similar symptoms she sent for Doctor Smith fearing that it was an 'infectious disorder'. Although he diagnosed just a 'common cold', Lady Portarlington was left in no doubt of Dr Smith's disapproval of what she had done prior to his attendance. She concluded however that this disapproval arose from his being 'affronted at not being sent for before'.¹¹⁸ Although she was willing to send for Dr Smith again, she also admitted to a lack of confidence in his abilities. Illustrative of the weaknesses of eighteenth-century medicine, this lack of confidence in the medical abilities of the nearest available surgeon or physician was a dilemma faced by many parents, especially those living in more rural and remote areas.

Although proprietary medicines for children such as *Bennet's Worm Cakes* became more widely available towards the end of the eighteenth-century, women continued to accumulate domestic receipts to assist them in administering to their children. This fact highlights two important points. In the first instance, the fallibility of the medical advice and medicines given throughout the eighteenth-century and, secondly, that in the case of children the patient's authority lay firmly, emphatically, and unquestionably in the hands of the parent, and overwhelmingly with mothers. This situation remained unchanged until the nineteenth-century. Then, the increased 'professionalisation' of medicine, as well as a greater recognition of children's diseases, allied with the improved availability of physicians, surgeons and apothecaries, and hospitals hastened the passage of control from the parent/patient to the 'doctors', and in paediatrics as well as other realms.

Although Roy Porter states that by the nineteenth-century it had become common both in Ireland and England for families to purchase medical preparations

¹¹⁷ William Drennan to Martha McTier, 28 Nov. [17]99, Agnew (ed.), *Drennan-McTier letters*, ii, 539.

¹¹⁸ Clark (ed.), *Gleanings*, ii, 48-9.

over the counter,¹¹⁹ and Ginnie Smith detects less reliance on domestic receipt books and self-medication in English records, Irish parents like Charlotte O'Hara, the Earls of Leitrim, and others, sustained the practice developed in the eighteenth-century of accumulating and referring to their domestic receipt books when required to deal with their children's illnesses into the nineteenth-century.

Children's medicine – 'Give in proportion'

During the eighteenth-century the earlier 'single sexed model', a one type fits all basis of medical treatment, underwent profound change. As Wendy D. Churchill has convincingly argued, by the eighteenth-century doctors recognised that diseases manifested themselves differently in male and female bodies,¹²⁰ and by mid-century children's diseases and treatments were recognised as requiring specific diagnosis and remedies. As a result, children's medicines and diagnostic procedures developed apace. However, the lack of understanding of and of a vocabulary to describe their pains and ills left many children vulnerable, not only to the neglect of their symptoms but more worryingly, to incorrect diagnosis. George Armstrong succinctly described the challenge when he observed that:

if you ask a boy of three or four, what is the matter with him, he will very likely either give you no answer at all, or one that you can make nothing out of. If you ask whether his head aches, perhaps he will say, yes. If he has a pain in the stomach? Yes. And if you ask him twenty such questions, he will probably answer in the affirmative, while perhaps he has no pain anywhere. It may possibly be sickness that he takes for pain, not yet knowing the proper distinction between these two words. ... Another, who perhaps is afraid of taking physic will answer no to every question that is put to him, and a third will say, I don't know, if you should ask him fifty questions.¹²¹

Given this situation, the development of a medical vocabulary useful in treating children was crucial to the advancement of children's diagnostic procedures and practices. Responding to this difficulty, Tissot not only prepared a range of general health questions applicable to adults, but also provided specific questions to assist with the diagnosis and treatment of children such as:

What is the child's exact age? How many teeth has he cut? Does he cut them painfully? Is he any-wise rickety, or subject to knots or kernels? Has he had

¹¹⁹ Roy Porter, *Disease, medicine and society in England, 1550-1860* (2nd ed., Cambridge, 1993), p. 24.

¹²⁰ Churchill, 'The medical practice of the sexed body'.

¹²¹ Armstrong, *An account of the diseases most incident to children*, pp 6-7.

the smallpox? Does the child void worms upwards or downwards? Is his belly large, swelled, or hard? Is his sleep quiet or otherwise?¹²²

Armstrong argued that the symptoms themselves allied to a close questioning of the parent or nurse would 'for the most part speak for ... [the child] in so plain a manner as to be easily understood',¹²³ and indeed the Belfast doctor William Drennan claimed he could 'count at least a dozen of miniature passions which shift across' his infant son's face.¹²⁴ Even so, six year-old Eliza Bruce (b. 1793), ill with fever, was in such awe of both her mother and doctor that despite his questioning he found it difficult to get any information from her in order to treat her.¹²⁵ The anxious Bishop Synge of Elphin hoped that he said enough in his letter to convince his daughter Alicia of the 'monstrous folly of this *fausse delicatessen*'. Noting that female reticence in discussing medical matters directly with male doctors was a 'ridiculous tho' common niceness', he urged Alicia to overcome it, reassuring her that, 'if it costs you a few blushes at first, what signifies it? They'll soon be over'.¹²⁶

However crude early eighteenth-century physic was, the importance of administering the correct dose, especially to children was clearly recognised by parents and medics. Reference is frequently made in early Irish domestic receipt books to treatments and physic being administered 'in proportion' to the child's age. A 1720 receipt for Dr Bank's dysentery powder adapted for the use of children is calculated for a full-grown person, but was given to children in smaller quantities 'in proportion to their ages'.¹²⁷ Less vague perhaps were instructions to administer an amount the 'size of a small or large nutmeg',¹²⁸ or as much worm powder 'as will fit on the size of a sixpence'.¹²⁹ There is however little clear evidence in these books to indicate more exact amounts or more precise measures, which suggests that parents felt confident in their own interpretations to administer medicines correctly.

Despite Churchill's observation that pre-pubescent and menstruating children in England were differentiated between medically,¹³⁰ there are no indications in

¹²² Tissot, *Advice to the people in general*, pp 347-9.

¹²³ Armstrong, *An account of the diseases most incident to children*, pp 6-7.

¹²⁴ William Drennan to Ann and Nancy Drennan, 6 Jun. 1801, Agnew (ed.), *Drennan-McTier letters*, ii, 708.

¹²⁵ William Drennan to Martha McTier, 28 Nov. [17]99, *ibid.*, ii, 539.

¹²⁶ Edward to Alicia, 31 May 1751, Legg (ed.), *The Synge letters*, pp 280-6.

¹²⁷ NLI, Inchiquin Papers, Ms 14887.

¹²⁸ NLI, Leitrim Papers, Ms 9928.

¹²⁹ Mrs Mary French's worm powder for a child (NLI, Leitrim Papers, Ms 9928, p. 33).

¹³⁰ Churchill, 'The medical practice of the sexed body', p. 21.

domestic receipt books that this differentiation was applied in Ireland other than an occasional and loose reference to a child's 'constitution'. Irish parents appear to have administered medicines only in proportion to the age of the child and 'its constitution' rather than its gender.

As domestic receipt book dosages were vague, parents took the more cautious route, and in line with children's medical authors and their own views on health, began with the smallest dose and increased it according to the visible symptoms, effects and results. For example an undated but probably eighteenth-century worm medicine in a Leitrim domestic receipt book advises that the medicine should be increased 'according to the effect it has on the child'.¹³¹ From the 1760s however, medical authors such as Tissot and Lobb increasingly defined clear and appropriate dosages for children. In 1764 Lobb laid out exact rules of measurement and correlated them to a 'common tablespoonful', not for any particular medicine but as a general medical guide for parents.¹³²

Table 2.1: Lobb's general guide to children's liquid medicine dosage, 1764				
Child's Age	Dosage			
0-1 year old	¼ common tablespoon	1 drachm	¼ ounce	4 times in 24 hours
1-2 years old	½ common tablespoon	2 drachms	¼ ounce	4 times in 24 hours
3 years and up	1 common tablespoon	4 drachms	½ ounce	4 times in 24 hours

Source: Theophilus Lobb, *The good Samaritan: or, useful family physician: containing observations on the most frequent diseases of men and women, infants and children* (Dublin, 1764), pp 2-3.

Tissot, in *Advice to people in general* advised that all prescriptions in his work were calculated by what was appropriate to an adult or grown man; that is a person from eighteen to sixty years, but provided clear guidance on what was appropriate to those of a younger age. He recommended that:

from the age of twelve to eighteen, two thirds of that dose will generally be sufficient; and from twelve down to seven years one half, diminishing this still lower, in proportion to the greater youth of the patient, so that not more than one eighth of the dose prescribed should be given to an infant of some months old, or under one year. But it must also be considered, that their different constitutions will make a considerable difference in adjusting their different doses.¹³³

¹³¹ Domestic receipt book (NLI, Leitrim Papers, Ms 9928).

¹³² Lobb, *The good Samaritan*, pp 2-3.

¹³³ Tissot, *Advice to the people in general*, pp 350-1.

Developing his theme further, Tissot then detailed with some exactness his dosages by 'pounds, ounces, half ounces, etc.' and crucially correlated them to weights 'contained in such vessels or liquid measures as are most commonly used in the country'.¹³⁴

Table 2.2: Tissot's general medicine measurements, 1766		
1 pound =	16 ounces	
1 ounce =	8 drachms	
1 drachm =	3 scruples	
1 scruple =	20 grains	
(Paris medical scruple) =	24 grains	
Pot =	3¼ pounds =	3 pints & 8 common spoonfuls English measure
Small drinking glass =	3¾ ounces	
Common middle size cup =	3¼ ounces	
Small glass =	7 common spoonfuls	
1 common spoonful =	½ ounce	
Small spoon/coffee spoon =	30 drops	
5/6 small spoons/coffee spoons =	1 common soup spoon	

Source: S. A. D. Tissot, *Advice to the people in general with respect to their health: translated from the French edition of Dr Tissot's avis au peuple, ... Printed at Lyons; with all his notes; ... and several occasional notes, adapted to this English translation by J. Kirkpatrick, M.D.* (Dublin 1766), pp 350-1.

Similarly in the 1805 edition of *Domestic medicine*, Buchan provided clearer guidance on dosages and how they should be dispensed.

Table 2.3: Buchan's medicine/age categorisation, 1805 based on Apothecary's weights and English wine measures			
Age	Proportion adult dose	Measure	Equal to
< 1 year	1/12	1 pound	12 ozs
1 to 2 year	1/10	1 oz.	8 drachms
2 to 4 year	1/6	1 drachm	3 scruples
4 to 6 year	¼	1 scruple	20 grains
6 to 9 year	½	1 gallon	8 pints
9 to 14 year	½	1 pint	16 ozs
14 to 20 year	¾	1 oz.	8 drachms
		A spoonful is the measure of half an ounce.	

Source: William Buchan, *Domestic medicine: a treatise on the prevention and cure of diseases by regimen and simple medicines with an appendix containing a dispensatory for the use of private practitioners* (19th ed., London, 1805), pp 656-7.

Following Tissot's and Buchan's interventions parents now had access to clear and unambiguous instructions not only how to diagnose illnesses but also the information to administer the correct remedies or medicines to their children in the home.

Medicines both domestic and 'professional' remained largely plant and herbal based until the development of a chemical based pharmacopoeia in the nineteenth-

¹³⁴ Tissot, *Advice to the people in general*, pp 350-1.

century, and specific times and seasons were designated for their collection and, occasionally their administration. Handwritten into a copy of the Irish edition of John Arbuthnot's *An essay concerning the nature of aliments* (1731) are 'General Rules for the Collection and preservation of simples - Roots - Herbs and Leaves - Flowers'. Replicating other domestic receipt books, the author recommended that 'flowers ... be gathered when moderately expanded, on a clear dry day, before noon'.¹³⁵ Horsetail, an ingredient in an ointment for children's rickets was best picked in May or June,¹³⁶ while Dr Butler advised Charlotte O'Hara to administer medicine for epilepsy 'the middle of the 3rd day before the full of the moon'.¹³⁷

Animal based ingredients which commonly feature in domestic receipts were readily available in rural areas. 'Sheep's dung melted down in hogs lard' was deemed 'an excellent remedy' for a burn or scald,¹³⁸ while an 'easey' earth worm and a dock leaf applied to a child's sore could determine whether it was 'ye king's evil' or not.¹³⁹ A cow milked over the prepared juice of hoar hound and the milk drunk warm was used to treat a cough.¹⁴⁰ Once ingredients were collected, their preparation could be time-consuming and physically demanding. A 'purging electuary for children' consisting of rhubarb and currants required that they be beaten 'together in a mortar for near two hours'¹⁴¹ while, earth worms were first dried on a griddle and then pounded to a fine powder in a mortar to treat fits in children.¹⁴² Similarly, a jar of syrup of diacodium using 'black or white poppey' heads was stood in a warm chimney for three days before it was re-boiled and only then prepared for use.¹⁴³

Although Nelson warned parents to 'be very wary ... [of] such dangerous weapons' as opium and mercury in children's medicines in 1756,¹⁴⁴ Harris writing slightly earlier in 1742 was not unsympathetic to their use in infantile cases of 'obstinate vomiting'. He argued that liquid laudanum given in syrup of 'Damask-Roses' or in 'syrup of succory' would lend 'a truce to the symptom' allowing the

¹³⁵ See copy in RCPI, John Arbuthnot, *An essay concerning the nature of aliments, and the choice of them according to the different constitutions of human bodies* (Dublin 1731).

¹³⁶ NLI, Inchiquin Papers, Ms 14887.

¹³⁷ Charlotte O'Hara's receipt book, c. 1808 (NLI, O'Hara Papers, Ms 16724).

¹³⁸ NLI, Leitrim Papers, Ms 9928.

¹³⁹ NLI, Smythe of Barbavilla Papers, Ms 11689.

¹⁴⁰ NLI, Leitrim Papers, Ms 9928.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Charlotte O'Hara's receipt book, c. 1808 (NLI, O'Hara Papers, Ms 16724).

¹⁴³ NLI, Inchiquin Papers, Ms 14786.

¹⁴⁴ Nelson, *An essay on the government of children*, p. 137.

child some rest and a chance to recover its strength.¹⁴⁵ While not specifically ascribed for children, Charlotte O'Hara's receipt book contains a recipe to stop vomiting that consisted of '20 to 30 drops of Elixir of Vitriol & from 15 to 20 drops of Laudanum in a large wine glass of water'.¹⁴⁶

Galenist theory required the poison or disease be expelled from the body, and vomiting, purging and bloodletting were the means of doing so. All three were applied to children throughout the eighteenth century. Staying in London, eleven year-old Lord William Fitzgerald, blooded for a fever, was 'so exceedingly afraid of bleeding' his aunt Lady Caroline Fox wailed that 'it goes to one's heart to see him so frightened'.¹⁴⁷ Throughout the century, medical authors consistently promoted bloodletting in children. Astruc advocated in 1746 that an infant of 'nine, ten or twelve months' was of sufficient age 'to bear blooding',¹⁴⁸ while Tissot recommended in 1766 that 'a large quantity of blood should be taken away, and occasionally repeated'¹⁴⁹ to relieve sunstroke in children. As late as 1806, William Drennan favoured drawing 'a little blood', should measles attack his son's lungs.¹⁵⁰

Receipts for children's laxatives and purgatives feature prominently in domestic receipt books, which was consistent with their recommendation by children's medical authors. Purges commonly consisted of rhubarb and senna, while laxatives comprised such ingredients as '20 grains of Hippo' and '20 grains of cloves powdered' mixed with either syrup of cloves or rhubarb and made into twelve to sixteen pills for children, 'the dose to be repeated if not effective'.¹⁵¹ As Porter notes, according to humoral theory as understood in the eighteenth-century, medicines were not expected 'to play a decisive role in healing',¹⁵² rather they were used to bring about certain reactions within the body.¹⁵³ Thus many eighteenth-century medicines did work and more importantly were seen to be working. Parents no doubt drew reassurance from seeing their child passing worms after administering a laxative or purge.

¹⁴⁵ Harris, *A treatise of the acute diseases of infants*, pp 96-7.

¹⁴⁶ Charlotte O'Hara's receipt book, c. 1808 (NLI, O'Hara Papers, Ms 16724).

¹⁴⁷ Lady Caroline Fox to Countess of Kildare, 10 Jan. [1760], Fitzgerald (ed.), *Leinster correspondence*, i, 269.

¹⁴⁸ Astruc, *A general and compleat treatise*, p. 101.

¹⁴⁹ Tissot, *Advice to the people in general*, p. 181.

¹⁵⁰ William Drennan to Martha McTier, 27 Oct. 1806, Agnew (ed.), *Drennan-McTier letters*, iii, 538.

¹⁵¹ NLI, Leitrim Papers, Ms 9928.

¹⁵² Roy Porter, *Blood & guts, a short history of medicine* (London, 2002), p. 100.

¹⁵³ Porter, *Disease, medicine and society in England*, p. 17.

Even if many parents collected, prepared and administered medicines themselves, the increasing availability of proprietary medicines throughout the eighteenth-century facilitated an expanding role for apothecaries. There is ample documentary evidence in Ireland to support Corfield's contention that as in England the apothecary's role was more than making and supplying medicines.¹⁵⁴ For the poor they may have been their only source of medical advice.¹⁵⁵ The apothecary to Primrose Grange Charter school outside Sligo frequently attended the school not only to treat sick pupils but also their surgical injuries.¹⁵⁶ Indeed the Sligo apothecary was later called on to direct improvements and alterations to the school's infirmary.¹⁵⁷ There is however no indication that specific proprietary medicines were developed for children as opposed to adults at this stage.

Even though institutions such as the Dublin Workhouse and Foundling Hospital employed apothecaries 'in-house', by the latter part of the century they had commenced purchasing medicines from retailers such as Westlake & Hanly¹⁵⁸ and 'French & Evatt, druggists on the Blind Quay', Dublin.¹⁵⁹ While this formalised retail trade may have improved the quality of drugs available, it also raised their cost, which had repercussions for children in institutions. The committee of The Incorporated Society for Promoting English Protestant Schools in Ireland constantly complained about the medicinal costs at their schools, while the local committee of Athlone Charter school balked at paying for Castor Oil, considering it 'much too expensive for ... poor' children.¹⁶⁰ Prompted by the same concerns, the committee of Clonmel Charter school directed their apothecary to prescribe only 'the simplest and lowest priced medicines' for the children in their care.¹⁶¹

Following its establishment in 1792, medicines could be purchased from Apothecaries Hall in Dublin. In October 1813 Edwin Stock (1778-1835) of Rahins, county Mayo, requested his brother Lucius (born 1791) to purchase '1 dram of Extract

¹⁵⁴ Penelope J. Corfield, 'The reputation of the apothecaries in Georgian England', *Social History of Medicine*, 22, 1 (2009), pp 1-21.

¹⁵⁵ James Kelly, 'Bleeding, vomiting and purging': ill-health and the medical professions in late early modern Ireland', Maria Luddy and Catherine Cox (eds), *Culture of care in Irish medical history, 1750-1970* (Basingstoke, 2010).

¹⁵⁶ Primrose Grange school, Orders 1757-96, 9 Jun. 1779 (TCD, Ms 5646).

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 7 Feb. 1759.

¹⁵⁸ Governors Proceedings Book 1779-83, 6 May 1782 (NAI, BR/2006/86 (House of Industry) box 2).

¹⁵⁹ Richmond Hospital Governors Proceedings Book, 1772-5, 3 Aug. 1772-30 Oct. 1775 (NAI, BR/2006/86 (House of Industry) box 1).

¹⁶⁰ Athlone Charter school, Orders, Inventories etc., 1795-1807, 12 Apr. 1797 (TCD, Ms 5599).

¹⁶¹ Clonmel school, Committee Book 1771-4, 25 Nov. 1772 (TCD, Ms 5236).

of Hemlock, ... [and] 1 dram of Powder of Hemlock' from Apothecaries Hall for his three year-old son St George (1810-79) who had whooping cough,¹⁶² and a week later to purchase 'an ounce of Oaklings', as St George was now 'alarmingly ill'.¹⁶³

Despite the increase in the numbers of apothecaries during the eighteenth-century, superstition and folk remedies remained firmly entrenched in rural thinking and for the majority of poor people were possibly the only medicines or treatment available to them and their children. For those without the financial resources to access medical assistance or even avail of herbal remedies, the enduring belief in the 'curative powers of holy wells' as James Kelly has noted, suggests that the 'peasant' population maintained a 'faith based medical tradition'.¹⁶⁴ When touring in the Cork area in 1758, Richard Pococke noted a firm attachment to 'fairies' among the peasantry.¹⁶⁵ Unusually, one domestic receipt offered a more 'magical' cure, recommending that a child suffering with a rupture be drawn:

Nine times backward & forward through a young ash being splite [sic] & tow [sic] people holding it open. Then bind it up close & as that growes [sic] together so will the rupture doe [sic] up.¹⁶⁶

Witchcraft was blamed for the convulsive fit that seized Jack Crofts in Cork in 1685. Jack's mother stated that he had been playing by an old woman with a reputation for witchcraft all day previous to the fit. Jack's father believed it was nothing other than 'the hand of god'. Nevertheless, Mr Crofts (b. ante 1640-d. post 1691) committed the unfortunate woman to the Bridewell.¹⁶⁷ Responding to the plight of the sick and poor in urban areas, dispensaries which provided medical assistance and medicines were established in the late eighteenth-century and were then considered the best source of treatment for children.¹⁶⁸

Having once identified the treatment required, prepared the medicine and established the dosage most suitable for the child, many parents and nurses then had to identify ways to administer it to the child. Eighteenth-century children were acutely aware of the unpalatability of most medicines, and parents and doctors had to

¹⁶² Edwin Stock to Lucius Stock, 12 Oct. 1813 (NUIG, Stock Family Papers, P10/310).

¹⁶³ Edwin Stock to Lucius Stock, 17 Oct. 1813 (ibid., P10/311).

¹⁶⁴ Kelly, 'Domestic medication'.

¹⁶⁵ McVeagh (ed.), *Richard Pococke's Irish tours*, p. 161.

¹⁶⁶ NLI, Smythe of Barbavilla Papers, Ms 11689.

¹⁶⁷ HMC, *Egmont mss.* vol. 2 (1909), pp 181-2.

¹⁶⁸ Entirely voluntary, these dispensaries did not receive official recognition until an 1805 act of parliament: Laurence M. Geary, *Medicine and charity in Ireland 1718-1851* (Dublin, 2004), p. 54.

be inventive when administering them. The frequent references to administering medicines to children surreptitiously in eighteenth-century medical books and family correspondence, suggests that stealth was normally and frequently adopted by parents.

Skill, patience and ingenuity were all required, and from mid-century medical authors such as Tissot and Buchan put forward their suggestions how to do so, although Thomas Dimsdale (1712-1800) the pioneer of smallpox inoculation noted pessimistically that children under two years of age were unlikely to take unpalatable medicines, nor could they be bribed to do so.¹⁶⁹ Faced with an obstinate one year-old, Walter Harris 'stopped her nose to force her' to take her medicine.¹⁷⁰ Noting that it was often very difficult to make children drink medicines to create 'a vomit', Buchan recommended infusing a scruple or half a drachm of the powdered medicine in a teapot with boiling water disguised with a few drops of milk and a little sugar, a 'sweetened' remedy similarly recorded by Mrs Trench.¹⁷¹ Thus the child would then imagine the mixture to be tea and 'drink it very greedily'.¹⁷² But, as James Nelson perceptively noted in 1756, children would 'not be so easily fooled a second time'.¹⁷³

Martha McTier attempted to hide the last pill prescribed for her nephew and foster-son, three and a half year-old Thomas Drennan, in a sweetmeat which he promptly dropped behind a trunk but claimed he had swallowed, nonchalantly calling his aunt a 'blind buzzard' when she could not find it.¹⁷⁴ Although not troubled with much medicine, his younger brother, two-year-old William was also wary of being dosed. His father, a doctor himself, wryly remarked that 'it would puzzle the most ingenious physician to get him to take anything of the kind without force'.¹⁷⁵

Children could remain stubborn, sometimes with tragic consequences. The heartache which Lady Bristow experienced during her cherished ten year-old son's fatal illness is palpable. Skeffington Charles Bristow (1796-1806) stubbornly refused to swallow any medicine for the mother he adored and subsequently died on 23

¹⁶⁹ Thomas Dimsdale, *The present method of inoculating of the small-pox; to which are added, some experiments, instituted with a view to discover the effects of a similar treatment in the natural small-pox. ... With pieces ... by William Buchan ... Baron Van Sweiten ...* (7th ed., Dublin 1774), p. 9.

¹⁷⁰ Harris, *A treatise of the acute diseases of infants*, p. 126.

¹⁷¹ NLI, Leitrim Papers, Ms 9928.

¹⁷² Buchan, *Domestic medicine* (3rd ed.), p. 236.

¹⁷³ Nelson, *An essay on the government of children*, p. 27.

¹⁷⁴ Martha McTier to William Drennan [15 Oct. 1804], Agnew (ed.), *Drennan-McTier letters*, iii, 270-1.

¹⁷⁵ William Drennan to Martha McTier [11 Jun. 1804], *ibid.*, iii, 227. Although listed as letter no 1140 and dated 11 Jun. 1804 on pp 227-8 of Agnew and Luddy, this has the same call number as a different letter on pp 228-9. Chart lists these two letters separately as numbers 1106 & 1107.

February 1806.¹⁷⁶ Nine year-old Louisa Bunbury had no such prejudice against medicines. Her mother remarked that she had a 'prodigious affection for her little identical self, and would take the devil if it was to make her healthy'.¹⁷⁷

Nursing the sick child

Once a child became ill, they, as much as adults required nursing care. When Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-97) proposed that girls be taught the 'elements of anatomy and medicine' in order to better care for their families¹⁷⁸ was she being aspirational or was she proposing improvements on the reality? From the evidence it is clear that in elite and middling Irish gentry families, adult's and children's nursing care was normally provided from within the immediate household, and then overwhelmingly by women. Women, especially mothers, were recognised as being more alert to changes in an ailing child's behaviour or temperament. As Warburton, Whitelaw and Walsh noted in 1818:

the mother's watchful anxiety can alone distinguish, for the physician's guidance, symptoms impervious to any but a mother's eye. ... The process of the disease is watched and salutary medicine is aided by that maternal care at home.¹⁷⁹

Demonstrating the endurance of seventeenth-century Puritan attitudes described by Andrew Wear,¹⁸⁰ elite women such as Lady Charlotte Fitzgerald (1758-1836) considered nursing sick family members part of their duty to their parents and siblings,¹⁸¹ a duty that brought with it certain levels of responsibility. Thus elite and gentry parents were reluctant to leave their sick children in the care of household servants. When seven year-old Lady Emily Fitzgerald was troubled with 'an ugly cough' in May 1759, her mother was unwilling to leave her in the care of Carton servants while she attended a social engagement in Dundalk. Noting that the change of air might do her some good, Lady Emily was brought to Dundalk where her

¹⁷⁶ Martha McTier to Sarah Drennan, 1 Mar. [1806], Agnew (ed.), *Drennan-McTier letters*, iii, 434.

¹⁷⁷ Lady Sarah Lennox to Duchess of Leinster, 22 Jun. 1777, Fitzgerald (ed.), *Leinster correspondence*, ii, 224.

¹⁷⁸ Mary Wollstonecraft, *A vindication of the rights of woman* (London, 2004), pp 236-42; Janet Todd, *Daughters of Ireland: the rebellious Kingsborough sisters and the making of a modern nation* (New York, 2003), pp 129-30.

¹⁷⁹ Cited in Geary, *Medicine and charity in Ireland*, p. 55.

¹⁸⁰ Andrew Wear, 'Puritan Perceptions of illness in seventeenth-century England', Porter (ed.), *Patients and practitioners*, p. 62.

¹⁸¹ Lady Louisa Conolly to Duchess of Leinster, 24 Sep. 1778, Fitzgerald (ed.), *Leinster correspondence*, iii, 17.

vigilant mother could 'have her under [her] own eye'.¹⁸² Later, when seventeen year-old Lord Henry Fitzgerald (1761-1829) was recovering from his smallpox inoculation at Castletown, his aunt Lady Louisa Conolly's house in late June 1778, his sister Lady Charlotte came from Carton to assist in nursing him. Between them Lady Louisa and Lady Charlotte were in attendance on the patient at all times.¹⁸³ Because he suffered as a child from a 'scrofulous complaint' Lord Cloncurry (1773-1853) was nursed at all times through his illness by his mother Margaret Browne (1748-1795). Significantly, this had the effect not only of curing him of his complaint but also served to increase the attachment between mother and son, an intimacy and affection that lasted her lifetime.¹⁸⁴ Similarly, even though he had his own nursemaid, Thomas Drennan was tended through his teething difficulties by his mother, a job his father noted kept her 'almost without rest'.¹⁸⁵

Although family members, often supported by friends and or trusted members of the household staff, attended the sickroom on a rota basis, in some instances a paid nurse-keeper was brought in for the duration of the illness or until it 'turned'. Their recommendation however was experience rather than medical training. Nurses, such as that specially employed to look after Donat and Lucius (1735-1795) (later third Bart) O'Brien during their smallpox inoculation at school in 1745,¹⁸⁶ were called 'nurse-keepers' or 'nurse-tenders', while those charged with the everyday care of children were called 'nurse' or 'nursemaid'.

When her god-daughter Sally Chapone contracted smallpox in July 1759, Mrs Delaney, wife of the Rev. Patrick Delaney (1684/5-1768) of Delville, Dublin believed it was her duty to nurse and care for Sally 'as she has no mother or sister to take care of her'.¹⁸⁷ Mrs Hamilton of Finglas, Mrs Delaney's friend and a woman of vast experience, offered her assistance and slept in a little bed in the dressing-room next to Sally's.¹⁸⁸ Mrs Delaney was quick to note that it was not only experience that Mrs Hamilton brought with her, but also a 'sense and spirit which will be useful to all, and

¹⁸² Countess of Kildare to Earl of Kildare, 12 May [1759], Fitzgerald (ed.), *Leinster correspondence*, i, 83-4.

¹⁸³ Lady Louisa Conolly to Duchess of Leinster, 26 Jun. 1778, *ibid.*, iii, 299.

¹⁸⁴ Valentine, Lord Cloncurry, *Personal recollections of the life and times of Valentine Lord Cloncurry* (Dublin, 1849), pp 5-6.

¹⁸⁵ William Drennan to Martha McTier, 23 Aug. 1802, Agnew (ed.), *Drennan-McTier letters*, iii, 65.

¹⁸⁶ NLI, Inchiquin Papers, Ms 45353/2, quarter ending 12 Apr. 1745.

¹⁸⁷ Day, *Letters from Georgian Ireland*, 18 Jul. 1759, pp 82-3.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

a great relief to my mind when I can't be in the way myself'.¹⁸⁹ Even so, Mrs Delaney also brought in a 'nurse-keeper', a 'very sober, good sort of woman and used to tend in the smallpox', to assist. Acutely aware of her patient's vulnerability and her own responsibility, Mrs Delaney was unwilling to trust Sally's care to the nurse-keeper entirely until 'after the turn'.¹⁹⁰

As Mrs Delany was aware, employing an 'outside' nurse-keeper or household staff for children's sickroom duties brought its own potential dangers and was an area where parental vigilance was essential. James Nelson maintained that the qualities required in any nurse were 'cleanliness, good temper, docility and innocence';¹⁹¹ while Buchan highlighted the dangers unscrupulous and even nurses of good character might pose to vulnerable children. Sick and irritable children Buchan claimed were administered soporifics such as laudanum and diacodium in the form of *Godfrey's Cordial*, *Daffy's Elixir* and other strong liquors¹⁹² and warned that nurses 'who deal much in medicine are always to be suspected. They trust to it and neglect their duty'.¹⁹³

Concerned that a feverish nurse might infect an otherwise healthy child, Buchan strongly disapproved of the practice of nurses lying 'a-bed' with 'peevisish' children to tempt them to sleep.¹⁹⁴ It was therefore the duty of parents not only to be cautious in their choice of nurse, but also to watch over their conduct. Acutely aware of the need for vigilance, Lady Louisa Conolly was grateful to her sister the formidable Emily Duchess of Leinster for 'giving an eye' to her niece Harriet Staples who was ill at Castletown, county Kildare when she was in London. Lady Louisa was sure that Emily's 'having called, has kept Nurse in order, for fear you should find fault with anything'.¹⁹⁵ Writing from Belfast in February 1802, William Drennan commented chillingly that despite her anxiety and vigilance Margaret Batt's youngest child had 'been in danger of starving from the deceit of two nurses'.¹⁹⁶ Thomas Evans (d. 1753), M.P. for Castlemartyr was not so lucky. He claimed his eldest son

¹⁸⁹ Day, *Letters from Georgian Ireland*, 18 Jul. 1759, pp 82-3.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

¹⁹¹ Nelson, *An essay on the government of children* (2nd ed.), p. 157.

¹⁹² Buchan, *Domestic medicine* (3rd ed.), p. 26.

¹⁹³ Ibid.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 179.

¹⁹⁵ Lady Louisa Conolly to Duchess of Leinster 22 Feb. [1773], Fitzgerald (ed.), *Leinster correspondence*, iii, 75.

¹⁹⁶ Martha McTier to William Drennan [19 Feb. 1802], Agnew (ed.), *Drennan-McTier letters*, iii, 12.

died from the 'inhuman neglect of him' when he contracted smallpox.¹⁹⁷ What must certainly have added to parental fears was the realisation expressed by Buchan that, when parents discovered a nurse had concealed an accident or an illness, it was often too late to remedy the situation.¹⁹⁸

No doubt nursing sick children led to fraught occasions for those in attendance whether parents, family or nurses. For parents there was the constant fear that the illness would take a turn for the worse and the possibility, not unwarranted, of the child dying. Thus the sick child was subject to constant monitoring. On the one hand two year-old William Drennan was so cross and irritable from a high fever that he could 'not bear to be looked at even by his mother ... and [was] so peevish that it [was] very hard to manage him'.¹⁹⁹ On the other, five year-old Lord Charles Fitzgerald was what his mother described as 'mighty comical about' his sore leg following an accident, calling his affliction 'the gout'. Although, or perhaps because the house at Carton in September 1761 was 'quite an [sic] hospital', Lord Charles was nursed not by his mother but by his personal servant, a man 'who diverts him all day and is good humour itself'.²⁰⁰ This good humour continued and by the 8 September, although covered with scabs, Lord Charles was reported as playfully 'firing squibs at the door'.²⁰¹ When Lady Harriet Fitzgerald was sent from Dublin to the more wholesome country air at Carton, county Kildare to recover from a cough in November 1762, her mother nursed her with 'jelly, chocolate and nourishing things' while her aunt Lady Louisa Conolly amused her by teaching her to draw.²⁰² Evidentially not all sickrooms were fraught with tension.

Thus throughout the eighteenth-century the provision of nursing care of sick children in elite and middling families fell overwhelmingly into the woman's realm and was firmly family based. This behaviour is indicative of the pivotal role women played not only in directing children's health but in the management of their ills. As a result, the family based supervision and control of the sickroom added a not insubstantial degree of comfort and security not only to the child but also to anxious

¹⁹⁷ Thomas Evans to Henry Boyle, 13 Jun. 1741 (PRONI, D2707/A/1/4/15).

¹⁹⁸ Buchan, *Domestic medicine* (3rd ed.), p. 27.

¹⁹⁹ William Drennan to Martha McTier [30 May 1804], Agnew (ed.), *Drennan-McTier letters*, iii, 223.

²⁰⁰ Marchioness of Kildare to Marquis of Kildare, 5 Sep. [1761], Fitzgerald (ed.), *Leinster correspondence*, i, 111.

²⁰¹ Squib, a firework tube filled with powder that burns with a fizzing noise. Marchioness of Kildare to Marquis of Kildare, 8 Sep. [1761], *ibid.*, i, 113.

²⁰² Marchioness of Kildare to Marquis of Kildare, 27 Nov. [1762], *ibid.*, i, 143.

parents. Although women accepted nursing as part of their 'duty', outside nurse-keepers were also employed when needed. Nevertheless, acutely aware of the inherent dangers, parents were advised to subject them to the strictest vigilance and were reluctant to delegate their children's care to them until all dangers were deemed to have passed.

In the absence of dedicated children's hospitals, it has to be assumed that when ill peasant or pauper children made do as best they could within their own accommodation. John Rutty (1698-1775) noted the lack of medicines in use amongst the Irish poor²⁰³ while De Latocnaye's itinerant inoculator observed and remarked on the healthy attitude towards fresh air adopted by peasant parents he encountered in rural areas.²⁰⁴ Reflecting the vulnerability of peasant families, the Earl of Abercorn's agent James Hamilton gave 'a crown' to a female employee to ease the family's burden as she was unable to work, being detained at home nursing her three children suffering from smallpox.²⁰⁵

SECTION III: 'DISEASES MOST INCIDENT TO CHILDREN'

Familial children's ailments and diseases

Having survived the dangers associated with childbirth, parents and children in eighteenth-century Ireland had in turn to negotiate a series of life threatening ailments and illnesses if they were to make their way successfully to adulthood. These included common childhood ailments and diseases such as teething, worms, and smallpox. During the eighteenth-century childhood ailments and disease took a heavy toll on young lives, particularly in the period after weaning when children lost the partial immunity provided by breast milk.²⁰⁶

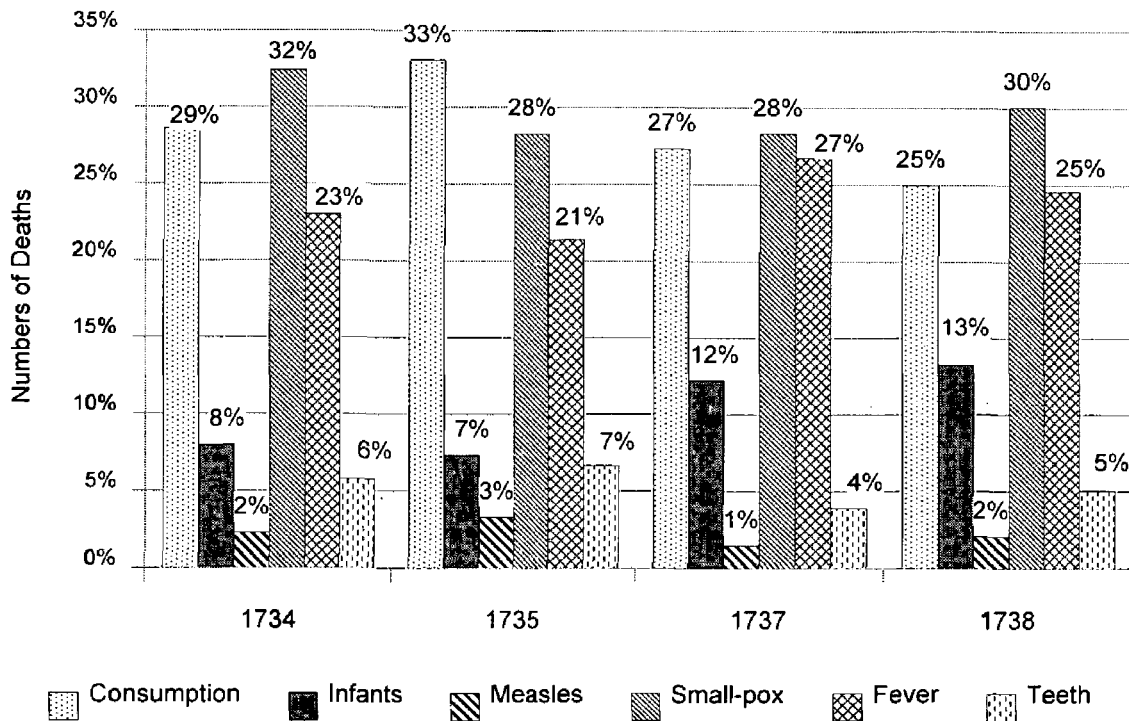
²⁰³ John Rutty, *A chronological history of the weather and seasons, and of the prevailing diseases in Dublin, with their various periods, successions, and revolutions, during the space of forty years ...* (London, 1770), p. 222.

²⁰⁴ De Latocnaye, *A Frenchman's walk through Ireland 1796-97*, tr. by John Stevenson, pp 175-77.

²⁰⁵ James Hamilton to Earl of Abercorn, 31 Jul. 1772 (PRONI, Abercorn Papers, D623/A/40/54).

²⁰⁶ Heywood, *A history of childhood*, p. 149; Nils Rosen Von Rosenstein, *The diseases of children and their remedies*, tr. by Andrew Sparrman (London, 1776), p. 38.

Fig. 2.2: Annual Dublin bills of mortality, 1734-5, 1737-8



Source: *Dublin Gazette*, 6 Apr. 1734; 5 Apr. 1735; 5 Apr. 1737; 8 Apr. 1738.²⁰⁷

As Astruc noted in 1746, three classes of diseases affected children at three different stages of their lives. At stage one, from infancy to three or four years, children were susceptible to teething disorders. From then until they were seven years-old, they were liable to disorders such as worms. But, from seven to twelve (girls) or fourteen (boys) years, children were subject to common adult diseases, but required different remedies according to their 'tender age and constitution'.²⁰⁸ Astruc's classification provides a convenient template for this section, which investigates parental and medical attitudes to teething, worms, whooping cough, croup, fever, consumption and smallpox within the domestic environment.

As Michael Flinn notes, during the eighteenth-century, only about half of all children survived to their tenth birthday.²⁰⁹ As a result, parents kept a close eye on their children's health, ever watchful for any adverse changes, and the publication of

²⁰⁷ Historians have contested the accuracy of the figures provided by the Dublin bills of mortality.

²⁰⁸ Astruc, *A general and compleat treatise*, pp 1-2.

²⁰⁹ Heywood, *A history of childhood*, p. 148.

the weekly, quarterly and yearly bills of mortality, although imperfect, clearly and emphatically manifest the susceptibility of children to death and disease.

Although not specifically attributable to children, the identification in the bills of mortality of 'Measles' and 'Smallpox' suggests these as the commonest causes of children's deaths in seven Dublin parishes between 1712-18, but deaths from 'childbed', 'consumption', 'convulsion', 'fever', 'fits' and 'teeth' also took a toll on children. As the years progressed more specific childhood diseases were added.²¹⁰ Consistently appearing in the Dublin bills of mortality, children's ailments and diseases such as 'chin-cough', 'worms', 'fevers' and, 'smallpox' correspondingly feature in Irish domestic receipt books and were clearly the ailments of most concern to Irish parents, the authorities and the medical professions (table 2.4).

Table 2.4: Children's ailments extracted from eighteenth-century Irish domestic receipt books

Asthma	Ear, deafness in	Rickets
Bleeding	Earache	Scald Head/Ringworm
Bloody Flux	Epileptic fits	Scurvy
Boils	Eye disorders	Smallpox
Bruises	Fevers	Sore mouth
Burn/scald	Green Gripes	Sores, eruptions
Chilblains	Insect Bites	Sore Throat
Colic	Jaundice	Stomach ache
Consumption	King's Evil	Teething
Convulsions	Lax, medicine for every kind of	Thrush
Cough	Measles	Vomiting
Croup	Plasters	Whooping Cough
Debility	Purges	Worms
Diarrhoea	Quinsey	Warts
Dysentery	Rabies	

Source: Irish domestic receipt books (NLI, Inchiquin Papers, Ms 14786; O'Hara Papers, Ms 16724; Leitrim Papers, Ms 9928; Smythe of Barbavilla Papers, Ms 11689; Gormanston Papers, Ms 44417/6; Inchiquin Papers, Ms 14887; Fingall Papers, Ms 8041; Ms 1360; Ms 19729; Townley Hall Papers, Ms 9560).

As Astruc notes, one of the first obstacles faced by an otherwise healthy infant was the naturally occurring, but genuinely troublesome process of dentition.²¹¹ While medical authors wrote alarmingly of the dangers associated with the 'breeding of teeth', there is a significant discrepancy between what they wrote and what the records indicate eighteenth-century parents believed. Writing in 1742, Harris

²¹⁰ For example see *The Dublin Gazette*, 6 Oct. 1733, 6 Apr. 1734, 5 Apr. 1735, 5 Apr. 1737, 8 Apr. 1738.

²¹¹ Astruc, *A general and compleat treatise*, pp 1-2.

observed that of 'all the disorders which threaten the lives of infants, there is none that is wont to produce so many grievous symptoms as a difficult and laborious breeding of teeth',²¹² and Tissot commented in 1766 that besides being 'very tormenting to children', some children died 'under the severe symptoms attending it'.²¹³

Teething, which according to Armstrong began when the infant was aged seven to ten months old,²¹⁴ was believed to be responsible for fevers, inflammations and convulsions,²¹⁵ which were symptoms of the 'raging humors'²¹⁶ within the gums. Confusing and compounding the problems of teething, especially in older children was the incidence of scurvy whose oral cavity symptoms were often confused with those naturally occurring during teething. In an effort to prevent an infestation of worms many parents restricted their children's intake of fresh fruit and vegetables which left them more prone to attacks of scurvy.²¹⁷

Medical authors recommended two treatment methods for teething children; externally the release of the tooth within the swelled gum and internally the relief of the 'hectic' fever by repeated 'gentle purges' adapted to the age, strength and constitution of the child.²¹⁸ Significantly the seventeenth-century practice of artificially releasing the emerging tooth from the gum²¹⁹ was continued in Ireland into the eighteenth-century and is indicative of the pointlessness of intervention so often apparent in eighteenth-century children's medical care. Although strongly disapproved of by Astruc,²²⁰ nursemaids commonly made an incision with their nail in the child's affected gum. Chewing on a piece of coral, chalk or pearls was the method preferred by physicians. But should these methods fail, parents were advised that a penknife or 'any other knife that has a thick back' could be used to make a deep and wide incision, thereby releasing the 'troublesome' tooth.²²¹

²¹² Harris, *A treatise of the acute diseases of infants*, p. 91.

²¹³ Tissot, *Advice to the people in general*, p. 229.

²¹⁴ Armstrong, *An account of the diseases most incident to children*, p. 81.

²¹⁵ Arbuthnot, *An essay concerning the nature of aliments*; Kevill-Davies, *Yesterday's children*, pp 55-6.

²¹⁶ Harris, *A treatise of the acute diseases of infants*, p. 96.

²¹⁷ Kevill-Davies, *Yesterday's children*, pp 55-6.

²¹⁸ Harris, *A treatise of the acute diseases of infants*, pp 91-3; Astruc, *A general and compleat treatise*, pp 97-101; Tissot, *Advice to the people in general*, p. 229; Armstrong, *An account of the diseases most incident to children*, pp 83-5.

²¹⁹ Charles Allen, *The operator for the teeth shewing how to preserve teeth and gums* (Dublin, [1686]) cited in James Kelly, "'I was right glad to be rid of it': Dental Medical Practice in Eighteenth-century Ireland' (forthcoming); Von Rosenstein, *The diseases of children & their remedies*, p. 25.

²²⁰ Astruc, *A general and compleat treatise*, pp 98-9.

²²¹ Harris, *A treatise of the acute diseases of infants*, p. 93.

Belief in the benefits of coral stretched back to ancient Greece when small pieces of peony roots were worn as necklaces to ward off evil spirits. In the early eighteenth-century, London quacks promoted the sale of 'Anodyne necklaces' for the 'easy breeding and cutting of [children's] teeth' through 'sympathy'.²²² As Francis Doherty notes, given parental concerns surrounding high infant mortality rates, the Anodyne Necklace firm's advertisements played up parental 'fears, anxieties, prejudices and concerns'.²²³ 'Anedoine [sic] Necklaces for cutting children's teeth' were advertised for sale in Dublin newspapers in 1726,²²⁴ and small pieces of coral were frequently mounted in silver and given to babies as christening presents, to chew on to ease the pain of teething.²²⁵ For example, Robert Peacock gave a 'corroll and bells' to his newborn nephew Pryce Peacock in January 1749.²²⁶ Buchan however disdained the supposed benefits of coral and suggested bread as a superior 'gum stick', and this scorn may have had an effect as references to the use of coral for teething are extremely rare in Irish domestic receipt books or family correspondence.

Although the Dublin Bills of Mortality and contemporary medical books claimed that teething was a major cause of death, there are few receipts in Irish domestic receipt books dealing with this complaint in children. Rather they address adult concerns such as whitening²²⁷ or preserving the teeth,²²⁸ or making toothpaste,²²⁹ which is emblematic of changing parental attitudes towards children's teething. While early eighteenth-century correspondents maintained an active interest in the progress of infant teething, by the latter part of the century parents had developed a more relaxed attitude, viewing infant teething not as a threat to the child's life, but as a milestone to be remarked upon. Indicatively, Lady Carlow wrote nonchalantly in 1780 that she had little to say about her son John other than 'his having got another tooth'.²³⁰ With the arrival of Thomas Drennan's first tooth in 1801, described as 'an era in the annals of the house', his parents bought his nurse Betty a shawl in

²²² Francis Doherty, 'The anodyne necklace: a quack remedy and its promotion', *Medical History* (Jul., 1990), 34, pp 273- 84.

²²³ Doherty, 'The anodyne necklace', p. 292; C. J. S. Thompson, *Magic and healing* (London, n.d.), p. 91; Kevill-Davies, *Yesterday's children*, pp 58-9.

²²⁴ *The Dublin Weekly Journal*, 8 Oct. 1726.

²²⁵ See 'Special Collections', NMI, Collins' Barracks, Dublin for examples of Irish provenance.

²²⁶ Legg (ed.), *The diary of Nicholas Peacock*, 1 Jan. 1749.

²²⁷ Jane Burton's cookery recipes and medical prescriptions (NLI, Ms 19729).

²²⁸ NLI, Ms 13603.

²²⁹ Fingall Papers, prescriptions and receipts, 1740-1760 (NLI, Fingall Papers, Ms 8041(1)).

²³⁰ Clark (ed.), *Gleanings*, i, 171.

celebration and expressed no concern other than a suspension of his cold baths.²³¹ At the same time Lady Leitrim noted that her son William (1806-71) had 'this day cut his 6th tooth' and other than the fact that he looked pale, she considered the event of no significance.²³²

If infant teething problems were obvious and generally passed with little medical intervention, doctors and parents of all social classes had more reason to be perplexed by the frequently recurring bouts of worms children suffered from. Mother of four Anne Venables, attributed most of her children's complaints to teeth and worms,²³³ and Astruc identified worms as one of children's second stage or age disorders.²³⁴ Any debilitating ailment in children was usually in the first instance ascribed to worms and parents and physicians routinely treated them with a variety of medicines and cures (in the early eighteenth-century more often than not homemade) with varying degrees of success. The extent to which family members discussed worms in children in their letters to each other is indicative of the scale of the problem. From the sixteenth century fruit was thought to spread disease and along with vegetables, both of which often contained maggots and caterpillars, were believed to be a source of worms in children. This fear led many parents to restrict if not prohibit fresh fruit and vegetables in their children's diets, a practice that in many instances led to the development of scurvy. Von Rosenstein (1706-73) perceptively observed in 1766 that worms could be 'conveyed into the human body by food and drink'²³⁵ and that breastfeeding children were never troubled with worms.²³⁶ As Kevill-Davis notes, the increased incidence of summer diarrhoea further reinforced in parents' minds the connection between fresh fruit, vegetables and worms.²³⁷

Following the humoral framework of health, children's constitutions were believed to have an important bearing on the degree to which they bred worms. A child with a weak constitution was considered more likely to breed worms than one with a strong constitution.²³⁸ Indicative of the seriousness with which the medical 'profession' viewed children's propensity to breed worms is their reluctance to

²³¹ William Drennan to Martha McTier, 25 Sep. 1801, Agnew (ed.), *Drennan-McTier letters*, ii, 725.

²³² Lady Leitrim to Lord Leitrim, 14 May 1807 (NLI, Killadoon Papers, Ms 36033/1).

²³³ Anne Venables nee King to Margaret O'Hara, 16 Jan. [1799/1800] (NLI, Ms 20366).

²³⁴ That is from three or four years to seven years old, Astruc, *A general and compleat treatise*, pp 1-2.

²³⁵ Von Rosenstein, *The diseases of children and their remedies*, p. 226.

²³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 38.

²³⁷ Kevill-Davies, *Yesterday's children*, p. 100.

²³⁸ Von Rosenstein, *The diseases of children and their remedies*, p. 227.

inoculate against smallpox children with or suspected to have worms.²³⁹ Through the eighteenth century doctors worked to identify and treat worms in children making detailed notes of the remedies administered and the worms expelled. Typically, having administered a purge to a child Walter Harris observed that:

from the first purge he voided twelve dead worms; from the second ten; from the third fifteen; from the fourth eleven; and, lastly, from the fifth six others, all round, white, and dead and most of them about nine inches long, besides a sort of cluster or seed-bag of the spawn of worms that had hardly acquired their full shape.²⁴⁰

Following five purges, the child was that evening given a 'bolus' made from rhubarb and further purges over the next fortnight.²⁴¹ Ironically we now know that the rhubarb would have worked on its own without the purges.

In directing parents towards a correct diagnosis, Von Rosenstein in 1766 outlined the symptoms a child suffering from threadworms presented. These included itchy nostrils, inadvertent vomiting, night sweats, wind, anxiety, fatigue and peevishness with a distended abdomen and 'pain under the short ribs ... especially after the stools'.²⁴² The 'itching of the nostrils and the slimy vomitings' were the 'surest signs of being affected with this kind of worms' he claimed.²⁴³

Clearly, parents found it extremely difficult to diagnose and treat correctly an infestation of worms in children. Their concern is reflected in their correspondence, and in the large numbers of worm recipes in domestic receipt books. The early eighteenth-century Inchiquin receipt book contains no less than nine different recipes on one page for the treatment of worms.²⁴⁴ Worm recipes were generally listed as being suitable for adults and children, the dosage being the only difference. For example, Mrs Hull's early eighteenth-century receipt advised the mother to:

take as much of the filings of pewter as will lye on a sixpence made in so fine powder. Wash it down with a little white wine & fast an hour after it. Ye quantity is for a child of 9 year old & so increase it with ye age till 'tis as much as will lye on a shilling for a man or woman.²⁴⁵

²³⁹ Von Rosenstein, *The diseases of children and their remedies*, p. 225.

²⁴⁰ Harris, *A treatise of the acute diseases of infants*, pp 170-1.

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*

²⁴² Von Rosenstein, *The diseases of children and their remedies*, p. 235.

²⁴³ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁴ NLI, Inchiquin Papers, Ms 14786, p. 9.

²⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

Other worm domestic receipts required the ingredients to be pounded in a mortar, placed in a warmed linen bag and attached to the child's body, usually the naval for a period of time, perhaps twelve hours.²⁴⁶ Having successfully treated her own children for worms, Anne Venables joyfully admitted that now 'you never saw four stouter boys. James is wonderfully improved, and not like the same child'.²⁴⁷

Each medical author had their preferred worm treatment and many early eighteenth-century remedies were based on herbs such as 'flower of brimstone', rhubarb and garlic.²⁴⁸ The O'Brien boys at school in Hillsborough, county Kildare were given a 'course of Physick' for worms in May 1747, the success of which was deemed worthy of record in the head-master's letter to their father.²⁴⁹ Nonetheless, some of the ingredients could affect a child's health negatively as the laxative and purging effects of particular herbs used might rapidly dehydrate a child.

By 1783, while recognising the benefits of previous herbal remedies, belief in the mercury based 'calomel' had gained ground. It was successfully exploited by the Cork based apothecary Bennet in his proprietary *Worm Cakes*, which were widely advertised in the nation's press. George Armstrong advocated administering calomel according to the child's age and constitution at bedtime followed by a purging draught the next morning.²⁵⁰ Children, he claimed, were unwilling to drink the bitter herbal draughts and were wise to the means parents adopted to disguise them. Three year-old Thomas Drennan was treated for worms in 1804 under the direction (by post) of his father Dr William Drennan in Dublin and Dr McTier in Belfast. Having recommended 'a trial either of *Bennet's* or *Ching's Worm Cakes*'²⁵¹ Thomas developed a 'sore belly', the effect according to his father of 'the calomel griping him'.²⁵² Despite this, and indicative of the continuing problem worms in children presented, over the years Thomas continued to be treated with worm cakes. Notwithstanding the many domestic worm cures available to Irish parents, the introduction of proprietary medicines such as *Bennet's Worm Cakes* ultimately led to the development of specific medicines to tackle worm infestations in children.

²⁴⁶ NLI, Inchiquin Papers, Ms 14786, p. 41; NLI, Ms 1603.

²⁴⁷ Letters to Mrs Charles [Margaret] O'Hara, 1799-1805 (NLI, O'Hara Papers, Ms 20366).

²⁴⁸ Tissot, *Advice to the people in general*, p. 231; Von Rosenstein, *The diseases of children and their remedies*, p. 250.

²⁴⁹ Shem Thompson to Sir Edward O'Brien, 19 May 1747 (NLI, Inchiquin Papers, Ms 45353/2).

²⁵⁰ Armstrong, *An account of the diseases most incident to children*, pp 141-2.

²⁵¹ William Drennan to Martha McTier, 3 Nov. 1804, Agnew (ed.), *Drennan-McTier letters*, iii, 279-80.

²⁵² William Drennan to Martha McTier, 5 Nov. 1804, *ibid.*, iii, 282.

Mirroring the debate among the medical 'profession' about the merits of self-diagnosing, by the 1770s there was a divergence in parental opinion regarding children's medicines and parental attitudes towards medical intervention. It is possible that the introduction of more readily available proprietary medicines such as *Bennet's Worm Cakes* generated a confidence in the efficacy of these modern remedies among parents. By contrast, the approach adopted by Lady Sarah Bunbury when dealing with her daughter Louisa's persistent cases of worms is indicative of the emergence of a more natural and holistic approach towards medical intervention from the 1770s. Looking miserable at times and perfectly well at others, the normally bright and energetic seven and a half year-old was diagnosed with worms in 1776.²⁵³ Despite following medical advice, administering several worm medicines and plenty of exercise, Louisa failed to expel any worms.²⁵⁴ The following year Lady Sarah was determined to change her course of treatment to the less invasive one of 'nourishment, and gentle bathing twice a week in the sea to strengthen ... [her] constitution'.²⁵⁵ Interestingly, by the early nineteenth-century the worm receipts in Charlotte O'Hara's domestic receipt book increasingly addressed the cause, being designed to 'curb the stuff which composes worms', rather than promoting the cure.²⁵⁶

Although Astruc acknowledged in 1746 that 'our knowledge I own, is very much confined, with respect to the physical causes of the generation of worms',²⁵⁷ it was only from the 1770s that questions were raised about the causes and incidence of worms in children. According to the London doctor Duncan, many children's constitutions were ruined by their complaints being mistaken for worms and treated for such, and he expressed his reluctance to treat the elder sons of the duke of Leinster staying with their aunt, Lady Caroline Fox, in Knightsbridge for worms.²⁵⁸ By 1783 George Armstrong, drawing on his experience as doctor to the London Dispensary for Sick Poor claimed that 'worm cases rarely occur than is commonly imagined', noting that 'not one in ten' brought to the London Dispensary diagnosed with and treated for worms had 'ever voided any'.²⁵⁹ Even so, he agreed that for the one child where the

²⁵³ Lady Sarah Bunbury to Duchess of Leinster, 21 Apr. [1776], Fitzgerald (ed.), *Leinster correspondence*, ii, 174.

²⁵⁴ Lady Sarah Lennox to Duchess of Leinster, 12 Aug. 1776, *ibid.*, ii, 193.

²⁵⁵ Lady Sarah Lennox to Duchess of Leinster, 22 Jun. 1777, *ibid.*, ii, 224.

²⁵⁶ Charlotte O'Hara's recipe book, c. 1808 (NLI, O'Hara Papers, Ms 16724).

²⁵⁷ Astruc, *A general and compleat treatise*, p. 182.

²⁵⁸ Lady Caroline Fox to Countess of Kildare, 31 Jan. [1760], Fitzgerald (ed.), *Leinster correspondence*, i, 270.

²⁵⁹ Armstrong, *An account of the diseases most incident to children*, pp 137-40.

symptoms strongly indicated their presence, it was 'right to try whether they have [worms] or not'.²⁶⁰ William Drennan concurred, observing in 1804 that 'worm medicines ... may be of much service in many cases where there are no worms in the bowels'.²⁶¹ Yet, as debilitating as worms and its treatments were to children, there were signally worse ailments, and Lady Louisa Conolly was relieved to discover in 1775 that the decay affecting her niece Harriet Staples was due to – just worms.²⁶²

Similar to worms, whooping cough and croup belonged to the second class of disorders that, according to Astruc, 'children [were] more frequently liable to than adults',²⁶³ and the large number of receipts dedicated to treating whooping cough in eighteenth-century Irish domestic receipt books are illustrative of the concern with which Irish parents regarded the disease. As Buchan remarked, whooping cough or chin-cough seldom affected adults but often proved fatal to children, especially those living upon a 'thin watery diet, who breathe unwholesome air, and have too little exercise'.²⁶⁴ Pertussis, commonly called whooping cough, was and is a highly contagious bacterial disease, the childhood years being the time of greatest exposure and greatest risk. When Lady Cecilia Lennox (1749-69) contracted whooping cough at fifteen years of age, it was concern rather than fear that her family voiced.²⁶⁵ By contrast, Martha McTier expressed her hope that her four-year-old nephew Thomas Drennan would not get it until older²⁶⁶ and accordingly, when the disease raged in Belfast, she removed Thomas immediately to the country.²⁶⁷

Although not fatal to adults, people still avoided contact with infected households. Emily, Countess of Kildare, refused to visit her sons Lords George (1748-65)²⁶⁸ and Charles Fitzgerald when they returned from Eton to Ireland suffering

²⁶⁰ Armstrong, *An account of the diseases most incident to children*, pp 137-40.

²⁶¹ William Drennan to Martha McTier, 3 Nov. 1804, Agnew (ed.), *Drennan-McTier letters*, iii, 280.

²⁶² Lady Louisa Conolly to Duchess of Leinster, 31 Mar. 1775, Fitzgerald (ed.), *Leinster correspondence*, iii, 128.

²⁶³ Astruc, *A general and compleat treatise*, pp 1-2.

²⁶⁴ Buchan, *Domestic medicine* (3rd ed.), p. 234.

²⁶⁵ Lady Holland to Marchioness of Kildare [Nov. 1764], Fitzgerald (ed.), *Leinster correspondence*, i, 419.

²⁶⁶ Martha McTier to William Drennan, 12 Jan. 1805, Agnew (ed.), *Drennan-McTier letters*, iii, 305.

Martha's methods were successful, as Thomas did not contract whooping cough until he was six years old: Martha McTier to William Drennan [1807], *ibid.*, iii, letter no. 1337.

²⁶⁷ Martha McTier to William Drennan, 4 Jun. [1803], *ibid.*, iii, 114.

²⁶⁸ There were two Lord George Fitzgerald. This refers to the first born son of the Duke and Duchess of Leinster, while George Simon (1773-83) refers to the son of the Duchess of Leinster and William Ogilvie, though he was recognised as Fitzgerald.

from whooping cough, as she had not had the disease herself.²⁶⁹ The fact that she had an extremely large and young family still living with her probably guided her reluctance. By contrast Sam Cooke spent six weeks away from school in Kildare recovering from whooping cough, living with his family.²⁷⁰

For many parents, whooping cough was difficult to diagnose and distinguish, particularly in its early stages, from children's other more common and less fatal coughs. Despite his medical training, William Drennan was uncertain whether his three month-old son's cough was whooping cough or not. Later, when his eldest son, six year-old Thomas developed a cough which his aunt was unsure of, Drennan sent an 'embrocation for the chin-cough' but, bowing to female experience, reminded his sister Martha that 'any old woman in the parish might have determined in this time, from the very sound of the cough, whether it be of the chin-cough kind or not'.²⁷¹

Remedies for whooping cough were varied and are to be encountered in all medical books relating to children's diseases and in domestic receipt books. Consistent with this, Von Rosenstein felt it necessary to comment critically in 1766 on the length of recovery when treatment was 'left to the course of nature alone',²⁷² while Armstrong in 1783 rebuked those of 'a superior station' and 'the vulgar' for believing a cure was 'out of the power of physic, and therefore to be solely left to time and nature to cure'.²⁷³ Even though their comments may reflect the continuing reluctance of many physicians to address children's diseases, the large numbers of remedies in Irish domestic receipt books clearly indicate that Irish parents did and continued to treat children's whooping cough with domestic 'physic'.

It is striking how many domestic remedies for whooping cough and croup were applied externally to the child's body rather than taken orally. Common to all these receipts was the requirement to apply unguents within a piece of brown paper or wrapped in a bag or on flannel to such parts of the body as the feet or the stomach.²⁷⁴ The early eighteenth-century Inchiquin papers contain a recipe for 'Garlick Oyntment' that required:

²⁶⁹ Lady Caroline Fox to Countess of Kildare, 5 Jul. 1759, Fitzgerald (ed.), *Leinster correspondence*, i, pp 239-40.

²⁷⁰ Sadlier (ed.), 'Diary of Anne Cooke 1761-76', pp 104-32, 205-19, 447-63.

²⁷¹ William Drennan to Martha McTier [14 Jan. 1807], Agnew (ed.), *Drennan-McTier letters*, iii, 359.

²⁷² Von Rosenstein, *The diseases of children and their remedies*, p. 194.

²⁷³ Armstrong, *An account of the diseases most incident to children*, p. 114.

²⁷⁴ Charlotte O'Hara's medical recipe book, c.1808 (NLI, O'Hara Papers, Ms 16724) or NLI, Ms 13603.

3 ounces of the heads of garlick. Pick them clean, pound them up with as much bears or boars grease as will mix them up into an ointment thick. With wool anoint the soles of the feet before ye fire & dip a little unwasht [sic] wool in it & bind it on with a linen cloth. Do ye 3 nights together. Tis also very good to draw down any unnatural heat.²⁷⁵

In Belfast, Martha McTier recommended 'a pitch plaster between [the] shoulders ... a slow and not wasting remedy'.²⁷⁶ The itch from the plaster however could make life very uncomfortable and aggravating for the child.

Indicative of parental concern, newer or 'better' receipts for whooping cough frequently superseded older receipts. For example, one page from the Inchiquin receipt book contains three such receipts. The first, Miss Johnston's, utilising old tallow candles, brandy and brown paper, was superseded by 'a better receipt' using garlic and butter, and this in turn yielded to Mrs Dawson's receipt which consisted of a pint of live 'millepeed' [sic], white wine and brown sugar candy.²⁷⁷ Interestingly, this receipt was also recommended by Buchan in *Domestic medicine*²⁷⁸ and since it may have been directly copied from that book it illustrates that receipts and medical knowledge were collected wherever and whenever available.

Although medical authors and commentators such as Von Rosenstein (1766), Buchan (1769) and Rutty (1770)²⁷⁹ had, by mid-century, recognised the contagious nature of whooping cough, they had a poor understanding of its source; all attributed its development to a 'miasma'.²⁸⁰ Operating within the flexible humoral framework of health it was considered important to keep the child's body 'open' through vomits, to eat as little 'trash' as possible, and to 'avoid all garden stuff' such as peas, beans, cream, milk and cherries, although strawberries could be eaten in moderation.²⁸¹

Medical authors such as Astruc advised bleeding, even for infants as young as eight or nine months old, to relieve 'inflammation' in the oesophagus followed by an emetic or ipecacuana, although this he recommended be done only once. However a child of two could be safely bled twice.²⁸² By mid-century, doctors such as Buchan

²⁷⁵ NLI, Inchiquin Papers, Ms. 14786.

²⁷⁶ Martha McTier to Sarah Drennan [n.d.], Agnew (ed.), *Drennan-McTier letters*, iii, 28.

²⁷⁷ NLI, Inchiquin Papers, Ms 14786.

²⁷⁸ Buchan, *Domestic medicine* (3rd ed.), p. 137.

²⁷⁹ Rutty, *A chronological history of the weather and seasons*, p. 63.

²⁸⁰ Von Rosenstein, *The diseases of children and their remedies*, p. 196.

²⁸¹ Lady Caroline Fox to Countess of Kildare, 28 Jun. [1759], Fitzgerald (ed.), *Leinster correspondence*, i, 238.

²⁸² Astruc, *A general and compleat treatise*, p. 147.

and the London doctors Duncan and Truesdale in treating cases of whooping cough recommended an immediate change of air, though not night air.

Supporting Buchan and Rutty's belief in the miasmatic nature of whooping cough and croup, Martha McTier left 'chafing dishes burning tobacco in the shrubberies around' her house in order to prevent her foster-son Thomas from contracting either.²⁸³ McTier was prompted to take this action by reports that a three year-old girl living nearby had died of the affliction; that it had 'been at Cultra, and ... fatal about Downpatrick'.²⁸⁴ The use of emetics and the application of leeches to the throat were the remedies resorted to by Charlotte O'Hara in Nymphsfield, county Sligo when her children contracted whooping cough.²⁸⁵ Thus the evidence from Irish domestic receipt books indicates that the humoral belief in 'bad miasmias' and the release of foulness or disease from the body, possessed credence in Ireland throughout the eighteenth-century.

Often confused with whooping cough though not as deadly, croup caused similar alarm amongst parents. In one case outlined in January 1805 by William Drennan, the deaths of Cunningham Greg's children in Belfast were attributed to croup.²⁸⁶ Croup or 'roup' was believed to be infectious and even hereditary throughout the eighteenth-century. It is interesting to note that in 1805 Drennan cited William Buchan's 1769 *Domestic medicine* in support of this view, since it offers further evidence of the impact, significance and durability of this particular work. A tracheotomy carried out in an attempt to save a further child of the Cunningham family from dying of croup proved unsuccessful. The extremely risky nature of this procedure is indicative of the desperate lengths to which some parents were prepared to go when faced with the trauma of their children's ills and the inability of the medical 'professions' to cure them.

As children got older they became increasingly liable to the same 'disorders' as adults.²⁸⁷ Fever, consumption and smallpox were three adult diseases in which children's remedies closely followed those recommended for adults. Until the late nineteenth century fever was regarded as a disease in its own right rather than a

²⁸³ Martha McTier to Sarah Drennan, 16 Apr. [1805], Agnew (ed.), *Drennan-McTier letters*, iii, 340.

²⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁵ Charlotte O'Hara's medical recipe book, c. 1808 (NLI, O'Hara Papers, Ms 16724).

²⁸⁶ William Drennan to Martha McTier, [15 Jan. 1805], Agnew (ed.), *Drennan-McTier letters*, iii, 306.

²⁸⁷ Astruc, *A general and compleat treatise*, pp 1-2.

symptom.²⁸⁸ Outbreaks of fever were alarming for all ages and classes of society. Neither doctors nor patients in the eighteenth-century had any real idea of what caused disease, and as Geary notes, until 1850 ‘fever was a generic term that embraced typhus, relapsing fever and enteric fever or typhoid’.²⁸⁹ For this reason fever epidemics rapidly created a climate of fear among people. Joseph Rogers (1677-1753) succinctly observed that ‘the fears and apprehensions of the people ... add wings to the growing evil, enhance its venom, and double the devastation’.²⁹⁰

As Porter has indicated, there were two theories in contention, the ‘miasma’ theory and the ‘contagion’ theory, but neither held sway.²⁹¹ Writing in 1734, Rogers acknowledged the connection between the lack of hygiene among the ‘close confin’d allies [sic] and lanes’ of the poor and the spread of disease.²⁹² Sweeping through households, regardless of age or status, fever could in a matter of days wipe out an entire household or leave surviving children extremely vulnerable. The county Clare gentleman farmer William Stacpoole (1743-96), having lost ‘the best wife and sincerest friend I ever knew or met’ to a ‘most violent malignant putrid fever’ in 1775,²⁹³ wrote sadly three years later of the death of his ‘beloved’ daughter Dorothea Maria (1775-1778), aged ‘three years, three months and fifteen days old’ from ‘chincough’ and fever.²⁹⁴ The death from fever of John Ross Lewin of Fortfergus possibly removed the income and protection his eight daughters and three sons enjoyed,²⁹⁵ while the death from fever of six months pregnant Mrs Ferguson of Belfast left her surviving ten young children extremely vulnerable.²⁹⁶ Despite their often remote locations, fever was a significant cause of death among Charter school children.²⁹⁷ Furthermore, during the frequent fever epidemics that swept the country throughout the eighteenth century, there was a marked increase in the numbers of children

²⁸⁸ Farmar, *Patients, potions & physicians*, p. 18.

²⁸⁹ Geary, *Medicine and charity in Ireland*, p. 70.

²⁹⁰ Joseph Rogers, *An essay on epidemic diseases; and more particularly on the endemial epidemics of the city of Cork such as fevers and small-pox ... in two parts* (Dublin, 1734), p. 2.

²⁹¹ Porter, *Blood & guts*, p. 86.

²⁹² Rogers, *An essay on epidemic diseases*, p. 37.

²⁹³ Leo McNamara (ed.), ‘The diary of an eighteenth century Clare gentleman’, *North Munster Antiquarian Journal*, 23 (1981) [3 Nov. 1775], pp. 55

²⁹⁴ *Ibid.* [>Sep.] 1778, pp 42-3.

²⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 26 [Apr. 1791], p. 44.

²⁹⁶ Martha McTier to William Drennan [n.d.], Agnew (ed.), *Drennan McTier letters*, ii, 533.

²⁹⁷ This issue is addressed more extensively in part three.

admitted to the Dublin Workhouse and Foundling Hospital, most strikingly during the 1741 famine.²⁹⁸

Once fever struck, parents reacted quickly and children were swiftly removed from the source. When fever struck his wife in early 1720, Matthew Plunkett in Westmeath quickly dispatched their children to stay with relatives in various parts of the country. Reflecting the duty of care children owed to their parents, their eldest son remained at home to nurse his dying mother but he too succumbed to the fever and died on the tenth day.²⁹⁹ Others fared better; contrary to his doctor's advice, Cork schoolteacher John Fitzgerald insisted on nursing and sleeping with his son Johnny as he battled his fever at home.³⁰⁰

Throughout the eighteenth-century, physicians, from Rogers in 1734 to Buchan in 1769 recommended diets 'moderately warm and comfortable, such as sack-whey, gruel with Rhenish [sic] wine and cordials' for recovering fever patients,³⁰¹ and, with his attention firmly focused on the child, Armstrong also recommended cold baths to 'strengthen the habit' in children following a fever.³⁰² Proprietary medicines such as *Dr James's Powders* were increasingly offered to treat fevers in adults and children.³⁰³ Dublin based Meliora Adlercron regularly purchased *James's Fever* powders at 3s. 3d.³⁰⁴ a go, as did the Rev. Harper when fever struck the pupils of St Mary's Charity school in Dublin in April 1791.³⁰⁵ By 1810 the Belfast doctor William Drennan had adopted a mild laxative 'and the plentiful use of oranges' to treat his eldest son's fever.³⁰⁶

Though the fear fever generated is well in evidence throughout eighteenth century correspondence, by 1806 William Drennan could claim that there was no need to fear it so long as a respectable distance was maintained from the source. Having retreated to the country to avoid the city fever, he issued explicit instructions to his

²⁹⁸ This issue is addressed more extensively in part three. *Commons Jn. (Irl.)* 1743, vol. 4, appendix clxxix, table no. III. Similarly Heywood has identified close links between periods of economic crisis and surges in abandonment in Europe during the seventeenth and eighteenth-centuries: Heywood, *A history of childhood*, p. 80.

²⁹⁹ Lyons (ed.), *The memoirs of Mrs Leeson madam*, p. 6.

³⁰⁰ T. A. Lunham (ed.), 'John Fitzgerald's diary, 1793', *Cork Historical and Archaeological Society Journals*, 24 (1918), pp 151-7; 25 (1919), pp 42-45, 102-7; 26 (1920), pp 32-35.

³⁰¹ Rogers, *An essay on epidemic diseases*, pp 50-1.

³⁰² Armstrong, *An account of the disease most incident to children*, pp 131-2.

³⁰³ *The Hibernian Journal*, 28 Jan. 1791; Charlotte O'Hara's medical receipt book, c. 1808 (NLI, O'Hara Papers, Ms 16724).

³⁰⁴ Adlercron diary 1782-94 (NLI, Ms 4481).

³⁰⁵ St Mary's Charity school minutes, Dublin, 30 Apr. 1791 (NLI, Ms 2664).

³⁰⁶ William Drennan to Martha McTier, 19 Mar. [18]10, Agnew (ed.), *Drennan-McTier letters*, iii, 662.

sister Martha in Belfast to be cautious of the company kept by his five year-old son Thomas staying with her and avoided visiting cabins where fever had previously been and contact with children with dirty clothes. According to Drennan 'it was the want of changes of clothing and bedding which keeps the fever so long in these cabins' and visitors and servants facilitated the transmission of the infection into 'genteel families'.³⁰⁷

For elite and 'genteel' families, escape from the source of fever to a Dublin townhouse was always possible. When fever struck Capt. Henry Caldwell of St Catherine's in Kildare in August 1763, his wife and daughter retreated to safety in Dublin closely followed by their houseguest, Anne Cooke.³⁰⁸ Yet as Swift noted, this seldom guaranteed immunity; the rich often became 'sharers in the general calamity' of 'pestilential and contagious distempers'.³⁰⁹ Given this backdrop, it is not surprising that domestic receipt books are full of receipts for fumigants designed to 'preserve' the body from infection, and 'plague waters' to cure all types of fevers.³¹⁰ Receipts, notably those kept by the Smythes of Barbavilla which were adapted for children, could contain long lists of ingredients and were time consuming in preparation.³¹¹ However, since few Irish domestic fever receipts are specifically addressed towards children, it suggests that parents viewed these types of fever (as opposed to those generated by ailments such as teething) as indiscriminate in their victims, symptoms and remedies.

Similar to fever, consumption or tuberculosis³¹² affected children and adults of all social classes and was noted as being particularly prevalent among Charter school children.³¹³ It was a particularly distressing disease, as it seemed to consume people from within with fever, a bloody cough and a long relentless wasting. While children's illnesses took a financial toll on elite and gentry families, the example of Richard Adlercron illustrates succinctly not only the financial commitment involved

³⁰⁷ William Drennan to Martha McTier, 8 Jun. 1806, Agnew (ed.), *Drennan-McTier letters*, iii, 488.

³⁰⁸ Sadlier (ed.), 'Diary of Anne Cooke 1761-76' [13 Aug. 1763], p. 113.

³⁰⁹ Jonathon Swift, 'The memorial of the poor inhabitants, tradesmen and labourers of the kingdom of Ireland', H. Davis (ed.), *Swifts Irish tracts 1728-1733* (Oxford, 1955), p. 303 cited in Joseph O'Carroll, 'Contemporary attitudes towards the homeless poor 1725-1775', David Dickson (ed.), *The gorgeous mask, Dublin 1700-1850* (Dublin, 1987), p. 75.

³¹⁰ NLI, Smythe of Barbavilla Papers, Ms 11689.

³¹¹ Ibid.

³¹² Known variously as phthisis, scrofula (in adults), white plague, king's evil and Pott's disease, TB was not identified as a single disease until the 1820s and not named 'tuberculosis' until 1839: *Blacks Medical Dictionary* (37th ed., London, 1992), pp 600-2.

³¹³ This issue is addressed in part three.

in treating consumption, but also the emotional toll paid by Richard's adoring mother (table 2.4).

After a prolonged four-year illness, Meliora Adlercron noted in her journal in November 1788 the death from consumption of her third eldest child and second eldest son, eleven-year old Richard. Throughout his long illness Richard's mother spared no expense in seeking medical assistance for him. As his condition deteriorated, Dr Robert Emmet visited Richard on a daily basis from September 1788 at a charge of £1 2s. 9d. per visit, and was later joined by a Dr Purcell. Richard's mother and a servant-maid Betty initially provided nursing care but by October, a nurse-keeper named Webb was employed specifically to tend to Richard's needs.

Isolating Richard from other children in the family, Brown the carpenter was paid a total of £3 3s. 5d to adapt a bedroom with a child's bed and blankets for Richard's sole use. Later a camp bed was erected, possibly so Nurse-keeper Webb could sleep nearby, and a 'window curtain' put up to ease Richard's swollen eyes and sensitivity to bright light, both symptoms of tuberculosis.

A bathing shift (2s. 8d.) was purchased and accompanied by his nurse Betty, Richard went for regular bathing sessions. Medicines such as *Doctor James' Powders* (3s. 3d. a packet), goats whey (5s. 10d. to 9s. 2d.), leeches (3s. 9½d.), a box of Issue Plaister (1s. 4d.), *Velnos Vegetable Syrup* (12s. 5½d. per bottle) and the expensive and popular *Godbold's Balsam* (£1 14s. 0½d. per bottle) were also purchased for Richards use.

As Richard slowly wasted away, his mother purchased 'trifles' such as cakes and oranges (2s. 4d.), figs (2d.) and Hungary Water (6½d.) to entice him to eat, and in order to keep him entertained, books and playthings such as pencils and paper (1s.) were also bought.

Notwithstanding the expense, love, care and attention received from his family and doctors, at twelve o'clock on the 12 November 1788 eleven year-old Richard Adlercron succumbed to his disease and left his mother utterly heartbroken.³¹⁴

³¹⁴ Adlercron diary 1782-94, Jan. 1787- Nov. 1788 (NLI, Ms 4481).

Table 2.5: List of expenses incurred in the illness and death of Richard Adlercron

Date	Entry	Cost		
		£	s.	d.
10 Jan. 1787	Child's bed	1	2	9
	Blankets		14	6
28 Jan.	Brown, carpenter for Richard's room	1	6	2
20 Apr.	Goats whey for Richard		3	4
25-29 Apr.	Three doctor visits	3	8	3
29 Apr.	Cakes & oranges for Richard		1	6
8 May	Bathing shift		2	8
12 May	Cakes & oranges for Richard		2	4
22 May	Goats whey		5	10
29 May	Playthings for Richard			11
29 May	Figs for Richard			2
18 Jun.	Goats whey		9	2
2 Aug.	Book & fruit for Richard		1	7½
30 Aug.	Hungary Water			6½
11 Nov.	Box of issue plaister		1	4
15 Nov.	Bottle of vegetable syrup for Richard		12	5
22 Jan. 1788	Packet of <i>James' Powders</i>		3	3
21 Mar.	Present to Betty for care of Richard		2	8½
23 Jun.	2 bottles of <i>Velnos Vegetable Syrup</i>	1	4	11
9 Jul.	1 pint of <i>Godbold's Vegetable Balsam</i>	1	14	0½
10 Jul.	For Richards portrait [before he died]	9	2	0
4 Aug.	Medicines for Richard		2	4
16 Aug.	<i>Godbolds Balsam</i>	1	14	0½
18 Sep.	Visits by Dr Emmet on a daily basis	1	2	9
	With Dr Purcell also	4	11	0
26 Sep.	Medicines		4	4
4 Oct.	Medicines		4	4
	Playthings		1	7½
7 Oct.	Pencil and paper for Richard		1	0
17 Oct.	Paid Fozal for campbed & window curtain	1	2	6
	Nurse Webb	1	2	9
	Diapers etc		3	0
10 Nov.	Leeches		3	9½
12 Nov.	Black petticoat		10	10
	<i>Godbolds Balsam</i>	1	14	1½
20 Nov.	Mrs Jelons paid in full 'for my dr son Richards funeral expences'	2	15	8
25 Nov.	Nurse Webb		1	1
26 Nov.	Paid Dr Emmet for attendance on Mrs Adlercron in a Bilious fever	9	2	0

Source: Adlercron diary 1782-94, Jan. 1787- Nov. 1788 (NLI, Ms 4481).

*Smallpox and inoculation*³¹⁵

Of all the diseases listed in the bills of mortality, smallpox had by far the most devastating impact on children's lives.³¹⁶ Smallpox (*variola virus*), was responsible for twenty per cent of all deaths in Dublin between 1661 and 1745,³¹⁷ and for the premature deaths of one-third (thirty-three per cent) of children between 1717 and 1746.³¹⁸ These were extremely high mortality figures. By comparison, during the eighteenth century smallpox was responsible for the deaths of ten per cent of all those born in Sweden and fourteen per cent in Russia.³¹⁹ Smallpox epidemics swept with alarming regularity across Ireland throughout the century.³²⁰ Exacerbated by famine conditions, John Rutty laid the blame for the 1741 epidemic firmly on 'a conflux of beggars from the north occasioned by the late scarcity there, whose children full of the smallpox were frequently exposed in our streets'.³²¹ Observers recorded that as the number of cases increased so did the severity of children's symptoms.³²² One contemporary observer noted in 1741 the 'universal distress ... [the] want and misery in every face ... [the] roads spread with dead and dying bodies' that could be found in the country.³²³ According to Meliora Adlercron, the smallpox outbreak in Dublin in September 1766 was 'of so virulent a nature that nineteen out of twenty [children] died of it'; she was therefore thankful for the safe recovery of her son John and daughter Elizabeth due to the attendance of not one, but two doctors during their illness.³²⁴

Inoculation, 'a particular and gracious dispensation of Providence', was the only certain method by which children could combat the ravages of smallpox.³²⁵ Introduced into Ireland at the beginning of the eighteenth century, it became widely accepted and practised among the urban and rural elite, middling, peasant and pauper

³¹⁵ Institutional attitudes to smallpox and inoculation are addressed in part three.

³¹⁶ See fig. 2.2, Annual Dublin bills of mortality p. 121.

³¹⁷ Peter Razzell, *The conquest of smallpox* (Sussex, 1977), pp 137, 183.

³¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 136.

³¹⁹ World Health Organisation, <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/smallpox/en> [accessed 10 Aug. 2009].

³²⁰ Rogers and Rutty identified notable epidemics in 1708-09, 1718, 1721, 1728-31, 1738, 1740-45, 1752 and 1766.

³²¹ Rutty, *A chronological history of the weather and seasons*, pp 126-7.

³²² Rogers, *An essay on epidemic diseases*, pp 108-3.

³²³ [Anonymous], *The groans of Ireland: in a letter to a member of parliament* (Dublin [15 Nov.] 1741), p. 3.

³²⁴ Adlercron diary 1782-94 (NLI, Ms 4481).

³²⁵ Tissot, *Advice to the people in general* (Edinburgh, 1766), p. 232.

populace by mid-century, and remained popular until superseded by the safer cowpock vaccine at the beginning of the nineteenth.

There were two significant and long lasting after-effects for smallpox survivors, scarring (particularly on the face) and, among males, reduced fertility.³²⁶ Following the introduction of inoculation the latter no longer occurred, leading (particularly from mid-century) to a reduction in male infertility in Ireland. Arthur Young observed in 1776 that the numbers of children in Fortland, Easkey, county Sligo had increased 'particularly since inoculation was introduced, which was about ten years ago'.³²⁷ Inoculation may therefore be of particular significance in Irish demographic history.

The facial scarring left by smallpox, which affected between sixty-five and eighty per cent of those affected,³²⁸ could have devastating effects on children, but for many parents this was second to the child's survival. As a result, only a few Irish domestic receipt books contain specific recipes for 'oyntment'³²⁹ to 'smooth the skin after the smallpox'.³³⁰ As Oliver Goldsmith succinctly put it in 1760:

Lo, the smallpox with horrid glare
Levelled its terrors at the fair;
And, rifling every youthful grace,
Left but the remnant of a face.³³¹

When Colonel Browne's daughter was recovering from smallpox in 1783 it was reported that 'not a scar [would] remain to deface her beauty'.³³² According to William Drennan who was in attendance throughout her illness, while her mother³³³ deemed the potential facial scarring to be 'among the first of considerations', her father wished only for her life.³³⁴ Lady Louisa Conolly reckoned that rather than

³²⁶ As Razell briefly noted, and it is worthy of further exploration, natural smallpox led to the creation of focal lesions along the epididymis resulting in male infertility.

³²⁷ Young, *A tour in Ireland*, p. 77.

³²⁸ World Health Organisation, <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/smallpox/en> [accessed 10 Aug. 2009].

³²⁹ NLI, Smythe of Barbavilla Papers, Ms 11689.

³³⁰ Diary of Mary Mathew, 1772-1775 (NLI, Ms 5102).

³³¹ Cited in Lawrence Stone, *The family sex & marriage* (1st ed., New York, 1977), p. 77.

³³² William Drennan to Martha McTier [n.d.], Agnew (ed.), *Drennan-McTier letters*, i, 143.

³³³ Although not related to smallpox, Olivia Weisser also identifies a mother's concern about potential scarring resulting from a seventeenth-century medical treatment to her daughter's face: Olivia Weisser, 'Reading bumps on the body in early modern England', *Social History of Medicine*, 22, p. 335.

³³⁴ William Drennan to Martha McTier [n.d.], Agnew (ed.), *Drennan-McTier letters*, i, 143.

spoiling fifteen year-old Lord Edward Fitzgerald's face, 'being pitted' from a smallpox inoculation would rather become him.³³⁵

As Razzell makes clear, inoculation was practised only sporadically in early eighteenth-century Ireland. Indeed, the local committee of Primrose Grange Charter school outside Sligo reported as late as 1769 that 'the practice of inoculation is not as yet carried on in this country'.³³⁶ Yet Bryan Robinson, M.D. made the first public report of inoculating children against smallpox in Ireland in August 1725.³³⁷ Compared with Tissot's later 1766 calculation of fourteen point three per cent mortality, Robinson's early inoculation records a discouraging fifty per cent.³³⁸ Other contemporary accounts confirm that early inoculation procedures were notoriously unreliable.

Despite the attendant risk, the dangers of smallpox encouraged an increasing number of parents to try inoculation. Though she was seized by anxiety both before and after the event, Mrs Forth Hamilton, a friend of Mrs Delany of Delville, had her two children inoculated in May 1747.³³⁹ When Meliora Adlercron's son William (b. 1778) contracted the natural smallpox she anxiously advertised in the Dublin newspapers for the virus in order to inoculate her other son Richard and daughter Maria (b. 1779) both of whom had been isolated from William in another house. Although she did eventually obtain the virus through her advertisement, it was, she noted, not without great difficulty.³⁴⁰

Humoral theory dictated that the body should be prepared to receive the inoculation virus and thus elaborate and expensive preparations overseen by a physician were demanded³⁴¹ for two or three weeks before inoculation.³⁴² This method was also supported by the inoculation pioneer, Thomas Dimsdale in his work, *The present method of inoculating of the smallpox* which was published in Dublin in

³³⁵ Lady Louisa Conolly to Duchess of Leinster, 28 Sep. 1778, Fitzgerald (ed.), *Leinster correspondence*, iii, 318.

³³⁶ Primrose Grange school, Orders 1757-96, 9 May 1769 (TCD, Ms 5646).

³³⁷ Bryan Robinson, *The case of five children who were inoculated in Dublin on the 26th of August 1725 by Bryan Robinson, M.D., to which is added the case of Miss Rolt by one who was an eye-witness of it*, (3rd ed., Dublin 1725).

³³⁸ Tissot, *Advice to the people in general*, p. 214.

³³⁹ Day (ed.), *Letters from Georgian Ireland*, 26 May 1747, p. 102.

³⁴⁰ Adlercron diary 1782-94 (NLI, Ms 4481) [p. 3].

³⁴¹ For a contemporary account of the process of smallpox inoculation see letters of Lady Louisa Conolly to the Duchess of Leinster, Fitzgerald (ed.), *Leinster correspondence*, iii, letters nos 123-8, 15-28 Jun. and letters nos 136, 19 Sep. and no 138, 28 Sep. 1778.

³⁴² Rogers, *An essay on epidemic diseases*, pp 177-180.

1774.³⁴³ Needless to say, while such arrangements were financially advantageous for the medical profession they effectively excluded the poor.

Given the high mortality rate among children from smallpox, visible confirmation of a successful inoculation was not an unreasonable demand. Parents eagerly sought evidence of successful inoculation in their children and the outbreak of approximately one hundred spots was deemed confirmation. Despite her doctor's reassurance, a concerned Lady Louisa Conolly remarked that she would 'have been much better satisfied if [her foster-daughter Emmy] had had a few spots'.³⁴⁴ Anne Cooke kept a record over seventeen days of the progress of her children's inoculation pocks,³⁴⁵ while Marianne Fortescue had her daughter Emily (1797-1860) inoculated in 1799 even though she thought 'she had it before'.³⁴⁶

Parental uncertainty surrounding smallpox and inoculation is obvious in Irish eighteenth-century correspondence and in contemporary medical books. The type of

Fig. 2.3: Appointed by the Sutton family to 'regulate and extend their art over the Kingdom of Ireland'

Messrs Houlton, Blake & Sparrow, Surgeons, Dublin.
John Haley, M. D. Cork.
John Mongan, M. D. Strabane, Tyrone.
John M'Donell, M. D. Cashel, Tipperary.
[Name torn] Belfast, Antrim.
Peter M'Kiough/M'Keogh, M. D. Galway.
Francis Gervais, Surgeon, Naas, Athy, Co. Kildare.
Richard Doherty, Surgeon, Carlow.
Messrs Vachell & Ward Surgeons, soon to be appointed to particular districts in Ireland.

Source: Robert Houlton, *Indisputable facts relative to the Suttonian art of inoculation: with observations on its discovery, progress, encouragement, opposition* (Dublin, 1768).

pox – benign or confluent – the child's preparation for it, and indeed the exact method of inoculation were subjects of active debate among parents and medical authors. The introduction of the Suttonian method of inoculation in 1755 heightened the debate still

further. In response, Robert Houlton, Sutton's Irish agent published a pamphlet, *Indisputable facts relative to the Suttonian art of inoculation*³⁴⁷ in Dublin in 1768, which clearly outlined the advantages of his method over others. It is also fair to say that this publication was intended to attract attention to their recently appointed Irish inoculation agents (figure 2.3).

³⁴³ Dimsdale, *The present method of inoculating of the small-pox*, p. 10.

³⁴⁴ Lady Louisa Conolly to Duchess of Leinster, 12 Nov. 1786, Fitzgerald (ed.), *Leinster correspondence*, iii, p. 382.

³⁴⁵ Sadlier (ed.), 'Diary of Anne Cooke 1761-76', 10 Jan. 1770, p. 123.

³⁴⁶ Ross (ed.), 'The diary of Marianne Fortescue', 24 (1999), p. 378.

³⁴⁷ Robert Houlton, *Indisputable facts relative to the Suttonian art of inoculation: with observations on its discovery, progress, encouragement, opposition* (Dublin, 1768).

Sutton's method not only significantly reduced the severity of the child's symptoms, but was also more successful. Thus there was a dramatic rise in the numbers of children being inoculated from mid-century. Nathaniel Cooper's wife was so satisfied with the inoculation of her daughter in 1796 that she went 'to a play in Drogheda' that night.³⁴⁸ But for Limerick Methodist Elizabeth Bennis the inoculation of her children in 1760 'out of obedience to [her] husband', involved a deep religious conflict.³⁴⁹ Although the issue of predestination and children's inoculation was strongly debated in Scotland, especially among islanders, Elizabeth Bennis apart, it does not generally appear to have been a matter of particular concern for Irish parents.

The frequent outbreaks of smallpox, especially during the second and third quarters of the eighteenth-century caused some philanthropists and charitable organisations to initiate systems of mass inoculation amongst poor children. The newly appointed Bishop of Down, John Ryder (1743-1752) was extremely satisfied with the early progress of inoculation in his diocese³⁵⁰ and claimed it was so firmly established that 'nobody who can bear the expense of it neglects inoculating [children] after two years old'.³⁵¹

As Razzell observes, there was a distinct difference between urban and rural attitudes to smallpox. The frequent smallpox epidemics in urban areas led to a fatalistic attitude towards its effects, whereas children in rural districts, while protected from frequent epidemics, were devastated when smallpox struck their communities. Contemporary accounts indicate that when available, inoculation was widely practised in rural areas.³⁵² The eagerness with which the rural poor embraced inoculation for their children is evidenced by Quaker Elizabeth Clibborn's (1781-1861)³⁵³ comment in 1813 that she had vaccinated twenty-nine 'poor' children in one evening and twelve the week before.³⁵⁴ During his tour of Ireland in 1796-7, the Frenchman De Latocnaye met an itinerant inoculator in county Mayo who 'had taken

³⁴⁸ Nath. Cooper to Alexander Marsden, Dublin, 21 Oct. 1796 (NAI, OP 13/47).

³⁴⁹ Raughter, (ed.) *The journal of Elizabeth Bennis*, 8 Apr. 1760.

³⁵⁰ John Ryder, Bishop of Down, Dublin to Ryder, 12 Oct. 1743 (PRONI, Harrowby Papers, T3228/1/9).

³⁵¹ *Ibid.*

³⁵² Razzell, *The conquest of smallpox*, pp 93-8.

³⁵³ http://www.macatawa.org/~devries/Quaker_Clonmel.html [accessed 8 Aug. 2009].

³⁵⁴ McLoughlin, 'The sober duties of life', p. xiii. [Elizabeth Clibborn diary 5th month 1816].

some lessons in the hospitals' and had, he claimed, been practising his craft among the Irish peasantry for thirty or forty years.³⁵⁵

In marked contrast to the elaborate preparations of elite and gentry children, according to De Latocnaye peasant children behaved just as they had before the inoculation, running about and amusing themselves nearly naked. The inoculator was called to see them only when the fever took effect, administering 'a few simple remedies' to relieve the symptoms.³⁵⁶ If the inoculation was administered correctly, the result was a mild infection and the mortality around three to four per cent.³⁵⁷ Of the 361 children De Latocnaye's itinerant inoculator had inoculated that year (1796-7), he claimed that only one had died.³⁵⁸ Similarly, Bishop Ryder boasted that of the more than one thousand children inoculated between 1740 and 1743 in his diocese, only one had died.³⁵⁹ Nevertheless, as James Kelly notes itinerant inoculations were not always successful. Of fifty-two children inoculated in county Donegal in 1781, fifty-one died.³⁶⁰ Despite the enthusiasm for inoculation amongst the poor, there were continuing but sporadic outbreaks of smallpox, although Irish infection rates were lower than those of England and Wales.³⁶¹

The death of a child was a constant worry for those in medical attendance in any capacity during the eighteenth-century and particularly so following inoculation. Remarking on the death of a friend's child following inoculation, Lady Sarah Lennox observed that the mother's grief was compounded by the fact that she had the child inoculated against the father's wishes.³⁶² Believing he had done all that was necessary when treating the child of Lt. Col. William Browne in 1783 for 'natural smallpox', William Drennan observed that 'even if the child should die I do not think that I shall lose that degree of confidence which I may have acquired'.³⁶³ This was not always the case; De Latocnaye's itinerant inoculator, faced physical retribution

³⁵⁵ De Latocnaye, *A Frenchman's walk through Ireland*, pp 175-77.

³⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 177.

³⁵⁷ Alfred W. Crosby, 'Smallpox', Kenneth Kiple, *Cambridge World History of Human Disease* (Cambridge 1993), p. 1010.

³⁵⁸ De Latocnaye, *A Frenchman's walk through Ireland*, p. 175.

³⁵⁹ John Ryder, Bishop of Down, Dublin to Ryder, 12 Oct. 1743 (PRONI, Harrowby Papers, T3228/1/9).

³⁶⁰ Kelly, 'Scientific and institutional practice, 1650-1800', Jones and Malcolm (eds), *Medicine, disease and the state in Ireland*, pp 30-1.

³⁶¹ Jones and Malcolm (eds), *Medicine, disease and the state in Ireland*, p. 8.

³⁶² Lady Sarah Lennox to Duchess of Leinster, 28 Nov. 1778, Fitzgerald (ed.), *Leinster correspondence*, ii, 262.

³⁶³ William Drennan to Martha McTier [n.d.] 1783, Agnew (ed.), *Drennan-McTier letters*, i, 141.

from grieving parents and relations. Not only did he not get paid his fee, but he was obliged to make a quick escape 'to avoid a beating by the afflicted parents'.³⁶⁴

Throughout the eighteenth century there was continuous debate about the best season and optimal age for children's inoculation. Buchan considered the beginning of winter the best season followed by spring or autumn.³⁶⁵ Thomas Dimsdale writing in 1774 disagreed; he recommended that 'we may safely inoculate in all seasons provided care be taken', and encouraged patients to go out and about in the open air.³⁶⁶ William Drennan however chose to inoculate his two month-old son Thomas in May 1801 before the 'summer heats' set in.³⁶⁷

Indicative of the complexity of the debate, Thomas Sydenham (1624-89) writing in 1681/2, claimed that the severity of smallpox was dependent on the patient's age and sex. While women and children's bodies were deemed to be more susceptible to the disease because of their 'moist' natures, they were also seen as more capable of enduring its effects.³⁶⁸ Young men 'in the flower of [their] age' were seen to be in much more danger.³⁶⁹ Tissot also recognised children's different constitutions – robust or weak – and their impact on inoculation.³⁷⁰ Von Rosenstein attached importance not only to the child's constitution but also their lifestyle, and suggested that this would impact on the severity of the resultant smallpox.³⁷¹

The age at which a child was inoculated could also determine the outcome. Joseph Rogers claimed to have successfully inoculated his own child at seven months-old circa 1710³⁷² whereas Buchan recommended inoculating children between three and five years of age. He maintained that doing so sooner would lead to 'many disagreeable circumstances'.³⁷³ Dimsdale also recommended that children under two years of age should not be inoculated.³⁷⁴ Rosenstein however offered a choice – from four to fourteen and from sixteen to twenty-five years of age.³⁷⁵ Thus there was no

³⁶⁴ De Latocnaye, *A Frenchman's walk through Ireland*, p. 175.

³⁶⁵ Buchan, *Domestic medicine*, (3rd ed.), pp 194-5.

³⁶⁶ Dimsdale, *The present method of inoculating of the small-pox*, p. 10.

³⁶⁷ William Drennan to Martha [23 May 1801], Agnew (ed.), *Drennan-McTier letters*, ii, 705-6.

³⁶⁸ Churchill, 'The medical practice of the sexed body', p. 11.

³⁶⁹ Cited in *ibid.*, p. 11.

³⁷⁰ Tissot, *Advice to the people in general*, p. 233.

³⁷¹ Von Rosenstein, *The diseases of children*, p. 72.

³⁷² Rogers, *An essay on epidemic diseases*, p. 182.

³⁷³ Buchan, *Domestic medicine*, (3rd ed.), pp 194-5.

³⁷⁴ Dimsdale, *The present method of inoculating of the small-pox*, p. 9.

³⁷⁵ Von Rosenstein, *The diseases of children*, p. 73.

clear 'medical' consensus available to parents on which to base their decision when best to inoculate their children, and at what age.

Unlike elite families whose children normally took up residence in the physician's home, the children of the middling sort were usually inoculated in their own home, but attended daily by a physician. So long as they had 'common sense and prudence', Buchan encouraged parents to inoculate children themselves using the thread method,³⁷⁶ a view endorsed by Dimsdale.³⁷⁷ Buchan's simple and less invasive inoculation instructions required the use of 'fresh matter' (virus) and directed the parent to:

let a bit of thread, about half an inch long, wet with the matter, be immediately applied to the arm, midway between the shoulder and elbow, and covered with a piece of the common sticking plaster, and kept on for eight or ten days.³⁷⁸

During the smallpox epidemics of 1718-21, Joseph Rogers began inoculating children by bleeding, followed by the administration of a vomit and then a purge with 'Rhubarb' and 'Mann. Crem. Tart.', the staple eighteenth-century medical routine.³⁷⁹ Anne Rogers recommended the same in her domestic receipt book, but it is unclear whether this was for inoculation or 'natural' smallpox treatment.³⁸⁰ When inoculating his seven month-old son in 1721, Rogers administered blisters on the second day of sickening and kept them constantly running for seventeen days. Although he makes no comment on the child's reaction it must have been quite distressing as he records that he applied two, three, four and sometimes five blisters at a time.³⁸¹

The incubation period following inoculation was circa twelve days.³⁸² Children tended to look a little dull, listless and drowsy before the symptoms showed, were thirsty, had little appetite and were apt to sweat when taking exercise. As the inoculation virus took effect, the child began to suffer slight fits of heat and cold that became more violent 'as the time of the eruption' approached, accompanied with pains of the head and loins, vomiting and restlessness. The pocks, resembling flea bites, appeared on the face, arms and breast about the third or fourth day 'from the

³⁷⁶ Buchan, *Domestic medicine*, (3rd ed.), p. 187.

³⁷⁷ Dimsdale, *The present method of inoculating of the small-pox*, p. 14.

³⁷⁸ Buchan, *Domestic medicine*, (3rd ed.), p. 189.

³⁷⁹ Rogers, *An essay on epidemic diseases*, pp 170-2.

³⁸⁰ Anne Roger's recipe booke, 11 Apr. 1753 (PRONI, D2784/18/1).

³⁸¹ Rogers, *An essay on epidemic diseases*, p. 182.

³⁸² Razzell, *The conquest of smallpox*, p. 31.

time of sickening'.³⁸³ The child was now in the full grip of the disease and parents and physicians began their anxious vigil noting each symptom as it came, and their relief as it passed.

But if there was disagreement on the best seasons, age and inoculation methods to be used, all medical writers throughout the century were in agreement on the care that should be given to the smallpox patient. Patients were kept cool, given a light diet such as panada or 'bread boiled with equal quantities of milk and water, good apples, roasted or boiled with milk, and sweetened with a little sugar, or such like'.³⁸⁴ Suggested drinks were watered milk, clear sweet whey, barley water or thin gruel, and when the pox was fully out, buttermilk, considered of a 'cleansing nature' could be substituted.³⁸⁵

It is noteworthy that there are few recipes dealing with smallpox in Irish domestic receipt books. This may be because those who kept receipt books were of a social class able to afford the physician's fee when their children contracted smallpox, or, the children would already be under a physician's care following inoculation. It is also clear that medical writers were to the fore in publishing medical advice books, many of which were readily available in Ireland that specifically addressed children's smallpox and inoculation treatments and procedures. Thus eighteenth-century parents may have felt little need to accumulate domestic receipts to assist them in dealing with smallpox in children. As a result, the significant issue of smallpox and children's inoculation is the one area where eighteenth-century parents bowed fully to the physician's guidance, control and advice. This changing attitude towards diagnosis, prognosis and treatment among elite and middling Irish parents was taken full advantage of by physicians and was fundamental to what Ginnie Smith describes as the 'professionalisation of medicine'.³⁸⁶

CONCLUSION

During the eighteenth century, medical care of children and the treatment of their diseases lay firmly within the domestic sphere. As a result, parents, but especially mothers played the dominant role in the provision of children's health and a

³⁸³ Buchan, *Domestic medicine*, (3rd ed.), p. 177.

³⁸⁴ Rogers, *An essay on epidemic diseases*, p. 170-2; Tissot, *Advice to the people in general*, p. 235-6;

Buchan, *Domestic medicine*, (3rd ed.), p. 181.

³⁸⁵ Buchan, *Domestic medicine*, (3rd ed.), p. 181.

³⁸⁶ Smith, 'Prescribing the rules of health', pp 273-5.

vicariously influential role in the development of paediatric medical care. They adopted strategies to keep their children healthy; they diagnosed, prepared and dispensed medicines in the home to their sick children; they controlled access to the sickroom, which was a predominantly female domain, and, though the evidence is more ambiguous on this point, they shaped the child's doctor-patient relationship. As such, many Irish mothers acquired a high level of medical knowledge and confidence in their capacity not only to diagnose children's complaints, but also to nurse, and to prepare and administer remedies.

When children were sick or ailing, mothers looked in the first instance for guidance to their domestic receipt books, and for advice and counsel to their family and friends. Indicative of the importance attached to these domestic receipt books is the fact that they were often handed down through the generations. But more important is the fact that women updated, commented on and continued to collect receipts into the nineteenth century.

As this suggests, there was no comprehensive medical network in Ireland and with the exception of the Lying-in Hospital, children were largely excluded from institutional medical care facilities. Seventeenth-century physicians were reluctant to address children's illnesses and they were still susceptible to criticism on that count, and were criticised for their disinclination from the mid eighteenth century. Attitudes changed, albeit slowly, though the proliferation of medical books dedicated to children's health attest to the increased interest of physicians in children and childhood. Members of the Anglophone community throughout the eighteenth-century enjoyed improved access to an expanding body of pamphlets and books dedicated to children's diseases, and it is a measure of their popularity that by the mid eighteenth century, paediatric medical works originating across Europe were increasingly published in Dublin.

The many Irish editions of William Buchan's *Domestic medicine* tangibly and vividly demonstrate the strength and sustainability of the market in Ireland for children's healthcare, while its provision was increasingly recognised as being of value to the 'safety and prosperity of the state'.³⁸⁷ The publication in Dublin in 1763 and 1764 of James Nelson's *Essay on the government of children* is indicative of the changing nature of parental culture, of which one emblematic feature is the

³⁸⁷ Buchan, *Domestic medicine* (3rd ed.), p. 43.

development of the childrearing manual and advice books discussed in Part one. Thus by the mid eighteenth century the child was assuming an increasingly central space in the medical and childrearing texts. This was in keeping with the fact that childhood was accepted as a separate stage of development requiring particular preventive and remedial action by both parents and the medical 'profession'.

The diagnostic advances and lifestyle recommendations advanced by children's medical authors such as Armstrong, Nelson, Tissot and Buchan had significant benefits for children as a whole and for sick children in particular. Specifically, the mid-century works of Tissot and Underwood first provided Irish parents with accessible and understandable frameworks to assess the severity, and also to provide improved treatments for children's disorders within the domestic environment. Therefore, the efforts of medical writers who sought to make their works accessible and understandable to parents is indicative not only of the role parents played in shaping eighteenth-century paediatric knowledge and practice, but also of the determined efforts by physicians to bring the entire area of infant and child care under tighter medical supervision and guidance. As a result, 'new roles, identities, relations and goals' for all those involved in raising healthy children, but especially mothers, were emerging.³⁸⁸

The slow emergence of 'paediatric' medicine is illustrative of the fundamental changes that shaped ideas about childhood in eighteenth-century Ireland. Churchill has observed of the adult that the 'single sexed model' of medical treatment underwent fundamental change, but it can also be suggested that paralleling this gendered differentiation of the human body, there was also a differentiation on the grounds of age that resulted in the emergence of the child as an increasingly distinct medical phenomenon. Certainly, from the mid eighteenth century more exact medicinal measurements were developed specifically to treat children's disorders. Children were no longer given medicine 'in proportion' to their age or constitution, and specific children's medical receipts became more common in Irish domestic receipt books.

But the development of 'paediatric' medicine during the eighteenth-century is not without its ironies. On the one hand as Ginnie Smith notes, 'prudence dominated the latter half of the eighteenth-century' with the result that 'parents and medics were

³⁸⁸ Benzaquén, 'The doctor and the child', pp 14-5.

prepared to take few risks' with children's health.³⁸⁹ On the other, the eclipse of early eighteenth-century organic herbal-based remedies by new metal-based proprietary drugs in the latter half of the century exposed children to new dangers such as lead or mercury poisoning. Although there is some evidence to suggest that peasant families took few medicines, it is not possible to pronounce authoritatively, not least since Pococke in 1753³⁹⁰ and Clibborn in 1816³⁹¹ both noted the enthusiasm with which the Irish poor accepted medical relief when offered. The increased commercialisation of medicine in Ireland during the latter half of the eighteenth-century, including children's, meant that many proprietary drugs were firmly out of the reach of the poor, but the poor came increasingly to perceive modern medicine as a source of cure.

Despite the increased commercialisation of medicine and medical knowledge, as evidenced in parental reactions to childhood diseases and disorders such as teething, fevers, whooping cough and consumption, Irish women and mothers remained firmly in control of their children's illnesses, sickrooms and of the doctor patient relationship throughout the eighteenth-century. Their authority experienced its most significant challenge from the 'professionalisation' of smallpox inoculation.

Smallpox inoculation had considerable immediate and far-reaching consequences for society as a whole and children in particular. It not only reduced male infertility, especially from the 1750s, but it also significantly reduced child mortality. As William Bynum has noted, during the eighteenth-century 'health mattered and people were prepared to pay for it',³⁹² and this is particularly manifest in the elaborate inoculation preparations promoted by physicians and engaged in by elite and gentry families. Yet inoculation work carried out among children in Ireland's scattered and rural communities by itinerant inoculators and philanthropists was also warmly supported, and the enthusiasm with which peasant parents availed of it for their children, paved the way, albeit slowly, for the absorption of Irish peasant families into the medical model.

Even if there was no scientific understanding of the smallpox virus during the eighteenth century, empirically inoculation worked. The newness of the inoculation procedures meant Irish parents had no domestic receipt books, no store of knowledge or experience to fall back on. As a result, smallpox and inoculation is the one area of

³⁸⁹ Smith, 'Prescribing the rules of health', p. 264.

³⁹⁰ McVeagh (ed.), *Richard Pococke's Irish tours*, p. 140.

³⁹¹ McLoughlin, 'The sober duties of life', p. xiii. [Elizabeth Clibborn diary 14/1/1813].

³⁹² Bynum, *History of medicine*, p. 41.

children's medicine in eighteenth-century Ireland where parents submitted their children to the total control of the attending physician or itinerant inoculator.

In summation, it must be noted however, that the available records for children's health and well being for eighteenth-century Ireland are incomplete. There is little secure evidence with which to establish how peasant parents viewed medicines or treated their sick children in the eighteenth century, when compared with that locatable for elite and middling families. As such, this chapter can provide only a partial picture. Nevertheless, when eighteenth-century children were well and healthy, Irish parents worked diligently to keep them so. The pragmatic James Nelson reassuringly urged parents in 1756 to use every means at their disposal to keep their children well and healthy; and that when they were ill, to seek good medical advice. But should 'a miscarriage' happen then:

their prudence and justice will be atten[d]ed with this consolation,
that they have done their best.³⁹³

And it is clear from the records that throughout the eighteenth-century, in medical matters concerning their children, elite, gentry and middling Irish parents did just that.



Fig. 2.4: Mortar and pestle.

³⁹³ Nelson, *An essay on the government of children*, p. 138.

PART THREE

CHILDREN IN INSTITUTIONAL CARE IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY IRELAND

- | | |
|-------------|---|
| Section I | Development of institutional childcare – the historical context |
| Section II | The nature and character of institutional childcare, 1740-1820 |
| Section III | Caring for vulnerable children |

CHILDREN IN INSTITUTIONAL CARE

'The moment the legislature shall resolve to extend protection to foundling children, it becomes bound by every principle of justice, not only to consult their present, but to provide for their future and eternal welfare'.¹

INTRODUCTION

While the majority of children in eighteenth-century Ireland were cared and provided for in the domestic environment, a substantial number came under the protection of the authorities because of parental mortality, economic distress or physical abandonment. The pressing need to provide this care, recognised at the end of the seventeenth century, took institutional form in the eighteenth in the establishment of The Blue Coat school (hereafter referred to as the King's Hospital, established 1670); the Dublin Workhouse and Foundling Hospital (established 1703 and 1729/30)²; the schools of The Incorporated Society for Promoting Protestant Schools in Ireland (hereafter referred to as the Charter schools, established 1733); the houses of industry (established from 1773), the Hibernian Societies for educating soldiers'³ and sailors'⁴ children (established 1769 and 1775), and not least the Charity schools (established on

¹ *Petition of the governors of The Foundling Hospital in Dublin, praying for parliamentary aid to enable them to establish a manufactory for the grown children of that institution, with their reasons for proposing the speedy adoption of such a measure* (Dublin, 1801), p. 6.

² Even though the workhouse was established in 1703 by 1729/30 it was officially recognised as a foundling hospital and as such these two dates are frequently referred to for its establishment.

³ This institution was incorporated in 1769 under the name of 'The Hibernian Society in Dublin, for maintaining, educating and apprenticing the orphans and children of soldiers in Ireland for ever'. By a second charter dated the 6 Feb. 1808 the Society was incorporated anew with additional powers, under the name of 'The Hibernian Society in Dublin for maintaining, educating and apprenticing or placing in our regular army as private soldiers, in such corps as from time to time we shall please to appoint, the orphans and children of soldiers in Ireland for ever'. By another amended charter of 1818, the Society was again incorporated under the name of 'The Hibernian Society for the care of soldier's children'.

⁴ The charter of the Hibernian Marine Society was granted on 20 Jun. 1775 and the institutions official title was 'The Hibernian Marine Society in Dublin, for maintaining, educating, and apprenticing the orphans and children of decayed seamen in our Royal Navy and Merchants Service for ever'.

an on-going basis from the late seventeenth century). There were two significant phases in the development of institutional care, from 1700 to *circa* 1750 and from 1758 to 1780 when, increased intervention paved the way, albeit slowly, for the more structured institutional reforms of the nineteenth. As a result, the development of institutional provision for children both publicly and privately funded was a particular characteristic of eighteenth-century Ireland.

The institutional provision extended to vulnerable children over the course of the century illustrates the dichotomy between philanthropy and reform⁵ and the care children received. This was not without its critics, and in most cases, deservedly so. The plight of children in Ireland's eighteenth-century institutions starkly illustrates their physical and emotional vulnerability and the poor standard of care that was presented compared with that in the home. As the century progressed, children in the domestic environment were increasingly the focus of parental concern, but was this child centeredness reflected in the institutional environment? Did institutional governors attend adequately as they claimed, to children's 'present' and 'provide for their future and eternal welfare'?⁶ How effective were institutions charged with the care of vulnerable children?

While pauper children's standard of living was generally comparable to that of children in institutions, as Milne has pointed out, within institutions there was an absence of family affection and crucially, responsibility.⁷ Institutional children were open and subject to physical and emotional neglect, and their vulnerability had detrimental effects on their overall development.

Whereas many institutions were established from the late seventeenth century onwards (but in particular from the mid eighteenth century) to care for pauper children, not all records have survived. By utilising the extant records of the King's Hospital, the Dublin Workhouse and Foundling Hospital, the Charter schools, the Dublin House of Industry (established 1773),⁸ and St Mary's Charity school in Dublin among others, this chapter will assess the care, determined by the actions and attitudes

⁵ David Hayton, 'Did Protestantism fail in early eighteenth-century Ireland? Charity schools and the enterprise of religious and social reformation, c. 1690-1730', Alan Ford, James McGuire, Kenneth Milne (eds), *As by law established: the Church of Ireland since the Reformation* (Dublin, 1995), pp 166-86.

⁶ *Petition of the governors of the Foundling Hospital in Dublin*, p. 6.

⁷ Milne, *The Irish Charter schools*, p. 85.

⁸ The Corporation Instituted for the Relief of the Poor and for Punishing Vagabonds and Sturdy Beggars in the County of the City of Dublin.

of institutional governors, given to the children in their charge. In doing so, it will examine whether children received the basic human requirements for survival and proper growth – food, clothing and medical attention.

This Part does not address the administrative functioning of children's institutions in eighteenth-century Ireland other than when directly relevant to the children's welfare. Rather it focuses on children in institutions and the care they received. It is divided into three sections. Section one examines the development of institutional childcare within the historical context; section two appraises the expanding nature and character of institutional childcare, and section three assesses and evaluates the healthcare institutional children received over the course of the eighteenth century.

SECTION I: DEVELOPMENT OF INSTITUTIONAL CHILDCARE – THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Though the statute of 33 Hen. VIII, c.15 which provided for the relief of the poor applied to Ireland, the subsequent act which strengthened the parish poor system in England, 43 Elizabeth I, c.2 did not.⁹ Consequently, there was no poor law system in Ireland and thus little provision or protection for vulnerable children at a local level. What emerged was an *ad hoc* arrangement of relief among reluctant parishes unsupported by a definitive legal framework or interpretation.¹⁰ It was not until the Irish statutes of 17 and 18 Chas. II, c.7 and 1 Geo II, c.27 that Irish parishes were

⁹ 43 Elizabeth I, c.2, The Act for the relief of the poor passed in 1601 created a national poor law system for England and Wales and is generally considered a refinement of the Act for the Relief of the Poor 1597. The main focus of the 1601 act was the in-house provision of, care for the impotent poor, employment in houses of industry for able-bodied poor, incarceration in prison or houses of correction for idle poor and vagrants, and the apprenticing of pauper children as apprentices.

¹⁰ Sir Matthew Hale (1609-1676), Lord chief Justice observed in 1655 that the act was to a great extent inoperative in Ireland as it omitted to direct the poor to what particular parish each was to look for relief. Sir Matthew Hale, *A discourse touching provision for the poor* (London 1683) cited in *Third Report of the Commissioners for inquiring into the condition of the poorer classes in Ireland* (London, 1836), p. 425. See also Rowena Dudley, 'The Dublin parish, 1660-1730', Elizabeth FitzPatrick and Raymond Gillespie (eds), *The parish in medieval and early modern Ireland: community, territory and building* (Dublin, 2006), pp 277-96; David Dickson, 'In search of the old Irish Poor Law', Rosalind Mitchison and Peter Roebuck (eds), *Economy and society in Scotland and Ireland 1500-1939* (Edinburgh, 1988), pp 149-59; also Raymond Gillespie (ed.), *The vestry records of the parishes of St Catherine and St James, Dublin, 1657-1692* (Dublin, 2004); Maighr  ad N   Mhurchadha (ed.), *The vestry records of the United Parishes of Finglas, St Margaret's, Artane and the Ward 1657-1758* (Dublin, 2007).

empowered to raise money (cess) specifically to assist their poor, including children. As Raymond Gillespie remarks, by the seventeenth century parishes provided both a religious and social infrastructure.¹¹ But a lack of clarity regarding responsibility and financial resources eventually led to an unwillingness among parishes to care for abandoned children. As Rowena Dudley observes, all parishes shouldered a significant financial burden meeting their commitments to the parish poor¹² and, in the case of Dublin, the municipality offered little help.

Parish difficulties multiplied in line with Ireland's economic and urban expansion, particularly from the 1660s. As the country's 'single administrative and commercial centre', Dublin's population grew from *circa* 10,000 inhabitants in the early seventeenth-century to *circa* 112,000 by 1744, when it was Europe's eleventh largest city.¹³ As a consequence, family poverty also grew and parish resources stretched as they tried to cope with increased demands for help. As Dudley observes, 'the needs of the poor were endless; caring for them [was] one of the parish's most onerous tasks',¹⁴ and those most vulnerable to the dangers of poverty were abandoned children. Even though the recorded numbers were still relatively small in the seventeenth-century, as exemplified by the demands on the Dublin parishes of St Catherine and St James, and the United Parishes of Finglas, St Margaret's, Artane and the Ward illustrated in table 3.1, the expenses incurred by these parishes were symptomatic of what was emerging. There was a steady increase in the number of children requiring care, and, in tandem, a greater reluctance by parishes to embrace responsibility for the provision of that care and the requirement to provide nursing, clothing and burial for them.¹⁵

¹¹ Gillespie, *The vestry records of the parishes of St Catherine and St James*, p. 18.

¹² Dudley, 'The Dublin parish', p. 289.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 278.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 293.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

**Table 3.1: Children's Parish Poor Relief – St Catherine and St James [C & J],
United Parishes of Finglas, St Margaret's, Artane and the Ward [UP], Dublin, 1657-1758**

Year	Payment to	For	Child's status	Payment				
				£	s.	d.	Parish	
1659	James Kain	Maintenance to	Orphan		4	6	C & J	Per ¼
	Katherin Kain	Maintenance to	Orphan		4	6	C & J	Per ¼
1660	Dorcas Ashley	Maintenance to	Orphan		18	0	C & J	
	Mary Yeats	Maintenance to	Orphan	1	7	6	C & J	
	Margrett Greene	Maintenance to	Orphan		5	0	C & J	
	[?] Spencer	Maintenance to	Orphan		10	0	C & J	
	John Morgan	To convey him to England	Not known	2	0	0	C & J	Once
1663	Georg Norris	Maintenance of Dorcas Ashley	Orphan		18	0	C & J	Per ¼
	Margrett Whitethorne	Maintenance of Marie Yattes	Orphan	1	7	6	C & J	
	Margret Greene	Maintenance of Tho. Tomblinson	Orphan		5	0	C & J	
	[?] Spencer	Maintenance to	Orphan		10	0	C & J	Per ¼
1665	Anne Brennan	Maintenance of	Foundling	1	0	0	C & J	
1666	Mr Wood	Maintenance of	2 foundlings	2	2	3	C & J	
	Owen Lewis	Maintenance of	Orphan				C & J	
	Margaret Duffe	Maintenance of	Orphan		10	0	C & J	
	Widdow ffell	Maintenance of John Reame	Orphan	2	12	0	C & J	
		Nursing a child	Orphan		2	0	UP	
1667	John Reame	To convey him to England	Orphan	2	0	0	C & J	Once
	A poor woman	Maintenance of	Orphan		10	0	C & J	
1668	Robert Barrow	Full settlement for Henery Harrington	Orphan	5	0	0	C & J	Once
	Mr Norrice	Full settlement for Dorcas Ashley	Orphan	1 2	8	0	C & J	Once
1671	Katherine Evans	Maintenance of Anne Casey	Orphan	4	0	0	C & J	
	Margrett Foge	Maintenance of Katherine Ram	Orphan	2	0	0	C & J	
	Katherine Ash	Maintenance to	Orphan	2	0	0	C & J	
	Mary Right	Maintenance of Edward Walton	Orphan	2	10	0	C & J	
	Owin Keegan	Maintenance of Hugh Hues	Orphan	3	15	0	C & J	Per an.
1678		Maintenance of	Foundling		6	9	C & J	
	Mary Norcott	Maintenance of	Orphan	1	5	0	C & J	
1679		Maintenance of	Orphan		4	3	C & J	
1681		Maintenance of	Foundling	4	0	0	UP	
1684		Maintenance of	2 foundlings	8	0	0	UP	
1685		Maintenance of	2 foundlings	8	0	0	UP	
1686	A nurse	Nursing of	Foundling		15	0	C & J	
	Joan Harlekin	Nursing of	Foundling		4	6	C & J	
1687	Coroners Court		Foundling		4	6½	C & J	
1686/7	Cess	Maintenance of Matthew Wise, Mary Cabragh	2 foundlings	6	0	0	UP	Per an.
1688	Cess	Maintenance of Matthew Wise	Foundling	4	0	0	UP	Per an.
	Churchwardens	Remove a child	Foundling		14	3	UP	

1696	Cess	Maintenance of	Orphan	4	0	0	UP	Per an.
1697	Cess	Maintenance of	Orphan	3	0	0	UP	Per an.
1698	Cess	Maintenance of	3 orphans	9	0	0	UP	Per an.
1699	Cess	Removal of Mary Fox	Foundling	6	0	0	UP	Per an.

Source: Raymond Gillespie (ed.), *The vestry records of the parishes of St Catherine and St James, Dublin, 1657-1692* (Dublin, 2004); Maighr  ad N   Mhurchadha (ed.), *The vestry records of the United Parishes of Finglas, St Margaret's, Artane and the Ward 1657-1758* (Dublin, 2007).

However, significantly different levels of maintenance were extended to children within the parish system. As Maighr  ad N   Mhurchadha has observed, parishes owed a duty of care to orphans born within that parish, but that duty was not necessarily extended to foundlings abandoned in the parish.¹⁶ As table 3.1 shows, the 'Widd[ow] ffell' was paid  2 12s. for 'keeping John Reame, an orphan whose ffather was kild upon the millpond' in 1666¹⁷ and Robert Wasberry accepted the care of Thomas Ambrose, orphan son of John Ambrose a former churchwarden in 1670.¹⁸ But the significant sum of six pounds was 'applotted' on the united parishes of Finglas, St Margaret's, Artane and the Ward in 1699 for 'the disposeing' of Mary Fox, 'a child left on the parish' so that the 'parish be at no further charge for the same'.¹⁹ This 'disposal' attitude, or 'once off cost,' adopted by parishes to 'solve' the problem of foundling children had a twofold significance. In the first instance it is indicative of societal attitudes towards pauper children – their inherent uselessness, their propensity to begging, vagrancy and vice – alongside the dangers they posed to the societal order and authority. In the second, it highlights the financial drain their maintenance placed on generally inadequate parish resources, the lack of structures to police society, but more pertinently, a general unwillingness among society as a whole to relieve the distress of vulnerable children. So at the beginning of the eighteenth century, parishes continued to dispose of foundling children as speedily as possible, and their methods contributed in large measure to the high rate of infant mortality among foundling children, particularly those entering the foundling hospitals.

Parishes made strenuous efforts to establish the 'rights' of a child or to divest themselves of their responsibilities to foundling children. On 25 May 1697 Nicholas

¹⁶ N   Mhurchadha, *The vestry records of the United Parishes of Finglas, St Margaret's, Artane and the Ward*, p. 18.

¹⁷ Gillespie, *The vestry records of the parishes of St Catherine and St James*, p. 69.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp 75-6.

¹⁹ N   Mhurchadha, *The vestry records of the United Parishes of Finglas, St Margaret's, Artane and the Ward*, p. 115.

Dromgole of 'Little Cabragh' was brought forth to testify on oath before Finglas vestry that he did 'not know who is either father or mother' of a 'male child ... found in the fields of little Cabragh' the previous day.²⁰ Later extracts from Aghaderg parish records illustrate the longevity of these attitudes. In 1749 a reward of two pounds was offered 'to discover the parents of a foundling' and by 1753 the vestry had adopted a tougher approach and advised that:

No farmer, house holder, Cottager or cottier, shall harbour any stranger, stroller or vagabond great with child, or entertain them as a lodger, servant or spinner. Otherwise they will have to pay the upkeep of the child themselves or if not able to pay, a cess will be laid on their townland.²¹

To further ease the strain placed on parish resources, the furtive practice of 'running', 'lifting' or 'dropping' abandoned infants from one parish to another was widely practised. Ní Mhurchadha notes that officially only six foundlings came into the care of Finglas parish in north county Dublin in the hundred years between 1657 and 1758, which given the scale of poverty and child abandonment noted in Dublin city parishes is surprising, and suggests that Finglas parish engaged in 'lifting' abandoned children out of the parish and hence their responsibility. It was claimed in 1730 that a Dublin parish nurse on the instructions of her parish warden 'lifted' seventeen children into her neighbouring St Paul's parish.²² This conclusion is further supported by the eagerness with which Finglas vestry paid to remove parishioners, including children, who were a charge on the parish to England or elsewhere.²³

Though parochial taxation covering the maintenance of foundlings only received legal backing in 1728, formerly parishes were bound to provide maintenance for children placed legitimately or furtively in their care.²⁴ Utilising the data in table 3.1 it would appear that during the seventeenth century there was no fixed amount set aside for the maintenance of lone children, foundlings or orphans. Women or men

²⁰ The vestry accepted Dromgole's testimony and maintenance for this child was borne by the Vestry: Ní Mhurchadha, *The vestry records of the United Parishes of Finglas, St Margaret's, Artane and the Ward*, p. 112.

²¹ John Joe Sands, 'Pre-famine poverty in the parish of Aghaderg', *Before I forget, Journal of the Poyntzpass and District Local History Society*, 3 (1989), p. 49.

²² The report also notes that upon examination there were less than half that number of foundlings in St Paul's parish. Those lifted either died from exposure or were subsequently lifted onto further parishes: *The case of the foundlings of the city of Dublin; humbly recommended to the consideration of the Parliament* (Dublin, 1730), p. 1.

²³ For example see vestry book entry for 17 Apr. 1688 and 10 Apr. 1699, Ní Mhurchadha, *The vestry records of the United Parishes of Finglas, St Margaret's, Artane and the Ward*, pp 98, 115.

²⁴ Dickson, 'In search of the old Irish Poor Law', p. 152.

were paid for specific incidences of nursing infants or providing care.²⁵ The costs borne by the parish were not exorbitant; in 1698 the maintenance of an individual foundling was £3 per annum (14d. per week);²⁶ by 1724 it was £1 10s. per annum (7d. per week)²⁷ and by 1754 it had risen to £2 per annum (9¼d. per week).²⁸ In 1749 in the parish of Aghaderg, county Down the sum required was £2 10s. (11½d. per week); it rose to £4 (1s. 6d. per week) in 1759, but the latter included clothing.²⁹ Furthermore, in 1757 a weekly collection was taken up at Aghaderg Sunday services for the relief of the parish poor. Over four Sundays the amounts raised for the maintenance of a foundling were 1s. 1d., significantly more than the 3d. to 6d. raised for other poor. But this initial enthusiasm quickly waned and the amounts over the following three Sundays were the same as that raised for the parish poor – 7d., 6½d., 4½d.³⁰ By 1788 the care of abandoned or orphaned children in Aghaderg parish was on a sounder footing in line with societal attitudes generally. Reflecting an awareness of the particular vulnerability of lone children, at a vestry meeting on the 4 June three overseers were appointed to take care of all children under one year ‘who are deserted or exposed in this parish.’³¹ Significantly, the overseers were also given powers to raise money for ‘The Foundling Fund’ for the children’s maintenance and a record was kept of parish disbursements for their care. For example:

18th September, 1798
Receive £2 16s. 10½d. which is in full for one year’s keeping a Foundling child. I say received by me.
Peter X O’Hare his mark

Fig. 3.1: Foundling maintenance receipt, 1798

Source: John Joe Sands, ‘Pre-famine poverty in the parish of Aghaderg’, *Before I forget, Journal of the Poyntzpass and District Local History Society*, 3 (1989), p. 53.

This arrangement proved effective and subsequently three overseers were appointed each Easter.

²⁵ For example see Ní Mhurchadha, *The vestry records of the United Parishes of Finglas, St Margaret’s, Artane and the Ward*, p. 55.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp 112-3.

²⁷ Dudley, ‘The Dublin parish’, p. 293.

²⁸ Ní Mhurchadha, *The vestry records of the United Parishes of Finglas, St Margaret’s, Artane and the Ward*, p. 203.

²⁹ Sands, ‘Pre-famine poverty in the parish of Aghaderg’, pp 49-53.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 50.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 53.

Even though a general cess or ‘applotment’ was levied on individual parishes for the maintenance of foundling and orphan children, by the closing years of the seventeenth century there was a growing realisation that a more coherent administrative arrangement was required to deal with the ‘problem’ throughout the island. By the 1690s the *ad hoc* arrangements that had evolved to cater for the poor, including children, were recognised as inadequate to meet the increased demands placed on the limited resources available at parish level. Yet despite the increased numbers of children requiring care, between 1669 and 1703 only two institutions were established specifically to cater for abandoned and pauper children over five years of age – the King’s Hospital (1669) (though numbers provided with care by the King’s Hospital were never large)³² and the Dublin Workhouse (1703). It was popularly assumed that abandoned children under five years came under the care of the parish in which they were found but this did not prove successful or legally binding. The unwillingness of parishes to care for these children resulted in the establishment in 1729/30, albeit reluctantly, of the Foundling Hospital in Dublin attached to the Workhouse.³³

From the 1690s societies dedicated to the reform of manners, including the morals of the people, sprang up in Dublin and though they were relatively short lived they were attempting to improve the situation of the poor at a fundamental level.³⁴ Through the early decades of the eighteenth-century, more charitable organisations emerged but their focus was generally directed at relieving certain interest groups such as ‘poor housekeepers’, weavers, debtors and distressed families, not particularly children. Even so, for children their influence is most clearly evident in the Charity schools established during the last decade of the seventeenth century.³⁵ Building on

³² The school was founded in 1669 as The Hospital and Free school of King Charles II and was located in Queen Street, Dublin. The school commonly referred to as the King’s Hospital, opened on 5 May 1674 with 60 pupils. From 1783 to 1971 it was located in Blackhall Place, Stonybatter, Dublin. For a comprehensive history of the school see Lesley Whiteside, *A history of the King’s Hospital* (Dublin, 1975); also Joan Tighe, ‘The Mendicity Institution’, *Dublin Historical Record*, 16, no. 3 (March, 1961), pp 100-15.

³³ In 1687 money was voted to lay the foundations of a workhouse at James’s Street, Dublin, but this failed to develop, as there was a dispute over ownership of the land. In November 1669, plans to develop a hospital on a piece of ground at Little Green, Dublin were proposed, but again came to nothing. Construction of the Dublin Workhouse eventually began in 1703 and by 1729 under the act of 3 Geo. II, c. 17, it incorporated a Foundling Hospital, thus the two dates are normally given.

³⁴ Toby Barnard notes that the ‘formal campaign’ began *circa* 1693, abated by 1701, and was over before 1717: T. C. Barnard, *Irish Protestant ascents and descents 1641-1770* (Dublin, 2004), p. 144.

³⁵ See part four: The education of children.

the belief that charity was a 'central Christian virtue',³⁶ early Charity schools assumed some responsibility towards children although the number cared for in each remained relatively small. But these were private philanthropic ventures rather than government backed initiatives. Many operated as day schools and provided a limited degree of maintenance and as such do not come under the remit of this Part. Yet despite the underlying motives, late seventeenth and early eighteenth-century society became increasingly concerned with poverty, vagrancy and begging by adults and children, particularly during times of crisis or unrest.³⁷

Initially, alleviating children's distress was not reformers' or government's primary focus or consideration; rather it was the relief of all 'poor'.³⁸ Significantly, Dublin's King's Hospital charter stated it was to be 'a place of abode for the sustentation and relief' of both poor children and 'aged and impotent people',³⁹ but it quickly applied itself to the maintenance and education of poor protestant children only. Similarly the establishment of the Dublin Workhouse, designed to rid the streets of the visibly embarrassment of poverty and maintain social order, also applied itself to the care of both adults and children.⁴⁰ Indicative of the desire to remove visible destitute children from the streets, although the Dublin Workhouse was still in construction (1704), abandoned children were taken up and accommodated in the 'upper storey of the south aisle of the King's Hospital'.⁴¹ But while the establishment of the Dublin Workhouse in 1703 'as a means of controlling the sturdy poor'⁴² was the first attempt to formalise state provision for the destitute, its inadequacies and limitations quickly became apparent. In the face of the scale of poverty and child

³⁶ Campbell-Ross (ed.), *Public virtue, public love*, pp 16-7.

³⁷ Both Kelly and Dickson note positive responses to social problems in the face of immediate crises and a reluctance to address the issue once the crisis passed: David Dickson, 'In search of the old Irish Poor Law', Rosalind Mitchison and Peter Roebuck (eds), *Economy and society in Scotland and Ireland 1500-1939* (Edinburgh, 1988), pp 149-59; James Kelly, 'Defending the established order: Richard Woodward, bishop of Cloyne (1726-94)', James Kelly, John McCafferty, Charles Ivar McGrath (eds), *People, politics and power, essays on Irish history 1660-1850 in honour of James I. McGuire* (Dublin, 2009), pp 148-54. See also [Sir W.F.], *Methods proposed for regulating the poor, supporting of some and employing others according to their several capacities* (1725).

³⁸ For a comprehensive analysis of charitable organisations established in Dublin during the eighteenth-century see James Kelly 'Charitable societies: their genesis and development, 1720-1800', James Kelly and Martyn J. Powell (eds), *Clubs and societies in eighteenth-century Ireland* (Dublin, 2010), pp 89-108.

³⁹ Whiteside, *A history of the King's Hospital*, pp 7-9; Tighe, 'The Mendicity Institution', pp 100-15.

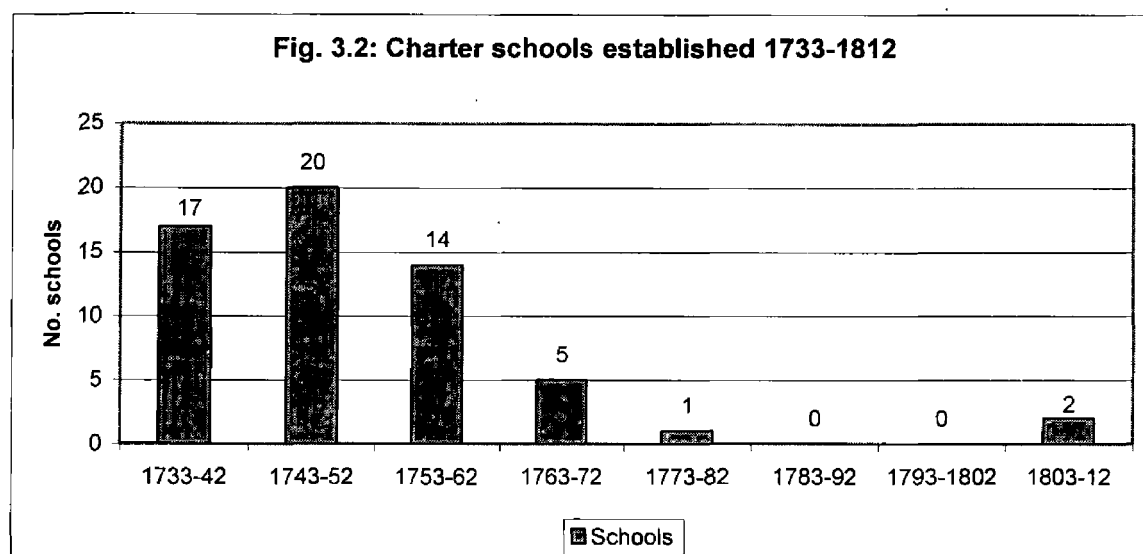
⁴⁰ Jacinta Prunty, *Dublin slums 1800-1925, a study in urban geography* (Dublin, 2000), p. 12.

⁴¹ Whiteside, *A history of the King's Hospital*, p. 29. The King's Hospital, intended to be a 'place of abode for the sustentation and relief of poor children, aged and impotent people' was established in 1670 but only ever catered for children. See Tighe, 'The Mendicity Institution', pp 100-15.

⁴² Joseph O'Carroll, 'Contemporary attitudes towards the homeless poor 1725-1775', David Dickson (ed.), *The Gorgeous Mask, Dublin 1700-1850* (Dublin 1987), p. 70.

abandonment at the beginning of the eighteenth century, by 1725/6 as many children (110) were being admitted to the workhouse as adults (112)⁴³ and by 1729/30, it had become a foundling hospital only and would remain so throughout the eighteenth century.⁴⁴ Indicative of the need to provide for young children, when Cork's city workhouse opened in 1747 it operated exclusively as a foundling hospital.⁴⁵

Meanwhile, the establishment of schools under the aegis of The Incorporated Society in Dublin for Promoting English Protestant schools in Ireland, the Charter schools, also possessed a significant welfare dimension.⁴⁶ As Kenneth Milne notes, the welfare, religion and education of 'Papist' children (who comprised the majority of pauper children) was henceforth inextricably bound within a 'centrally-directed, government-supported and adequately-financed grand design'.⁴⁷ But as figure 3.2 illustrates, the early enthusiasm exhibited by parents and the authorities for the Charter schools did not last and by the middle decades of the century, the abuse and neglect of children in the care of the Society's schools were matters of public concern and parents were increasingly reluctant to place their children in the Society's care.



Source: Kenneth Milne, *The Irish Charter schools, 1730-1830* (Dublin, 1997), pp 347-8.

⁴³ *A list of the poore in the city work-house from their several parishes with their age and qualities, 20 Mar 1725-6.*

⁴⁴ Under the act of 3 Geo. II, c.17 the Foundling Hospital began to accept only children under the age of five but it continued to admit certain adults such as those suffering from mental or behavioural disorders for incarceration in 'Bedlam'. Foundling children unable to function within society as adults also remained in and were cared for by the hospital. Cork's Workhouse also assumed responsibility for 'foundling' adults in similar situations.

⁴⁵ The Cork City Workhouse closed in 1848. Dickson, 'In search of the old Irish Poor Law', p. 158.

⁴⁶ See part four: The education of children.

⁴⁷ Milne, *The Irish Charter schools*, p. 16.

By the 1770s, the Dublin Workhouse and Foundling Hospital, the King's Hospital and the Charter schools between them cared for approximately 6,800 children, but it was still not enough.⁴⁸ The *Freeman's Journal* described the 'great number of beggars and vagrants perpetually infesting the streets of this city [Dublin]' in 1763 as, 'an evil so loudly complained of and so severely felt', and called for their licensing or removal.⁴⁹ It was clear by mid-century that the response of institutions and charitable associations was insufficient to deal with the effects of Ireland's escalating poverty, a poverty caused by uneven economic development and compounded by population growth post 1740-1. Dean Richard Woodward (1726-94) highlighted the deteriorating condition of Ireland's poor in 1760.⁵⁰ Although Woodward advocated the establishment of poorhouses or houses of industry in each county, the 1773 legislation passed by the Irish parliament manifested a lack of urgency in dealing with the problem of escalating poverty and ensured that only four houses of industry were opened,⁵¹ and then only in urban areas. There was little provision for the poor and destitute in the countryside. The functions of the Dublin House of Industry 'were very similar to the original aims of the 1704 workhouse' in that it did not address itself to young children,⁵² but Dean Woodward countered this by intimating that the Charter school system provided adequately for them. This strongly suggests that as late as 1773 the authorities still believed that the provisions then in place were sufficient to cope with the number of young children requiring care. The lack of adequate facilities however ultimately forced the governors of the Dublin House of Industry to accept children, but only reluctantly. Indicative of their disinclination to recognise the specific needs of children, no distinction was made in provision between adult and child. Moreover, by the 1780s the limited institutional care provided pauper children in Ireland was problematical on a number of levels, not least of which were on-going deficiencies in management structures, and crucially, the self-interest of staff. Both had direct effects upon children's health and well-being.

⁴⁸ Eighteenth-century figures are notoriously unreliable. These figures are approximate and are drawn from sources comprising: *Commons Jn. (Irl.)* 1773, vol. 9, appendix ccxi, no. vi; Milne, *The Irish Charter schools*, p. 183; The King's Hospital database.

⁴⁹ *Freeman's Journal*, 8 Oct. 1763.

⁵⁰ [Richard Woodward], *A scheme for establishing county poor-houses in the kingdom of Ireland* (Dublin, 1766); idem, *An argument in support of the right of the poor ... to a national provision* (Dublin, 1768). See also James Kelly, 'Defending the established order', pp 148-54.

⁵¹ 11 and 12 Geo. III, c. 30. Kelly, 'Charitable societies', p. 98; idem, 'Defending the established order', p. 169.

⁵² Dickson, 'In search of the old Irish Poor Law', p. 155.

Problems of gross mismanagement and abuse were identified as early as the 1750s in the Dublin Workhouse and Foundling Hospital and the Charter schools. Despite parliamentary inquiries, most notably that of 1758, not enough was done and what little was, was quickly forgotten. The lack of proper regulation, oversight and a preparedness to put children first (i.e. above the lack of interest of governors and the self-interest of staff of both the Dublin Workhouse and Foundling Hospital and schoolmasters and mistresses in Charter schools), culminated in an unhealthy and dangerous situation for pauper children in the care of the state by the 1780s. As Oliver MacDonagh remarks, 'it was not a system likely to be free from either cruelty or corruption.'⁵³ The appalling conditions children endured were exposed in the latter half of the century by John Wesley (1703-91), John Howard (1726-90) and Sir Jeremiah Fitzpatrick (1740-1810), given a parliamentary airing by John Blaquiére (1732-1812) and by Thomas Orde (1740-1807), both chief secretaries.⁵⁴ Though the response initially was encouraging, Fitzpatrick's attack on the Incorporated Society aroused both temporal and spiritual resistance.⁵⁵ Rather than taking it for what it was, an indictment of the state's provision and role caring for children, Dean Woodward described it as an 'attack upon religion'.⁵⁶ Yet the crux of the matter lay in two directions; the continuing disinterest of many in authority in the welfare of children, and the inability, compounded by a lack of experience and insufficient resources to administer a large 'corporation'. What Woodward had earlier identified as lacking Fitzpatrick provided – carefully enumerated and quantifiable reports, yielding more reliable statistical data.⁵⁷ Even so, the debate on children's welfare remained ideologically driven, though it did serve to highlight the plight of children in the care of the state and bring their welfare into sharper focus.

The situation, however, was not universally bleak. Throughout the eighteenth century improvements in and the recognition of the specific needs of pauper children

⁵³ Oliver MacDonagh, *The Inspector General, Sir Jeremiah Fitzpatrick and social reform, 1783-1802* (London, 1981), p. 87.

⁵⁴ John Blaquiére, was appointed chief secretary for Ireland under Lord Harcourt in 1773 and Thomas Orde was appointed as chief secretary for Ireland in 1784. Although primarily concerned with Sir Jeremiah Fitzpatrick's work concerning the reformation of the prison system Oliver MacDonagh also deals with his investigations and reports into conditions in the Charter schools: *The Inspector General*, pp 86-104. For a more detailed analysis of the Charter schools see Milne, *The Irish Charter schools*.

⁵⁵ MacDonagh, *The Inspector General*, p. 92.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, pp 92-3.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 97; Kelly, 'Defending the established order', p. 150.

are identifiable within education, but not within institutional care.⁵⁸ For example, private educational establishments such as Townley Hall school in county Louth closely monitored their school and its management, as did the governors of St Mary's Charity school in Dublin at a later date. Moreover, the intervention of the 1780s did lead to a greater consciousness of the need for betterment. For example, in 1788 the Dublin House of Industry attempted to address children's welfare and developed facilities specifically for their care.⁵⁹

If the moral justification for the establishment of institutions caring for children could be seen in 'the multitude of prostitutes with which [the] streets every night abound' (a fate *The Gentleman's Magazine* warned as late as 1791 awaited 'the orphan of the rising generation'),⁶⁰ the provision, scope and capacity of institutions caring for children, though initially centred in Dublin, evolved and grew, albeit fitfully, throughout Ireland over the course of the eighteenth century. As Kelly and Dickson both note, for most of the century proposed provisions for the poor, including children, were driven by reactions to immediate crises, the initial enthusiasm for reform unfortunately falling away as the crisis subsided. Nevertheless, the social reforms of the 1770s, illustrated by the establishment of houses of industry, were, as David Dickson discerns, 'not related to a specific crisis, but to the context of a slightly wealthier society'.⁶¹ Though Sir Jeremiah Fitzpatrick's investigations may have brought about small material changes, as MacDonagh observes, the effect of his 'intrusion was neither deep nor lasting – in plain words, it was negligible.'⁶² But despite the apparent movement for social reform in the last two decades of the eighteenth century, by its close the overall picture was still deficient, not least because of the ideologically motivated defence of Charter schools sustained into the nineteenth century.

⁵⁸ See part four: The education of children.

⁵⁹ See pages 176-8.

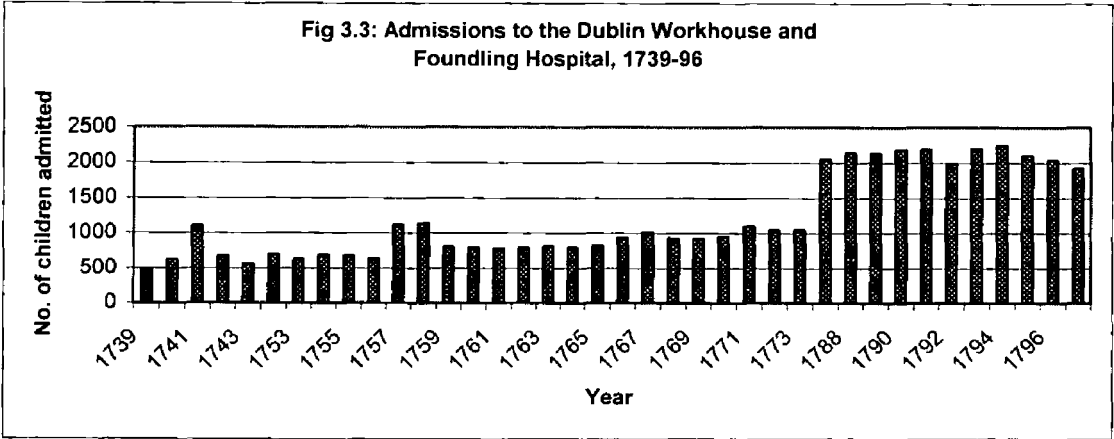
⁶⁰ *The Gentleman's and London Magazine*, Jan. 1791.

⁶¹ Dickson, 'In search of the old Irish Poor Law', p. 154.

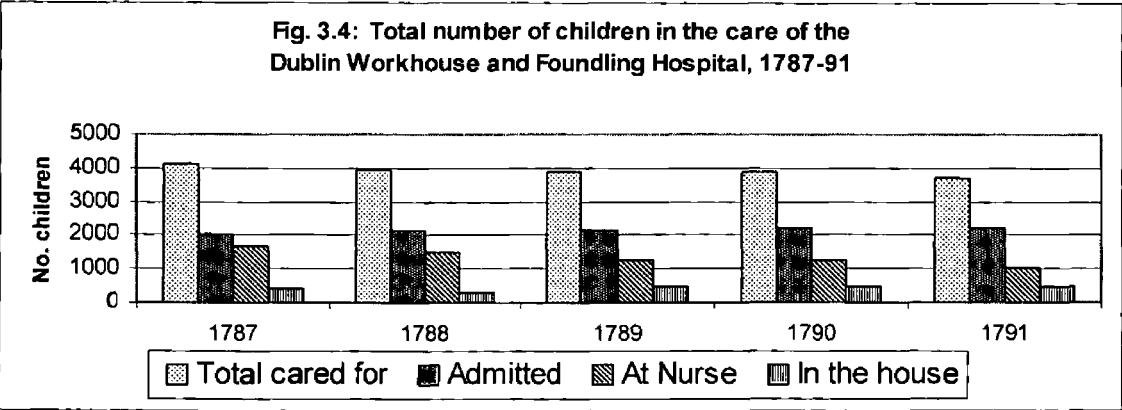
⁶² MacDonagh, *The Inspector General*, p. 95.

**SECTION II: THE NATURE AND CHARACTER OF INSTITUTIONAL
CHILDCARE, 1740-1820**

As discussed above, the eighteenth century witnessed a relentless increase in the number of children both requiring and coming into institutional care. The number of pauper and abandoned children admitted annually to the Dublin Workhouse and Foundling Hospital continually exceeded the numbers of children admitted elsewhere, and thus it dominates the institutions concerned with children throughout the eighteenth century. As figures 3.3 and 3.4 illustrate, the annual intake in 1739 was 478; by 1794 it had risen to 2253 children⁶³ excluding those already at country nurses, even though the house prior to 1797 was only built to accommodate six hundred children. This figure was maintained throughout the 1790s; between 1791 and 1797 the total number of infants admitted was 12,681.⁶⁴



Source: *Commons Jn. (Irl.)*, 1743, vol. 4, appendix clxxx, no. v; 1773, vol. 9, appendix ccxi, no. vi; 1792, vol. 15, appendix ccvii, no. i; 1798, vol. 17, appendix dxvii.

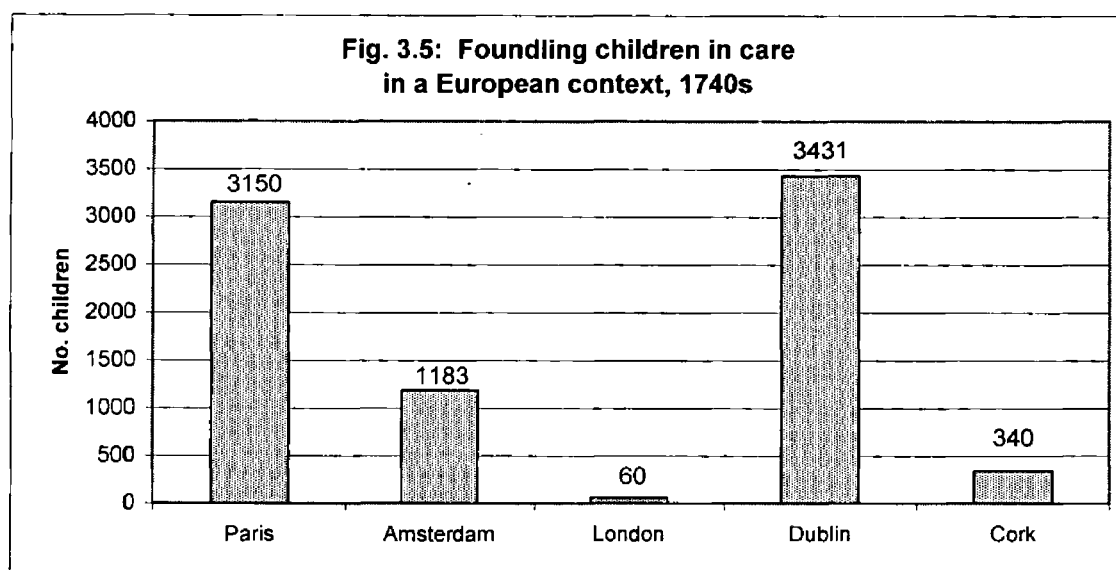


Source: *Commons Jn. (Irl.)*, 1792, vol. 15, appendix ccvii, no. i.

⁶³ *Petition of the governors of The Foundling Hospital in Dublin* (Dublin, 1801); *Commons Jn. (Irl.)* 1743, vol. 4, appendix clxxx.

⁶⁴ *Commons Jn. (Irl.)* 1797, vol. 17, appendix cclvii.

Even though the records are incomplete, it is significant that by the 1740s the Dublin Workhouse and Foundling Hospital cared for more children than its counterparts in Cork, London, Paris and Amsterdam's Weehuijs (figure 3.5).⁶⁵ The numbers admitted continued to increase; between March 1750 and September 1759 a total of 7382 children were admitted to Dublin's Workhouse and Foundling Hospital, a stage that bears comparison with London's Foundling Hospital. Originally admissions to the London Foundling Hospital were strictly controlled but between 1756 and 1760 a general admission (General Reception) was ordered by parliament and the charity was quickly overwhelmed by the huge increase in the numbers of children requiring care. It is this particular period only that can bear direct comparison with the Dublin Foundling Hospital. Mirroring the appalling situation in Ireland with respect to the accommodation, maintenance and funding required to support such large numbers of children, the repercussions of this disastrous decision on the health and well-being of the foundlings lasted for a long number of years.

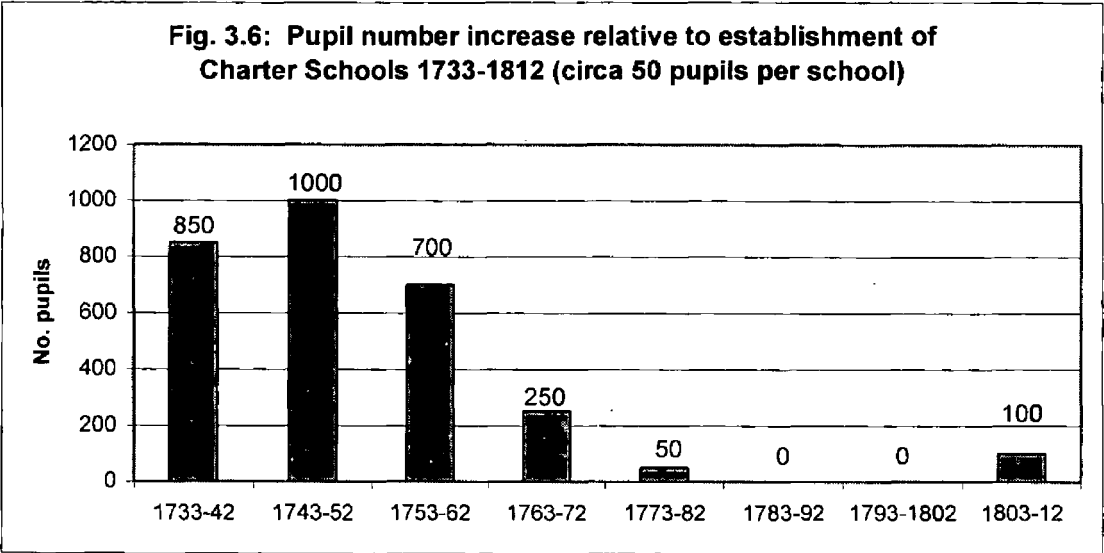


Source: Ruth McClure, *Coram's Children. The London Foundling Hospital in the eighteenth-century* (New Haven, 1981), p. 43; Gillian Pugh, *London's forgotten children: Thomas Coram and the Foundling Hospital* (Stroud, 2007); John McVeagh (ed.), *Richard Pococke's Irish Tours* (Dublin, 1995), p. 99; *Commons Jn. (Irl.)* 1743, vol. 4, appendix clxxx, no. v.

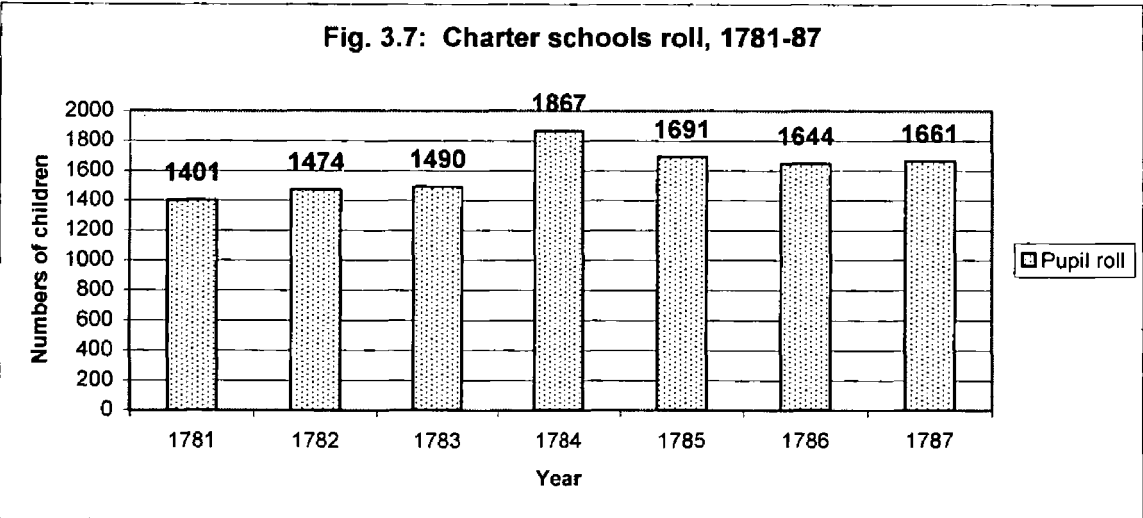
The number of children in the care of the Charter schools also increased, particularly during the first half of the eighteenth century (figures 3.6 and 3.7). On average each individual school cared for forty to fifty children, though some were

⁶⁵ See Ruth McClure, *Coram's Children: the London Foundling Hospital in the eighteenth-century* (New Haven, 1981), p. 43; Gillian Pugh, *London's forgotten children: Thomas Coram and the Foundling Hospital* (Stroud, 2007); Veagh (ed.), *Richard Pococke's Irish tours*, p. 99; *Commons Jn. (Irl.)* 1743, vol. 4, appendix clxxx, no. v.

larger. Nevertheless, the total cared for generally did not exceed *circa* 2000 children. By the 1780s, 150 children were lodged in the Dublin House of Industry but by 1793 it had risen to 302. Generally the King's Hospital admitted *circa* thirty children annually, though this fluctuated.



Source: Kenneth Milne, *The Irish Charter schools, 1730-1830* (Dublin, 1997), pp 347-8.



Source: Kenneth Milne, *The Irish Charter schools, 1730-1830* (Dublin, 1997), p. 195.

Children gained admission to institutions in a variety of ways. Those apprehended accompanying unlicensed beggars were separated from their parents and sent immediately to the Workhouse and Foundling Hospital.⁶⁶ The infant children of pauper women from different parts of Ireland, who gave birth in ‘cold garrets, open to every wind, or in damp cellars subject to floods from excessive rains; destitute of

⁶⁶ *Freeman's Journal*, 8 Oct. 1763

attendance, medicines, and often of proper food'⁶⁷ were frequently abandoned in their local parishes, and following their establishment, later transported to the Dublin and Cork foundling hospitals.⁶⁸ Prior to opening their own nurseries in 1757, foundlings deposited at the gates of Charter schools were sent to the Dublin Foundling Hospital.⁶⁹

Mirroring the situation in London and France,⁷⁰ difficult economic conditions prompted a significant increase in the number of children admitted to institutions. As figure 3.8 illustrates, there was an increase in the numbers of children admitted to the Dublin Workhouse and Foundling Hospital during the severe weather of 1740-1, while the Dublin House of Industry, which opened food kitchens during the harsh winter of 1783-4, fed 650 men but, 3879 women and children daily (table 3.2).⁷¹ Kenneth Milne notes a similar pattern of 'economic' admissions to the Charter schools,⁷² while Lawrence Stone recognises the increased numbers of legitimate children abandoned to the care of the English parish system as a product of a 'deepening economic crisis for the very poor'.⁷³

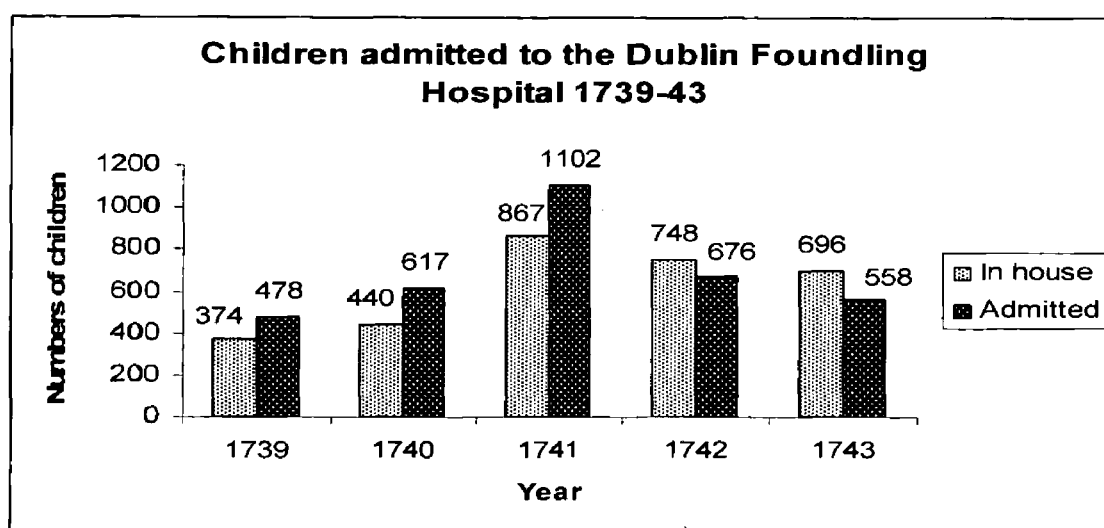


Fig. 3.8 Children admitted to the Dublin Foundling Hospital 1739-43
Source: *Commons Jn. (Irl.)*, 1743, vol. 4, appendix clxxx.

⁶⁷ T. P. C. Kirkpatrick, *The book of the Rotunda Hospital, an illustrated history of the Dublin Lying-in Hospital from its foundation in 1745 to the present time* (London, 1913), p. 5.

⁶⁸ See part one: Raising children in eighteenth-century Ireland, and the issue of abandonment and infanticide.

⁶⁹ Robbins, *The lost children*, p. 75.

⁷⁰ McClure, *Coram's children*, p. 113.

⁷¹ Governors Proceedings Book 1783-87, 6 Feb. 1784 (NAI, BR/2006/86 (House of Industry) box 2).

⁷² Milne, *The Irish Charter schools*, p. 46-9.

⁷³ Stone, *The family, sex and marriage* (New York, 1977), p. 476.

Table 3.2: Entrants to the Dublin House of Industry, 1780-1784

Year	Persons received into the House	Sex		Age		
		Male	Female	+60 years	30-60 years	Under 30 years
25 Mar 1780 – 25 Mar 1781	1796	565	1231	305	598	893
25 Mar 1782 – 25 Mar 1783	3976	1287	2689	819	1365	1792
25 Mar 1783 – 25 Mar 1784	3784	1441	2343	668	1139	1977
25 Mar 1784 – 25 Dec 1784	1845	712	1133	424	520	901

Source: Governors Proceedings Book 1779-83, 25 Mar. 1781, 25 Mar. 1783, 5 Jul. 1784, 25 Jan. 1785 (NAI, BR/2006/86 (House of Industry) box 2).

Having conveyed their children into institutions during times of economic hardship, parents frequently sought their return when conditions improved.⁷⁴ However, institutions were reluctant to do so and rarely did, a practice that became particularly entrenched during the latter half of the century. In 1739, of 478 children admitted to the Dublin Workhouse and Foundling Hospital, four per cent (twenty-one) were returned to their parents. In 1743, of 558 children admitted, seven per cent (thirty-eight) were returned.⁷⁵ By 1781-2, of the 4602 children then in the care of the Dublin hospital only thirty-one or point seven per cent were returned⁷⁶ and by 1791 less than half a per cent were returned.⁷⁷ To discourage parents, the Dublin Workhouse and Foundling Hospital charged a fee for a child's return; a similar policy was adopted by the Hibernian Society school in 1799 for children dismissed from the school (twenty shillings).⁷⁸ The fee was justified as being both a deterrent to parents and recompense for the governors' expenses in caring for the children.

⁷⁴ For example see *Commons Jn. (Irl.)*, 1792, vol. 15, appendix ccvii.

⁷⁵ *Commons Jn. (Irl.)*, 1743, vol. 4, appendix clxxx, table no. v.

⁷⁶ *Wilson's Almanack 1783*, p. 67.

⁷⁷ *Commons Jn. (Irl.)*, 1792, vol. 15, appendix ccvii, table no. i.

⁷⁸ *Regulations of the Hibernian society for maintaining, educating and apprenticing the orphans and children of soldiers* (Dublin, 1799), p. 49.

From their establishment in 1773, the houses of industry, though not specifically charged with caring for children, were empowered to take up all fatherless and deserted children under eight years of age found wandering or begging.⁷⁹ Despite the governors' reluctance to accept them, children also gained entry when their parents were granted admission, though frequently the governors attempted to transfer these children to the Foundling Hospital or, failing that to the Charter schools.⁸⁰ In order to cope with the increased numbers of children admitted, by 1806 the Bedford Asylum for Industrious Children capable of accommodating one thousand children was constructed on a site on North Brunswick Street in Dublin.

Children duly recommended by the rector, curate or churchwarden, and generally at the request of the child's mother or father, were admitted into the Charity and Charter school systems,⁸¹ the Hibernian Marine Society school, and so forth. For example, notices of vacancies in St Mary's Charity school, Dublin, were placed 'on the school house door' and parents were requested to apply with the appropriate recommendation.⁸² With the exception of the foundling hospitals, a personal recommendation of worthiness, to be considered at their board meetings was normally sought by institutional governors before a child gained entry to these school systems. This remained a consistent but crucial component of Irish institutional charity and patronage for adults and children alike throughout the eighteenth century.⁸³

As illustrated in table 3.3, in line with other European foundling hospitals, Irish children entered into the care of charitable institutions at extremely vulnerable ages, both physically, mentally and emotionally. In continental Europe children remained with their wet-nurses until weaned and returned to their institutions when they were seven years-old in Lisbon, five in Paris, four in Amsterdam and three in London.⁸⁴

⁷⁹ Robbins, *The lost children*, p. 101.

⁸⁰ Governor's Proceedings Book 1776-79, 27 Sep. 1778 and Governor's Proceedings Book 1779-83, 3 Jul. 1780 (NAI, BR/2006/86 (House of Industry) box 2).

⁸¹ Committee Book 1771-74, 20 Nov. 1771 (TCD, Ms 5236).

⁸² St Mary's Charity school, Minutes, 20 Jan. 1796 (NLI, Ms 2664).

⁸³ *Ibid*, 14 Nov. 1795.

⁸⁴ McClure, *Coram's children*, pp 46-7.

Table 3.3: Institutional and educational age of admission

Institution:	Age:	Date established:
The King's Hospital/ Blue Coat school	6 years, but in practice 9 years until 14 years or apprenticed	Charter granted 5 Dec 1670
Dublin Workhouse and Foundling Hospital	5 years and over until 16 years or apprenticed	1703
	All ages until 16 years or apprenticed	1729/30
Charter schools/Incorporated Society	6 years and over until apprenticed	Charter granted 6 Feb 1733/4
Incorporated Society Nurseries	4 to 6 years	
Hibernian Society for maintaining ... orphans and children of soldiers	7 to 12 years	1765 [opened 1770]
Hibernian Marine Society for maintaining ... orphans and children of decayed seamen	7 to 12 years	1766
Houses of Industry – Dublin, Belfast, Cork, Waterford, Limerick	All ages to 15 years	1773
Female Orphan House, Dublin	5 to 10 years	1790
Patrician Society	3 years and over	fl. 1792
Orphan House for destitute boys, Dublin	4 to 10 years	1794-5

Sources: Archives of the Incorporated Society in Dublin for Promoting English Protestant schools in Ireland (TCD), *Commons Jns (Irl.)*, 1773, appendix ccxii; *Hibernian Journal*, 24 Apr. 1793; Kenneth Milne, *The Irish Charter schools 1730-1830* (Dublin, 1997); PRONI, DIO4/9/12/3; St Mary's Charity school, Minutes (NLI Ms 2664); *Sixth report of the Commissioners of Irish education inquiry* (London, 1827); Lesley Whiteside, *A history of the King's Hospital* (Dublin, 1975); George N. Wright, *An historical guide to ancient and modern Dublin* (London, 1821).

In Ireland, the 1703 parliamentary act establishing the Dublin Workhouse addressed itself specifically to the care of children between the ages of five and sixteen. As previously discussed, it was popularly assumed that abandoned children under five years came under the care of the parish in which they were found. When the Dublin Workhouse incorporated the Foundling Hospital in 1729/30, children of all ages were then admitted, as later were those children who gained entry to the Dublin

House of Industry following its establishment in 1773.⁸⁵ Throughout the century infants who entered the Foundling Hospital were sent to country nurses where they remained until they were six years-old. They then re-entered the 'Foundation side' of the hospital where they were cared for until fifteen years or apprenticed.⁸⁶

Although some individual cases differed, in general children's age of admission to an institution remained constant for most of the eighteenth-century, at six years-old. From its incorporation the Charter schools (1733) accepted children from six, while the Hibernian Society (1765) and the Hibernian Marine Society (1766) both accepted children at seven years of age. Although the King's Hospital (1670) charter stated that children of six years and over would be admitted, for much of the eighteenth-century only those who had reached nine years of age were actually accepted.

Indicative of society's drive for reform and an awareness that children could be trained from young, from mid-century children began entering institutions at an earlier age. The Incorporated Society Nurseries (1757) admitted children from two years of age until six,⁸⁷ while the Catholic Patrician Society (fl. 1792) accepted children from three years and over. It must be noted that rather than acting out of any particular concern for the vulnerability of younger children, the Incorporated Society Nurseries were specifically designed to guarantee a supply of children for its own Charter schools which were faced with declining numbers. This was unusual. Throughout the century all charitable institutions caring for children were coming under mounting pressure to cope with the increased numbers of abandoned children.

For most of the eighteenth century, apart from the foundling hospitals, institutional governors actively sought to admit only healthy children and therefore put in place procedures to filter admissions. Sick or potentially sick children were an additional expense institutional governors were loath to absorb.⁸⁸ Though contrary to its charter, the governors of the King's Hospital restricted entry to boys who had

⁸⁵ The governors of the Dublin House of Industry did not recognise children as separate inmates until the 1780s.

⁸⁶ Children 'on the Foundation side', between six to *circa* ten years of age were regarded as 'young' and those between ten to fifteen years of age as 'old'. Although normally apprenticed at fifteen years, a few children remained until they were twenty-one and were then dismissed the house.

⁸⁷ Shannon Grove Nursery, Committee Book 1771-74, 24 Jul. 1773 (TCD, Ms 5236). Five nurseries were established with the help of a government grant in 1757. Each nursery was to accommodate 100 children between four and six years of age in each of the provincial areas – Dublin (York Street), Milltown (Dublin), Monasterevan (County Kildare), Monivea (County Galway) and Shannon Grove (County Limerick). None were opened in Ulster. See also Robbins, *The lost children*, p. 75.

⁸⁸ The provision of healthcare to children in institutions is addressed in Section III.

reached the required height of a 'full three feet and nine inches' according to a standard marked out in the governors' room and were not sickly.⁸⁹ The Incorporated Society also sought to limit admission to their Charter schools to healthy children and re-issued instructions to all its local committees in January 1768 not to:

receive any child into any school of the Society that shall not be intirely free from disorders and that they be informed that this society will not suffer any children (disordered at the time of admittance) to remain in their schools, nor shall any such that may be sent to Dublin from any school be received by the Society.⁹⁰

It was noted that some children were admitted without following normal procedure and brought 'scald head', a highly infectious complaint with them.⁹¹ Indicative of their concern, by 1773 a child admitted into a school required a certificate of health signed by at least five members of the local committee.⁹²

In its early years the governors of the Dublin House of Industry did not accept that they had a responsibility towards the children in their care as most entered accompanying an adult or parent. As such, the authorities found these children more difficult to dispose of when sick or in danger of becoming so. It was not until the 1780s that they recognised children as requiring care and provision distinct from that afforded adults in the house. Despite this, the governors remained reluctant to provide specific care for children. Illustrative of their attitude, in July 1780 the mothers of eight infant children who were at most vulnerable ages were offered the choice 'to be dismissed [from the house] with their children or else consent to their being sent to the Foundling Hospital'.⁹³

Notwithstanding the fact that they cared for significantly less children than the Dublin Foundling Hospital, at a board meeting in January 1785 it was again resolved to send all 'illegitimate' children under a year old then in the House to the Foundling Hospital⁹⁴ and the following year, the governors determined not to accept any child

⁸⁹ Whiteside, *A history of the King's Hospital*, p. 28.

⁹⁰ This was a height that was then appropriate to healthy boys of nine years and upwards only: Board Book, 1761-75, p. 137, 13 Jan. 1768 (TCD, Ms 5225).

⁹¹ It was determined that the children admitted had not been properly 'examined and approved of as healthy and sound limbed' by the physician, surgeon, or apothecary normally attending the school: Committee Book 1771-74, 21 Oct. 1772 (TCD, Ms 5236).

⁹² Ibid., 4 Aug. 1773 (TCD, Ms 5236).

⁹³ The children's ages ranged from fifteen days to six months old: Governor's Proceedings Book 1779-83, 3 Jul. 1780 (NAI, BR/2006/86 (House of Industry) box 2).

⁹⁴ Ibid., 1783-87, 17 Jan. 1785.

under one year old.⁹⁵ Although this was clearly an attempt by the governors of Dublin's House of Industry to delineate responsibility for pauper children, there is however no record confirming this decision was carried out.

Though drawn from a more restricted grouping, the orphans and children of soldiers and sailors seeking admission to the Hibernian Society schools were also inspected and certified as healthy by the society's physician or surgeon.⁹⁶ Similarly for the Charity schools. As late as 1800, nine children including Eliza Deal of Stafford Street, Dublin were refused admission into St Mary's Charity school until they produced a certificate 'that they are in perfect health'.⁹⁷ In the absence of a comprehensive medical system in eighteenth-century Ireland it is significant that the fate of those children refused entry on health grounds to charitable organisations rarely concerned institutional governors. Charity clearly had its limits.

Though an increasing number of children came into the care of institutions as the eighteenth-century progressed, the quality of care provided was limited by a number of factors that were crucial to children's welfare. Deteriorating institutional building fabric, the on-going establishment of new institutions charged with the protection of vulnerable children, and increased admissions to those already operating placed great strains on the finances available. Moreover, despite initial manifestations of enthusiasm, all institutions struggled to maintain public and philanthropic interest. Consequently, supervisory practices in many institutions fluctuated wildly, but were generally lax, which had immediate costly ramifications for children in their care, though there were notable exceptions such as St Mary's Charity school in Dublin.

Frequently children's health was already compromised on entry and the building fabric and conditions within institutions seriously compounded their problems. The lack of safe clean water, the proximity of cess pits to residential and dormitory buildings, the use of chamber pots within the confines of the dormitories and the food provided, all had the potential to inflict significant injury to a child's health. While many of these hazards also applied to the domestic home, it was the sheer scale of numbers within the institutions that made them so lethal to children. Despite growing awareness in general of the importance of hygiene and ventilation

⁹⁵ Governor's Proceedings Book 1779-83, 26 Jun., 24 Jul. 1786 (NAI, BR/2006/86 (House of Industry) box 2).

⁹⁶ *Regulations of the Hibernian Society for maintaining, educating and apprenticing the orphans and children of soldiers* (Dublin, 1799), p. 43.

⁹⁷ St Mary's Charity school, Minutes, Feb.-Dec. 1800 (NLI, Ms 2664).

and in particular of the physical vulnerability of children, few establishments proactively engaged in remedying the harmful effects of the institutional fabric on children's well-being. There were occasional and rare exceptions; in 1797 the governors of the Dublin Workhouse and Foundling Hospital petitioned parliament for an increase in funding in 'consequence of many alterations made' and the many children's lives saved as a result. Their request implies that while there was an acceptance of the need for improved facilities in order to properly care for children, their health and well-being, this came at a price, one they were reluctant to absorb and parliament to address.⁹⁸

The harshness of the surroundings in which they lived did have severe detrimental physical effects on institutional children to say nothing of their emotional well-being. The dining hall in the Dublin Workhouse and Foundling Hospital where they ate was so cold and damp, the children's 'hands and feet [became] much swelled and disordered with colds and sores', particularly in winter.⁹⁹ Sleeping conditions were generally cramped. And, despite the fact that the dangers of more than two children sharing a bed (let alone with adults) was recognised and loudly declaimed throughout the century, children in the Dublin Workhouse and Foundling Hospital (six to fifteen years of age) slept in 'little rooms, six or eight of them sometimes in a bed ... and three or four beds in a room with a bucket in the middle, in which their dirt and nastiness' was collected.¹⁰⁰ John Wesley noted in May 1785 that 'fourteen or fifteen boys' in Ballinrobe Charter school, county Mayo shared between them three beds, and the nineteen girls, five.¹⁰¹ In the Dublin House of Industry eighty-nine women and 109 children shared sixty-one beds in the infant ward.¹⁰²

Given these cramped conditions and a general lack of cleanliness, it is not surprising that Dr Knox, the newly appointed physician to the Dublin Workhouse and Foundling Hospital, in 1758 bluntly described the children as 'eaten up with vermin',¹⁰³ while later the children in the House of Industry were described as 'sickly and emaciated'.¹⁰⁴ These children were particularly susceptible to contagious diseases

⁹⁸ *Commons Jn. (Irl.)*, 1798, vol. 17, appendix dxxvii.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 1758, vol. 6, appendix ci, Isabella Craig; John Higgins.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, appendix xcvi.

¹⁰¹ MacDonagh, *The Inspector General*, p. 94.

¹⁰² J. D. H. Widdes, *The Richmond, Whitworth & Hardwicke Hospitals, St Laurence's Dublin, 1772-1972* (1972), p. 28.

¹⁰³ *Commons Jn. (Irl.)*, 1758, vol. 6, appendix xcvi.

¹⁰⁴ Widdes, *The Richmond, Whitworth & Hardwicke Hospitals, St Laurence's Dublin*, p. 28.

that were often fatal to them such as 'small-pox, measles, scrophulous affections and consumptions'.¹⁰⁵ Yet, consistent with a growing awareness in the last decades of the eighteenth-century of the importance of pauper children's welfare, when a report in 1788 bluntly described the nursery in the Dublin House of Industry as 'fatal to the health of all children put therein', the governors promptly ordered the removal of the children and, a committee was formed to consider building 'improvement[s for] the health of the children'.¹⁰⁶ There is no record that any occurred.¹⁰⁷

Despite a growing awareness of the vulnerability of children and regardless of continual reports describing the deteriorating and harmful building fabric of the Charter schools, local committees and the Committee of Fifteen maintained a reluctance to carry out repairs to improve the situation of children in their care. James Armstrong complained to both committees of the dreadful conditions in Primrose Grange Charter school outside Sligo in December 1790¹⁰⁸ as did Thomas Hackett, vicar of Boyle. A full seven years later, Thomas informed the committee again that the schoolhouse and offices were still 'in very bad order, the furniture decayed, neither beds or bedclothes for the children'.¹⁰⁹

Furthermore, inadequate water supplies (one of the issues addressed by Sir Jeremiah Fitzpatrick in his damning reports) promoted debilitating diseases such as diarrhoea, which could have devastating effects. In the absence of a sufficient water supply even rudimentary hygiene methods could not be applied. Primrose Grange Charter school relied on a well whose water was brackish and considered unfit for use. This was known to the Dublin based Committee of Fifteen, yet no other supply was obtained.¹¹⁰ In contrast, St Mary's Charity school in Dublin secured its water supply by cart but storage left it liable to contamination. By 1799, the 'two casks' used were described as 'exceedingly out of repair and inadequate'. In an attempt to remedy the situation the governors resolved that 'a proper cistern lined with lead be immediately provided for the use of the school',¹¹¹ which improvement introduced a new contaminant, albeit one unknown at that time.

¹⁰⁵ Widdes, *The Richmond, Whitworth & Hardwicke Hospitals, St Laurence's Dublin*, p. 28.

¹⁰⁶ Governors Proceedings Book 1783-87, 22 May 1786 (NAI, BR/2006/86 (House of Industry) box 2).

¹⁰⁷ In 1798 the governors petitioned the Commons to build a proper infirmary but work on this, the Hardwicke Fever Hospital did not begin until 1803. The Bedford Asylum for Industrious Children was constructed on a site on North Brunswick Street, Dublin in 1806.

¹⁰⁸ Primrose Grange Charter school, Orders 1757-96, 27 Dec. 1790 (TCD, Ms 5646).

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., Account Book 1796-1841, May 1797 (TCD, Ms 5647).

¹¹⁰ Ibid., Orders 1757-96, 13 May 1765 (TCD, Ms 5646).

¹¹¹ St Mary's Charity school, Minutes, 2 Dec. 1799 (NLI, Ms 2664).

Financing institutions

The financial assistance and support institutions received either from government, private individuals or fundraising, is one obvious key marker of the level of interest shown by the public and the establishment in children's welfare over the course of the eighteenth-century. Given the voluntary nature of many societies caring for children, finance remained a primary concern of governors. But the King's Hospital, the Dublin Workhouse and Foundling Hospital, and the Charter schools were not solely voluntary organisations. Each came under the remit of parliament and in general was in receipt of direct government grants. However, in the case of the Dublin Workhouse and Foundling Hospital, this consistently proved inadequate to meet demand.

Though the Dublin Workhouse and Foundling Hospital was the first and, for a considerable time, the only government supported institution for abandoned children in Ireland, its finances fell quickly into disorder. Alderman John Porter noted that 'upwards of 400 poor', including children were accepted in the first year the Workhouse building was opened, a far greater number than their revenue and circumstances could cope with.¹¹² Although initially funded indirectly by government through a tax on sedan chairs and city houses,¹¹³ funding was increased only reluctantly over the course of the eighteenth-century and the subsequent shortcomings proved detrimental to the welfare of children in its care. Similarly the Dublin, Cork, Belfast, Waterford and Limerick houses of industry were not established on a sound financial footing. Apart from Dublin, all relied on voluntary contributions and grand jury presentments for funding.¹¹⁴

For voluntary organisations particularly, charity sermons were an extremely important means of funding their work (table 3.4) and a public manifestation of social benefaction, being designed to fit within the social calendar.¹¹⁵ As Karen Sonnelitter observes, the vulnerability of children was a common theme in charity school

¹¹² *Commons Jn. (Irl.)*, 1725, vol. 3, appendix ccccxiii.

¹¹³ Under the act of 3 Geo. IV, the tax levied on the citizens of Dublin ceased to be chargeable after 4 Jan. 1823. (LMA, A/FH/M/01/003/145-148).

¹¹⁴ Kelly, 'Defending the established order', p. 153; Dickson, 'In search of the old Irish Poor Law', p. 156.

¹¹⁵ See Karen Sonnelitter, 'To unite our temporal and eternal interests': Sermons and the charity school movement in Ireland, 1689-1740', *Eighteenth-century Ireland*, 25 (Dublin, 2010), pp 62-81.

literature and was used as a major argument to convince donors of the efficacy of the movement.¹¹⁶

Table 3.4: Finance raised from selected charity sermons

Date:	Charity:	Church:	Preacher:	Amount:		
				£	s.	d.
1717	Finglas Charity school	County Dublin		14	-	-
1758-62	Dublin Workhouse and Foundling Hospital		Benefactions and sermons	888	1	4
Feb 1758	Parish Charity school	St Nicholas-within, Dublin	Rt Rev. Lord Bishop of Killalla and Achonry	40	7	11
Feb 1758	St Bridget's Charity school	Parish church of St Bridget, Dublin	Rev. Dr John Laswon	121	15	1
Nov 1763		Parish Church of St Ann, Dublin	Rev. Edward Bayly	16?	14	9
Nov 1763		St Michan's, Dublin	Rt Rev. Lord Bishop of Raphoe	69	11	3
Nov 1763		Eustace St Meeting House, Dublin		80	-	1
Dec 1763	St Catherine's Charity school	St Audeon's, Dublin	Rt Rev. Lord Bishop of Clogher	45	-	-
Dec 1763	St Werburgh's Charity school	Parish church of St Werburgh, Dublin	Rev. Mr Dodgson	78	-	-
Feb 1764	Parish Charity school	Parish Church of St Andrew, Dublin	Rev. Dr. John Obins	165	13	6½
Mar 1768	St Paul's Charity school	St Paul's, Dublin	Rev. Dr. Law	38	9	-
Mar 1768	Strand-street Charity school	Strand-street, Dublin		130	3	9
Mar 1765	Hibernian Society for soldiers children	St Paul's, Dublin	Rev. Pratt	251	3	9
Nov 1766	Charity	St Werburgh's, Dublin	Rev. Bayly	135	-	-
Sep 1767	Charity	Finglas, Dublin	Archdeacon Mann	47	2	9 ½
May 1794	Female Orphans	Dublin	Rev. W. B. Kirwan	819	-	-
Dec 1794	Poor children of Cork (1000)	St Peter & St Paul's, Cork	Rev. Dr M'Carthy	62	-	-
May [1799]	Parish poor	Castle Bellingham Church, Louth	Mr Murphy	73	-	-
Dec 1799	St Mary's Charity school	St Mary's & Lying-in chapel, Dublin	Rev. T. Hawksworth	335	-	-
Jun 1802	Masonic Female Orphan school	St Anne's church, Dublin	Sermon	225	9	6
			Total benefactions	540	-	3

Sources: *Pue's Occurrences*, Feb. 1758; *Freeman's Journal*, Nov., Dec. 1763, Feb. 1764, Mar. 1765, Nov. 1766, Sep. 1767, Jan., Mar. 1768; *Gentleman's and London Magazine*, Apr. 1768; *Hibernian Journal*, May 1771, Nov. 1775, Apr. 1790, Nov 1791, Apr. 1793, Nov. 1794; *Cork Examiner*, Dec. 1794; Agnew (ed.) *Drennan-McTier letters*, i, ii, iii.

The public appearance of charity children, dressed for the occasion in new clothes, singing hymns in procession,¹¹⁷ was visible confirmation of the value

¹¹⁶ Sonnelitter, 'To unite our temporal and eternal interests', p. 74.

attached to supporting these institutions, while the eloquent and impressive discourses of preachers such as the Rev. Walter Blake Kirwan (1754-1805) were designed to open women's hearts and men's purses for the charitable cause. In 1791 the accoucheur William Drennan remarked of Kirwan's sermon to a Dublin audience that:

such a patriotic display of this wretched land, never did I hear. The town is thin, and he got but £418. One lady took her purse, and not thinking it enough, threw a watch with trinkets into the plate ... You may conceive what a sermon it was when I felt the strongest impulse to give a guinea, but somehow or other it was, in falling, transformed into a shilling. I doubt much if St Paul could have preached better.¹¹⁸

Even though large sums were frequently raised by these sermons, the popularity of a charity, including children's was subject to the vagaries of fashionable society. For example the King's Hospital, which cared for Protestant children only, never achieved the 'fashionable' charitable status amongst society that other charities achieved and as such it was always faced with financial difficulties. Similarly the Charter schools and the Dublin House of Industry, though caring for significantly less children, frequently found themselves in financial difficulties.

While the Dublin Foundling Hospital's practice of naming foundlings after 'important' people¹¹⁹ was designed primarily to elicit funds or patronage for the institution, a similar custom at the London Foundling Hospital was foremost to benefit the child.¹²⁰ As a result the very nature of eighteenth century charitable fundraising and the inconsistency of government funding severely curtailed not only the quality of care afforded to pauper and abandoned children but also its extent, and this despite the fact that the numbers of children being admitted to institutional protection increased steadily over the course of the eighteenth-century.

Institutional oversight

Fundamental to a child's survival was the quality of care afforded them and this was to a large extent determined by the level of interest, supervision and inspections carried out by each institution's respective board of governors and crucially, the staff that directly engaged with the children. But in many cases diligence was severely lacking and this lack reflects a consistent unwillingness throughout the eighteenth-

¹¹⁷ William Drennan to Sam McTier, 5 Feb. [17]91, Agnew (ed.), *Drennan-McTier letters*, i, 356.

¹¹⁸ William Drennan to Sam McTier, 21 May [17]91, *ibid.*, i, 358.

¹¹⁹ Martha McTier to William Drennan, [n.d., 1795], *ibid.*, ii, 190.

¹²⁰ McClure, *Coram's children*.

century to recognise both the vulnerability and demands of childhood. As early as 1725 a parliamentary committee appointed to inspect the state and management of the Dublin Workhouse noted that there was 'a very great neglect and mismanagement' within it.¹²¹ This was unsurprising given that the 'court of assistants in whom the immediate power of managing and regulating the Workhouse was lodged' had not met for eleven years. Even then, meetings were held at the Tholsel and the governors rarely visited the actual workhouse.¹²² Despite spending seven years (1790-7) attempting through parliament to instigate reforms in the workhouse, John Blaquiére's proposals were met with apathy and a lack of will within the house. Without, they were attacked and peremptorily dismissed by self-interested members of Dublin Corporation.

Amongst the staff, self-interest also predominated and children suffered and were impoverished by it. Rev. Hill, chaplain to the Dublin Workhouse for over twenty-one years in 1758, though aware of the conditions the children lived under was not sufficiently moved to investigate further as it 'was not his duty' to attend the Foundation side of the house. This despite the large numbers of children he christened on arrival and buried within days.¹²³ The treasurer Joseph Purcell, the butler Stephen Faucey, and the housekeeper Mary Whistler (Purcell's sister) were all called to account before a parliamentary committee in 1758 and found responsible for gross mismanagement of the hospital. They were subsequently dismissed but not before Purcell appropriated £1,703 4s. 11¾d. of the institution's money and its account books.¹²⁴ Similarly, the indifference of nurses to the welfare of their charges, particularly in the early years of the hospital, the attractiveness of the annual payment to country nurses and the lack of supervision both internally and in the country all contributed towards many children's unnecessary deaths.

Despite the intended role of local committees, the care of children in Charter schools scattered throughout the country was also conducted at a remove, through the Committee of Fifteen in Dublin. As Joseph Robbins notes, although uneasy at the dangers the children in the schools were exposed to, the committee was never sufficiently concerned to carry out its own inspections.¹²⁵ As a result, the Dublin

¹²¹ *Commons Jn. (Irl.)*, 1725, vol. 3, appendix cccxxxiii.

¹²² *Ibid.*

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 1758, vol. 6, appendix xcvi.

¹²⁴ Robbins, *The lost children*, p. 22.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 78.

Workhouse and Foundling Hospital and the Charter schools were consistently criticised for the obvious neglect and abuse of the children in their care. Yet for most of the time the authorities were unwilling to remedy the situation and remained personally at a remove from both the institutions and the children themselves.

Shortly after opening, the Dublin House of Industry perceived a difficulty in achieving a quorum during the summer months and established a committee of 'gentlemen most likely to remain in town during the summer season' to oversee issues pertaining to the house.¹²⁶ But again, they met at the Tholsel and not at the institution. In the absence of close inspection and governance, abuses within this institution went undetected and children's needs remained neglected.

Despite initial fervour and a more positive attitude overall, the governors of St Mary's Charity school also found it difficult to sustain attendances at committee meetings.¹²⁷ Consistent with a positive shift in attitudes towards children and their welfare visible from the 1780s, in March 1793 it was agreed to appoint four visitors to inspect and make observations on the children and the school and sign the visitor's book on a four-week rotational basis.¹²⁸ Unlike the Charter schools, the governors prioritised the children's welfare and sought immediate explanations when the 'weekly visitor' reported anything amiss. For example, in early 1802 'the dirty appearance of the elder girls' in the school was noted and upon enquiry found to be as a result of the 'immediate necessity of employing them in cleaning the house' rather than a lack 'of attention in the master and mistress'.¹²⁹ As a result, problems with the children's welfare were promptly addressed. Yet it must be remembered that charity schools such as St Mary's relied heavily on public subscriptions and though the number of children cared for within the school remained relatively small, by the end of the eighteenth-century it was clear that increasingly, public opinion also mattered.¹³⁰

¹²⁶ Richmond Hospital Governors Proceedings Book 1772-75, 11 May 1773; 1 Jun. 1773 (NAI, BR/2006/86 (House of Industry) box 1).

¹²⁷ St Mary's Charity school, Minutes, 15 Dec. 1792 (NLI, Ms 2664).

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 23 Mar. 1793 (NLI, Ms 2664).

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 15 Feb. 1802.

¹³⁰ Concern for children's well-being continued even when they left school. The House of Refuge in Baggot Street was opened in 1802 for the reception of young women who had been brought up in charity schools in 'the vicinity of Dublin' and who found themselves unemployed. From its opening in Feb. 1802 to 1 Nov. 1821 a total of 1205 women were admitted and cared for: *The Treble Almanack 1822* (Dublin, 1822), p. 212.

Although not universal, public opinion facilitated an improvement in conditions for children in the Dublin Workhouse and Foundling Hospital following the 1758 parliamentary inquiry into its operation. The atrocious conditions highlighted by the inquiry prompted the formation of a ladies group led by Lady Arbella Denny (1707-92) who entered the Workhouse in a supervisory capacity. This was a significant step given that elite protestant women had previously confined their philanthropic activities to smaller and more personally related establishments such as charity and estate schools or to domestic benevolence. It is important to note that this women's committee was established on an *ad hoc* basis and was not viewed as a direct challenge to male governorship.¹³¹ Immediately, regular inspections, reports and feeding times were established with consequent benefits for the children. But as the ladies committee foundered so too did their reforms. Sixteen years later a concerned board meeting again approached Lady Arbella to supervise the hospital for which 'she was truly sensible of the great honour done to her'.¹³² Similarly, following the 1797 parliamentary inquiry a group of elite ladies¹³³ offered their assistance to the governors on the same basis as in 1758 and 1774. However, their proposition was then seen as challenging male authority within the hospital. Accordingly their influence within the hospital was severely restricted – being unable to dismiss officers or servants or suspend contracts, though they were permitted to place their concerns before the general board 'from time to time'.¹³⁴ Nevertheless, the fact that the governors approached the ladies does suggest that from 1758 the board was acutely aware of the need to reform the way children were cared for within that institution, yet their concern was not maintained.

Despite the fact that the ladies did not possess any legal power, the benefits of their work are seen in the improved care given and the significantly reduced child mortality figures (most noticeably from venereal disease), which was a reality recognised by parliament.¹³⁵ The fact that female intervention on each occasion improved conditions within the hospital for the benefit of the children supports the

¹³¹ *Commons Jn. (Irl.)*, 1797, vol. 17, appendix cclxxvii.

¹³² *Ibid.*

¹³³ These were Emily, Duchess of Leinster; I. Carhampton; D. Knox; A. H. Trench; A. Ormonde; Anne O'Brien; T. Bective; C. Shannon; Eliz. Stewart; Eliz. Pakenham; A. Lifford; Letitia Balfour; E.S. De Vesci; Mary Ladeveze; Arbella Hamilton: *Commons Jn. (Irl.)*, 1797, vol. 17, appendix cclxxvii.

¹³⁴ *Commons Jn. (Irl.)*, 1797, vol. 17, appendix cclxxvii.

¹³⁵ The 1797 ladies visiting committee continued to superintend the hospital and was still operative in 1825: *Commons Jn. (Irl.)*, 1798, vol. 17, appendix div; appendices dxv-dxxvii; *Third Report of the commissioners of Irish Education Inquiry* (Dublin, 1826), p. 4.

view that by mid-century women were significantly more concerned about the plight of institutional children than men. Unfortunately for eighteenth-century institutional children, men held all the cards.

At a more fundamental level institutional mortality rates were and are indicative of the quality of care afforded children. Throughout the eighteenth-century children entered institutional care at an age when attention to their health and welfare was crucial not only for their survival to adulthood but also their potential usefulness as adult members of society. Despite the fact that William Buchan had clearly identified as unhealthy the environments of foundling hospitals and institutions caring for children, the implications of his conclusion failed to impress itself on those institutional governors charged with children’s care.¹³⁶ As a result, despite parliamentary investigations, children in the care of the state died in large numbers.

When the Foundling Hospital began receiving all abandoned infants in 1729/30, parishes, urban and rural quickly took advantage of the opportunity to divest themselves of responsibility for these children, despite the costs involved. The transportation of infants across the country continued throughout the eighteenth-century even though it was early recognised as detrimental to children’s well-being.¹³⁷ As late as May 1768 Peter Quinn of Aghaderg parish was paid half a guinea expenses for ‘carrying a foundling child to Dublin’ (table 3.5) and that December, Ann Graham brought ‘a foundling child cared for by Alice McCamley’ to Dublin.¹³⁸ It is interesting to note that the expenses incurred were shared between the different churches within the parish, though it is not clear why the amounts differed by parish or church.

Table 3.5: Expenses incurred transporting a foundling from Aghaderg parish to Dublin, December 1768		
	s.	d.
Meeting House, Loughbrickland	11	4½
Meeting houses of Glasker and Scarva	7	8
The Mass House in this parish	7	0
Church of Ireland, Loughbrickland	8	0

Source: John Joe Sands, ‘Pre-famine poverty in the parish of Aghaderg’, *Before I forget, Journal of the Poyntzpass and District Local History Society*, 3 (1989), p. 51.

¹³⁶ Buchan, *Domestic medicine* (3rd ed.), p. 24.
¹³⁷ For example see William King, *The case of the foundlings of the city of Dublin humbly recommended to the consideration of parliament* (Dublin, 1729), p. 2.
¹³⁸ Sands, ‘Pre-famine poverty in the parish of Aghaderg’, p. 51.

Later, in October 1795 Alice Muckleboy, again from Aghaderg parish brought a male infant to Dublin and admitted him into the Foundling Hospital.¹³⁹ Given that these journeys occurred in the winter months it is remarkable that these defenceless infants survived. Too often they did not.

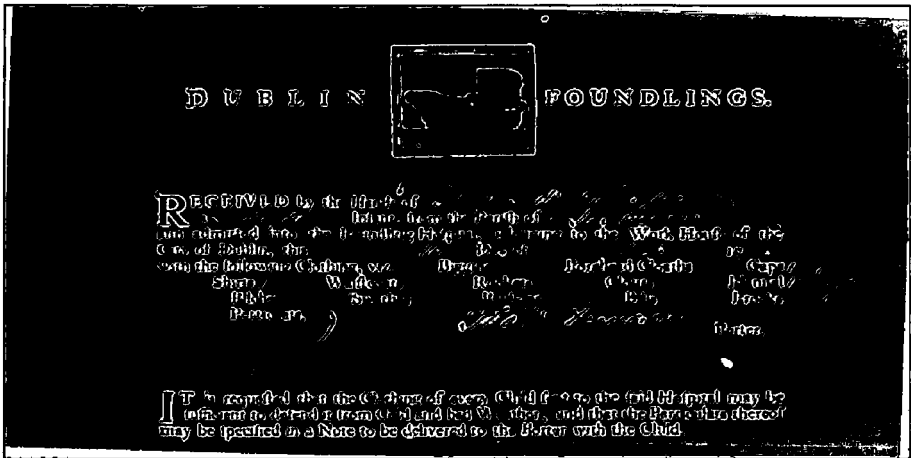
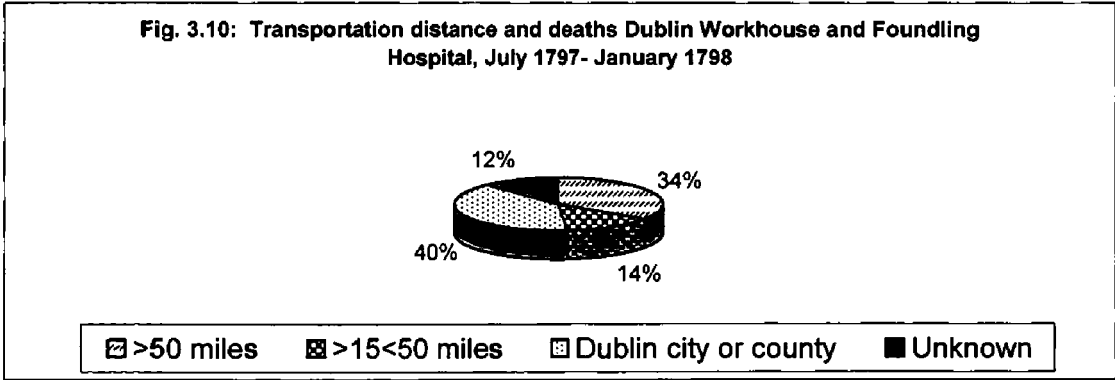


Fig. 3.9: Dublin Foundling Hospital receipt, 16 Sep. 1788
Source: PRONI, D152/1.

Notwithstanding the numbers of abandoned children that died or were harmed *en route* to the Dublin Workhouse and Foundling Hospital (figure 3.10), a procedure early recognised as detrimental to children’s well-being,¹⁴⁰ it was small when compared with the mortality rate among those following admission to the Hospital. By 1739 the mortality rate there was already forty-five per cent and it rose steadily thereafter until it reached an imposing seventy-six per cent among infants admitted in 1797.¹⁴¹



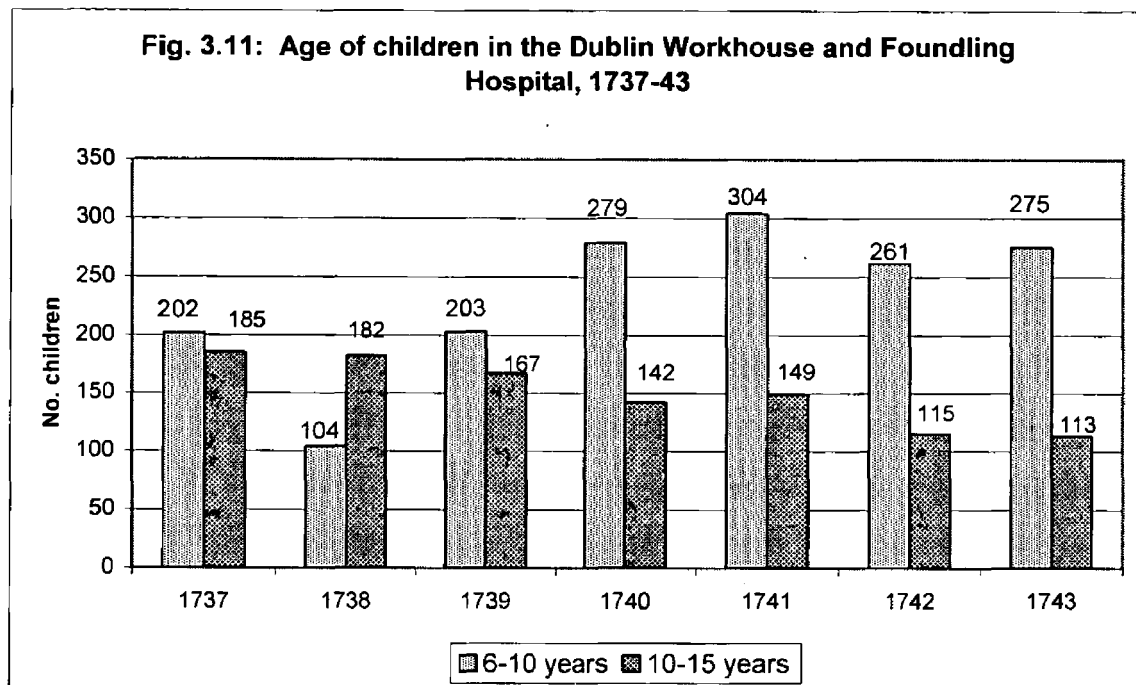
Source: *Commons Jn. (Irl.)*, 1798, vol. 17, appendix dxvi.

¹³⁹ Sands, ‘Pre-famine poverty in the parish of Aghaderg’, p. 53.

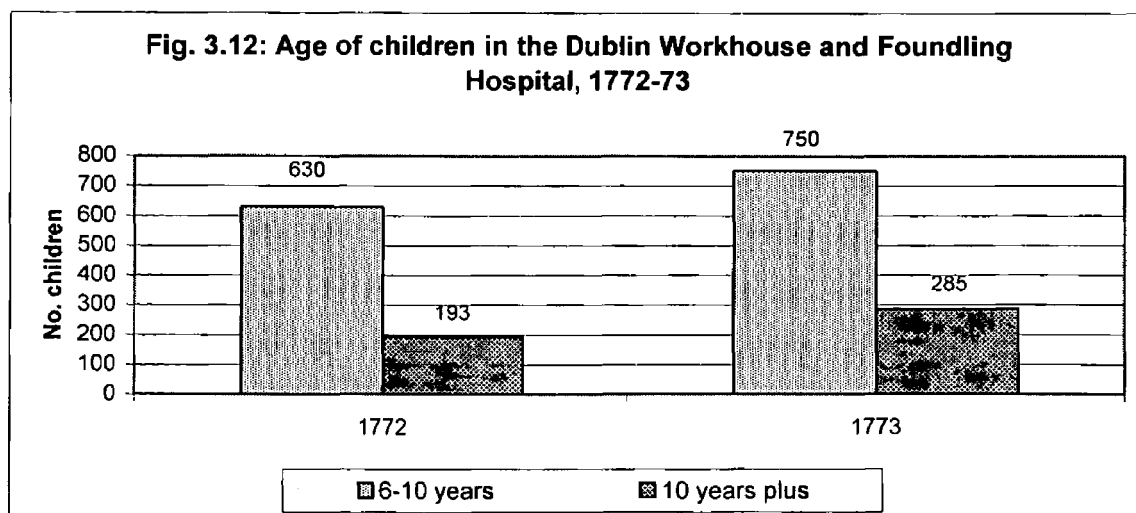
¹⁴⁰ For example see William King, *The case of the foundlings of the city of Dublin humbly recommended to the consideration of parliament* (Dublin, 1729), p. 2.

¹⁴¹ *Commons Jn. (Irl.)*, 1798, vol. 17, appendix dxviii; *Third report of the Commissioners of Irish Education inquiry*, p.148.

Most children who entered the Dublin Foundling Hospital as infants were first sent to country wet-nurses, and if they survived their country nursing, were returned to the Dublin institution at six years of age. They left there or were apprenticed by fifteen, as figures 3.11 and 3.12 illustrate. For example, between 1737 and 1743, sixty-one per cent of the children cared for in-house were aged between six and ten years and for two years, 1772 and 1773, seventy-four per cent were comparably aged.¹⁴²



Source: *Commons Jn. (Irl.)*, 1773, vol. 9, appendix ccxi.



Source: *Commons Jn. (Irl.)*, 1773, vol. 9, appendix ccxii.

¹⁴² *Commons Jn. (Irl.)*, 1773, vol. 9, appendices ccxi, ccxii.

Although mortality levels in 1758 were similarly high, the period July 1796 to July 1797 deserves particular mention. Even though sporadic attempts were made throughout the eighteenth-century to remedy its faults, by 1797 the abuses within Dublin's Foundling Hospital system became 'so great as forcibly to attract the attention of the Irish parliament'.¹⁴³ In the twelve-month period, 1796-7, 1922 children were admitted of whom seventy-six per cent were infants and twenty-four per cent aged three to twelve months. However, only twenty-four per cent of those admitted survived, thirty-nine per cent of whom were infants and fifty-two per cent aged three to twelve months (forty-one infants were returned to their parents).¹⁴⁴ Thirty-four per cent of infants were given to wet-nurses in the country within three days of admission, but the remaining sixty-one per cent still remained in the hospital a week after being admitted.¹⁴⁵ As a result, the majority of the seventy-six per cent admitted who died did so during the second week. A shortage of wet-nurses left these infants vulnerable to starvation, which was a recurring complaint throughout the eighteenth-century. Dr Blackall, physician to the Workhouse, having witnessed the transfer of 'twenty children to five [wet]-nurses'¹⁴⁶ suggested in May 1757 that 'children might be reared better and safer by the spoon',¹⁴⁷ this despite the inherent difficulties associated with spoon-feeding. But in 1797 the Registrar Mr Baillie still noted a 'lack of nurses for the children'.¹⁴⁸

Older children, of whom fifty-two per cent were three months old, were given to country dry nurses within a week of being admitted to the hospital.¹⁴⁹ Nevertheless, a majority of these older infants sent to the country were also destined not to survive. During the summer of 1791, an inspection in eleven Wicklow parishes where 3364 children were listed as 'at nurse' found that seventy-two per cent of the children were dead or unaccounted for. Of the 927 children found alive, the majority (eighty-six per cent) were deemed healthy.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴³ *Third report of the Commissioners of Irish Education Inquiry*, p. 4.

¹⁴⁴ Eighty-five per cent of the infants and forty-seven per cent of 'dry children' died: *Commons Jn. (Irl.)*, 1798, vol. 17, appendix dxviii.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁶ Dr Blackall reported that he had 'seen twenty children to five [wet]-nurses': *Ibid.*, 1758, vol. 6, appendix xcvi.

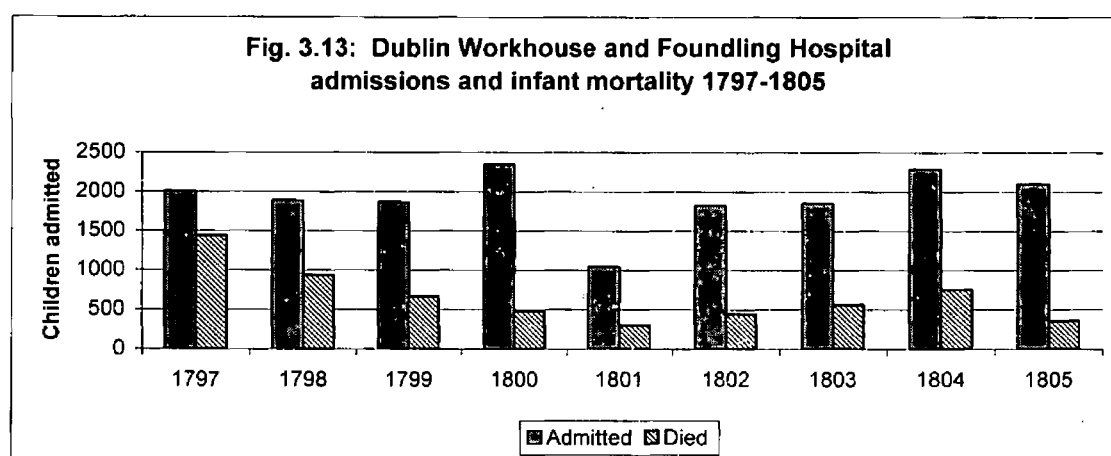
¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, appendices xcvi-ciii.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 1797, vol. 17, appendix ccxl.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 1798, vol. 17, appendix dxviii.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 1792, vol. 17, appendices ccx-ccxii.

The report of the 1797 parliamentary investigation received widespread publicity. In the Irish House of Lords in June of that year, Lord Altamont (1756-1809) gave a ‘very affecting description’ of ‘some poor diseased infants’ in the hospital and observed that ‘to put an end to whose existence with a pistol would be a humane act, to relieve them from their torture.’¹⁵¹ Similarly, testimonies of Foundling Hospital staff made harrowing reading and were of such significance and impact that an act of the Irish parliament was passed¹⁵² and a reformed management system put in place, which was in keeping with a fundamental shift in attitudes towards pauper children at the close of the century. Indicative of the positive effect of this new attitude is the declining infant mortality rate in the Dublin Foundling Hospital illustrated in figure 3.13 from seventy-two per cent in 1797 to seventeen per cent in 1805.¹⁵³



Source: *Third report of the Commissioners of Irish Education Inquiry* (Dublin, 1826), p. 148.

Although the numbers of children in each Charter school were smaller (*circa* forty to fifty per school) the conditions therein also militated against children’s welfare. Though the records are not complete, Milne states that 109 of the 4300 children admitted to the Dublin Nursery between 1765 and 1792 died there or at another school. Between 1792 and 1819 of approximately 4000 admitted 161 were recorded as dying.¹⁵⁴ Epidemics such as smallpox¹⁵⁵ or measles could have devastating effects on already vulnerable children. The fact that Milne records that

¹⁵¹ James Kelly (ed.), *The proceedings of the Irish House of Lords 1771-1800* (3 vols, Dublin, 2008), p. 171.

¹⁵² By the act of 38 Geo. III, c. 35 the number of governors to the Dublin Workhouse and Foundling Hospital was reduced from 200 to nine to include the Chancellor of the Exchequer for Ireland.

¹⁵³ *Third report of the Commissioners of Irish Education Inquiry*, p. 148.

¹⁵⁴ Milne, *The Irish Charter schools*, pp 94-5.

¹⁵⁵ See pages 220-3.

‘some of the worst years’ for mortality in the Charter schools occurred in the nineteenth century testifies to the fact that if there was a wider recognition of the importance of children’s welfare by the end of the eighteenth-century, this had not filtered down to those charged with the care of Charter schoolchildren.¹⁵⁶

Discipline and control

The methods adapted to discipline and control children were emblematic of eighteenth-century institutional care. As Joseph O’Carroll notes, eighteenth-century social policy was ‘only slightly tinged by humanitarian feelings’ being ‘aimed at greater control rather than greater care of the homeless’,¹⁵⁷ and this included children. Foremost in the minds of the authorities throughout the eighteenth century, but particularly during the first half, was the maintenance of social order. As charitable institutions were regarded as crucial in ensuring this, it was also a view consistently espoused in charity sermons.¹⁵⁸ Rev. Henry Downes clearly identified the importance of childhood in forming the adult character in a charity sermon in 1721.¹⁵⁹ Raymond Gillespie also observes that charity schools ‘took pains to ensure that their schools reflected rather than reformed the social order’.¹⁶⁰ So despite the objections of philosophers and reformers such as John Locke, corporal punishment of children was routinely carried out in larger institutions throughout the eighteenth-century, regardless of the fact that there was a growing awareness of the physical vulnerability of children within the population at large.¹⁶¹

Although Sally Kevill-Davies suggests that ‘humiliation and pain, meted out in the guise of a Christian education were the daily lot of most children’,¹⁶² the methods of control available to the masters and staff of children’s institutions, especially the Dublin Workhouse and Foundling Hospital, were exercised with extravagant cruelty even by adult standards of the day. Flogging with a ‘cat-o’-

¹⁵⁶ Milne, *The Irish Charter schools*, p. 95.

¹⁵⁷ Joseph O’Carroll, ‘Contemporary attitudes towards the homeless poor 1725-1775’, Dickson (ed.), *The gorgeous mask*, p. 79.

¹⁵⁸ See ‘Reforming Irish manners: the religious societies in Dublin during the 1690s’, T. C. Barnard, *Irish Protestant ascents and descents 1641-1770* (Dublin, 2004), pp 143-78.

¹⁵⁹ Henry Downes, *A sermon preach’d in the parish church of St Warburgh [sic], Dublin: May the 7th 1721* (Dublin, 1721), p. 5; see also Sonnelitter, ‘To unite our temporal and eternal interests’, p. 74.

¹⁶⁰ Raymond Gillespie, ‘Church, state and education in early modern Ireland’, Maurice R. O’Connell (ed.), *O’Connell, education church and state* (Dublin, 1992), p. 57.

¹⁶¹ See part four: The education of children.

¹⁶² Kevill-Davies, *Yesterday’s children*, p. 222.

nine'¹⁶³ was a routine practice. William Bennet, the writing master, reported to a House of Commons inquiry in 1758 that children, stripped to the waist and 'put into stocks' could receive six lashes for wetting their beds and twenty for stealing, while seven or eight year-olds, who were late going to bed, could expect 'eight or nine lashes ... on that account' from the butler.¹⁶⁴ Thus all children, including those who complained (usually about the inadequate food allowance), faced severe physical chastisement from those directly charged with their care, and possible incarceration for days with 'lunatics' in 'Bedlam'.¹⁶⁵

Reflecting Locke's views, by mid-century the physical vulnerability of children and the use of corporal punishment was being questioned, particularly by parents. Yet contemporary reports indicate that children in the Dublin Workhouse and Foundling Hospital continued to live in an atmosphere of fear and physical intimidation, in an unsafe and insecure environment. Testifying to a parliamentary inquiry in 1758, the chaplain to the Workhouse Rev. Hill stated categorically that 'he never knew any of the children to be chastised inhumanely or with cruelty', which contradicted the testimony of many others.¹⁶⁶ What Rev. Hill's statement reflected was the attitude adopted towards 'social control' but not childrearing at mid-century. In condoning the use of corporal punishment on children, the authorities perceived that the social order was not only maintained but also robustly and daily reinforced.

Moreover, this was not a unique sentiment. Indiscipline among the pupils of the King's Hospital was punished severely.¹⁶⁷ For example, during the 1730s boys were 'whipped out of the gate for lewdness' or sent to the Workhouse not to return. Illustrating the fundamental shift in attitude towards corporal punishment, by mid-century a set of rules clearly defining expected behaviour was agreed and displayed in the school, and by the 1790s boys caught 'mitching' were 'confined for some hours in

¹⁶³ The severity of the physical damage and the excruciating pain inflicted on sailors led the Royal Navy to restrict the use of the 'cat' as a form of punishment. The 'cat' consisted of a round handle about 1½ feet long and about two inches in diameter, covered in a green tweedy material, open at each end. Attached to the handle were nine pieces of thin rope or cord about two feet long and less than ¼ inch in diameter. These were knotted at the loose end then bound with thread, and further knotted at about two inch intervals along the cord towards the handle. There is an extant 'cat' on display in the Scottish United Services Museum, Edinburgh Castle [2004]: Gabrielle Ashford, 'The medical journals of William Burnie M.D., R.N. aboard HMS Tartar, England to South America, 1823-24'.

¹⁶⁴ *Commons Jn. (Irl.)*, 1758, vol. 6, appendices xcvi-ciii, William Bennett.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, appendices xcvi-ciii, Dr Blackall.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, appendices xcvi-ciii, Rev Hill.

¹⁶⁷ Whiteside, *A history of the King's Hospital*, pp 38-9; King's Hospital, Board Minute Book 1726-46, pp 106, 152, 154, 193, 195.

the coal vault, ... deprived of shoes and stockings for three days' and sent to bed without supper for three nights.¹⁶⁸

**Table 3.6: The King's Hospital
Rules to be observ'd by the boys in the New Building, c. 1745-6.**

1. That the boys go into and return from their lodging without crowding or jostling each other.
2. They shall not when in their lodging play among themselves but behave themselves decently and quietly.
3. They shall not hurt or deface any part of the building by wetting the floor, dirtying the walls or cutting and breaking the stair case doors, or windows etc.
4. They shall not use any indecent or abusive language to each other, or to any person whatever on any occasion or strike each other.
5. That four or more monitors shall be appointed for each ward who shall be accountable for the conduct and behaviour of the rest of the boys.
6. When any boys offends against any of the foregoing rules they shall be punished in such manner as the steward shall think proper, and if they do not amend upon correction, they shall be represented to the governor as incorrigible and unfit to be continued in this house.
7. If the monitors do not give the names and faults of the offending boys in writing to the steward, the monitors neglecting to so do shall be deem'd guilty of any faults not complain'd of and be punish'd accordingly.

Source: Ms255/21. King's Hospital archives.

Institutional children were of necessity mainly passive recipients of corporal punishment, though a spirit of resistance and rebellion is occasionally glimpsed. For instance, the boys in Primrose Grange Charter school routinely broke the school's windows 'in revenge for ye masters chastising them',¹⁶⁹ and runaway children were a concern in all institutions throughout the century. In the case of the Charter schools a 'bounty' was placed on their heads making them a valuable commodity and worth recovering. In 1759, Robert Brown and Thomas Moore were paid £1 10s. 4d. for 'seven days searching for children who ran away' from Primrose Grange.¹⁷⁰ Over the course of the summer of 1789, sixteen children in total eloped, seven in one night alone.¹⁷¹ Once they had made their escape, children could travel substantial distances. In August 1798, six girls 'who fled from the Charter school of Castlebar', county Mayo were received into the Ranelagh school in Athlone, county Westmeath.¹⁷² Even

¹⁶⁸ King's Hospital, Board Minute Book 1779-1801, p. 136.

¹⁶⁹ Primrose Grange school, Orders 1757-96, 28 Mar. 1760 (TCD, Ms 5646).

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 19 Jan. 1759; Board Book 1761-75, 1 Jun. 1768 (TCD, Ms 5225).

¹⁷¹ Ibid., Orders 1757-96, 10 Aug. 1789 (TCD, Ms 5646).

¹⁷² Athlone Charter school, Orders 1795-1807, 31 Aug. 1798 (TCD, Ms 5599).

though punishment for the children caught was severe,¹⁷³ the records show it was unsuccessful as a deterrent.

Given that Charter school children were transplanted to schools at a distance from their home and that the Incorporated Society believed they had obtained 'ownership' of the children once they entered their system, it is not surprising that there are few records of formal complaints made by parents about conditions within the schools. During the last quarter of the eighteenth century the reports of John Howard and Sir Jeremiah Fitzpatrick alerted the public to the state of affairs within the schools. Perhaps mindful of public opprobrium, the complaints of Sarah Kempson and Jan Dunn in October 1772 regarding 'the bad treatment given to their children' by the master and mistress of Santry Charter school in Dublin were heard, investigated, and the master and mistress promptly dismissed 'from the service of the society' by the Committee of Fifteen.¹⁷⁴ Similarly, the master and mistress of Strand Charter school also in Dublin were dismissed following complaints from parents.¹⁷⁵ Subsequent to the elopement of the sixteen children from Primrose Grange Charter school in Sligo in 1789, the local committee convened a meeting to question the children on the conduct of the master and usher towards them. Unsurprisingly no information was forthcoming.¹⁷⁶ Unusual though these cases are, they do suggest an increasing recognition by the public that institutions were responsible for the children in their care during the second half of the century, and more importantly, a desire, though embryonic, to properly address their issues.

Nonetheless, there was a continuing unwillingness among institutional governors and staff to put children's welfare first. Complaints alleging mistreatment were effectively silenced by the wide-ranging authority and control exercised by institutional masters and mistresses who, for most of the century remained unaccountable. Institutional children had no avenues to pursue complaints and were reliant on adults, such as nurses and teachers, to plead their cause. All too often these failed at the outset. Having voiced concerns, Dublin Workhouse and Foundling Hospital employees were frequently threatened with punishment and dismissal. For instance, Isabella Craige the spinning mistress was warned that should she bring her

¹⁷³ For example Richard Cutt of Maynooth school was 'whipt' by the master, and Richard Boarden who eloped with him was discharged from the school: Committee Book 1771-4, 15 Jul. 1772 (TCD, Ms 5236).

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 7 Oct., 14 Oct. 1772; 28 Oct. 1772 (TCD, Ms 5236).

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 28 Oct. 1772.

¹⁷⁶ Primrose Grange school, Orders 1757-96, 10 Aug. 1789 (TCD, Ms 5646).

complaint further 'she would be put [in] Bedlam', while Bridget Robinson was discharged because 'she spoke too freely about the affairs of the house'.¹⁷⁷ Clearly instances such as these illustrate not only that children had cause to fear authority, but also that prospective adult fears were similarly silenced.

Childrens' clothing

If the main purpose of charitable institutions established during the century was the maintenance of social order, by the beginning of the nineteenth-century both Protestant and Catholic organisations were made aware of the requirement that they tend fully to children's physical and education needs.¹⁷⁸ For example, problems in respect of clothing, diet and education identified in visitors' reports are illustrative of eighteenth-century institutional governors' preoccupation with the financial implications of charity children's maintenance. Throughout the century each aspect of institutional provision was primarily defined and motivated by its financial cost, and the provision of proper children's clothing and diet provides one manifestation of this.

Contemporary commentators consistently remarked on the inadequate clothing of children in the Dublin Workhouse and Foundling Hospital. Despite the fact that funds for clothes, shoes and socks were apportioned in the accounts, children were required to wear their own meagre patched clothes, though they were frequently thoroughly inadequate to cover them or to provide warmth.¹⁷⁹ By 1741 the annual clothing allowance for the Dublin Workhouse was a paltry 11s. 9d. per person which also included the cost of clothing twenty-two servants as well as the children. Although the *per capita* clothing allowance had increased to £1 7s. 9d. by 1786, there were now fifty-five servants and nurses in the house, all probably included in the clothing allowance.¹⁸⁰ And twelve years later, it had deteriorated; by 1798 the allowance was reduced to £1 6s. 8d. though 171 more children were maintained in the house.¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁷ *Commons Jn. (Irl.)*, 1758, vol. 6, appendices xcvi-xcvii.

¹⁷⁸ Prunty, *Dublin slums*, p. 12.

¹⁷⁹ *Commons Jn. (Irl.)*, 1758, vol. 6, appendices xcvi-ciii.

¹⁸⁰ *Wilson's Almanack*, 1783.

¹⁸¹ This may be due to a revision of the accounting system as there is no indication whether servants were still included in the clothing costs of the institution. *Commons Jn. (Irl.)*, 1743, vol. 4, appendices clxxvii no. ii, clxxx no. iv; *ibid.*, 1792, vol. 15, appendices ccvii-ccxiii.

According to its own records (table 3.7), Charter schoolchildren were in theory adequately clothed, despite the fact that the clothing given to York Street Nursery school in 1772 was regarded as ‘insufficient to last the children for twelve months’.¹⁸²

Table 3.7: Charter school clothing, 1770s	
Boys:	
Coat, waistcoat, breeches, with metal buttons	A cap
Two shirts	Two stocks
Two pairs stockings	Two pairs shoes
Girls:	
Gown	Petticoat
A pair of bodice and stomacher	Two shifts
Two coifs and two bands	Two aprons of blue check linen
Two pairs of stockings	Two pairs of shoes

Source: Kenneth Milne, *The Irish Charter schools, 1730-1830* (Dublin, 1997), pp 64-5; Committee Book 1771-74, 16 Sep. 1772, Committee Book 1771-74, 16 Sep. 1772, 27 Jan., 12 May, 23 Jun., 14 Jul. 1773 (TCD, Ms 5236); Primrose Grange Charter school, Reports 1801-41, 22 Mar. 1802 (TCD, Ms 5647).

Despite recurring reports of the ‘nakedness’ of children in the schools and the governors’ drive for cheapness, the yearly clothing allowance per child in the Charter schools compared favourably with other institutions and was increased in response to rising prices. In October 1769 it rose from £1 to £1 5s., and in 1787 to £1 10s. This was increased again in 1788 to £1 11s. and to £1 11s. 10d. in 1795.¹⁸³ By comparison, the annual clothing allowance per child in the school for Female Orphan Children of Free and Accepted Masons in 1801-2 was £1 11s. 9d.,¹⁸⁴ generally in line with that in the Charter schools. Although the allowance in Athlone Charter school was substantially increased to £2 4s. in 1799, this may have been due to the fact that, as a Ranelagh school, it was funded differently and required a different uniform to the Charter schools.¹⁸⁵

Yet despite issuing complete sets of children’s clothing annually, and to each child as they entered the system,¹⁸⁶ visitors to Charter schools such as Sir Jeremiah Fitzpatrick and local committees consistently complained of the ‘shameful ragged condition’ and ‘near nakedness’¹⁸⁷ of the children. The following examples drawn

¹⁸² Committee Book 1771-74, 16 Sep. 1772 (TCD, Ms 5236).

¹⁸³ Milne, *The Irish Charter schools*, p. 65.

¹⁸⁴ Masonic notes, vol., 6, pp 456-64.

¹⁸⁵ Athlone Charter school, Orders, Inventories etc., 1795-1807, 7 Aug. 1799 (TCD, Ms 5599).

¹⁸⁶ Committee Book 1771-74, 27 Nov. 1771 (TCD, Ms 5236).

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 18 Dec. 1773.

from Primrose Grange Charter school in county Sligo are illustrative of the indifferent attitudes adopted generally throughout the Charter school system towards a child's basic requirement – adequate and warm clothing.

In October 1759, the local committee of Primrose Grange described the children there as being 'almost naked'.¹⁸⁸ Despite claiming to have held their committee meetings at the school the fact that they ordered them to be immediately clothed suggests they were unaware of the true state of the children's clothes and the premises.¹⁸⁹ Thirty years later, as the winter of 1788 approached, the children's clothing was again so bad that the local committee confined them to the house¹⁹⁰ prompting the Rev. Dean Bond to advance the sum of ten pounds for their 'immediate relief'.¹⁹¹ Exhibiting a total disregard for the children in his care, the master, expecting 'daily to be removed', had made no provision for new clothing for the children. Besides the committee's report of late April 'that the children are now fully cloath'd for the year 1789',¹⁹² six months later the children were again confined to the house being 'in so naked a condition that they cannot go to church'.¹⁹³ By September of the following year, the local committee once again appealed for funds for new clothing for the fifty children in their care. Yet it would take three months before they could report somewhat unsatisfactorily, that the children were then 'nearly clothed'.¹⁹⁴

Compounding the lack of clothing, authorisation was first required from the Committee of Fifteen in Dublin to replace clothes and, while the financial cost of clothing the children in their care was the governor's primary consideration, according to the Rev. Bond in Sligo it was a false economy: he noted in 1788 that the poor state of the children's clothing was owing to the 'bad quality of the cloaths'.¹⁹⁵

Even though clothing was supplied to children in Dublin's House of Industry its provision was sometimes directly linked to and an incentive to labour, which reflects contemporary attitudes towards 'deserving' and 'able' poor, including children. For example, during the winter of 1786, shoes and stockings were 'given to the children as a reward for their industry',¹⁹⁶ while any money (over one pound per

¹⁸⁸ Primrose Grange school, Orders 1757-96, 29 Oct. 1759 (TCD, Ms 5646).

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 7 Oct. 1788.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, 21 Apr. 1789.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, 7 Oct. [1789].

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 6 Sep.; 28 Sep.; 29 Sep.; 1 Nov.; 6 Dec. 1790.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 7 Oct. 1788.

¹⁹⁶ *Governors Proceedings Book 1783-87*, 13 Nov. 1786 (NAI, BR/2006/86 (House of Industry) box 2).

day) earned by the children in the Spinning school was ‘appropriated to form a fund for purchasing additional cloathing [sic]’, but not for all – only for ‘the most deserving spinner’.¹⁹⁷

A uniformity of clothing was generally adopted by institutional governors and functioned on a number of levels and, as figures 3.14 and 3.15 illustrate, changed little between 1792 and 1892.



Fig. 3.14: Masonic Orphan boys school uniforms, left 1792, right 1892
Source: *Centenary celebration* (Dublin, 1892).



Fig. 3.15: Masonic Orphan girls school uniforms, left 1792, right 1892
Source: *Centenary celebration* (Dublin, 1892).

While on the one hand a charity was instantly recognisable according to its uniform, for example Dublin’s Blue Coat or Cork’s Green Coat school, on the other, a uniform stripped children of their identity and particular personality, thus in theory making them easier to control. As early as 1717, directions were issued regarding the uniform clothing of children attending Charity schools.¹⁹⁸ Those attending St Mary’s Charity school in Dublin were issued the standard uniform in blue frieze and ‘camblette’

¹⁹⁷ Governors Proceedings Book 1783-87, 25 Aug. 1783 (NAI, BR/2006/86 (House of Industry) box 2).

¹⁹⁸ *An account of Charity-schools: the methods used for erecting charity schools with the rules and orders by which they are governed. A particular account of the London charity schools: with a list of those erected elsewhere in Great Britain & Ireland* (16th ed. London, 1717), p. 35.

outlined in table 3.8 when they first entered the school, then on an annual basis, generally in preparation for their charity sermon.¹⁹⁹

Table 3.8: St Mary's Charity school, Dublin, clothing, 1790s

Table 3.8: St Mary's Charity school, Dublin, clothing, 1790s			
Item:	Cost:		
Boys			
Frieze jacket and waistcoat			
Breeches			
Linen shirt.			
Hat	2s.	6d.	each
Blue yarn stockings	1s.	-	a pair
Worsted stockings		10d.	a paid
Pocket handkerchief	4s.	6d.	dozen
Shoes	3s.	6d.	a pair

Girls

Petticoat and gown in blue 'camblette' and frieze.			
Shift, apron, cap and 'nandyke' of linen and lawn.			
Straw hat	1s.	-	each
Pair of 'shamy' gloves		10d.	a pair
Pocket handkerchief	4s.	6d.	dozen
Blue yarn stockings	1s.	-	a pair
Worsted stockings		10d.	a pair
Shoes	2s.	8d.	a pair

Source: St Mary's Charity school, Minutes, 26 Mar., 26 Jul. 1791; 25 Aug. 1792; 31 May 1794; 20 Jan., 13 Oct. 1798 (NLI, Ms 2664).

Reflecting their training and future employment as domestic servants, children in the Female Orphan House (1790) were issued with:

a jacket and skirt of the green stuff, three bibs and aprons of white linen, two pairs of cuffs of white linen ... one tippet of white linen ... one hat (straw) bound with green ribbon ... one cloak, one pair of gloves.²⁰⁰

Yet it was not until 1800 and following improvements suggested by the ladies committee, that each 'school' in the Dublin Workhouse and Foundling Hospital had its own distinctively marked clothes 'being trimmed with a particular coloured tape'.²⁰¹ The annual practice of supplying each pupil in the King's Hospital school with a suit of clothes and a pair of boots survived until the 1940s.²⁰²

¹⁹⁹ St Mary's Charity school, Minutes, 26 Jul. 1791 (NLI, Ms 2664).

²⁰⁰ M. C. M. Davis, 'The upbringing of children in Ireland 1700-1831 from visual and historical sources' (MPhil thesis, TCD, 1992), pp 205-6; *A brief record of the Female Orphan House from 1790-1892, compiled by Nemo* (Dublin, 1893), p. 15.

²⁰¹ *Rules for conducting the education of the female children in the Foundling Hospital, drawn up by order of the Board of Governors, and by them ordered to be printed* (Dublin, 1800), p. 5.

²⁰² Whiteside, *A history of the King's Hospital*, p. 181.

As a consequence of their position as ‘charity children’, those in institutions were entirely dependent on their respective boards of governors for the provision of what would be considered a basic requirement, adequate clothing. Yet where accounts are available there was a consistent disparity between what was in theory provided and what children actually received. Though clothing was nominally issued, with the exception of the charity schools, it constantly proved inadequate for the children’s use. Despite the fact that all institutions allocated adequate financial resources for clothing the children in their care, the consistency of contemporary reports throughout the eighteenth-century commenting on the lack of shoes, stockings and proper clothing for the children suggests not only continuous financial mismanagement but also highlights the disinclination and disinterest of governors to put, at a basic level, children’s welfare first.

Notwithstanding the fact that the vulnerability of children and the importance of childhood in forming the adult character was publicly recognised from the 1720s,²⁰³ for most of the eighteenth-century there continued to be a general and fundamental lack of interest among institutional governors in pauper children’s welfare. However, the public notoriety – particularly evidenced in the 1758 and 1796 parliamentary reports – engendered by the mismanagement, abuse and infant mortality within the Dublin Workhouse and Foundling Hospital system, brought the issue of appropriate institutional childcare to the fore. The impetus for reform however stopped there. Despite an equally appalling public record of care the abusive conditions and the lack of close supervision within the Charter schools was allowed to continue into the nineteenth-century.²⁰⁴

SECTION III: CARING FOR VULNERABLE CHILDREN

By the mid eighteenth-century there was a growing realisation and acceptance of the importance of children’s healthcare, but there were stark differences not only between the care provided in the domestic environment and that within institutions, but also

²⁰³ Sonnelitter, ‘To unite our temporal and eternal interests’, p. 74.

²⁰⁴ The nineteenth-century saw for the first time official and unbiased reports of conditions within the Charter schools. The Irish Education Commissioners reported scathingly on the schools in 1825, the Endowed Schools Commissioners (the Kildare commission) in 1857-8 and the Rosse Commission in 1881. By 1894 the Charter schools as they were originally known had ceased and a new governing board of the Incorporated Society was established. Schools were closed, amalgamated or moved to new sites and under the new governing body the society continues to provide educational facilities today though without direct management.

between large and small establishments. In this section, healthcare embraces the promotion of health and well-being, the prevention of disease and the care given to sick children in their respective institutions. Vital to maintaining children's health were the diets provided, the facilities available to sick children; the hygiene methods adopted, and crucially the care given to them when ill. Furthermore, these facets of childcare provide a measure of the effectiveness of institutional structures and, significantly, of the attitudes prevailing therein towards children in care.

Addressing institutional children's health and well-being

An appropriate diet is a basic human requirement and is essential to proper growth, but particularly for children in their early years. As Arthur Young noted in his tour of Ireland in 1776 and 1777, and Cullen, Clarkson and Crawford affirm,²⁰⁵ the majority of Irish peasants survived on a basic and unsophisticated diet of potato, oatmeal and milk²⁰⁶ which was replicated in institutional diet sheets. Thus children in institutional care should have received a diet 'as nutritious and varied' as children received at home.²⁰⁷ The many reports of malnourished children indicate that the reality was very different. Thomas Adderley reported in 1758 that children in the Dublin Workhouse and Foundling Hospital were unable to work because they were hungry, and described their bread allowance as pitiable.²⁰⁸ Bridget Robinson, the former Foundation nurse, believed the workhouse diet so insufficient that she bought food for the sick from her own money.²⁰⁹ While parents in the Sligo area threatened to remove children from the Charter schools in June 1761 if their children's diet did not improve.²¹⁰ Clearly the recommended diets, though adequate on paper were not followed, yet in the case of the Charter schools, the Committee of Fifteen was content to do no more than re-issue written reminders to local committees to ensure that children were properly fed.²¹¹ Contemporary reports indicate these were ignored. It is therefore unsurprising

²⁰⁵ Louis M. Cullen, *The emergence of modern Ireland, 1600-1900* (London, 1981); Clarkson and Crawford, *Feast and famine*.

²⁰⁶ Young, *A Tour in Ireland*, Maxwell (ed.).

²⁰⁷ Milne, *The Irish Charter schools*, p. 80.

²⁰⁸ *Complaint of Thomas Adderley of Adderley's spinning school* (Mar., 1758) (Marsh's Library, Z I. 1. 13(49)).

²⁰⁹ *Commons Jn. (Irl.)*, 1758, vol. 6, appendix xcvi, Bridget Robinson, nurse.

²¹⁰ Primrose Grange school, Orders 1757-96, 24 Jun. 1761 (TCD, Ms 5646).

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, 5 Mar 1789; Board Book 1761-75, 12 Nov. 1766 (TCD, Ms 5225).

to note that the financial costs of feeding children in their care consistently exercised the minds of institutional boards throughout the eighteenth-century.

Children's nutritional difficulties began as soon as they entered an institution. In the case of the Dublin Foundling Hospital, which cared for more and younger children than any other institution, the difficulty and expense of locating sufficient wet-nurses meant breast-feeding infants were immediately liable to undernourishment. According to the physician Dr Knox, a wet-nurse there might feed six or more children at one time, which was clearly detrimental to the children's health.²¹² In an attempt to address this situation, the surgeon Dr Blackall suggested spoon-feeding in 1758, as one nurse would be able to feed three children. Furthermore, this method would also prevent 'disorders' passing between children and nurses,²¹³ and thereby improve infant mortality. But there were difficulties and dangers with this method, which were identified by Armstrong, Buchan and Cadogan, and as the number of available wet-nurses declined, infant mortality rates rose inexorably. Nothing was done to remedy the situation. While accepting the limitations of 'house wet-nursing', the 1798 report on the *State of Charitable Institutions* was unwilling to recommend a system of spoon-feeding, and this intransigence in the face of mounting deaths suggests that at the close of the eighteenth-century there was still a widespread acceptance of institutional infant mortality as inevitable.²¹⁴

Throughout the eighteenth-century the cost of provisions fluctuated in accordance with the availability of food, and larger institutional boards were slow to react to those changes.²¹⁵ Because of the smaller numbers of children being cared for, the governors of St Mary's Charity school in Dublin kept a close eye on their food costs and increased the amount spent when prices rose thereby ensuring children received an adequate diet.²¹⁶ By contrast the governors of the Dublin Workhouse and Foundling Hospital were slow to react to market prices and when they did it was often at the expense of the welfare of the children. The 1772 annual dietary allowance per child was 2½d. per day or £3 15s. 8d. per annum,²¹⁷ which was in line with similar

²¹² *Commons Jn. (Irl.)*, 1758, vol. 6, appendix xcvi.

²¹³ *Ibid.*, appendix xcvi-ciii.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 1798, vol. 17, appendix dxxi.

²¹⁵ See Athlone Charter school, Orders 1795-1807, 13 Jan. 1798 (TCD, Ms 5599).

²¹⁶ St Mary's Charity school, Minutes, 25 May 1799 (NLI, Ms 2664).

²¹⁷ Based on feeding 1000 children the total cost for 1772 was £3783 13s. 10d.: *Commons Jn. (Irl.)*, 1773, vol. 9, appendix ccxv, no. xi.

institutions at the time. But as prices rose the governors responded by reducing the allowance to 1¾d. per child per day or £2 16s. 0d. per annum and introduced a new dietary, giving the board a twenty-six per cent saving on the old.²¹⁸

Charter schools' daily *per capita* food allowance increased from 2d. to 2½d., and 3d. for schools near Dublin in March 1787, rising to 3d. for all schools in April 1788. Reacting to rising costs, the daily food expenditure per child per day by 1799 rose to 3½d., reaching 6d. in 1800.²¹⁹ Charter schools were expected to supply some of their own food needs from their gardens and lands. Most did not and despite increased allowances, the food Charter school-children received remained inadequate for their needs,²²⁰ a fact frequently commented on by visitors. Still the trend in institutional dietary provision was upwards, especially in the 1790s. In 1791 the daily per capita food allowance in Dublin's St Mary's Charity school was 3d. rising to 3½d. by 1793. In 1795 it increased to 4d., again in 1799 to 5d. and by 1801 it stood at 6d. per child. By 1803 it was increased to 8½d. per child per day in keeping with price inflation.²²¹ In the Dublin House of Industry, the per capita cost for children in 1797 varied between 2½d. and 3d. per day or £3 16s. 0½d. per annum. The fact that this was 15s. 2½d. more than the adult allowance is significant.²²²

Eighteenth-century institutional children were provided with a bland and monotonous diet, normally consisting of potatoes, oatmeal, stirabout, bread and milk. Meat was served though the frequency varied between institutions. In 1737 King's Hospital children ate meat three times weekly as well as 'pease' and 'cutlin' porridge (table 3.9); the situation was comparable in St Mary's Charity school,²²³ and in the Hibernian Soldiers school (table 3.10) where boys ate bread, milk and vegetables every day and beef three times a week.²²⁴ The diet of Charter schoolchildren consisted mainly of milk and potatoes with meat once a week and 'stirabout'²²⁵ on

²¹⁸ *Commons Jn. (Irl.)*, 1773, vol. 9, appendix ccxv, no. xi.

²¹⁹ Milne, *The Irish Charter schools*, p. 78.

²²⁰ See Primrose Grange school, Orders 1757-96, 4 May 1757, 5 Mar. 1789 (TCD, Ms 5646); Board Book 1761-75, 4 Oct. 1769 (TCD, Ms 5225); Committee Book 1771-4 Longford school, 29 Jul. 1772 (TCD, Ms 5236).

²²¹ St Mary's Charity school, Minutes (NLI Ms 2664).

²²² *Commons Jn. (Irl.)*, 1798, vol. 17, appendix dxxxvii, table no. 2.

²²³ Pease porridge was a form of split pea soup and cutlin, a porridge of wheaten meal and sugar, possibly with dried fruits. These were 'rounds and laps of beef'. St Mary's Charity school, Minutes, 19 Jan. 1793 (NLI, Ms 2664).

²²⁴ Hibernian Society. *Regulations of the Hibernian society for maintaining, educating and apprenticing the orphans and children of soldiers* (Dublin, 1799), p. 52.

²²⁵ Stirabout is a form of thin gruel made with oats, or porridge with water or milk.

Mondays and Fridays.²²⁶ Their overall dietary allowance was increased by a quarter in December 1769 with a recommendation that meat be provided two days a week, but, always with an eye on finances, this was only provided when the cost of meat did not exceed 2d. a pound.²²⁷ Nevertheless, as Milne notes, the Charter school's dietary was found inadequate in a contemporary comparison with those of the House of Industry, the Marine school, the Hibernian schools, and even the Foundling Hospital.²²⁸

Table 3.9: Children's dietary, the King's Hospital school, 1737

<i>Day</i>	<i>Breakfast</i>	<i>Dinner</i>	<i>Supper</i>
Monday	Rice milk with sugar	Pease porridge	Bread and beer
Tuesday	Bread and beer	Beef and broth	Bread, butter and beer
Wednesday	Cutlin porridge with sugar	Potatoes and butter	Bread, butter and beer
Thursday	Bread and beer	Beef and broth	Bread, butter and beer
Friday	Rice milk with sugar	Potatoes and butter or pease	Bread and beer
Saturday	Bread and beer	Cutlin porridge and sugar	Bread, butter and beer
Sunday	Bread and beer	Mutton and broth	New milk and bread

Source: King's Hospital, Board Minute book, 1726-46, p. 179.

Table 3.10: Children's dietary in the Hibernian school, Phoenix Park, Dublin, winter and summer, 1799

<i>Day</i>	<i>Breakfast</i>	<i>Dinner</i>	<i>Supper</i>
Sunday	½ lb. of bread & 1 pint milk	½ lb. of bread, 5 oz. beef with cabbage, greens, parsnips or turnips	½ lb. of bread & 1 pint milk
Monday	Ditto	½ lb. of bread, 1 pint broth thickened with oatmeal, cabbage, leeks, onions, turnips etc.	Ditto
Tuesday	Ditto	Beef etc. as on Sunday	Ditto
Wednesday	Ditto	Broth etc. as on Monday	Ditto
Thursday	Ditto	Beef etc. as on Sunday	Ditto
Friday	Ditto	Broth etc. as on Monday	Ditto
Saturday	Ditto	Potatoes & 1 oz. butter	Ditto
Water to drink at dinner each day.			
N.B. The 5 oz. of beef to each child is on an average but it has been thought necessary to give ½ of the boys 6 oz., ½ 5 oz. and the small boys 4 oz.			

Source: Hibernian Society, *Regulations of the Hibernian society for maintaining, educating and apprenticing the orphans and children of soldiers* (Dublin, 1799), p. 52.

²²⁶ Primrose Grange Charter school, Orders 1757-96, 24 Jun. 1761 (TCD, Ms 5646).

²²⁷ Board Book 1761-75, 4 Oct. 1769 (TCD, Ms 5225).

²²⁸ Milne, *The Irish Charter schools*, p. 78.

Table 3.11: A dietary for the Dublin House of Industry, February 1783

Class	Breakfast	Dinner						
	Every Day	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1st class Industrious or working poor exceeding 13 years	1 quart thick oatmeal pottage, 1 pint buttermilk	12 ozs of bread, 1 lb beef raw without bone, 1 pint beer	12 ozs of bread, 1 quart broth or 2 lbs potatoes, 1 quart broth	12 ozs of bread, 1 quart oatmeal pottage with leeks	2 lbs potatoes, 2 herrings, 1 pint beer	12 ozs of bread, 1 quart oatmeal pottage with leeks	2 lbs potatoes, 2 herrings, 1 pint beer	12 ozs of bread, 1 quart oatmeal pottage with leeks
2nd class Aged or infirm unable to work & children from 6 to 13 years	1½ pint thick oatmeal pottage, 1 pint buttermilk	9 ozs of bread, 12 ozs beef raw without bone, 1 pint beer	9 ozs of bread, 1 quart broth or 1½ lbs potatoes, 1 quart broth	9 ozs of bread, 1 quart oatmeal pottage with leeks	1½ lbs potatoes, 1 herring, 1 pint beer	9 ozs of bread, 1 quart oatmeal pottage with leeks	1½ lbs potatoes, 1 herring, 1 pint beer	9 ozs of bread, 1 quart oatmeal pottage with leeks
3rd class Those unable to work from old age or general infirmity	1 pint thick oatmeal pottage, 1 pint buttermilk to each	7 ozs of bread, eight ozs beef raw without bone, 1 pint beer	7 ozs of bread, 1 quart broth or 1 lb potatoes, 1 quart broth	7 ozs of bread, 1 quart oatmeal pottage with leeks	1 lb potatoes, 1 herring, 1 pint beer	7 ozs of bread, 1 quart oatmeal pottage with leeks	1 lb potatoes, 1 herring, 1 pint beer	7 ozs of bread, 1 quart oatmeal pottage with leeks
4th class Children from 2 years or weaned, to 6 years	1 pint thick pottage, 1 pint buttermilk to each	7 ozs of bread, 1 pint sweet milk	7 ozs of bread, 1 pint broth or 1 lb potatoes, 1 pint broth	7 ozs of bread, 1 quart oatmeal pottage with leeks.	1 lb potatoes, 1 pint buttermilk	7 ozs of bread, 1 quart oatmeal pottage with leeks	1 lb potatoes, 1 pint buttermilk	7 ozs of bread, 1 pint oatmeal pottage with leeks
5th class Stubborn or lazy poor confined to Bridewell	One pound of bread with water each day							

N.B. In the First Class are Comprehended Women with children on their breasts and the nurse tenders of the Wards and of the Infirmaries

Source: NAI, Governors Proceedings Book 1783-87 (BR/2006/86 (House of Industry) Box 2), pp 194-5.

Table 3.12: A dietary for the Dublin House of Industry, 1786

Table 3.12: A dietary for the Dublin House of Industry, 1786								
Class	Breakfast	Dinner						
	<i>Every Day</i>	<i>Sunday</i>	<i>Monday</i>	<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>Wednesday</i>	<i>Thursday</i>	<i>Friday</i>	<i>Saturday</i>
1st class Industrious or working poor exceeding 13 years of age	1 quart oatmeal pottage, 1 pint buttermilk	9 ozs of bread, 1 lb beef raw without bone, 1 pint beer	9 ozs of bread, 1 quart broth, thickened	9 ozs of bread, 1 quart oatmeal pottage	2 lbs of calecannon, 2 ozs butter or 2 lbs potatoes, 1 herring, 1 pint beer	Same as Tuesday	Same as Wednesday	Same as Tuesday or 9 ozs bread, 1 quart pea soup with ginger.
2nd class Aged or infirm unable to work & children from the age of 6 to 13 years	1½ pint oatmeal pottage, 1 pint buttermilk	8 ozs of bread, 12 ounces beef raw without bone, 1 pint beer.	8 ozs of bread, 1 quart broth	8 ozs of bread, 1 quart oatmeal pottage	1½ lbs calecannon, 1½ ounces butter or ½ lb of potatoes with 1 herring, 1 pint beer	Same as Tuesday	Same as Wednesday	Same as Tuesday or 8 ozs of bread, 1½ pint pea soup with ginger
3rd class Children from the age of 2 years to that of 6	8 ozs of bread, ½ pint new milk or 1 pint oatmeal pottage, ½ pint new milk	8 ounces of bread, 4 ounces beef raw without bone, 1 pint beer	8 ozs of bread, 1 pint broth	8 ozs of bread, 1 pint oatmeal pottage	1 lb calecannon, ½ pint beer	Same as Tuesday	Same as Wednesday	Same as Tuesday or 8 ozs of bread, 1 pint pea soup
4th class Stubborn or lazy poor confined to Bridewell	Half allowance of bread with water							
Present allowance to children under two years of age to be continued								

Source: NAI, Governors Proceedings Book 1783-87 (BR/2006/86 (House of Industry), Box 2), pp 397-8.

In theory eighteenth-century institutional children were provided with ‘a cheap, satisfying, nourishing and convenient diet’²²⁹ containing the prerequisites for growth children required. In practice, the bad quality of the food and its poor preparation deprived them of essential vitamins and minerals. As Andrew Williams has identified in his researches of dietaries at Northampton Infirmary in 1744, a city that bears reasonable comparison with eighteenth-century Dublin, it was the length of time children were exposed to these diets that was so debilitating.²³⁰

Young children especially require vitamin A for vision; vitamin B complex for energy absorption; vitamin C for the absorption of iron, the manufacture of healthy connective tissue and prevention of scurvy; and vitamin D for maintaining healthy absorption of calcium and the manufacture of strong bones. But vitamins are notoriously unstable and storage, cooking, drying and salting all reduce or destroy them.²³¹ Taking as an exemplar the summer and winter dietary of children aged six to twelve years in the Dublin Workhouse and Foundling Hospital and the proposed ‘improved’ dietary of 1772 (tables 3.11, 3.12,), including the ‘Analysis of children’s diets aged 6-12 years in the Dublin Workhouse and Foundling Hospital, 1772’ (table 3.13) and the ‘Analysis of proposed changes to children’s diets aged 6-12 years in the Dublin Workhouse and Foundling Hospital, 1772’ (table 3.14) it is clear that if fed from these dietaries, the children suffered from an all-round vitamin deficiency, which held significant implications for their health and well-being.²³²

²²⁹ Robert Bell, *A description of the conditions and manners as well as the moral and political character, education etc. of the peasantry of Ireland such as they were between the years 1780 and 1790* (London, 1804), p. 280.

²³⁰ The work of Dr Williams on children’s dietary provision at Northampton Infirmary allows for a more analogous comparison than London, and a collaborative research project using the data from this thesis and the methodology and software developed at Northampton is currently in progress: see Andrew Williams, ‘Eighteenth-century child health care in a Northampton infirmary: a provincial English hospital’ in *Family and Community History*, 10/2 (Nov., 2007), pp 153-66; Williams, ‘Four candles. Original perspectives and insights into 18th century hospital child healthcare’, *Archives of Diseases in Childhood* (2007), pp 75-9 [<http://adc.bmj.com/>]; G. Denny, P. Sundvall, S. J. Thornton, J. Reinartz, A. N. Williams, ‘Historical and contemporary perspectives on children’s diets: is choice always in the patients’ best interest?’ in <http://mh.bmj.com> (12 May 2010). I am extremely grateful to Dr Williams for sharing his insight and research with me.

²³¹ Clarkson and Crawford, *Feast and famine*, p. 80.

²³² I am extremely grateful to Valerie Kelly, dietician to Children’s University Hospital, Temple Street, Dublin for assistance with this analysis.

Table 3.13: Reconstruction of vitamin analysis of children's diets aged 6-12 years in the Dublin Workhouse and Foundling Hospital, 1772

Summer diet			
Nutrient	Amount provided/day	Amount required/day for 6-12 year old	Mainly provided by
Calories (kcal)	1550	1620-2220	
Protein (grams)	99.5*	19.7 – 42.2	White bread, beef, broth ²³³ buttermilk
Calcium (mg)	1180	450-1000	Buttermilk, white bread
Iron (mg)	10.5	6.1-14.8	White bread, broth and beef
Vitamin A (micrograms)	53	400-600	Buttermilk, whole milk
Vitamin B1 (mg)	1.25	0.62-0.89	White bread
Vitamin B2 (mg)	1.75	0.8-1.2	Buttermilk
Vitamin B6 (mg)	1.02	0.9-1.2	Buttermilk, broth, beef, white bread
Vitamin B12 (micrograms)	5.4	0.8-1.2	Broth and beef
Vitamin C (mg)	19	30-35	Broth and milk
Winter diet			
Calories (kcal)	1410	1620-2220	
Protein (grams)	89.1*	19.7 – 42.2	Beef, broth, bread, milk
Calcium (mg)	987	450-1000	Milk, buttermilk
Iron (mg)	8.97	6.1-14.8	White bread, broth, beef
Vitamin A (micrograms)	126	400-600	Whole milk
Vitamin B1 (mg)	1.31	0.62-0.89	Potatoes, white bread
Vitamin B2 (mg)	1.81	0.8-1.2	Whole milk, buttermilk
Vitamin B6 (mg)	1.68	0.9-1.2	Potatoes
Vitamin B12 (micrograms)	7.7	0.8-1.2	Whole milk, broth
Vitamin C (mg)	35#	30-35	Potatoes, broth
* The recipe used for broth in this analysis is much higher in protein than originally, making this result falsely elevated.			
# About half the vitamin C came from the potatoes and half from the broth. Again the broth recipe used is higher in vitamin C than that of the Foundling hospital so the actual intake of vitamin C was probably about 25mg/day.			

Source: *Commons Jn. (Irl.)*, 1773, vol. 9, appendix ccxiv, table no x.

²³³ It was stipulated that 'the broth to be made of the water in which their beef was on the preceding day boiled, strengthened by stewing the bones of the beef and a few onions in it and thickened with rice in the proportion of half an ounce to a pint for each child, or an ounce of oatmeal whichever may appear to be most economical': *Commons Jn. (Irl.)*, 1773, vol. 9, appendix ccxiv, table no x.

Table 3.14: Reconstruction of vitamin analysis of proposed changes to children's diets aged 6-12 years in the Dublin Workhouse and Foundling Hospital, 1772

Nutrient	Amount provided per day	Amount required/day for 6-12 year old	Mainly provided by
Calories (kcal)	1652	1620-2220	
Protein (grams)	93.9*	19.7 – 42.2	Beef, white bread, broth
Calcium (mg)	1021	450-1000	Whole milk, white bread
Iron (mg)	10.4	6.1-14.8	White bread, broth
Vitamin A (micrograms)	190	400-600	Whole milk
Vitamin B1 (mg)	1.14	0.62-0.89	White bread
Vitamin B2 (mg)	1.79	0.8-1.2	Whole milk
Vitamin B6 (mg)	1.06	0.9-1.2	Whole milk, broth, white bread, beef
Vitamin B12 (micrograms)	8.8	0.8-1.2	Whole milk, broth
Vitamin C (mg)	23**	30-35	Broth, whole milk
** Again the broth recipe used in this calculation contributes a lot of the vitamin C which in reality it wouldn't have.			

Source: *Commons Jn. (Irl.)*, 1773, vol. 9, appendix ccxiii, table no. ix.

From tables 3.13 and 3.14, it is clear that all of the diets were deficient in vitamin C, which was essential in preventing scurvy. The extra potatoes in the winter diet provided more vitamin C, but the changes proposed in 1772 (tables 3.16 and 3.18) reduced the amount of potatoes and hence the children's intake of vitamin C was further reduced. A lack of vitamin A or retinol may cause night blindness, but the more critical outcome was a reduction in a child's ability to fight infection. Each of the above diets, but particularly the summer diet, were low in vitamin A. The children had more vitamin A in winter than summer because buttermilk is much lower in fat and calories and consequently vitamin A than whole milk and they received more buttermilk in summer. The proposed changes to the diet involved more whole milk and thus were a nutritional improvement for the children. The white bread given in addition to milk and meat ensured the diets were adequate for B vitamins. But again buttermilk is lower in vitamin B12 than whole milk so summer diets were lower in B12 though still adequate. Generally children received enough calcium from their milk and buttermilk while their iron intake was sufficient provided they ate

wholesome beef and broth. The calories provided were almost adequate for a six year-old but not for a twelve year-old.

Table 3.15: Dietary of workhouse children 6 to 12 years, 1772

	<i>Summer</i>			<i>Winter</i>		
Day	Breakfast	Dinner	Supper	Breakfast	Dinner	Supper
Sunday Tuesday Thursday	¼ lb. bread, ½ pint buttermilk	¼ lb. bread, ½ lb. beef	¼ lb. bread, ½ pint buttermilk	4 ozs oatmeal in stirabout, ½ pint milk	12 ozs potatoes, ½ lb. beef	¼ lb. bread, ½ pint buttermilk
Monday Wednesday Friday	Same	¼ lb. bread, 1 pint broth	Same	Same	¼ lb. bread, 1 pint broth	Same
Saturday	Same	¼ lb. bread, ½ pint new milk	Same	Same	1 lb. potatoes, ½ pint new milk	Same

Note: The broth to be made of the water in which their beef was on the preceding day boiled, strengthened by stewing the bones of the beef and a few onions in it and thickened with rice in the proportion of half an ounce to a pint for each child, or an ounce of oatmeal whichever may appear to be most economical.

Source: *Commons Jn. (Irl.)*, 1773, vol. 9, appendix ccxiv, table no. x.

Table 3.16: Proposed dietary of workhouse children 6 to 12 years, 1772²³⁴

Day	Breakfast	Dinner	Supper
Sunday Tuesday Thursday	¼ lb. bread, ½ pint milk	½ lb. beef, ¼ lb. bread, 1 pint broth	¼ lb. bread, ½ pint milk
Monday Friday	Same	Buttered turnips, ¼ lb. bread, ½ pint beer	2 ounces rice in porridge, sweetened, ¼ lb. bread
Wednesday Sunday	Same	¼ lb. oatmeal in stirabout, ½ pint milk	¼ lb. bread, 1 ounce butter, ½ pint beer.

Note: The milk is desired to be new and boiled in winter, and in summer ¾ new milk and ¼ buttermilk, not boiled.

When turnips are not to be got, potatoes may be used and sometimes turnips and parsnips or potatoes according to the discretion of the Treasurer.

Source: *Commons Jn. (Irl.)*, 1773, vol. 9, appendix ccxiii, table no. ix.

²³⁴ When they proposed cutting the children's diets the governors produced the following figures based on feeding 1000 children: the total cost of the old dietary was £3783 13s. 10d. per annum (cost per child £3 15s. 8d. per annum or 2½d. per child per day) and the proposed new dietary was costed at £2803 17s. 0d. per annum (cost per child £2 16s. per annum or circa 1¼ d. per child per day) allowing for the not insubstantial saving of £980 15s. 3½d or 26% on the cost of the old dietary: *Commons Jn. (Irl.)*, 1773, vol. 9, appendix ccxv, no xi.

Table 3.17: Dietary of Workhouse children over 12 years of age, 1772

	<i>Summer</i>			<i>Winter</i>		
Day	Breakfast	Dinner	Supper	Breakfast	Dinner	Supper
Sun. Tues. Thur.	5½ ozs bread, 1 pint beer	1 lb. beef, ½ lb. bread, 1 pint beer	5½ ozs bread, 1 pint beer	5½ ozs bread, 1 pint beer	1 lb. beef, 1½ lb. potatoes, 1 pint beer	5½ ozs bread, 1 pint beer
Mon. Wed. Fri.	Same	½ lb. bread with broth	Same	Same	½ lb. of bread with broth	Same
Sat.	Same	½ lb. bread, ¼ lb. ch[ees], 1 pint beer	Same	Same	½ lb. of b[rea]d, ¼ lb. of ch[ees], 1 pint beer	Same

Prisoners in Bridewell to get 1 lb. bread, 1 quart of beer to each every day and on the broth days, 1 pint broth extraordinary, thickened with oatmeal.

The daily provision of each servant to be 1 lb. bread, 1 lb. beef, ¼ lb. butter and 3 pints beer.

Source: *Commons Jn. (Irl.)*, 1773, vol. 9, appendix ccxiv, table no. x.

Table 3.18: Proposed dietary for Workhouse children over 12 years of age, 1772

Day	Breakfast	Dinner	Supper
Sunday Tuesday Thursday	½ lb. bread, ½ pint beer	1 lb. beef, 1 quart broth, ½ lb. bread	½ lb. bread, 1 pint beer
Monday Friday	Same	½ lb. bread, cheese, 1 pint beer	Rice porridge, ½ lb. bread
Wednesday Saturday	Same	½ lb. oatmeal in stirabout, 1 pint milk	½ lb. bread, 2 oz. butter, 1 pint beer

Note: The milk is desired to be new and boiled in winter, and in summer ⅔ new milk and ⅓ buttermilk, not boiled.

When turnips are not to be got, potatoes may be used and sometimes turnips and parsnips or potatoes according to the discretion of the Treasurer.

Source: *Commons J. (Irl.)*, 1773, vol. 9, appendix ccxiii, table no. ix.

By 1797 a special dietary was drawn up to cater for persons in the Dublin House of Industry Asylum. Although adults were accommodated here, children were also, but significantly they were separated and dieted apart from the adults. The average cost per child *per annum* then was £3 16s. 0½d. while the average cost per adult *per annum* was £3 0s. 10d., a significant and not obvious difference of 15s. 2½d.

Table 3.19: Dietary for the asylums, Dublin House of Industry, 1797								
<i>Day</i>	<i>Breakfast</i>	<i>cost</i>	<i>Dinner</i>	<i>cost</i>	<i>Supper</i>	<i>cost</i>	<i>Daily cost</i>	<i>Observations</i>
Sun.	2 lbs Stirabout, 1 pint buttermilk	$\frac{3}{4}d.$	3 pints soup made with 3 ozs beef boiled into pulp with oat & barley meal, peas, vegetables, spices, 4 ozs bread	$1\frac{1}{2}d.$	3 ozs Bread, 1 pint buttermilk	$\frac{3}{4}d.$	$3d.$	2 lbs 7 ozs solids, 5 pints fluids
Mon.	Same	$\frac{3}{4}d.$	1 quart Oatmeal pottage, spiced, 8 ozs bread	$1d.$	Same	$\frac{3}{4}d.$	$2\frac{1}{2}d.$	2 lbs 11 ozs solids, 2 quarts fluids
Tues.	Same	$\frac{3}{4}d.$	As Sunday	$1\frac{1}{2}d.$	Same	$\frac{3}{4}d.$	$3d.$	As Sunday
Wed.	Same	$\frac{3}{4}d.$	3 lbs potatoes, 1 quart buttermilk	$1d.$	Same	$\frac{3}{4}d.$	$2\frac{1}{2}d.$	5 lbs 3 ozs solids, 2 quarts fluids
Thur.	Same	$\frac{3}{4}d.$	As Sunday	$1\frac{1}{2}d.$	Same	$\frac{3}{4}d.$	$3d.$	As Sunday
Fri.	Same	$\frac{3}{4}d.$	3 lbs Calecannon, 1 pint buttermilk	$1\frac{1}{4}d.$	Same	$\frac{3}{4}d.$	$2\frac{3}{4}d.$	5 lbs 3 ozs solids, 3 pints fluids
Sat.	Same	$\frac{3}{4}d.$	8 ozs bread, 1 quart buttermilk	$1d.$	Same	$\frac{3}{4}d.$	$2\frac{1}{2}d.$	As Monday

Source: *Commons Jn. (Irl.)*, 1798, vol. 17, appendix dxxxvii, table no. 2.

Whether because of financial considerations or a genuine recognition of children's different requirements it is unclear, but most institutions apportioned food according to age. The smallest/youngest boys in the Hibernian school received four ounces of beef, the biggest/oldest, six.²³⁵ Workhouse children from six to twelve years of age were dieted slightly differently from those over twelve, the proportions were larger for older children.²³⁶ Children in Dublin's House of Industry in 1783 were divided into three classes, from two years or weaned to six (fourth class); from

²³⁵ Hibernian Society. *Regulations of the Hibernian society for maintaining, educating and apprenticing the orphans and children of soldiers* (Dublin, 1799), p. 52.

²³⁶ *Commons Jn (Irl.)*, 1773, vol. 9, appendix ccxiii-ccxiv.

six to thirteen years (second class) and those over thirteen (first class).²³⁷ So, as the institutional dietaries discussed above indicate by the closing decades of the eighteenth-century there was a clear recognition of the specific dietary needs of growing children. Although it was the focus of consistent and persistent criticism, the quality and quantity of food children received continually fell short of the ideal and therefore proved completely inadequate for children's needs. In particular, the food children in the Dublin Workhouse and Foundling Hospital received (especially the stirabout) was so substandard it was singled out for criticism again and again in parliamentary committee inquiries throughout the century. The Workhouse nurses Bridget Robinson and Elinor Sutherland testified in 1758 that it was 'ill made and thin', had a 'bad taste and colour', was frequently 'full of lumps' with 'clocks and other dirt in it'.²³⁸ Likewise the children's bread was not only of inferior quality but also under the recommended weight.

Given that officially children's dietary allowances set by larger institutions were in many ways sufficient for proper growth, the unhealthy state of children so frequently remarked on by visitors is evidence that the food provided was wanting in both quality and quantity. This suggests that corruption and false accounting was endemic in the Workhouse and Charter schools.²³⁹ Yet despite repeated inquiries, reports and complaints, governors of both institutions failed to react in any meaningful manner beneficial to the children.

By mid-century the importance of hygiene and cleanliness, particularly within institutions, to the health and well-being of children was recognised, and it featured prominently in the works of medical authors such as Tissot and Buchan. The health and demeanour of a child affected their suitability for employment, a fact institutional governors were well aware of. Employers were reluctant to accept weak or sickly children as potential servants or apprentices. As the century progressed, the reputation of children apprenticed from the larger institutions such as the workhouses and Charter schools plummeted, yet little remedial action was taken. In contrast, by the close of the century the demand for servants from the closely monitored Female Orphan House in Dublin outstripped supply.

²³⁷ Governors Proceedings Book 1783-87, pp 194-5, pp 397-8 (NAI, BR/2006/86 (House of Industry) box 2).

²³⁸ 'Clocks' are black beetles.

²³⁹ For example see *Commons Jn. (Irl.)*, 1758, vol. 6, 'Report from the committee appointed to enquire into the state and management of the fund of the workhouse of the city of Dublin and into the conduct of the officers and servants of the said house for ten years last past', appendix xcvi-ciii.

Still, as the 'Instructions to nurses' employed by the King's Hospital in 1749 and outlined in table 3.20 indicates, there was an awareness by mid-century of the need to maintain both cleanliness and order among the children.

**Table 3.20: The King's Hospital
Instructions to nurses c. 1749**

1. To comb and keep the children clean.
2. To make their shirts and bands.
3. To mend their cloaths, linens, stockings and sheets.
4. To wash all their linen and stockings.
5. To wash their rooms once a quarter or as often as occasion requires.
6. To wash under their beds twice a week.
7. And in general to keep their wards and beddings clean and sweet.
8. To attend the boys at their meals and serve them there in a clean neat and orderly manner.
9. To scour the hall tables and forms.
10. To return to the steward the names of such boys as behave unruly and do not keep good hours in-going to bed.
11. To wash the chapel and gallery in summer by turns.
12. To keep the necessary house clean by turns.
13. To wash the officers linen.
14. To light their fires, and their rooms to clean as they shall be appointed by the housekeeper.
15. To obey the housekeeper's orders and the several rules hung up in each of the wards.

Source: Ms 255/21, King's Hospital archive.

Since conditions such as scald head (ringworm) were endemic, directions such as these occur throughout the century, though mainly in the smaller establishments. As early as 1675, four and a half dozen combs were purchased at a cost of 6s. 4d. for the use of the children in the King's Hospital school.²⁴⁰ Similarly, nurses employed by the Hibernian Marine Society in 1775 were instructed not only to keep the children's hair clean and 'well comb'd',²⁴¹ but particularly to wash the hands and faces of the children every morning and their feet once a fortnight.²⁴² As well as having hair cut on a regular basis at a cost of 2d. per child, by 1799 one dozen horn combs, which cost 1s. 6d., were routinely purchased for the use of children in St Mary's Charity school, and in preparation for their Charity sermons, one pound of hair powder (9d.) was purchased as well.²⁴³ In the much larger Dublin Workhouse and Foundling

²⁴⁰ Ms 1, King's Hospital, Account Book, 1669-1739.

²⁴¹ Hibernian Marine Society. *By-laws agreed to and confirmed by the Hibernian Society, according to the rules prescribed by their charter* (Dublin 1775), p. 20.

²⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 28.

²⁴³ St Mary's Charity school, Minutes, 5 Jan., 2 Feb., 27 Jul., 2 Dec., 28 Dec. 1799 (NLI, Ms 2664).

Hospital however, a specific injunction to cleanliness was not forthcoming until 1800 when the housekeeper was directed to:

frequently examine the heads of six or eight children taken at hazard from the different schools, immediately after dinner, to see they are well combed; also, she to examine their feet to see they are kept perfectly clean.²⁴⁴

Even though measures were taken to keep children's hair clean and tidy, there was a significant risk of cross contamination unless there were combs for each individual child, which clearly there were not.

If hygiene measures were of importance to the Incorporated Society members in Dublin, schoolmasters and mistresses more often than not ignored their instructions, with the result that persistent skin diseases, illness and infections were a recurring problem among Charter school children.²⁴⁵ Such clothes as the children wore were rarely washed.²⁴⁶ Moreover as John Howard noted during one tour of the schools,²⁴⁷ the soap allowance was inadequate and was 'an inducement to preserve the urine for washing the children's linen'.²⁴⁸ Clearly no hygiene standards were being observed at Castlebar school when Sir Jeremiah Fitzpatrick visited it in 1787. There he found the children 'almost alive with vermin' which, within a few minutes of his entering the school, 'attached themselves to his own person'.²⁴⁹ The children in Killough school, county Down were in such a bad state of health the school was ordered closed in 1771.²⁵⁰ Despite this indictment of conditions there, the governors did not see fit to implement the order to close the school until 1774. So, even though local committees sent regular and usually favourable reports of the children in their care to Dublin, the reality was manifestly different.

Since the deplorable state and the unhealthy condition of children in the Charter schools was public knowledge by the 1780s, it is difficult to rationalize the criteria or justification for the extra payments repeatedly made to masters and mistresses of the schools for their particular care and attention paid to children. One

²⁴⁴ Foundling Hospital Dublin. *Rules for conducting the education of the female children in the Foundling Hospital. Drawn up by order of the Board of Governors, and by them ordered to be printed* (Dublin 1800), p. 8.

²⁴⁵ For example see Committee Book 1771-74, 19 Jan. 1774 (TCD, Ms 5236).

²⁴⁶ It was stipulated that two sets of clothes should be issued to the children so that one could be washed: Committee Book 1771-74, 17 Mar. 1773 [Nursery school] (TCD, Ms 5236).

²⁴⁷ Howard investigated the schools in 1782, 1784, 1787 and 1788.

²⁴⁸ *Report on Protestant Charter Schools*, pp dcccxv-dcccxvi cited in MacDonagh, *The Inspector General*, p. 94.

²⁴⁹ Robbins, *The lost children*, p. 84.

²⁵⁰ Board Book, 1761-75, Killough school, 7 Aug. 1771 (TCD, Ms 5225).

can only conclude that accountability for the health and well-being of the children in their care was not a priority at local or national level. This is the implication of the decision of the Committee of Fifteen, which had criticised the condition of children sent to Dublin from Longford school on the 19 May 1773, to vote 'eight pounds, a premium to him [the master] and the mistress for their great tenderness and care of the children and school during the year ended the said 10th of May last'.²⁵¹ Clearly the governor's sense of responsibility lay with their employees and not with the children.

Children's healthcare in the institutional environment

The deficiencies in institutional diets, inadequate clothing, lack of hygiene and general lack of care had the potential to inflict seriously detrimental effects on children's health and well-being. Even though the eighteenth-century witnessed an emerging consciousness of paediatrics and a growing recognition of the importance of appropriate healthcare for children generally, this is barely evident in Irish institutions. As in elite, middling and peasant families, when sick, institutional children were treated 'within the family',²⁵² that is, their institution. The care offered was significantly different however. Overwhelmingly the healthcare provided to institutional children, was not only minimal but also deficient to the point of negligence. Commentators both inside and outside the system raised serious concerns throughout the century, but the failure to attend to these concerns highlights the inability of the state to rise to the challenge of providing proper care for children.

A properly constructed infirmary was crucial to the effectiveness of the healthcare children received in institutions. Throughout the century all institutions were aware of the need to provide separate accommodation for sick children, and most had an infirmary incorporated within their buildings. Though the King's Hospital originally opened in 1670, the first steps to establish an infirmary for children therein was not provided by the governors until 1706 when it was resolved that a suitable room for one should be identified. However, it was not until 1717 that a room was fitted out and a nurse employed to care for sick children. The fact that a

²⁵¹ Committee Book 1771-74, 2 Jun. 1773 (TCD, Ms 5236).

²⁵² The seventeenth-century terminology 'The Family', used to refer to all those in the care of and employed in the Dublin Workhouse and Foundling Hospital is utilised in *Commons Jn. (Irl.)*, 1797, vol. 17, appendix cclxiii, table no. xviii.

total of seven pupils died in that year may have galvanised the governors into action.²⁵³

In general, institutional infirmaries were small and not designed to facilitate the recovery of sick children; most lacked proper ventilation and at times even glass in the windows, which contravened the advice of medical authors such as Cadogan, Armstrong and Buchan. Such conditions compromised the children's ability to recover or die in peace. Like the infirmary in the Incorporated Society's newly built Nursery school on Milltown Road in Dublin (1772),²⁵⁴ the infirmary of the Dublin Workhouse and Foundling Hospital was in the upper part of the house, 'under the slates', which meant it was prone to become very cold in winter and extremely hot in summer. Moreover, children, both sick and healthy were expected to sleep two and even three to a bed or cradle, but in reality it could be more. More seriously, the infirmary was adjacent to the room where the bodies of dead children were stored until burial.²⁵⁵ It is not surprising that the physician Dr Knox who attended the establishment throughout 1757, found all the children in an extremely unhealthy state.²⁵⁶

As the governors of the Dublin House of Industry did not accept responsibility for the maintenance of children until the 1780s, no specific apartments were designed for their use in the House. At the outset sick children were generally accommodated within the adult infirmary, however by 1785 they were accommodated separately, though in an un-floored and unheated 'shed'.²⁵⁷ St Mary's Charity school usually returned children to their homes when sick, but made financial contributions to parents towards their care.²⁵⁸

Each Charter school also had an allocated infirmary, generally containing one or two beds. Typical of the Charter schools, Arklow (which catered for twenty boys and twenty girls) at its opening in 1748 contained both a male and female infirmary. Initially each infirmary was adequately furnished with a bedstead, bed-tick and bolster, a pair of blankets, rug, a pair of sheets, a pewter [chamber] pot and oak table

²⁵³ Board Minutes 1674-1746, 7 Jun. 1706, 21 Jun. 1717 (The King's Hospital).

²⁵⁴ Committee Book 1771-74, 28 Oct. 1772 (TCD, Ms 5236).

²⁵⁵ According to the porter William Kellet, children's dead bodies were stored there until enough were gathered for a mass burial: *Commons Jn. (Irl.)*, 1797, vol. 17, appendix xcvi-ciii.

²⁵⁶ Dr Knox was employed as physician to the Dublin Workhouse and Foundling Hospital from 10 May 1757: *ibid.*, 1758, vol. 6, appendix xcvi.

²⁵⁷ Governors Proceedings Book 1783-87, 12 Dec. 1785 (NAI, BR/2006/86 (House of Industry) box 2).

²⁵⁸ For example see St Mary's Charity school, Minutes, 25 Aug. 1792, Mary Nevin; 27 Apr., 31 Aug. 1799, William Bomford (NLI, Ms 2664).

and chair.²⁵⁹ As the years progressed Charter school infirmaries fell into varying states of disrepair. Those in Primrose Grange outside Sligo were built in 1755 and were in need of alteration and repair by 1759 as they were ‘not as fit for the reception of sick children as they ought to be’.²⁶⁰ It is interesting to note that the attending apothecary was called on to supervise the rebuilding.²⁶¹ Longford Charter school’s infirmary was used for purposes other than tending to sick children though these are not specified²⁶² and when he visited Trim Charter school in 1786, Sir Jeremiah Fitzpatrick found twelve children ill of a fever in ‘a sort of stable or outhouse’.²⁶³ The lack of attention to and the speed with which the Charter school infirmaries fell into disrepair alongside the inadequate provision within other institutions, is consistent with the conclusion that the treatment and care of sick children was not a priority for eighteenth-century institutional governors.

The lack of care and attention to the needs of sick children was also reflected in the paucity and quality of nursing staff. Despite the increased numbers of children admitted to the Dublin Workhouse and Foundling Hospital, and the continuing and damning reports of their ill-health, only two nurses, both of them over sixty years of age, were employed in 1757-58 to tend to sixty ailing children.²⁶⁴ The fact that the nurses were criticised for their dirt and filth and the infirmary for being ‘extremely dirty and offensive’²⁶⁵ highlights how exposed already vulnerable children were to further disease and contagion.²⁶⁶ Allied to this was the indifference of the nurses towards their charges. In addressing a House of Commons committee, Dr Knox, the attending physician recalled that he had:

attended one of the children in the Green Nursery [infants] who was ill of a fever, and thought the child was likely to do very well; that in a few days after, when he visited this child, he found it in a languid, dying condition; [he] was surprised at this change, enquired of the nurse whether it had got a flux since he had been there, for it sometimes happened upon the going off of a fever a lax ensued; was answered not; stript down the cloaths, found the child lying in its dirt and filth, which occasioned a mortification in the backside of the child,

²⁵⁹ Arklow school, Roll & Account Book, 1748, pp 4-5 (TCD, Ms 5598).

²⁶⁰ Primrose Grange school, Orders 1757-96, 7 Feb. 1759 (TCD, Ms 5646).

²⁶¹ Ibid.

²⁶² Committee Book 1771-74, 21 Jul. 1773 (TCD, Ms 5236).

²⁶³ Dorothea Casserley, ‘Primary Education in Ireland in the 18th Century, with an introductory sketch of Education in Ireland previous to the 18th Century’ (MA Thesis, U.C.D. [n.d.]).

²⁶⁴ *Commons Jn. (Irl.)*, 1758, vol. 6, appendix xcvi, Dr Knox, physician.

²⁶⁵ Ibid., appendices xcvi-xcvii, Dr Blackall, surgeon.

²⁶⁶ Ibid., appendix xcvi.

which eat into the body of which the child died that night or the next morning.²⁶⁷

Consistent with Dr Knox's claims of neglect, the carpenter also reported the deaths of children in the infirmary to the committee. Called in to fix beds in the Infant Nursery, he surprised the nurses still in bed and asleep at six a.m.; they were unaware that five children in their care lay dead in their cradles.²⁶⁸

Moreover, 'professional' medical assistance in the Dublin Workhouse and Foundling Hospital remained deficient. Mr Ewing the spinning master testified to a parliamentary committee in 1758 that he 'could not depend upon the surgeon and his apprentice to take care of the boys employed by him' when they were ill; he made use of his own apothecary, paying 'him out of his pocket without any expense to the house'.²⁶⁹ Yet even though infant mortality at the Foundling Hospital was by then at an alarming level (table 3.21 and figure 3.16), it was claimed as late as 1797 that the surgeon or his assistant attended the children irregularly, the physician never, and the apothecary 'very seldom',²⁷⁰

The improvements in medicine and a greater awareness of and treatments for children's illnesses notwithstanding, by the closing decades of the eighteenth-century the only medicine given to ailing children in the Dublin Foundling Hospital was a 'composing bottle', probably filled with a sedative.

Table 3.21: Dublin Workhouse and Foundling Hospital, mortality 1785-97

Year	Total yearly admissions	Total deaths, Infant Nursery & Infirmary	As a %
1785	1900	359	19%
1786	2150	541	25%
1787	2051	409	20%
1788	2144	677	31%
1789	2134	925	43%
1790	2187	945	43%
1791	2192	1205	55%
1792	1998	1281	64%
1793	2205	1287	58%
1794	2253	1285	57%
1795	2101	1470	67%
1796	2037	1279	63%
1797	1922	1457	76%

Source: *Commons Jn. (Irl.)*, 1798, vol. 17, appendix dxvii.

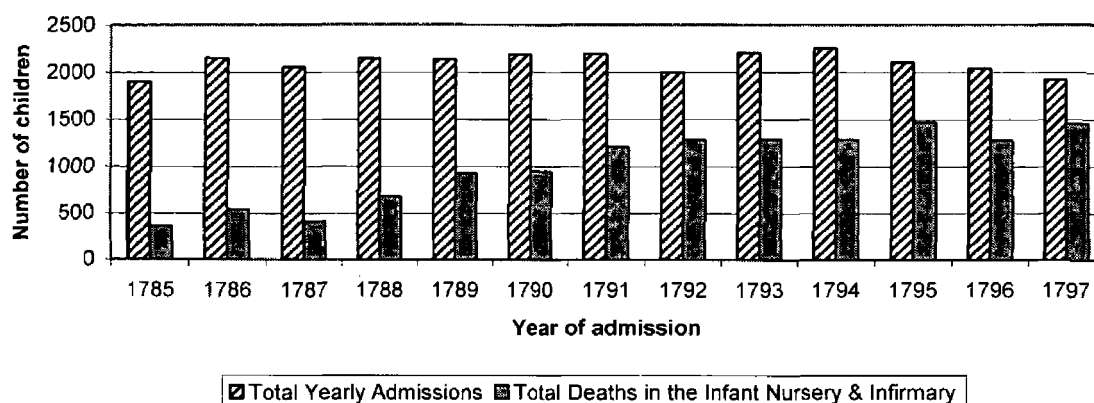
²⁶⁷ *Commons Jn. (Irl.)*, 1758, vol. 6, appendix xcvi, Dr Knox, physician.

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, James Tynan, carpenter.

²⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, appendix cii.

²⁷⁰ The surgeon was Philip Woodroffe, the physician Dr William Harvey and the apothecary James Shaughnisy: *ibid.*, 1797, vol. 17, appendix ccxliii, 3 May 1797.

Fig. 3.16: Dublin Foundling Hospital, admissions and mortality, 1785-97



Source: *Commons Jn. (Irl.)*, 1798, vol. 17, appendix dxvii.

As the number of children in individual Charter schools was smaller, on average forty to fifty children in each school, no specific nursing staff were employed. Caring for sick children was deemed part of the mistress's and at times the master's duties, 'nurse tenders' were sometimes employed during times of crisis.²⁷¹ From their establishment in 1733, individual schools relied on the experience and services of the local physician and apothecary who were expected to give their services to the Charter schools free, though payments were allowed for medicines supplied.²⁷² Despite their attempts to confine admission to healthy children, the records note countless visits of local apothecaries to attend sick children. As these visits were without payment, the time and care given to the sick child was limited. It was only towards the latter half of the eighteenth-century, and in line with the increased 'professionalisation' of medicine, that the Committee of Fifteen reluctantly bowed to pressure and began to pay both physicians and apothecaries to attend the children.²⁷³ As such the medical care and attention given children should have improved significantly. Contemporary reports indicate that they did not.

In contrast to larger institutions, by the late eighteenth-century the governors of St Mary's Charity school were proactive in caring for sick pupils though not on their premises. Given the contagious nature of many complaints this was a sensible option. A system of medical supervision and reporting between parent/home and

²⁷¹ For example, during an outbreak of 'the itch' Primrose Grange school paid Anne Waters the not insubstantial sum of £4 6s.10d. to attend sick children in the infirmary over a period of seventeen weeks and two days in July 1759: Primrose Grange school, Orders 1757-96, 9 Jul. 1759 (TCD, Ms 5646).

²⁷² *Ibid.*, 20 Apr. 1763.

²⁷³ For example see Committee Book 1771-74, 31 Mar. 21 Apr. 1773 re Monastereven school (TCD, Ms 5236).

school was maintained throughout the pupil's illness.²⁷⁴ Prior to their returning to school a doctor certified the child's good health which helped prevent the spread of infections. For example, when Dr Saunders inspected William Bumford and Mary Acheson and 'found them improper objects for [the] institution', both were summarily dismissed in December 1799.²⁷⁵ Mary's case however was reconsidered, and she was readmitted to the school as healthy in August 1800.²⁷⁶ If a child's complaint was deemed beyond the skills of the attending physician they were taken by chair to Mercer's or Steevens' hospitals accompanied by a servant.²⁷⁷ The attitude adopted by the governors of St Mary's Charity school towards sick children in their care mirror those embraced by the population at large and is indicative of the sense of duty the governors of this institution assumed towards sick children in their charge.

The medicines available to institutional physicians and apothecaries were similar to those available in the home. There are numerous entries in St Mary's Charity school accounts for medicines and treatments such as *James' Powders*, sea bathing, lemons, oranges, sugar, new milk and whey. By contrast the Charter schools' Committee of Fifteen judged medicines too expensive and regularly instructed local apothecaries to dispense only 'the simplest' and 'lowest priced' medicines to sick children.²⁷⁸ As a result, the quality of the medicines given to them is open to question, but the fact that they were provided by an apothecary and paid for suggests that they may have had some worth.

The lack of regulation in the medical marketplace left all children vulnerable, but particularly those in institutions. The master of Monasterevan Charter Nursery, who had the care of over seventy children between two and six years of age in 1782, considered himself qualified to make and dispense his own medicines for which the Incorporated Society paid him. Although women in the home similarly self-diagnosed and medicated their children, the high mortality rate in Monasterevan, even in relation to other schools (in one quarter alone eleven coffins were purchased for the nursery²⁷⁹), illustrates the vulnerability of institutional children when sick.

²⁷⁴ St Mary's Charity school, Minutes (NLI, Ms 2664). For examples see entries 30 Apr. 1791, 28 Jun. 1794, 2 Feb. 1799, 28 May 1804.

²⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 2, 9 Dec. 1799.

²⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 22 Aug. 1800.

²⁷⁷ *Ibid.* For example see 2 Feb. 1799, 22 Mar., 21 Apr. and 14 Jul. 1800.

²⁷⁸ For example see Committee Book 1771-74, Kilkenny school 29 Jul. 1772; Dunmanway school 27 May 1772; Athlone school 21 Apr. 1773 (TCD, Ms 5236).

²⁷⁹ Robbins, *The lost children*, p. 83.

Though 'institutional' and children in the home suffered similarly from diseases and ailments such as scald head,²⁸⁰ fever, smallpox and consumption, their prognoses were significantly different. Because of the cramped and unhygienic conditions in which they lived institutional childhood ailments could quickly spread and escalate, particularly in larger establishments. Contemporaries observed the prevalence of ulcers among institutional children while epidemic fevers raged. The remoteness of the Charter schools enabled them to escape the worst ravages of epidemics such as those associated with the 1740-1 famine. However once fever entered an institution, children's unhealthy constitutions and the poor condition of the establishment meant they quickly succumbed to the disease. Younger children and recent entrants were more likely to die from fever²⁸¹ and these deaths are regularly recorded in account books.

Throughout the eighteenth-century scald head, which is highly contagious, was a widespread institutional problem. Time and again governors made funds available to treat the complaint with sulphur ointment or pitch cap, often for months at a time.²⁸² The governor's willingness to do so may be related to the fact that scald head was considered as undesirable and infectious as smallpox, and masters were unwilling to employ those suffering with the affliction.²⁸³ As such, the possibility of having un-placeable children on their hands drove the Incorporated Society to great lengths to cure the infection. For instance, a copy of Dr Blackhall's successful receipt (figure 3.17) was sent to the masters of each of the Society's schools and nurseries in 1772 advising them to 'strictly adhere' to the directions therein.

Fig. 3.17: Dr Blackhall's receipt for scald head, 1772

Let the heads be carefully shaved and afterwards washed with fresh urine. After these operations let a double linen night-cap be well besmeared with the following ointment. Take of common Norway Tar one pint, mix it with one ounce of Flower of Sulphur and hold this proportion for a larger or smaller quantity. Keep the cap on the child's head for eight days then shave and wash as before and put on a new cap. This in general will do the business but if it shou'd fail, the whole must be again repeated.

Edmd Blackhall.

Source: Committee Book 1771-74, Castlecaulfield school, Tyrone, 1 Apr. 1772 (TCD, Ms 5236).

²⁸⁰ *Tinea capitis* or ringworm.

²⁸¹ For example see Register of Children 1753-92 (TCD, Ms 5597) and Arklow school, Roll and Account Book (TCD, Ms 5598).

²⁸² For example, in the Dublin House of Industry nurse-tender Mary Horan was employed for five months to superintend the process: Governors Proceedings Book 1783-87, 23 Jul. 1787 (NAI, BR/2006/86 (House of Industry) box 2).

²⁸³ Committee Book 1771-74, 8 Jun 1772, Castledermot school (TCD, Ms 5236).

The normally parsimonious committee paid Rose McLean in 1773 £5 2s. 4½d. to cure nine children (11s. 4d each), and another 11s. 4d. to part with the recipe.²⁸⁴ Subsequently, Mr Vouzden was paid £7 19s.3d. (14s. 5d. each) in 1774 to attend and cure eleven boys at Maynooth school.²⁸⁵ But while it was accepted that scald head was a recurring problem, governors did not seek to establish the reason why it was so widespread. By the late eighteenth-century Charter school children with 'scald head' and other infirmities were sent to Clontarf and Arklow for the benefit of sea-bathing,²⁸⁶ a therapeutic practice that had become popular among the population at large. In 1800 the problem of 'scald head' was considered a public health issue and the Dispensary for Infant Poor in Dublin established to treat children brought to them.²⁸⁷ Indicative of the continuing seriousness with which scald head was viewed, in 1817 thirty-one children were incarcerated in the Dublin House of Industry penitentiary because they were afflicted with 'scabbed' heads.²⁸⁸

Children of all social classes succumbed to smallpox but institutional mortality rates from smallpox are at variance with those for children living in a domestic environment. The low mortality rates ascribed to it and the infrequent recordings of major epidemics in institutions suggests that children frequently possessed immunity when they entered or returned to their institutions, the majority of them then being over eight years of age. This hypothesis is supported by the reference to the children of Primrose Grange Charter school where it was noted in May 1769 that 'there are very few ... children of this school who had not had the smallpox in the natural way'.²⁸⁹ Indeed, the fact that between 1750 and 1801²⁹⁰ only one child in the King's Hospital and one boy in Ardraccon Charter school²⁹¹ died from smallpox supports the view that by the age of nine (the common entry age for the King's Hospital at that time), most children would already have gained immunity.²⁹² Ironically the very

²⁸⁴ Committee Book 1771-74, 20 Jan. 1773, Ballycastle school, Antrim (TCD, Ms 5236).

²⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 26 Jan. 1774, Maynooth school.

²⁸⁶ Register of Children 1798-1837, Santry Charter school (TCD, Ms 5642).

²⁸⁷ Children brought at 11 o'clock on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays were treated. Townley Hall Papers, late eighteenth-century recipes (NLI, Townley Hall Papers, Ms 9560).

²⁸⁸ Robbins, *The lost children*, p. 112.

²⁸⁹ Primrose Grange school, Orders 1757-96, 9 May 1769 (TCD, Ms 5646).

²⁹⁰ Although pupil deaths are noted from 1679, the cause of death is recorded only from 1750 onward.

²⁹¹ Ardraccon Charter school, Register of Children 1753-92 (TCD, Ms 5597).

²⁹² Pupil database (The King's Hospital).

closeness of institutional living may also have assisted children to develop their own immunity from measles and smallpox.

Outbreaks of smallpox however did occur, especially amongst the youngest and most vulnerable children. It is recorded as one of the commonest causes of death among those aged two to six years in the Dublin Nursery.²⁹³ According to Buchan, it was usual for children in institutions suffering from smallpox to lie two or three to a bed 'with such a load of pustules that even their skins stick together'.²⁹⁴ However, the introduction of inoculation, and the popularity from mid-century of the Suttonian method reduced both the number and the severity of outbreaks generally.

Despite the obvious benefits of inoculation for children, and society as a whole, it had to be paid for, and this fact alone had a considerable bearing on the attitude of institutional governors. Regardless of the fact they ferried children throughout the country, the Dublin committee of the Charter schools decided in June 1767 to postpone a decision to introduce inoculation into all their schools.²⁹⁵ Previously (in October 1766) the local committee of Primrose Grange warned Dublin that 'within the space of six weeks past, fifty-two ... children' were ill of the smallpox and measles, and again in February 1767, sixty-five children were reported ill with the same complaint.²⁹⁶ The Dublin Nursery also reported regular outbreaks of smallpox, not only among its own children but also among those transported there from other parts of the country.²⁹⁷ Despite these outbreaks it was not until February 1769 that the Dublin Committee issued approval to local committees to inoculate the children in their care.²⁹⁸

Though tardy in the introduction of inoculation, by the 1770s the Committee of Fifteen became more proactive as evidenced by its willingness 'to pay five shillings for each child' inoculated in Dunmanway school.²⁹⁹ Indicative of the general seriousness with which smallpox was viewed during the latter half of the century and the commitment to prevent its spread among the children, from 1791 the Baggot

²⁹³ Milne, *The Irish Charter schools*, p. 92.

²⁹⁴ Buchan, *Domestic medicine* (3rd ed.), p. 180.

²⁹⁵ Board Book 1761-75, 3 Jun. 1767, p. 119 (TCD, Ms 5225).

²⁹⁶ Primrose Grange school, Orders 1757-96, 29 Oct 1766, 27 Feb. 1767 (TCD, Ms 5646).

²⁹⁷ General Register of Children, 1765-1838 (TCD, Mss 5668-9); Milne, *Irish Charter schools*, p. 92.

²⁹⁸ Board Book 1761-75, 1 Feb. 1769, p. 155 (TCD, Ms 5225).

²⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 4 Sep. 1771, p. 221 (TCD, Ms 5225).

Street Charter school register identified with an 'S' those children who had either been inoculated or had contracted smallpox in the natural way.³⁰⁰

As illustrated by table 3.22, the Dublin Workhouse and Foundling Hospital also attempted to inoculate children in its care, although it must be noted half-heartedly so. Of the 3919 children admitted to the Foundling Hospital between 1789 and 1796, 3615 (ninety-two per cent) were listed as cured of smallpox against 298 (eight per cent) who died of the disease. It is remarkable that only 463 (twelve per cent) of these children were actually inoculated. This again reflects the age of the children within the institution and the likelihood that they had already acquired immunity before returning to the hospital from their country nurses, or had obtained sub-clinical infection from the closeness of the infirmary, thereby boosting their immunity to the disease.³⁰¹

Table 3.22: An abstract of the number of children inoculated in the Dublin Foundling Hospital for eight years ending 25th December 1796

The Year ending the 25th December 1789		55
1790		34
1791		30
1792		115
1793		35
1794		80
1795		99
1796		15
	Total	463
Gross Admission		3913
Gross Cured		3615
Died	298	
Inoculated	463	
Total	3615	

Source: *Commons Jn. (Irl.)*, 1797, vol. 17, appendix cclxxiv.

The governors of the Dublin House of Industry were significantly more proactive in combating the spread of smallpox, and with good reason. Children were generally admitted with a parent and as such may have been younger than those admitted into institutions such as the Charter schools (over six years), the King's Hospital (over nine years) and the Foundling Hospital (returned from country nurses

³⁰⁰ Bagot Street, Register of Children 1791-1826 (TCD, Ms 5622); Milne, *The Irish Charter schools*, p. 92

³⁰¹ *Commons Jn. (Irl.)*, 1797, vol. 17, appendix cclxxiv.

at six years). Thus they were more susceptible to smallpox. Indeed of the 160 children in the house when an epidemic occurred in 1782, possibly 106 (sixty-six per cent) were under the age of six.³⁰² Drawing on their experience from previous epidemics such as fevers, it was suggested that those children infected with smallpox be removed to a distant house furnished as an infirmary and given medical attendance there.³⁰³ There is no record whether this was actually done, but the lack of further references to smallpox epidemics in the house suggests they acted accordingly.

By the end of the eighteenth century the safer 'vaccination' system developed by Dr Edward Jenner (1749-1823) using a cowpox fluid had become standard.³⁰⁴ The first vaccination centre in Dublin using Jenner's method was opened at the Dispensary for Infant Poor at Exchequer Street in 1800 where over 11,000 children were vaccinated in the first six years.³⁰⁵ Reflecting the serious implications of smallpox for all classes of society and the benefits for society as a whole, the Duke of Bedford writing to Lord Grenville as early as 1806, argued for 'compulsory measures' and 'legislative interference'³⁰⁶ to assist in the extermination of smallpox. This did not come about until 1863.³⁰⁷

Eighteenth-century attitudes towards venereal disease³⁰⁸ (*Lues Venerea*) highlight the dichotomy between the maintenance of social order and the care and protection of children. In doing so it singularly and vividly illustrates the failure of Ireland's eighteenth-century systems of care for its most vulnerable – its children. This is most noticeable during the latter part of the century in the Dublin Workhouse and Foundling Hospital. Of all the diseases prevalent during the eighteenth-century, venereal disease in particular was disproportionately borne among the lower classes, including children, while those in authority situated it within a religious or moral framework and made their judgements accordingly. In 1766, the medical author Von

³⁰² Governors Proceedings Book 1779-83, 9 Dec. 1782 (NAI, BR/2006/86 (House of Industry) box 2).

³⁰³ *Ibid.*, 16 Dec. 1782.

³⁰⁴ For a fuller debate of this issue see Razzell, *The conquest of smallpox*.

³⁰⁵ Deborah Brunton, 'The problems of implementation', Jones and Malcolm (eds) *Medicine, disease and the state in Ireland*, p. 140.

³⁰⁶ Lord Lt Bedford to Prime Minister Grenville, 7 Jul. 1806, *Fortescue mss.* viii (HMC, 1912), pp 223-4.

³⁰⁷ However, compulsory smallpox vaccination was not introduced in Ireland until 1863. Previously, from 1840 to 1862 legislation provided for free rather than compulsory vaccination. This compulsory, and it must be noted safer smallpox vaccination system, had the effect of finally turning the rural poor away from itinerant smallpox inoculators to whom they had remained firmly attached. Brunton, 'The problems of implementation', pp 139-40

³⁰⁸ The term venereal disease was used to describe both syphilis and gonorrhoea until the distinction between them was identified in 1797 and confirmed in 1837.

Rosenstein reflected the commonly held belief that venereal disease attacked the ‘common people more violently’; it was ‘more corrosive with them’ and ‘very often lethiferous’.³⁰⁹ The surgeon of the Dublin Foundling Hospital reported in 1758 that most of the children then being admitted suffered from venereal disease. Yet, many of the symptoms we now recognise as symptomatic of congenital syphilis³¹⁰ – runny nose (rhinorrhea), sore eyes (interstitial keratitis), body sores (chancres), distinctive front teeth (Hutchinson’s molars) and distinguishing facial characteristics (frontal bossing) – could also apply to abandoned or neglected pauper children in the eighteenth-century. Von Rosenstein recognised three different degrees of infection in pregnant women, ‘active, vigilant acute, or inactive’, all of which he believed had different effects on the unborn or newly born child (table 3.23).³¹¹

Table 3.23: Degrees and effects of venereal disease on new-born children, Von Rosenstein, 1776

Poison	Effect on new-born child
Active poison	Stillbirth or miscarriage. If the child is born alive, it will have sores or ‘evident signs of venereal disease’.
Vigilant acute poison	Born apparently healthy but will develop sores and boils.
Inactive or weakened poison	Unlikely to develop venereal disease. Virus will have changed. Child will develop rickets, scrophulae or ‘other distempers’.

Source: Nils Rosen Von Rosenstein, *The diseases of children and their remedies*, tr. Andrew Sparrman (London, 1776). p. 323.

Although generally perceived as a sexually transmitted disease, children also contracted venereal disease in-utero, during birth, through breast-feeding (the nurse having lesions on her breasts) or indeed from another child if kept in close physical contact. As noted above, there was also a belief ‘that sexual intercourse with a virgin represented a cure for venereal disease’ and this left young female children vulnerable and exposed.³¹² The influential London physician Walter Harris bemoaned this

³⁰⁹ Von Rosenstein, *The diseases of children and their remedies*, p. 337.

³¹⁰ I am grateful to Prof. Fiona Mulcahy of St James’s Hospital, Dublin who clarified issues and very patiently answered my questions regarding this topic.

³¹¹ Von Rosenstein, *The diseases of children and their remedies*, p. 323.

³¹² Kelly, ‘A most inhuman and barbarous piece of villainy’, p. 95.

‘pernicious’ belief, questioning ‘how many sound girls have been infected, or got the pox, and been lost by this stupid error’.³¹³

The reaction of the governors of the Dublin House of Industry to the admission of venereal diseased ‘women of infamous character’ in 1781 echoes the aims of the late seventeenth-century societies for the reformation of manners. Describing the seventy ‘strolling prostitutes’ then resident in the house as a ‘danger to the morals of the female children supported and educated’ therein, they were considered ‘unfit to be introduced among female children.’³¹⁴ It is interesting to note that the governors expressed no views on their influence on male children which suggests they were more concerned with the children’s morals rather than infection. Further illustrating the late eighteenth-century drive to address social issues through the formation of children’s behaviour, in a deputation to the Lord Mayor the governors expressed their views of the ‘impropriety of admitting diseased prostitutes into the ... house’ and urged the Grand Jury to consider ‘some means of removing such objects from under the jurisdiction of this Corporation’.³¹⁵ To prevent physical and moral contagion, once admitted venereal diseased women were isolated in the six-bed room called ‘the Asylum Apartment’³¹⁶ and were transferred to the Infirmary where children might be only when ‘in danger of perishing’.³¹⁷

There was a slow but significant rise in the numbers of adults and children presenting in institutions with venereal disease throughout the eighteenth-century, particularly during the second half. This has been attributed to the increase in army numbers stationed in Ireland³¹⁸ and it prompted the authorities to establish Lock hospitals throughout the country open to both men and women.³¹⁹ Even so and despite a general acceptance of children’s particular needs and remedies, no specific treatments or centres were available for venereal diseased children.

³¹³ Harris, *A treatise of the acute diseases of infants*, p. 226.

³¹⁴ Governors Proceedings Book 1783-87, 10 Dec. 1781 (NAI, BR/2006/86 (House of Industry) box 2).

³¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 26 Nov. 1781.

³¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 11 Mar. 1782.

³¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 7 Jan. 1782.

³¹⁸ Warburton, Whitelaw and Walsh claim that between January 1793 and 1800, Crown Forces in Ireland increased from 9,644 to 116,584 (1108%). J. Warburton, James Whitelaw, Robert Walsh, *The history of the city of Dublin from the earliest accounts to the present time; containing its annals, antiquities, ecclesiastical history, and charters, its present extent, public buildings, schools, institutions &c to which are added biographical notices of eminent men, and copious appendices of its population, revenue, commerce and literature*, vol. 1 (London, 1818), p. 617.

³¹⁹ The first Dublin hospital dedicated to the treatment of venereal disease was opened in 1755 by surgeon George Doyle in Rainsfort Street: Warburton, Whitelaw & Walsh, *The history of the city of Dublin*, i (London, 1818), p. 696; Boyd, *Dublin 1745-1922*, pp 144-5.

Though children accompanied mothers attending Dublin's Westmoreland Lock Hospital for treatment,³²⁰ they were also admitted as patients in their own right, though this practice cannot be confirmed for the eighteenth-century. However, eighteen lone children were admitted for treatment in 1817.³²¹ Although no ages are given, it is significant that they were entered under the nomenclature 'child'. Taking the rule that persons were classed as children until they were either fifteen (House of Industry) or sixteen (Dublin Workhouse and Foundling Hospital), these children were probably under either of these two ages.

These lone children received on average four weeks treatment as internal patients in the Hospital whereas mothers with children received on average two months treatment.³²² Von Rosenstein claimed that the treatment of venereal diseased children occasionally required 'a continual use of mercurial medicines for a whole year' and 'sometimes ... two' in order to be cured.³²³ An analysis of the available records indicates that children were more likely to die in the hospital, either from the disease or the treatment, than other patients. It is interesting to note that according to the surgeon and physician of the Dublin Workhouse and Foundling Hospital in 1797, the opening of the Westmoreland Lock Hospital in Dublin made no impression on the number of venereal diseased children admitted into their institution. They claimed that the majority of children admitted came from country areas, suggesting that there was no access to treatments for venereal disease in rural areas for the poor – men, women or children.³²⁴

As can be seen in figure 3.18 and table 3.24, in line with adult figures, the number of foundlings admitted and dying from venereal disease in the Dublin Workhouse and Foundling Hospital increased significantly from the 1780s. According to the Foundling Hospital surgeon, the hopelessness of these children's cases explained the alarming rise in infant mortality between January and March 1797.³²⁵ Of the 5216 children admitted with venereal disease over a six-year period from 1790-6, all died except three,³²⁶ a chilling ninety-nine per cent mortality rate.

³²⁰). Records are not fully extant for the eighteenth-century. Governors Minute Book 1792, 5 Jan. 1796 (RCPI, Westmoreland Lock Hospital).

³²¹ Patient Register 1817 (RCPI, Westmoreland Lock Hospital).

³²² See Governors Minute Book 1792, 5 Jan. 1796 (RCPI, Westmoreland Lock Hospital).

³²³ Von Rosenstein, *The diseases of children and their remedies*, p. 339.

³²⁴ *Commons Jn. (Irl.)*, 1797, vol. 17, appendix ccxlii, 3 May 1797, Surgeon P. Woodroffe.

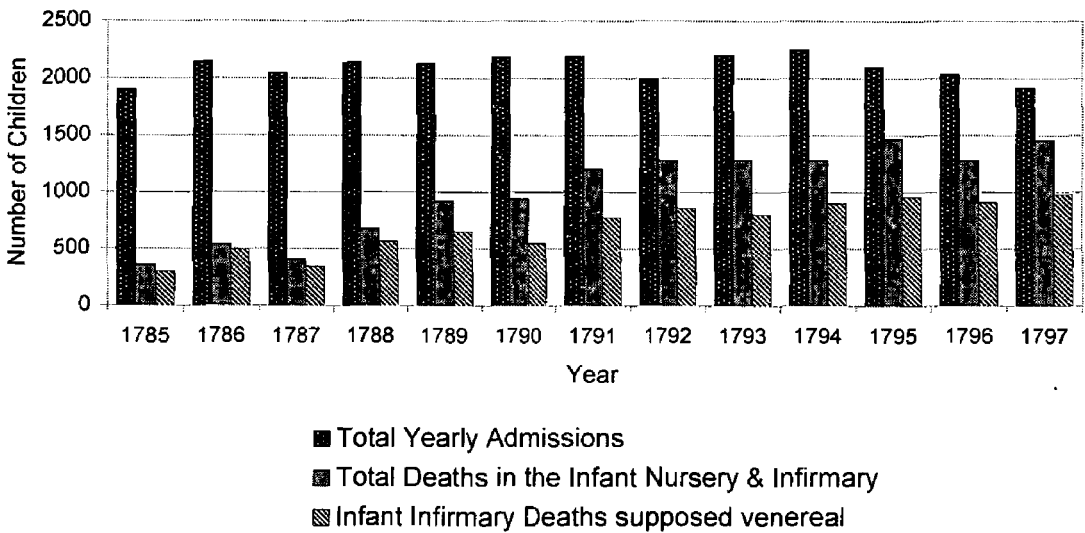
³²⁵ *Ibid.*, appendix ccxliii.

³²⁶ *Ibid.*, appendix ccxliv, James Shaughnessy.

Testifying to a House of Commons committee in May, Surgeon Woodroffe remarked that:

nothing can recover venereal diseased children but breast milk impregnated with mercury, which cannot be got as no nurse will suffer herself to be salivated for the purpose, and even if the children recovered, it would be a burden to the state.³²⁷

Fig. 3.18: Dublin Foundling Hospital admissions and deaths from venereal disease, 1785-1797



Source: *Commons Jn. (Irl.)*, 1798, vol. 17, appendix dxvii.

Table 3.24: Dublin Foundling Hospital admissions and deaths from venereal disease, 1785-1797

Year	Total yearly admissions	Total deaths in the Infant Nursery & Infirmary	Infant Nursery Deaths not Venereal	Infant Infirmary Deaths supposed venereal		Venereal Deaths as a percentage of Total Yearly Admissions
				No.	%	
1785	1900	359	59	300	83	15
1786	2150	541	48	493	91	22
1787	2051	409	65	344	84	16
1788	2144	677	112	565	83	26
1789	2134	925	273	652	70	30
1790	2187	945	396	549	58	25
1791	2192	1205	426	779	64	35
1792	1998	1281	420	861	67	43
1793	2205	1287	484	803	62	36
1794	2253	1285	382	903	70	40
1795	2101	1470	411	959	65	45
1796	2037	1279	369	910	71	44
1797	1922	1457	474	983	67	51

Source: *Commons Jn. (Irl.)*, 1798, vol. 17, appendix dxvii.

³²⁷ *Commons Jn. (Irl.)*, 1797, vol. 17, appendix ccxliii.

To determine whether a child was infected with venereal disease, the surgeon visited the Foundling Nursery, examined each child and placed a badge about its neck, the number on it acting as confirmation of the child's infection. The child was then sent to the Infant Infirmary where 'none are admitted but such as are supposed to be infected with the venereal disease'.³²⁸ In 1797 the apothecary confirmed that all 1975 children then in the Infant Infirmary suffered from venereal disease and no other complaint.³²⁹

Given the lack of interest in the children shown by the governors and staff it is not surprising that both the Infirmaries and Nursery were dirty and 'the children ... eaten up with vermin'.³³⁰ According to the Infirmary Nurse, Catherine McQuin, venereally diseased children, crowded more than one to a cradle 'swarming with bugs',³³¹ lying on straw and covered with 'old discarded blankets' of no use elsewhere in the House,³³² were deemed to be 'unsavable'.³³³ The only medicine dispensed was a bottle described by the surgeon as 'a medicine bottle',³³⁴ probably filled with a sedative as it kept the children quiet for an hour or two.³³⁵ Significantly this limited palliative care was not given to dying children,³³⁶ although the surgeon stated that he:

only administered such medicines to the unhappy infants as might make the remainder of life as comfortable as possible without inhumanly torturing them with mercury.³³⁷

Though the standard treatment for venereal disease was mercury,³³⁸ it was recognised that it was attended with dangers to both adult and child. Buchan was apprehensive about giving mercury to children and recommended that even the mildest preparation be given sparingly.³³⁹ Yet salivation was generally considered the preferred method for treating breast-feeding babies. Needless to say, wet-nurses were

³²⁸ *Commons Jn. (Irl.)*, 1797, vol. 17, appendix ccxiv, 3 May 1797, James Shaughnessy.

³²⁹ *Ibid.*

³³⁰ *Ibid.*, 1758, vol. 6, appendix xcvi.

³³¹ *Ibid.*, 1797, vol. 17, appendix ccxlii, appendix cclxiii, 3 May 1797, Sir John Trail.

³³² *Ibid.*

³³³ *Ibid.*

³³⁴ *Ibid.*, Catherine Maquean.

³³⁵ *Ibid.*, appendix ccxlii, appendix cclxiii.

³³⁶ *Ibid.*

³³⁷ *Ibid.*

³³⁸ Rogers notes that mercury was used as a medicine because of its 'ponderous' weight, the heaviness of which would carry off the internal disease or poison: Joseph Rogers, *An essay on epidemic diseases; and more particularly on the endemial epidemics of the city of Cork such as fevers and smallpox ... in two parts*. (Dublin, 1734), p. 34.

³³⁹ Buchan, *Domestic medicine*, (3rd ed.), p. 414.

reluctant to engage with this treatment process and this reluctance was one of the reasons cited for the high infant mortality in the Dublin Workhouse and Foundling Hospital.

Although the figures available are not extensive enough to permit a comprehensive statistical analysis, there was a substantial discrepancy between the figures given by the three medical men to the parliamentary committee of inquiry in 1797 (table 3.24)³⁴⁰ and those reported by the ladies' visiting committee in January 1798 (albeit for six months only) of the numbers of children suffering and dying from venereal disease in the Dublin Workhouse and Foundling Hospital (table 3.25). It is significant that between 1785 and 1797 the mortality rate from venereal disease varied from a high of ninety-one per cent in 1786 to a low of fifty-eight per cent in 1790.³⁴¹ As can be seen from table 3.25, for six months from July 1797 to January 1798 the mortality rate from venereal disease was only two point four per cent.³⁴² Such a huge discrepancy begs the question why?

Table 3.25: An account of the number of children admitted to the Dublin Foundling Hospital suffering from venereal disease and their deaths for six months ending 8 January 1798

<i>Date</i>	<i>Admitted</i>			<i>Venereal cases</i>	<i>Venereal deaths</i>
	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Total</i>		
From 9 Jul to 8 Aug 1797	63	88	151	2	2 (1%)
From 9 Aug to 8 Sep 1797	64	74	138	3	4 (2.9%)
From 9 Sep to 8 Oct 1797	48	54	102	--	1 (1%)
From 9 Oct to 8 Nov 1797	74	75	149	2	1 (0.7%)
From 9 Nov to 8 Dec 1797	47	76	123	3	5 (4.1%)
From 9 Dec to 8 Jan 1798	69	70	139	9	6 (4.3%)
Total	365	457	802	19	19 (2.4%)

Source: *Commons Jn. (Irl.)*, 1798, vol. 17, appendix dxvi.

The likely motives for inflating the number of venereal diseased children admitted to the Dublin Workhouse and Foundling Hospital are many. On the one hand it is possible that by inflating the numbers it not only reflected, but also affirmed society's view of the immorality and profligacy of the pauper population and by association, identified the Foundling Hospital as an institution unworthy of public

³⁴⁰ *Commons Jn. (Irl.)*, 1797, vol. 17, appendix cclxiii, Philip Woodroffe; appendix cclxxiv, Dr Harvey, James Shaughnisy, 6 May 1797.

³⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 1798, vol. 17, appendix dxvii.

³⁴² *Ibid.*, appendix dxvi.

concern or scrutiny. On the other, it conveniently disguised the gross medical negligence of the surgeon, physician and apothecary, and the lack of supervision and accountability by the authorities towards extremely vulnerable and sick children placed in their care.

As previously discussed, there were many inquiries over the course of the eighteenth-century into conditions within the Workhouse and Foundling Hospital, but the 1797 parliamentary inquiry report was the first to bring about sweeping changes in the institutional care provided for children. A new surgeon and apothecary were employed,³⁴³ while a ladies visiting committee supervised more accurate inspections and recordings of the children in the Nursery and Infirmary. During 1798 they found that the:

proportion of children tainted with venereal disease was in the former period more than one half, and in the latter period less than one to eleven of the number admitted.³⁴⁴

As Rev. Dr Murray, a member of a visiting committee appointed by parliament in 1797 reported:

no human effort was ever made use of to save the lives of the children except administering the common food of milk, bread and common water.³⁴⁵

Although it was but one, and perhaps an extreme, example, the treatment of ‘venereal diseased’ children in the Dublin Workhouse and Foundling Hospital vividly highlights the inability of Ireland’s eighteenth-century system to care adequately for its most vulnerable, its children. While Rev. Dr. Murray’s statement is a dreadful indictment of those in authority responsible for children’s health and well-being in the Dublin Workhouse and Foundling Hospital, the result of the visiting committee’s inquiries laid the foundations for closer scrutiny of institutional children’s care, and the eventual closure in 1831 of an Irish institution that was synonymous with wilful neglect in eighteenth-century Ireland.

³⁴³ They were surgeon John Creighton and apothecary William Lindsey.

³⁴⁴ *Commons Jn. (Irl.)*, 1798, vol. 17, appendix dxxi, 16 Feb. 1798, ‘Report from Committee on State of Charitable Institutions’.

³⁴⁵ *Commons Jn. (Irl.)*, 1798, vol. 17, appendix ccxliii, Rev. Dr Murray, 3 May 1797.

CONCLUSION

The development of institutional provision for children, first centred in Dublin, evolved slowly over the course of the eighteenth-century, and the aims of the organisations involved remained in many respects similar. The establishment of the Dublin Workhouse in 1703 and Foundling Hospital in 1729/30 embodied eighteenth-century Irish society's concerns with the behaviour, manners and morals of the poor. Ostensibly to improve the lot of vulnerable children, the destitute and abandoned, it epitomised the clash between the desire for social order and charitable benevolence in that it lacked the exercise of power and privilege so intimately woven through elite society in eighteenth-century Ireland. Even if the scale and ambition of this attempt to formalise state provision for children was enormous, the century long lack of interest of its governors led to death on a massive scale, corruption and misappropriation, mismanagement, and abuse, all of which ran contrary to the emerging consciousness of children and childhood so evident in the domestic environment.

The poor quality of care afforded children in institutions was exacerbated by a number of factors, the building fabric, the numbers of children being cared for, and crucially, insufficient financial support. Given that the financial stability of many smaller institutions, especially the charity schools was not guaranteed, the quality of care afforded these children was consistent with the best practices of the day. Yet for one hundred years the two largest institutions established and funded by government to care for vulnerable children, the foundling hospitals and the Charter schools, failed to provide the basic requirements to enable children to survive. More pertinently there was little obvious commitment to do so. Though the Dublin House of Industry founded in 1773 (while far from faultless), did address children's welfare in a more comprehensive manner.

Closely allied to the foregoing factors was public opinion. Throughout the eighteenth-century concern for institutional children's welfare only intermittently entered the public consciousness, despite the work of reformers. As a result only sporadic improvements of benefit to children occurred, and in the Charter schools, none at all. In fact, as Robbins notes, the ethos of the Charter schools was never charitably based, being 'neither humanitarian nor educational', but 'politico-religious' in nature.³⁴⁶

³⁴⁶ Robbins, *The lost children*, pp 9, 99.

In line with Ireland's improved economic conditions an increased interest in children's needs is visible from mid-century, which is best illustrated by the proliferation of charitable institutions caring for children, though the numbers within remained consistently small. Because of their size, the demand on the Charity schools was never as great as that made on the larger institutions. Many provided only limited maintenance and cared for fewer children. As such, they were more effective.

It is significant that the two major inquiries into conditions in the Dublin Workhouse and Foundling Hospital occurred at times of economic improvement and political change. The 1758 inquiry for the first time involved women in the superintendence of government provided childcare with consequent benefits for the children as a whole. However, the impetus for reform was consistently interrupted. The Earl of Clare's (c. 1749-1802) statement to the Irish House of Lords in 1797 that without the assistance of 'thirteen humane ladies' it would be 'impossible to have it [the Foundling Hospital] properly conducted'³⁴⁷ highlights not only the recurring failure of the male board of governors to provide even an adequate system of care for children in its charge, but also the crucial role women played in negotiating childhood both domestically and institutionally.

It is significant that children in eighteenth-century Irish institutions were more likely to die than those living outside these systems. Although the Dublin Foundling Hospital was opened to save children's lives, for most of the century they perished in great numbers therein. When children were sick, at their most vulnerable and in most need of care and attention, in general they were denied it. Despite the increased interest in children's health expressed by physicians from mid-century, Dr William Harvey informed the House of Commons investigating committee in 1797 that notwithstanding his best exertions and twelve years attendance as physician, he had no reason to consider the disease of the children 'within the reach of medicine'.³⁴⁸ Without the mediating influence of family, the callousness, brutality and self-interest of staff generated an atmosphere of neglect, and nature too often was left to take its course. As a result, vulnerable children suffered needlessly and died in large numbers.

Whatever changes in relation to children eighteenth-century Irish society witnessed outside its institutions, these attitudes were barely applied within.

³⁴⁷ Kelly (ed.), *Proceedings of the Irish House of Lords*, p. 170.

³⁴⁸ *Commons Jn. (Irl.)*, 1797, vol. 17, appendix ccxi-ccxiv.

Notwithstanding parliamentary inquiries, it was not until the very last years of the eighteenth century and the nineteenth that institutional board members came to recognise that children required specific care and attempts were made to alleviate children's distress in a compassionate and understanding manner. As such James Kelly's assertion that:

the egregiously abysmal health record of ... the Foundling Hospital (1729/30) – indicated that the country's politicians did not even accept it was their responsibility to provide against illness for those in state institutions,³⁴⁹

stands as an indictment of those in authority throughout the eighteenth-century charged with the care of society's most vulnerable – its children.

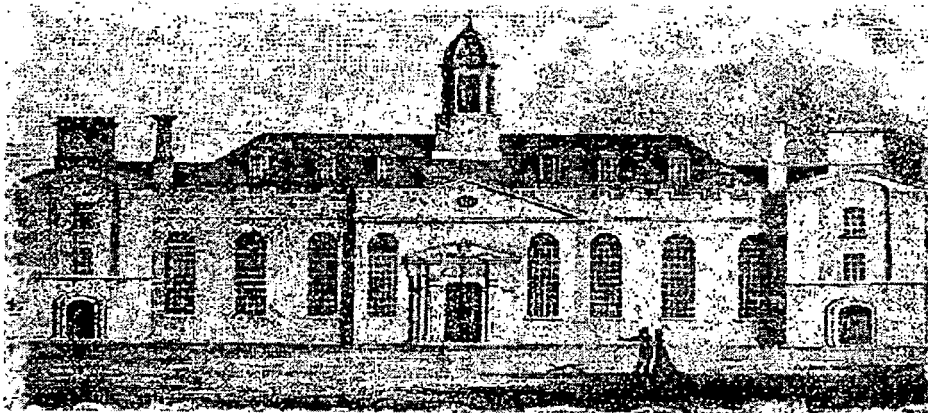


Fig. 3.19: Dublin Workhouse and Foundling Hospital, 1818
Source: John Warburton *et al.*, *History of the city of Dublin*, (1818).

³⁴⁹ Kelly, 'Scientific and institutional practice', Jones and Malcolm (eds), *Medicine, disease and the state in Ireland*, p. 26.

PART FOUR

THE EDUCATION OF CHILDREN IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY IRELAND

- Section I** Directing children's education – the theoretical and societal debates
- Section II** The development and provision of children's educational needs
- Section III** The mechanics of education
- Section IV** The foundations of structured programmes of education

THE EDUCATION OF CHILDREN IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY IRELAND

The well-being of a state depends upon the education of their youth. There cannot be a good and wise community, made up of foolish and vicious individuals; and individuals cannot be made wise or good, but by education.

Thomas Sheridan, 1756.¹

The principal aim of parents should be, to know what sphere of life their children will act in; what education is really suitable for them; what will be the consequence of neglecting that; and what chance a superior education will give them for their advancement to posts of dignity.

James Nelson, 1756.²

INTRODUCTION

A significant component of the new thinking about children and childrearing that appeared over the course of the eighteenth-century was children's education, though its provision was by no means certain. As Kenneth Charlton wrote, and Mary Hilton and Jill Shefrin have reiterated, historians of education must concern themselves not only with the structure and institutions of education but also with the ideas and the ways and context in which those ideas were developed and put into effect.³ Elite, gentry, peasant and pauper children's education mirrored the changing attitudes surrounding children taking place within the domestic and public environments, and similarly encompassed two phases, from *circa* 1690 to *circa* 1750, and *circa* 1750 to 1831. By mid-century the importance of education in shaping the life of the child was recognised, and Irish parents had developed specific views on the type of education their children required. By the close of the century not only was the child firmly and irrevocably placed at the centre of Irish educational theory, provision and practice, but

¹ Thomas Sheridan, *British education: or, the source of the disorders of Great Britain* (Dublin, 1756), p. 6 hereafter referred to as *British education*.

² Nelson, *An essay on the government of children* (2nd ed.), p. 250.

³ Kenneth Charlton, *Education in Renaissance England* (London, 1965), p. ix; Hilton and Shefrin (eds), *Educating the child in Enlightenment Britain*, p. 2.

across all sectors of society, access to education had become a crucial factor in parental expectations.

The focus of part four, is not to offer a comprehensive survey of educational theory and practice. Rather, its emphasis is the growing awareness and recognition throughout the century of what John Locke described as the individuality of the child and, as a consequence, their abilities and capacities, and how their identification guided and directed children's education. Not all aspects of education are addressed here. Those that are were considered fundamental to and illustrative of the development within education of the new thinking about childhood previously discussed. Consideration is given to children only up to sixteen years, the more generalised age of educational egress in eighteenth-century Ireland.⁴

Part four of the thesis is divided into four sections. Section one, 'Directing children's education', identifies the theoretical and societal debates that shaped the public discourse on childhood education that took place in Ireland over the course of the century; section two, 'The development and provision of children's educational needs' assesses the educational provision, its quality and accessibility; section three, 'Responses to educating children' examines the actualities and practices adopted by elite, middling, peasant and pauper families engaged with education in eighteenth-century Ireland; and section four, 'Measuring children's abilities and capacities' examines the pedagogical methods adopted in schools that were essential for the foundation of structured programmes of education in nineteenth-century Ireland.

SECTION I: DIRECTING CHILDREN'S EDUCATION – THEORETICAL AND SOCIETAL DEBATES

The recognition of the value inherent in educating children was crucial to the emergence of a child-oriented society. The importance of education in shaping the life of the adult and, consequently the nation was established by those involved in children's schooling by the end of the seventeenth-century. The publication of *Some thoughts concerning education* in 1693 initiated a vigorous debate about raising children, the nature of childhood and the importance of children's education. This debate accelerated and expanded during the course of the eighteenth-century and was

⁴ As such this thesis does not address itself to university education or the 'Grand Tour'.

shaped in its Irish context by four influential theorists, the Englishman John Locke, the Swiss/French Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and Thomas Sheridan and Richard Lovell Edgeworth, who were both Irish. Foremost among these was John Locke, whose educational writings set the terms by which education was debated in eighteenth-century Ireland.

Locke's *Some thoughts concerning education* was published in at least fifty-three editions during the eighteenth-century, twenty-five in English, sixteen in French, six in Italian, three in German, two in Dutch and one in Swedish, while there were Dublin imprints of the ninth (1728), tenth (1737) and fifteenth editions (1738 and 1778).⁵ Locke's views were also disseminated and given currency by others. John Newbery used them as a theoretical basis for his children's publications, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Sarah Trimmer and Maria Edgeworth each acknowledged Locke's influence. As Margaret Ezell has observed, the criticism afforded Locke's views on education in eighteenth-century literary publications by such well-respected authors as Jonathan Swift (1667-1745)⁶ and Samuel Richardson (1689-1761)⁷ is indicative of the impact of his works. Even when it was criticised, Locke's work was treated with respect.⁸ As such Locke's theories were the bedrock upon which eighteenth-century educational theory and practice were built.

Locke followed on from such seventeenth-century educational writers as John Amos Comenius (1592-1670), the Czech (Moravian) teacher, educator, writer and proponent of universal education,⁹ and John Milton (1608-1674). He broke new ground, however, in promoting an all-inclusive and rational approach to children and childhood. Acutely aware of the strength of tradition within education, yet anxious to promote a fundamental shift in societal attitudes, Locke addressed his remarks at 'enlightened' parents, those 'so irregularly bold', who chose to 'consult their own reason' rather than 'wholly to rely upon old custom'.¹⁰

By placing the child at the centre, Locke's educational objective was the development of 'a person who is capable of judging independently his own and public

⁵ The shelf list of books extant in Dromoland library, county Clare c. 1889 lists three volumes of works by John Locke (NLI, Ms 14877, Inchiquin Papers).

⁶ *The Intelligencer Papers*, no. 9 (1728-9).

⁷ Samuel Richardson, *Pamela, or virtue rewarded* (London, 1741).

⁸ Ezell, 'John Locke's images of childhood', pp 145-49.

⁹ John Amos Comenius, *Didactica magna* (London, 1633-8).

¹⁰ Locke, *Some thoughts concerning education*, p. 161.

affairs'.¹¹ Crucially, Locke saw the child not only as an individual, but also possessed of a mind 'that distinguishes him from all others'.¹² But he also accepted the then prevailing (and enduring) belief that children were raised and educated to a particular station or role in life. Furthermore, Locke recognised the importance of children's early years and advocated that education – which embraced not only learning but also the instilling of virtue – should begin when the child was young because 'the little and almost insensible impressions on our tender infancies have very important and lasting consequences'.¹³ He was aware nonetheless that there were important limitations to education. While Locke identified a child's ability, capacity and character as a key factor, he also accepted that though children may 'be a little mended' by education, they cannot be 'totally altered and transformed into the contrary,'¹⁴ a sentiment echoed in Ireland by James Nelson in 1756 and in England by Lady Caroline Holland in 1768.

The view expressed by Lady Holland, widely shared in eighteenth-century Ireland, that children's 'education may spoil or mend manners a little, but as they are born so ... they remain',¹⁵ was one of three major claims made by Locke. The second was that children should be taught subjects on the 'principle of utility', and the third, his pedagogical theory of the 'association of ideas'. The purpose of Locke's educational method, a method that put children firmly at the centre, was to enable them to subject their desires to rational control,¹⁶ and be taught subjects according to their utility based on the principle of 'associationism'; an approach later approved by Richard Edgeworth.

There is abundant evidence from family correspondence of the influence of Locke's theories on Irish domestic educational practice. The mother of Richard Edgeworth, Jane Lovell Edgeworth (1693-1764), whose 'whole mind was bent from every ordinary occupation' towards her children's education, read everything written on the subject and, in the words of her son and granddaughter, 'preferred with sound judgment the opinions of [John] Locke' though 'with modifications suggested by her

¹¹ Locke, *Some thoughts concerning education*, p. vii; Ezell, 'John Locke's images of childhood', p. 141.

¹² Locke, *Some thoughts concerning education*, p. 161.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

¹⁵ Lady [Caroline] Holland to Duchess of Leinster, 10 Dec. [1768], Fitzgerald (ed.), *Leinster correspondence*, i, 555.

¹⁶ Locke, *Some thoughts concerning education*, p. xii.

own good sense'.¹⁷ The impact of her educational interest may be seen in her son Richard's attitude towards and involvement in his own children's education, and his conclusion that 'to the influence of her instructions and authority I owe the happiness of my life'.¹⁸

An exemplar of the Lockean approach in Ireland was the 'play-school' established in 1755 by the Belfast teacher David Manson (1726-92). As school training aspired to reflect the larger community outside, Manson aimed at 'producing self-disciplined citizens with a respect for hard work and personal independence'.¹⁹ Manson's educational philosophy was – the author Elizabeth Hamilton, whose sister was educated in Manson's school, notes – to make every scholar 'to teach himself, while he all the time considered himself as assisting the master in teaching others'.²⁰ Significantly, Manson not only placed the child at the centre of his educational philosophy but he actively involved them in it. Acutely aware of children's mentalities, Manson adapted both Comenius' and Locke's theories to provide a sensory, logical and child-orientated educational system based on co-operation and merit. Although supported in his endeavours by the newspaper owner Henry Joy, whose daughter Ellen was his first pupil, Manson's innovative educational ideas did not achieve currency outside the Belfast area. Notwithstanding this, Manson's 'play school' is indicative of the impact and appeal of Locke's pedagogical theories in eighteenth-century Ireland.

From mid-century, educational discourse was increasingly shaped and influenced by the drive for social, moral and environmental improvement. In the politically stable and economically improving Ireland of the 1750s there was an enhanced appreciation of the merits of children's education and it became a focus of lively debate among theorists and society in general. Its primary exponent was Thomas Sheridan (1719-88), who contended in 1756 that:

our manners depend upon our notions and opinions, and our opinions and notions are the result of education. This, and this alone, must necessarily be

¹⁷ Edgeworth and Edgeworth, *Memoirs*, i. 108.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ J. J. Campbell, 'The play school of David Manson (1726-92) of Belfast', *The Capuchin Annual* (Dublin, 1956-7), p. 168-9.

²⁰ John J. Marshall, 'David Manson, schoolmaster in Belfast', *Ulster Journal of Archaeology*, 14, no. 23 (May-Aug., 1908), p. 62; Elizabeth Hamilton, *The cottagers of Glenburnie, a tale for the farmer's ingle-nook* (Edinburgh, 1822), p. 283.

the source of all our disorders; and here, and here only, must we therefore look for a cure.²¹

Even though Sheridan was not writing with the education of young children in mind, he did restore the primacy of Lockean thought at mid-century. But while he accepted that Locke provided a foundation, his respect for Locke's ideas was not unreserved or unconditional. Sheridan firmly believed that Locke did not go far enough.

Recognising the importance of childhood in shaping adult behaviour, Sheridan echoed Locke's emphasis on the centrality of the child, thereby vocalising and focusing the debate more clearly. Like Manson, Sheridan deemed education crucial to the forging of responsible human beings, and was emphatic that it was necessary to change the system of education to produce 'good men' and 'good subjects':²² 'if our youth are not trained in the right way, they will probably go wrong; if they are not taught to do good, they will be likely to commit evil.'²³ Sheridan perceptively highlighted the type of education children received and the need for an expansion of the curriculum – an undercurrent running through the eighteenth-century debates. The positive reaction to Sheridan's words indicates that there were many in society well-disposed to take on board such sentiments.

The most striking manifestation of this responsiveness was provided by the reaction to Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who took up these same issues in his influential, popular and contentious book, *Émile* (1762).²⁴ Although William Boyd has said of Rousseau's *Émile* that it was the one book 'among the multitude of writings about education in the modern world' to have exerted 'the greatest influence on the course of educational thought and practice',²⁵ its impact on Ireland is less obvious.²⁶ But Rousseau's theories did pose a fundamental challenge to eighteenth-century Irish child rearing practices and to prevailing educational opinion.

Émile was first published in Paris and Amsterdam in 1762, and subsequently reprinted in London, Paris, Brussels, Dublin and Edinburgh. There were two Dublin

²¹ Sheridan, *British education*, p.3.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 10.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ Rousseau's treatise *Émile* is twofold. On the one hand it could be read as reflecting Rousseau's political views and the future of European states and society, which he saw, as corrupt. On the other it could also be read as a childrearing manual or a new system of education. While *Émile* embraces the child's total upbringing, this part is only concerned with Rousseau's pedagogical theories.

²⁵ Boyd, *Émile for today*, p. 1.

²⁶ Lawrence Stone has also noted that Rousseau's impact in eighteenth-century English society was similarly overrated. Stone, *The family, sex and marriage* (Penguin ed., 1979), p. 256.

editions, one in 1765 and another in 1779. Rousseau's hypothesis of 'childhood innocence' was, as Mary Hilton and Jill Shefrin have observed, 'historically perceived as liberating', especially when contrasted with the religious viewpoint encapsulated by John Wesley's 'concept of childhood sinfulness'.²⁷

Rousseau's claim that *Émile* was not an educational method²⁸ is endorsed by Boyd who suggests it was only illustrative; parents adapted its methods 'appropriate to their own conditions'.²⁹ Moreover Rousseau's twenty-five year educational plan was controlled in its entirety by either the parent or the tutor. So if Rousseau claimed to place the child at the centre of its education, the parent or tutor retained complete control of the child and its educational development.³⁰

Similar to Locke, Rousseau's *Émile* did not apply itself to the education of the poor. It also was gendered.³¹ It is notable that Rousseau's views on female education excited controversy at the time, which highlights the shift in attitude towards female education and women's roles at mid-century discussed later (see page 242). Lady Caroline Holland noted this when she remarked that though Mary Greville admired *Émile*, 'she and several others don't like what he says of women, nor his notions about them'.³² Like many others, Rousseau argued for improved female education but contended that it should be 'wholly directed to ... [women's] relations with men'.³³ Claiming that a natural education would compensate girls for their 'lack of strength', he asserted that, it would enable them to 'direct the strength of men'.³⁴

But there were fundamental differences between Locke and Rousseau. Whereas Locke advocated an education that would train children for their specific role or station in life, Rousseau favoured a broader education, one that in the event of social revolution would equip children of all social ranks to gain useful employment. Therefore Rousseau's educational theory fundamentally challenged the hierarchically based social and educational system prevailing in eighteenth-century Ireland. But if

²⁷ Woodley, 'Oh miserable and most ruinous measure', pp 12, 24.

²⁸ Jimack, *Rousseau: Émile*, p. 47.

²⁹ Boyd, *Émile for today*, p. 1.

³⁰ Although an admirer of Rousseau, the noted author and publisher William Godwin strongly disagreed with his educational methods. Allowing children to do as they pleased according to the principles outlined in *Émile* but all the while being guided by the tutor or parent, amounted in his view to no more than a disguised form of coercion.

³¹ Rousseau outlined his views on female education in book five of *Émile*, and these were concerned only with the education of Sophie as it related to her role as *Émile's* future wife.

³² Lady [Caroline] Holland to Marchioness of Kildare, 7 Dec. 1762, Fitzgerald (ed.), *Leinster correspondence*, i, 353.

³³ Boyd, *Émile for today*, p. 135.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 134.

Émile demonstrates the explicit power of the Rousseauvian vision and illustrates eighteenth-century receptivity to Enlightenment thoughts, in reality how influential was Rousseau in Ireland?

As part of an Anglophone world, Irish parents had easy access to Rousseau's writings and to that of his critics.³⁵ The fact that Lady Caroline Holland encouraged her sister the Marchioness of Kildare to read *Émile* in 1766 is indicative of the openness to Enlightenment ideas and the interest in Rousseau's writings among the elite.³⁶ But, because it was 'setting out upon a principle' Lady Holland considered false – 'the possibility of happiness in this world',³⁷ – *Émile* was, she claimed, full of 'paradoxes', 'absurdities' and 'more striking pretty thoughts in it' than any previous book he had written.³⁸ Though enchanted by Rousseau's education plan, Lady Holland astutely recognised that it was 'impossible' to put into practice.³⁹ Yet, like her sister Emily Duchess of Leinster, she applied aspects of *Émile* to her children's upbringing⁴⁰ – in Lady Holland's case to her son Harry [Henry Fox], who attended Wandsworth School. Harry, 'a pleasant child', was encouraged to work out of doors 'quite according to Monsr. Rousseau's system', though he departed, his mother noted, a little from the plan at night 'for he reads fairy-tales'.⁴¹ Similarly his Leinster cousins followed Rousseau's plan, spending hours working and playing outdoors at their seaside villa Frascati near Dublin.⁴²

The celebrated novelist and 'feminist' Mary Wollstonecraft⁴³ 'thoroughly identified' with Rousseau,⁴⁴ but her pupil Margaret King (1773-1835)⁴⁵ later expressed the view that she thought Rousseau 'an eloquent madman ... his heart in

³⁵ For example see the *Freeman's Journal*, 2 Feb. 1773, 12 Sep. 1780.

³⁶ In 1766 Lady Holland recommended Rousseau's *Les Pensées*: Lady [Caroline] Holland to Marchioness of Kildare, [24 Feb. 1766], Fitzgerald (ed.), *Leinster correspondence*, i, 433-4.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 7 Dec. 1762, i, 353.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 8 Aug. 1762, i, 336.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 15 Nov. [1762], i, 352.

⁴⁰ For example see Lady [Caroline] Holland to Marchioness of Kildare, 28 Sep. 1762, Fitzgerald (ed.) *Leinster correspondence*, i, 341-4; Lord Edward Fitzgerald to Duchess of Leinster [1733], *ibid.*, ii, 3; Lady Louisa Conolly to Duchess of Kildare, 21 Dec. 1776, *ibid.*, iii, 243-5.

⁴¹ Lady [Caroline] Holland to Marchioness of Kildare, 28 Sep. 1762, Fitzgerald (ed.), *Leinster correspondence*, i, 343.

⁴² For an account of the children hay-making see Lord Edward FitzGerald to Duchess of Leinster [1773], *ibid.*, ii, 3.

⁴³ Wollstonecraft was employed as governess to the King children at Mitchelstown, county Cork between 1786-7 and claimed to have spent her nights reading the works of Rousseau.

⁴⁴ Todd, *Daughters of Ireland*, pp 99-100.

⁴⁵ Later Countess Mountcashel and latterly Mrs Mason.

the wrong place and his mind distorted by morbid sensibility and extraordinary selfishness.’⁴⁶

Though educated according to Lockean principles, Richard Edgeworth responded not altogether differently. *Émile* made such a deep impression on him that, with the support of his wife, he resolved to raise his son Richard (1765-96) strictly according to Rousseauvian principles, with disastrous results. Edgeworth later acknowledged with ‘deep regret’ the error of the experiment,⁴⁷ and having done so, placed his son in a Jesuit boarding school in France.

Because of the negative responses in these quarters to Rousseau’s work,⁴⁸ the degree to which his philosophy was actually engaged with and taken on board is questionable. The ‘embarrassment’ and ‘ridicule’ endured by Richard Edgeworth as he embraced Rousseauvian education strongly indicates that Rousseau’s methods were not the norm in eighteenth-century Irish children’s education.⁴⁹ But these engagements with Rousseau are evidence of parental concern in Ireland with children’s education. Moreover, these proved enduring.

Drawing on Enlightenment theories, Thomas Orde, the chief secretary between 1784-7 made a pragmatic attempt to put in place a functional system of education drawing heavily on ideas previously proposed by John Hely-Hutchinson (1724-94), the Provost of Trinity College. Believing that the root cause of Irish social and political disturbances was the ‘want of education’, Orde identified a reform of education as ‘the means to infuse ‘the balm of information into the wound of ignorance’.⁵⁰ The attraction of Orde’s plan⁵¹ was bolstered by the publication of John

⁴⁶ Despite her admiration for Mary Wollstonecraft, Margaret King later expressed the view that she thought Rousseau ‘an eloquent madman with his heart in the wrong place and his mind distorted by morbid sensibility & extraordinary selfishness.’ See Todd, *Daughters of Ireland*, pp 99-100.

⁴⁷ Edgeworth and Edgeworth, *Memoirs*, i, 273-5.

⁴⁸ Rousseau’s work remained contentious and instigated heated debate. For example see William Drennan to Martha McTier, [n.d., 1784], Agnew (ed.), *Drennan-McTier letters*, i, 184; *ibid.* [1785], i, 203; *ibid.*, 14 Oct. [17]94, ii, 103; *ibid.* [n.d., 1802], iii, 14; Lord Edward Fitzgerald to Duchess of Leinster [Aug. 1783], Fitzgerald (ed.), *Leinster correspondence*, ii, 40-1; Lady [Caroline] Holland to Marchioness of Kildare, 8 Aug. 1762, *ibid.*, i, 336; Day (ed.), *Letters from Georgian Ireland*, p. 286; Lefanu (ed.), *Betsy Sheridan’s journal*, p. 193.

⁴⁹ Edgeworth and Edgeworth, *Memoirs*, i, 26.

⁵⁰ James Kelly, ‘The context and course of Thomas Orde’s plan of education of 1787’, *The Irish Journal of Education*, 20, no. 1 (1986), p. 16.

⁵¹ For a discussion of the proposed reforms of Chief Secretary Thomas Orde which led to the unique collection of substantial data concerning the state of Irish schools and the education they offered see Kelly, ‘The context and course of Thomas Orde’s plan of education’, pp 3-26; N. D. Atkinson, *Irish education, a history of educational institutions* (Dublin, 1969); Edward F. Burton, ‘Richard Lovell Edgeworth’s education bill of 1799: a missing chapter in the history of Irish education’, *The Irish Journal of Education*, 13, no. 1 (1979). For a contemporary analysis see John Gifford, *Mr Orde’s plan*

Howard, John Wesley and Sir Jeremiah Fitzpatrick's reports of the appalling conditions that children endured within the Charter schools and Irish schools in general.

Orde envisaged a graduated system of education for all social groups. He ambitiously proposed the establishment of new tiers of schools – parish, provincial, diocesan, pre-university or collegiate schools, and another university – with suitable instruction for each social class in their appropriate school or college.⁵² Crucially, although each child would receive an improved education, the social structure of eighteenth-century Ireland would also be maintained.⁵³ Only Anglican teachers would be employed under Orde's plan which was in general a 'reflection of traditional Anglican thought on education', but he was not an open advocate of proselytism.⁵⁴

Orde presented his plan of educational reform to the Irish parliament in April 1787,⁵⁵ and the printing of the report and subsequent debates in the *Freeman's Journal* is indicative of public interest in children's education. But overall, his scheme was considered too radical.⁵⁶ Though ill-health forced him to leave office before any of his proposals were put into action, it is significant that a reform of eighteenth-century Ireland's educational system was seriously considered and debated at governmental level.

His early departure notwithstanding, Orde's plan had far reaching effects and benefits for children of all social classes, even if these mainly came to fruition during the early nineteenth-century. For Orde planted the seeds for further inquiries into the provision of a comprehensive and appropriate educational system in Ireland, and Richard Edgeworth, with the authority of *Practical Education* (1798) behind him, led the movement to re-introduce the subject of children's education into the Irish parliament.⁵⁷

of an improved system of education in Ireland; submitted to the House of Commons, April, 12, 1787; with the debate which arose thereon ... (Dublin, 1787).

⁵² Kelly, 'The context and course of Thomas Orde's plan', pp 13-15.

⁵³ Atkinson, *Irish education*, p. 65.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 67.

⁵⁵ See the *Freeman's Journal*, 12 Apr. 1787 for a complete report.

⁵⁶ See A. P. W. Malcomson, *Archbishop Charles Agar: churchmanship and politics in Ireland, 1760-1810* (Dublin, 2002) for a detailed account of the resistance to reforming education in the 1780s.

⁵⁷ Burton, 'Richard Lovell Edgeworth's education bill of 1799', p. 25.

Reflecting parental anxiety to access suitable education for their children at the end of the eighteenth-century, Edgeworth⁵⁸ combined the educational theories and practices of Locke, Manson and Sheridan with his own familial experiences to produce what James Newcomer describes as the most important piece of educational writing since Locke.⁵⁹ As Tony Lyons notes, ‘one of the most laudable aspects of Edgeworthian education is that the ideas were founded on first-hand observation of children’, Edgeworth’s own.⁶⁰ But, significantly his ideas were mediated by Locke, not by Rousseau. Written in collaboration with his daughter Maria, *Practical education* was the result of more than twenty years observation and the belief that ‘more good may be done by improving education, than by any other means’.⁶¹ In this respect Edgeworth not only re-affirmed Locke’s earlier injunction to virtue, morality and the centrality of the child to education, but also clearly identified the concerns of Irish parents and society, and put forth practical ideas that parents could adopt or aspire to improve children’s education.

Edgeworth was chiefly concerned with inculcating through rational means of education, habits that would lead to a moral way of life; which echoed Locke’s ideal of an educated person ‘capable of judging independently his own and public affairs.’⁶² *Practical education* achieved widespread appeal in Ireland, England and North America and was republished several times. Edgeworth’s constant reference to maintaining the desire of the child to learn, of the child as the focus of education, and the promotion of education as an enjoyable learning experience for the child is indicative of the formal acceptance of the centrality of the child to education, which contributed to the book’s popularity. Moreover, his role as a member of the Commissioners for Irish education had far reaching effects for Irish children in particular. As Brian Taylor notes, Richard Edgeworth developed:

a philosophy of education, a practical way of implementing it, a school in which it was implemented and the social and legislative awareness within which it made sense.⁶³

⁵⁸ For a comprehensive analysis of Richard L. Edgeworth’s educational philosophy see Tony Lyons, *The education work of Richard Lovell Edgeworth, Irish educator and inventor, 1744-1817* (Lampeter, 2003).

⁵⁹ James Newcomer, *Maria Edgeworth* (Lewisburg, [1973]), pp 31-2.

⁶⁰ Lyons, *The education work of Richard Lovell Edgeworth*, p. 228.

⁶¹ Edgeworth and Edgeworth, *Memoirs*, ii, 177.

⁶² Lyons, *The education work of Richard Lovell Edgeworth*, p. 228; Locke, *Some thoughts concerning education*, p. vii; Ezell, ‘John Locke’s images of childhood’, p. 141.

⁶³ Brian W. Taylor, ‘Richard Lovell Edgeworth’, *The Irish Journal of Education*, 20, no. 1 (1986), p. 33.

Still the situation was far from satisfactory. It was difficult to inculcate Lockean liberal principles or even Edgeworth's more pragmatic approach in a less than liberal society such as eighteenth-century Ireland.⁶⁴ Even if theorists shaped educational discourse, societal needs also generated debate. All children's education was seen as crucial in the maintenance of the hierarchical structure of eighteenth-century Irish society – each child was educated only for their expected station in life.

Education for life

At the turn of the seventeenth-century Irish society's goal for children was a modest education according to their social rank. Although it evolved slowly and fitfully, by mid-century children's education was split into five distinct strands designed to support individually the elite, gentry, the 'genteel and common trades', the peasantry and the female child in their future roles. Thus in keeping with the prevailing social hierarchy, the education children received reflected their social station and expectation in life.⁶⁵

If primarily concerned with raising children, James Nelson also addressed their education and, in *An essay on the government of children*, laid strict rules for doing so. Like Locke, he was primarily concerned to educate children according to their place in society, and in 1756 advised parents that their business was 'to give their children first a just sense of their present station; then to guide their education'.⁶⁶ He further cautioned them to be aware that 'at no time through their education should parents cherish or develop in their children a passion above their station'⁶⁷ and observed that education, 'designed to lead us to happiness, by enlarging and improving our understandings ... is often made the instrument of our destruction'.⁶⁸ Reinforcing his views, Nelson detailed the social gradations and type of education he considered most appropriate for each social class though he permitted certain allowances as individual circumstances varied (table 4.1).

⁶⁴ Grant and Tarcov (eds), *Some thoughts concerning education* (Indiana, 1996), introduction.

⁶⁵ Nelson, *An essay on the government of children* (3rd ed.), p. 273.

⁶⁶ Ibid., (2nd ed.), p. 298.

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 301.

⁶⁸ Ibid. (3rd ed.), p. 336.

Table 4.1: Nelson's societal gradations and education, 1756

Rank:	Status:	Purpose:	Subjects:
Nobility or elite –	Nobleman	Useful and ornamental	Mathematics. <u>Languages</u> - Latin, Greek, English, French. <u>Philosophy</u> – moral and natural. <u>Law</u> – ancient and modern, domestic and foreign. <u>History</u> – English. <u>Arts</u> - polite literature; poetry; painting; music; dancing; fencing; riding; architecture.
	Young lady of the first quality	Useful and ornamental	Reading, writing, [needle] working, Dancing, French, Italian, music, polite literature, a knowledge of arithmetic, geography, drawing, a general acquaintance with moral and experimental philosophy.
Gentry –	Eldest son and heir	A 'learned education'.	As for education of a nobleman.
	Younger son	A 'learned education'. Designed for future employment such as Divinity, Law, Physic, Sea, Army, the Exchange. To conduct themselves in the professions and advance their fortunes.	As for eldest son and heir but chosen according to individual's 'genius' or ability.
	Young lady of the second rank - only child or heiress	Designed for her future role as, she will probably become a lady of first quality.	As for education of a lady of the first quality.
	Younger sister	'Not so brilliant' nor 'expensive' but to gain knowledge suited to her station.	English, writing, dancing, French, music (but not to perfection), [needle] work, domestic knowledge, arithmetic, drawing, geography.
Genteel trades – Merchants and 'such as require figure, credit, capital and others for support'	Male	A 'learned education'. To conduct themselves in business.	As for gentry but in proportion to their and the family's fortune.
	Female	To conduct their household.	Knowledge of books, [needle] work, writing [penmanship], figures, household management and family 'oeconomy'.

Common or inferior trades –	Male	To conduct themselves in business.	Reading, writing [a mercantile hand], arithmetic, drawing [mechanical], geography, a knowledge of maps, French for men of particular business, singing if appropriate.
	Female	To conduct their household.	Reading, writing, domestic accounts, ‘useful’ [needle] work, English, household management, French (if circumstances permit), dancing for health not vanity.
Peasantry –			
Rural	Male	To ‘distinguish right from wrong, truth from lies, innocence from guilt.’	Reading.
Urban			Reading, writing, ‘first rules in arithmetic’.
Urban and rural	Female		Reading, [needle] work.

Source: James Nelson, *An essay on the government of children under three general heads: viz., health, manners and education* (3rd ed., London, 1768), pp 277-367.

In keeping with the prevailing attitude, the education provided closely followed Nelson’s social gradations. This is exemplified by the education the first Duke of Leinster’s sons received. Initially educated by a tutor at home, all attended Eton, though twelve year-old Lord Ophaly [George Fitzgerald], considered ‘idle’ and ‘dissipated’ by his masters at Eton,⁶⁹ an assessment endorsed by his aunt Lady Caroline Holland,⁷⁰ avowed that his only ambition was ‘to be a buck’.⁷¹ Originally enthusiastic about boarding school, his brother William found ‘school learning’ unpleasant and, echoing Locke and Nelson’s injunction to educate children according to their abilities, a military academy was deemed most suitable for the second son of the Marquis and Marchioness of Kildare.⁷² Anxious at the lack of progress her sons made at the Royal School at Raphoe, county Donegal, Catherine Wynne of county Sligo, urged their agent in January 1737 to dispatch them back to school as soon as possible. Expressing her fears that they would ‘grow up great ignorant fellows’, her

⁶⁹ Lady Caroline Fox to Countess of Kildare, 8 Apr. 1760, Fitzgerald (ed.), *Leinster correspondence*, i, 279.

⁷⁰ Lady Caroline Fox to Countess of Kildare [n.d., 1760], *ibid.*, i, 284-5.

⁷¹ The exploits of eighteenth-century ‘bucks’ in Covent Garden, London are detailed in E. J. Burford, *Wits, wenches and wantons* (London, 1986).

⁷² His elder brother’s death in 1765 however changed the dynamics and Lord William succeeded to the title. Lady Caroline Holland to Marchioness of Kildare, 28 Sep. 1762, Fitzgerald (ed.), *Leinster correspondence*, i, 341-4.

worry was that as adults they would 'be ashamed when they don't know how to converge [sic] with gentlemen'.⁷³

Private schools and academies attended by middle-class and gentry children offered the three R's but, in keeping with their pupils' social status, children's tuition might also include such social accomplishments as French and dancing.⁷⁴ The elite and gentry schools of Raphoe and The Abbey School, county Tipperary continued throughout the eighteenth-century to follow a strictly classical education offering subjects such as Latin, Greek, English, Arithmetic and Euclid.⁷⁵ There was considerable debate on what benefits elite and gentry children gained from a classical education. In 1783, St Kieran's College, county Kilkenny offered a classical education to upper class Catholic boys, but one based on French educational tradition.⁷⁶ Here children availed of classes in French history and natural philosophy. Mirroring the hopes of Thomas Sheridan's Hibernian Academy of 1758, emphasis was placed on the 'content of works', and pupils were encouraged to achieve 'clarity of style in writing and speech'.⁷⁷ Accordingly, at mid-century, the focus of schools such as these not only affirms Nelson's scale but, those of eighteenth-century Irish society at large.

The improved economic situation in Ireland manifest from mid-century encouraged the development of a more specific and commercial or vocational based curriculum for 'middling' children attested by the publication of Elias Voster's (d. 1760) *Arithmetic*,⁷⁸ and schools and academies responded accordingly. By 1758, Cork schoolchildren not only received instruction in reading, writing and arithmetic but also geometry, trigonometry, book-keeping or 'merchants accompts', 'navigation in theory and practice', gauging, surveying and 'the use of the globes'⁷⁹ – subjects designed to qualify them 'for any sort of trade or business'.⁸⁰ Given Cork's maritime location and burgeoning mercantile industry, eighteenth-century children's education

⁷³ Catherine Wynne to Edward Martin, Jan. 1737, Winston Guthrie-Jones, *The Wynnes of Sligo & Leitrim, the powerful family of Hazelwood & Lurganboy* (Manorhamilton, 1994), pp 40-1.

⁷⁴ *Cork Evening Post*, 17 Jul. 1769. (NLI, Quane Papers, Ms 17981(6)).

⁷⁵ Michael Quane, 'The Abbey School, Tipperary', *Journal of the Cork Historical and Archaeological Society*, 65, no. 201 (1960), p. 64.

⁷⁶ Atkinson, *Irish education*, p. 59.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ Elias Voster, *Arithmetic, in whole and broken numbers digested after a new method and chiefly adapted to the trade of Ireland to which are added instructions for book-keeping* (13th ed., Cork, 1774), p. iv.

⁷⁹ *Cork Evening Post*, 23 Jan. 1758; 22 May 1760 (NLI, Quane Papers, Ms 17981(6)); *Finn's Leinster Journal*, 29 Dec. 1792; *Hibernian Journal*, 9-12 Aug. 1771.

⁸⁰ *Cork Evening Post*, 23 Jan. 1758.

there was clearly designed to respond to the demands of local employment. As Gillespie notes, from mid-century the trend was set to offer a wider and more applicable vocational training to children of the 'middling sort'.⁸¹

The correlation between education, economics and lifestyle was not lost on peasant parents. Though still monoglot Irish speakers, parents on Valentia Island, county Kerry appreciated not only the benefits education would bring to their children but also the increasing economic and social importance of the English language in Ireland. In April 1795, fifty-eight, and in August, thirty-one, male pupils from eight to eighteen years of age were educated through English in Zelva School, although the master claimed that on occasion over ninety children might be present.⁸²

The curriculum availed of by peasant and pauper children in the pay school system differed significantly from what Nelson recommended. According to Nelson, rural peasants required educating in correct methods of tilling the soil and reading, but he also acknowledged that education would 'at times be an entertainment and a consolation to them', while more formalised learning would also 'remove in some degree that total darkness and ignorance they must otherwise remain in.'⁸³ Besides the three Rs, pay schools such as that in the Union of Kilmore, Killaloe Diocese and schools in Galway, Sligo and elsewhere provided instruction in 'philosophy', Latin and English to children. Eighteenth-century travellers frequently noted peasant school children well versed in Hebrew and Greek⁸⁴ who were introduced to elements of a classical education similar to that of gentry children.

Early eighteenth-century institutional children's education was intended 'to provide functional literacy' only,⁸⁵ to instruct children for their role or station in life, 'to render ... [their] education more useful to the publick',⁸⁶ and for employment in

⁸¹ Raymond Gillespie, 'Church, state and education in early modern Ireland', Maurice R. O'Connell (ed.), *O'Connell, education church and state* (Dublin, 1992), pp 54-5.

⁸² PRONI, DIO 4/8/9/3/8 cited in Pádraig de Brún, 'Some documents concerning Valentia Erasmus Smith school, 1776-95', *Journal of the Kerry Archaeological and Historical Society*, nos 15-16 (1982-3), pp 70-81.

⁸³ Nelson, *An essay on the government of children* (2nd ed.), p. 339.

⁸⁴ See Rev. T. Corcoran, *State policy in Irish education A.D. 1536-1816* (Dublin, 1916), p. 106; M. G. Jones, *The Charity school movement: a study of eighteenth-century Puritanism in action* (Cambridge, 1938), p. 261; George Holmes, *Sketches of the southern counties of Ireland, 1797* (London, 1801); Rev. Martin Brennan, *Schools of Kildare & Leighlin A.D. 1775-1835* (Dublin, 1935), pp 305, 313, 496-7. For a comprehensive survey of hedge schools in Ireland see P.J. Dowling, *The hedge schools of Ireland* (Dublin, 1968).

⁸⁵ Gillespie, 'Church, state and education in early modern Ireland', p. 52.

⁸⁶ *An account of charity-schools lately erected in England, Wales and Ireland: with the benefactions thereto; and of the methods whereby they were set up, and are governed. Also, a proposal for*

service or apprenticeships.⁸⁷ Male and female children in Cork's Green Coat School were taught to 'read competently well', but only boys, destined for a labouring life were taught 'to write a fair legible hand'. Charity school boys were instructed in the 'grounds of arithmetick',⁸⁸ whereas girls – due for a life of domestic service – were taught reading, knitting, sewing and spinning.⁸⁹

On paper Charter schoolchildren were instructed in the 'English tongue', the principles of the Protestant religion, and reading, writing and arithmetic. In reality secular learning was limited to 'those skills necessary for the menial arts and for husbandry', further reinforcing the social gradations outlined by Nelson and buttressed by eighteenth-century Irish society.⁹⁰ The foundation of the Linen Board in 1711 gave impetus to the amalgamation of pauper children's education and labour. The introduction of spinning wheels into schools and the establishment of 'spinning schools' under landlord supervision such as proposed by Sophia Hamilton of Bangor, county Down, was favoured in order to allow children not only to earn their education but also in many instances their keep.⁹¹ By 1733, supporters of the Charter schools proclaimed that:

every popish child turned out a Protestant from these [Charter] schools, will bring an accession of strength to the Protestant interest, and of wealth to the kingdom, by the labour of his hands.⁹²

Children's working schools were not new; John Locke promoted them, and in Ireland the Duke of Ormond established a spinning and weaving school at Kilkenny in 1705.⁹³ Children in Dublin's Workhouse and Foundling Hospital made shoes but, as Archibald Rowan Hamilton noted in 1788, they were so 'ill made' they did not sell.⁹⁴

enlarging their number, and adding some work to the children's learning, thereby to render their education more useful to the publick (London, 1706), p. 6.

⁸⁷ *An account of charity-schools lately erected in England, Wales and Ireland* (London, 1706), p. 6; [Rowland Davies], *An account of the present state of the Green-coat Charity School of the parish of St Mary Shandon, Corke* (Cork, 1716), p. 26.

⁸⁸ *An account of charity-schools* (London, 1706), p. 6.

⁸⁹ [Davies], *An account of the present state of the Green-coat Charity School*, p. 26.

⁹⁰ 'Charter for English Protestant Schools in Ireland [1733]', Corcoran, *State policy in Irish education*, p. 108-9; D. H. Akenson, *The Irish education experiment, the national system of education in the nineteenth-century* (London, 1970), p. 31.

⁹¹ NLI, Castle Ward Papers, Ms 4915.

⁹² *A brief review of the rise and progress of the Incorporated Society in Dublin, for promoting English Protestant Schools in Ireland: from the opening of His Majesty's Royal Charter, February 6th 1733, to November 6th 1743*, Corcoran, *State policy in Irish education*, p. 147.

⁹³ NLI, Ormonde Papers, Ms 11070.

⁹⁴ Archibald Rowan Hamilton to Rev. Dr S. White, 16 Feb. 1788 (LMA, Foundling Hospital, A/FH/M/01/003/145-148).

Therefore, if the academic education institutional children received was inadequate, evidentially their vocational training was also.

The belief that children could be both educated and given the skills to earn a livelihood retained credence throughout the eighteenth-century.⁹⁵ Yet John Howard noted in 1787 that Charter schoolchildren's education was severely neglected for 'the purpose of making them work'.⁹⁶ Although Richard Edgeworth viewed outdoor work as a combination of usefulness and physical exercise for children,⁹⁷ the labour Charter schoolchildren engaged in was physically demanding agricultural work. Between 1744 and 1745, schoolchildren at Killoteran Charter school in county Waterford 'cleared two acres of land of stones ... besides ditching and preparing ... for oats, flax, and potatoes', work that increased the school's land value by four shillings per annum.⁹⁸ Yet it was not until 1788 that Sir Jeremiah Fitzpatrick vocalised the concern that:

by the master's paying for the children's labour, he becomes more interested in the profits arising from it than in their making ... progress in a proper knowledge either of religion or of education.⁹⁹

Over the course of the eighteenth-century, societal attitudes towards peasant and pauper children's education changed, due in part to more enlightened views on education, but more significantly to increased demands for a more literate employment force. By the close of the century, charity schoolgirls were taught arithmetic, and those in the Dublin Workhouse and Foundling Hospital who showed promise writing and 'accounts'.¹⁰⁰ By 1792, children in Dublin's Female Orphan House were not only instructed in domestic and household duties such as making and mending clothes, knitting and spinning, but also reading, writing, ciphering and geography.¹⁰¹ Children in Dublin's Hibernian Marine School, initially educated for a life in the Royal Navy, were taught navigation besides the '3 R's'. Significantly, they

⁹⁵ Children in Nano Nagle and Teresa Mulally's schools in the late 1760s were taught glove-making, dressmaking and housework, while those attending Mercer's school in Rathcoole, county Dublin were taught to knit, spin, wash, do plain work, bake and make butter. Similarly in Dublin's Female Orphan House, but the quality of supervision and instruction children received there eventually became synonymous with servants of quality.

⁹⁶ *First report of the Commissioners of Irish Education Inquiry* (London, 1825), p. 7.

⁹⁷ Taylor, 'Richard Lovell Edgeworth', *Irish Journal of Education*, p. 1.

⁹⁸ Charles Smith, *History of Waterford* (1746); Corcoran, *Selected texts*, pp 50-1.

⁹⁹ Corcoran, *Selected texts*, p. 60.

¹⁰⁰ *An account of charity-schools* (London, 1706), p. 6; [Davies], *An account of the present state of the Green-coat Charity School*, p. 34; *Rules for conducting the education of the female children in the Foundling Hospital*, p. 11.

¹⁰¹ *Sixth report of the Commissioners of Irish Education inquiry*, pp 12, 94.

were also instructed in other trades such as shoemaking and tailoring, skills adaptable not only for a sea-faring life but also useful in a civilian role.¹⁰²

Even though educational provision increased during the century, children's social standing continued to determine their education. Notwithstanding the lively debate on the educational issues prompted by Locke, Rousseau, Sheridan and Edgeworth, elite and gentry children's education remained relatively static, reinforcing the existing social hierarchies. The most significant change appeared in the education availed of by those involved in trade, the peasantry, and institutional children. Although improvements did take place, these responses served to buttress eighteenth-century Irish society and the social gradations outlined by Nelson.

As societal attitudes towards children's education changed in line with parental expectation, those involved in educational provision adapted and responded to these new demands. The expansion female education underwent in eighteenth-century Ireland is particularly illustrative of this response.

Female education debate

Apart from general educational reform, the most significant educational debate to take place in eighteenth-century Ireland centred on the benefits of female education. Samuel Johnson's observation that 'a man is in general better pleased when he has a good dinner upon his table, than when his wife talks Greek',¹⁰³ captured the widespread attitude towards female education in the early eighteenth-century.¹⁰⁴ However, Mary O'Dowd notes, by the last quarter of the eighteenth-century there was a significantly increased interest in and debate on the subject of female education amongst elite and middling families.¹⁰⁵ This interest was shaped internally by educationalists such as Samuel Whyte, and externally through the dissemination of

¹⁰² PRONI, DIO 4/9/12/5; *Sixth report of the Commissioners of Irish Education inquiry*, p. 11.

¹⁰³ James Boswell, *The life of Samuel Johnson LL.D.: including a journal of a tour to the Hebrides* (2 vols, Boston, 1832), ii, 398.

¹⁰⁴ Quaker and dissenting groups tended to educate girls to a higher and broader standard than normal within elite and middling Irish society. Similarly, pay schools educated all sexes, though the costs incurred probably contributed to deprive girls of that education as parents focused on the educational benefits for male children.

¹⁰⁵ O'Dowd, *A history of women in Ireland*, p. 213.

publications such as John Swanwick's *Thoughts on education addressed to the visitors of the Young Ladies' Academy in Philadelphia*.¹⁰⁶

In the mid eighteenth-century educated women were viewed as a liability in the competitive marriage market. Though strongly in favour of female education Lady Mary Wortley Montague famously cautioned her daughter in 1753 to 'conceal whatever learning ... [her granddaughter] attains, with as much solicitude as she would hide crookedness or lameness'.¹⁰⁷ Ten years later Charles Allen offered a compromise in his 1763 Dublin publication *The polite lady*, observing that it is a lady's 'business rather to acquire than communicate knowledge'.¹⁰⁸ By 1772 the Dublin based pedagogue Samuel Whyte wrote extensively in support of female education.¹⁰⁹ An extract from an *Occasional prologue to the tragedy of Jane Shore* succinctly identifies contemporary sentiment both for and against female education:

If female minds are uninform'd and blank,
Whom, lordly sirs! Are female tongues to thank?
And if they thunder nonsense in your ears,
Why for such paltry talents choose your dears?
If you no higher excellence can brook,
Go wed at once your sempstress or your cook.¹¹⁰

Although he disagreed with the contemporary emphasis on female instruction in the arts of needlework and domesticity, Whyte also avowed that women were 'not to act on the great theatre of the world like men', their spheres were more 'domestic' and thus 'confined'. Still, he believed that they, like men should be given the opportunity to develop into rational creatures¹¹¹ through a regular course of the *Belles Lettres* such as geography, chronology, history, oratory and writing,¹¹² and he accepted girls into his Dublin academy, with that purpose in mind.

Others such as James Nelson contended that in a society based on rank and subordination, education generally had the potential for destabilisation and that

¹⁰⁶ John Swanwick, 'Thoughts on education addressed to the visitors of the Young Ladies Academy in Philadelphia, October 31 1787 at the close of the quarterly examination, by John Swanwick, Esq., one of the visitors of said Academy', *Walker's Hibernian Magazine*, Jan. 1792, pp 52-9.

¹⁰⁷ Robert Halsband (ed.), *The complete letters of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu* (3 vols, Oxford, 1965-67) cited in Kenyon, *800 years of women's letters*, p. 57.

¹⁰⁸ Allen, *The polite lady*, p. 87.

¹⁰⁹ See *Walker's Hibernian Magazine*, May 1772; Samuel Whyte, *The Shamrock or Hibernian cresses* (Dublin, 1772).

¹¹⁰ Samuel Whyte, 'Occasional prologue to the tragedy of Jane Shore', *Poems on various subjects* (3rd ed., Dublin, 1795), p. 75.

¹¹¹ *Walker's Hibernian Magazine*, May 1772, p. 267; Sep. 1789, pp 472-3.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, p. 272.

education would raise girls above their intended rank and station in life.¹¹³ Still more argued against female education based on women's physiology. Their lack of 'robustness' and 'natural qualities' precluded them from developing and making strong judgements or capable of being discriminating beings, equal with or comparable to the prerogatives of men.¹¹⁴

Yet women played a crucial role in children's early education. The fact that they were central in fixing 'lasting impressions upon ... children's minds',¹¹⁵ impressions that would counter the 'inequity of the age' and 'the temptations incident to youth',¹¹⁶ in their first eight or ten years,¹¹⁷ was recognised by theorists throughout the century. Still elite and middling women's education remained rooted in the social graces and domestic arts.

By mid-century arguments both for and against women's education had crystallised. Maria Edgeworth perceptively observed in her argument defending the right of women to education, an argument designed to appeal to men in power, 'you apprehend that knowledge must be hurtful to the sex, because it will be the means of their acquiring power'.¹¹⁸ An anonymous writer in *Walker's Hibernian Magazine* echoed this, claiming explicitly that females 'are what they are by education. If ignorant, it is through want of instruction, not of capacity'.¹¹⁹ Thus the three main arguments concerning female education in late eighteenth-century Ireland were established, namely that educated women could challenge men on their own ground; what capacity women had to acquire knowledge, and crucially, what that knowledge should be.

So the debate raged. An anonymous male writer in *Finn's Leinster Journal* in 1787 warned that females were incapable of being both educated and continuing their domestic and charitable works. Perceiving that social stability was at issue, he cautioned that if females were educated, 'the order of nature would be totally

¹¹³ For example see Nelson, *An essay on the government of children* (2nd ed.); Miller, 'Women's education, 'self-improvement' and social mobility – a late eighteenth century debate', *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 20, no. 3 (Oct., 1972), pp 302-14.

¹¹⁴ 'Thoughts on female education', *Finn's Leinster Journal*, 27 Oct. 1787.

¹¹⁵ 'Reflections on the importance of forming the female character by education', *Walker's Hibernian Magazine*, Jan. 1798, pp 38-40.

¹¹⁶ These views serve to illustrate how Locke's theories, though un-attributed, remained in the public consciousness throughout the eighteenth-century. Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Stone, *The family, sex and marriage* (Abridged ed., 1979), pp 228-9.

¹¹⁸ Maria Edgeworth, *Letters for literary ladies to which is added an essay on the noble science of self-justification* (London, 1795) cited in Kenyon, *800 years of women's letters*, pp 73-4.

¹¹⁹ 'Reflections on the importance of forming the female character by education', *Walker's Hibernian Magazine*, Jan. 1798, pp 38-40.

reversed, and the population of the globe preposterously sacrificed to the cold forbidding pride of a studious virginity'.¹²⁰

By the 1790s the importance of children's education, girls included, was clearly recognised. Without losing the manners and 'qualifications that tend to render the person amiable', and without disturbing the order of men's lives, female education was then seen as rendering girls 'fit associates in life for men of understanding and information'.¹²¹ Responding to the increased awareness of the benefits education might bring to female children, there were a significant number of educational establishments catering for upper and middle-class females of all religions throughout Ireland by the close of the century. Though reactionary views continued to have their adherents, enlightenment thoughts dominated educational debate. Criticisms were levelled at both political and social conventions and the focus of attention moved from society as a whole to the individual. Throughout the century different strands of educational theory emerged – empiric, speculative and scientific – none perfect. Yet all built on the experiences of the long eighteenth-century and crucially, at the heart of each lay the child. As a result, the concept of childhood was more clearly recognised and defined within the theoretical debates surrounding children's education at the end of the eighteenth-century than at the beginning.

SECTION II: THE DEVELOPMENT AND PROVISION OF CHILDREN'S EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

Although educational provision improved over the course of the eighteenth-century there was an enduring lack of uniformity not only in provision, but also of access and the nature and quality of that education. From the outset elite, middling, peasant and pauper children's education was socially determined. The expanding economy of the second half of the century facilitated a greater public discourse concerning children's educational provision and the purpose and value of that education to society as a

¹²⁰ 'On female education, chiefly as it relates to the culture of the heart', *Finn's Leinster Journal*, 9 May 1787.

¹²¹ *Freeman's Journal*, 5 Apr. 1792; 'The female advocate', *Walker's Hibernian Magazine*, Aug. 1779, pp 466-8.

whole. As a result there were improvements in educational provision, though geographically scattered. Yet despite the improved provision, the legacy of the impoverished nature of children's educational facilities lingered, forcing parents to rely on their own resources and to adapt circumstances to their own and their children's educational requirements.

Until the eighteenth-century children's educational needs were little addressed. The 1537 statute of Henry VIII establishing parish schools and the 1570 statute of Elizabeth I establishing diocesan schools,¹²² supplemented by the Stuart Royal Free Schools, Cromwellian educational initiatives, and charitable bequests such as that of Erasmus Smith, together constituted the basis of what should have been by the eighteenth-century a comprehensive legislatively driven parochial and diocesan system of education in Ireland.¹²³ The reality was quite different.

Early Irish educational provision was designed to anglicise the Irish – their language and customs. The priority of both church and state was not to preclude Roman Catholic and Dissenter children receiving an education but to ensure 'the provision of a Protestant education'.¹²⁴ However, Ireland's political instability and the inadequate resources of the Established church at local level¹²⁵ meant there was little real forward momentum in school provision between 1537 and 1690. For example, in 1692 there were only six parish schools in the eighteen parishes in the Diocese of Raphoe.¹²⁶ This did not pass unnoticed Gillespie notes.¹²⁷ In 1703, a Dublin correspondent of Sir John Percival (1683-1748) (later first Earl of Egmont) recorded regretfully that 'from my observations I can say that many dioceses in Ireland have not the schools intended by the Acts'.¹²⁸ There were schools of course, but crucially, the few educational facilities that existed in early eighteenth-century

¹²² For the Diocesan Schools Act see Akenson, *The Irish education experiment*, p. 26. For a more comprehensive survey see Michael Quane, 'The Diocesan schools, 1570-1870', *Journal of the Cork Historical and Archaeological Society*, 2 ser., 66 (Jan. – Jun., 1961), pp 26-31.

¹²³ Early state legislative educational provisions in Ireland were the English parish schools from 1537; the Diocesan Grammar Free schools from 1570; the Royal Free schools from 1608-9; some urban Grammar schools; and The English Colledge [TCD] in 1592. Raymond Gillespie argues that the 1537 educational provision was never intended to provide a nationwide system of schools but to act as a buttress for the Anglo-Irish community of the Pale. Gillespie, 'Church, state and education', p. 45.

¹²⁴ Gillespie, 'Church, state and education', p. 44; Akenson, *The Irish education experiment*, p. 22.

¹²⁵ The Elizabethan 'Act for the erection of Free Schools' stipulated that a school-house was to be built in the 'principal shiretown' of the diocese and crucially, at the cost to the diocese. See also Akenson, *The Irish education experiment*, p. 23.

¹²⁶ NLI, Smyth of Barbavilla Papers, Ms 41576/6.

¹²⁷ Gillespie, 'Church, state and education', p. 45.

¹²⁸ Mr Rice to Sir John Percival, M.P., 16 Oct. 1703, HMC, *Egmont Manuscripts*, vol. 2 (London, 1909), pp 213-4.

Ireland were geographically scattered, variable in character and quality, and socially and religiously exclusive.¹²⁹

Poor and inadequate school buildings, a consistent feature among all classes throughout the eighteenth-century, deterred many parents from availing of a school facility. As early as 1714, the governors of Galway's Erasmus Smith School authorised the expenditure of £124 12s. on repairs as the deteriorating school buildings were deemed responsible for declining pupil numbers.¹³⁰ It is noteworthy that the governors were cogniscent of the relationship between the school's reputation, the number of pupils, and an adequate building fabric. In many cases where there was no specific schoolhouse, instruction took place in the teacher's home and could be combined with other activities. An acquaintance of William Drennan, married to a schoolteacher, who taught six children 'in a neat back parlour ... with a tea shop in front ... [and her] husband ... in the attic storey, with an usher and forty boys under their care'¹³¹ was not untypical.

The type of building hedge, pay or 'Popish' schools occupied varied widely. According to the French traveller De Latocnaye:

among a peasantry so poor, it is not to be expected to find a fine house used as a school; consequently when it is a house it has usually a miserable roof, the chamber being not more than five feet high. Children and the master will certainly not feel comfortable in such a hut, and, when the weather permits, they establish themselves under a tree, or under a hedge, and the master gives his lesson in the open air.¹³²

Though this description may have applied to rural areas, the situation was less grim in urban areas. The 1731 inquiry into illegal popish schools notes the established presence of 'Popish' schools spread across Dublin city parishes (maps 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4).¹³³ Thaddeus Norton kept a 'popish school in Earl Street in St Catherine's parish,

¹²⁹ For example, the Earl of Cork established estate schools at Lismore and Bandon as early as 1610; The King's Hospital was established in 1670; Kilkenny College was established in 1682 and The Blue Coat School, Cork was established in 1699.

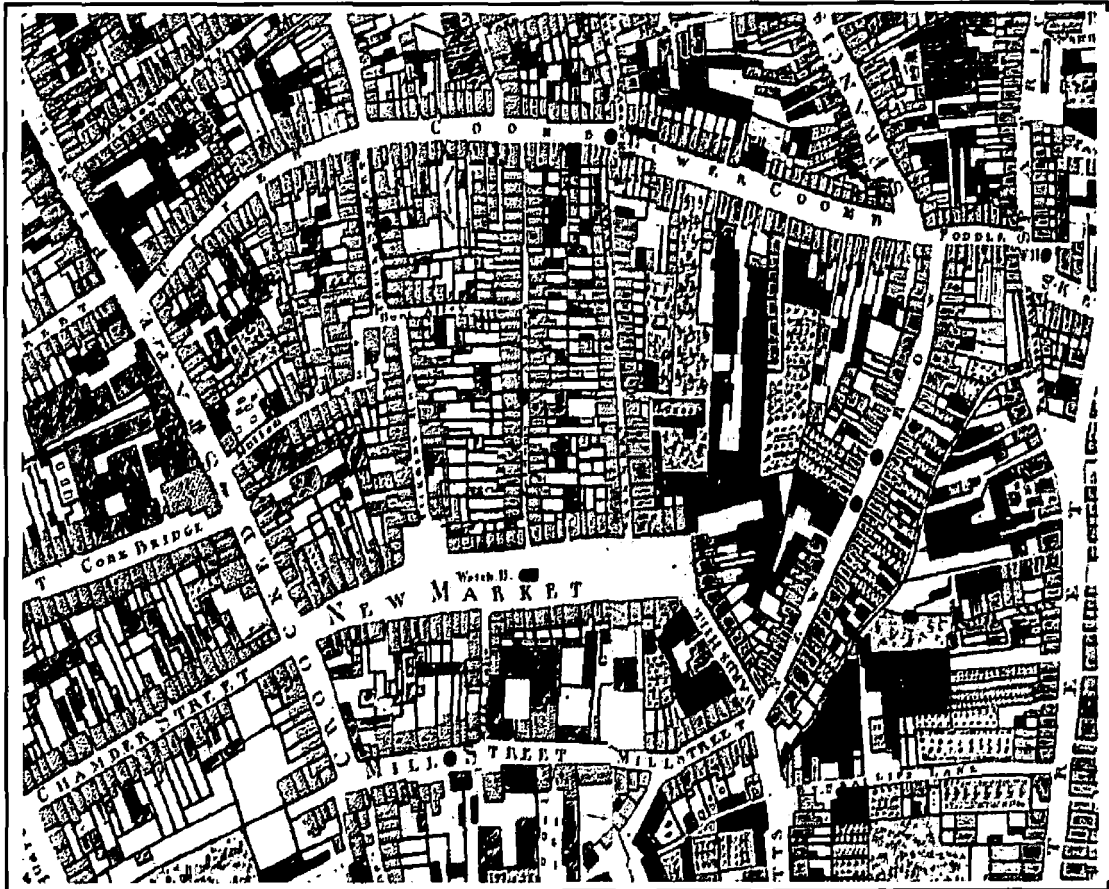
¹³⁰ Quane, 'The Abbey School, Tipperary', p. 59.

¹³¹ William Drennan to Martha McTier, Feb. [17]97, Agnew (ed.), *Drennan-McTier Letters*, ii, 302.

¹³² De Latocnaye, *A Frenchman's walk through Ireland*, pp 90-1.

¹³³ These locations are drawn from the *Inquiry into illegal Popish schools by House of Lords, diocesan, urban, parochial returns and comments*, 1731 in Corcoran, *State policy in Irish education*, pp 103-7 (hereafter referred to as *1731 Inquiry*), 'Report on the state of Popery, Ireland, 1731', *Arch. Hib.*, vol. 1 (1912), pp 10-27, and are based on the schools street location located within Rocque's 1756 map of Dublin.

as did Catherine Anderson in Mill Street in St Luke's, and twelve 'popish' schools educated children in St Michan's parish.¹³⁴ Given their city locations it can be assumed that lessons took place in substantive buildings.



Map. 4.1: Popish schools in St Luke's parish, Dublin, 1731
Source: 1731 *Inquiry*, pp 104-5.

¹³⁴ 1731 *Inquiry*, pp 103-7.



Map 4.2: Popish schools in St Catherine's parish, Dublin, 1731
 Source: 1731 *Inquiry*, pp 104-5.



Map 4.3: Popish schools in St Michan's parish, Dublin, 1731
 Source: 1731 *Inquiry*, pp 104-5.

only to the elite situation that was her focus, but also to a significant degree, to all schools throughout the eighteenth-century.

Given the unevenness of educational provision and in defiance of the acts to restrain foreign education of 7 William III, c. 4 and 2 Anne, c. 6, Roman Catholic children who could afford it were frequently educated on the continent. Between 1712 and 1715 the justices of the peace at Tralee and Galway recorded the departure of fourteen male children including the sons of the Earl of Clanrickard and Hyacinth Nugent, son of Lord Riverston, to France for 'foreign education'.¹³⁷ Éamon Ó Ciosáin has also noted a tradition among Cork families sending their children to be educated in France, notably in the Angers and Loire Valley area.¹³⁸

Families unable to afford the expense of foreign education adapted to the less than ideal situation in Ireland to suit their own needs. Even if operating outside the strict legal boundaries of the penal code a significant number of private tutors, schools, academies and convents servicing the educational needs of wealthier Irish Roman Catholic children, male and female, functioned in the first quarter of the eighteenth-century. The 1731 report noted that Cornelius Lynchy, a 'private Popish Schoolmaster' in Clonmel, Tipperary, went from 'house to house to instruct popish children', while Father Thady Glin, parish priest of Dunmore, county Galway boarded 'some gentlemen's children', teaching them 'philosophy and humanity in his Mass house'.¹³⁹ According to Edward Synge, Archbishop of Tuam, there were 'three Nunnerys which the Papists commonly call boarding schools' in Galway. Besides these, private tutors not only educated their employer's children but also took in children from the surrounding neighbourhood.¹⁴⁰

As the century progressed increasing Roman Catholic confidence encouraged the widening of educational provision for elite and middle-class Catholic children. The combination of public demand and a relaxation of the penal laws in the latter half of the century prompted a surge in private schools and the emergence of a number of major educational institutions, notably in 1782 St Kieran's College, Kilkenny, followed a year later by the Augustinian Academy at Brunswick Street, Cork. Both schools accepted upper-class Roman Catholic boys for 'second level' education. Yet despite these developments there was no official attempt to provide a comprehensive

¹³⁷ Corcoran, *Selected texts*, pp 52-3.

¹³⁸ Éamon Ó Ciosáin, 13 Jul. 2010, via email.

¹³⁹ 1731 *Inquiry*, p. 105.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, pp 106-7.

Catholic education for elite, gentry, peasant or pauper Catholic children until the nineteenth-century.

Dissenting religious groups such as Quakers, Huguenots, Methodists and Presbyterians were more successful in ensuring that most children of their denominations were educated. All opened and ran schools according to their religious beliefs.¹⁴¹ As Neville Newhouse notes, in order to 'keep Quakerism pure and undefiled',¹⁴² Quakers were obliged to educate their children, servants and 'those under their care' in Quaker principles of plain speech, dress and behaviour.¹⁴³ The first Irish Quaker school, which opened at Mountmellick in 1677 to 'instruct children in learning and sobriety', was quickly followed by one in Cork where children were taught reading, writing, Latin and arithmetic,¹⁴⁴ and by another in 1680 at Camden Street in Dublin.¹⁴⁵ Further schools opened over the course of the eighteenth-century; mainly privately run, the most notable was that at Ballitore, county Kildare (1726).¹⁴⁶ Quaker parents were expected to send their children to Quaker schools, and in cases of poverty, assistance to do so was given by their community.¹⁴⁷

Similarly Huguenots established their own schools with a distinctive ethos that was both Francophile and militaristic. The importance of education to Huguenot refugees was expressed by de Gaillard in 1695:

Busy our children, please, in learning what gentlefolk must know: a little Latin, geography, the globe, heraldry, Greek and Latin and French History, music, if they have a voice, and drawing, which is a science much in evidence nowadays. Finally neglect nothing that will give our children the education which they must have in accordance with their birth.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴¹ For Quaker education see Michael Quane, 'Quaker schools in Dublin', *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, 94, (1964), pp 48-9; Isobel Grubb, *Quakers in Ireland 1654-1900* (London, 1927); Olive Goodbody, 'Anthony Sharpe, a Quaker merchant of the Liberties', *Dublin Historical Record*, xiv, no. 1; McLoughlin, 'The sober duties of life'; Neville H. Newhouse, 'The founding of Friends' School, Lisburn', *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, 98, (1968), pp 47-55. For Huguenot education see Brigid O'Mullane, 'The Huguenots in Dublin, part I', *Dublin Historical Record*, viii, no. 4 (1946), pp 110-34; Thomas Gimlette, *The history of the Huguenot settlers in Ireland* (Dublin, 1888).

¹⁴² Newhouse, 'The founding of Friends' School, Lisburn', p. 47.

¹⁴³ McLoughlin, 'The sober duties of life', p. 13.

¹⁴⁴ Quane, 'Quaker schools in Dublin', pp 48-9.

¹⁴⁵ Grubb, *Quakers in Ireland 1654-1900*, p. 147.

¹⁴⁶ Atkinson, *Irish education*, p. 27. Quaker schools were also established at Edenderry, county Offaly in 1764; Mountmellick, county Laois in 1786; Lisburn, county Antrim in 1788, and Newtown, county Waterford in 1798.

¹⁴⁷ Grubb, *Quakers in Ireland 1654-1900*, p. 145; McLoughlin, 'The sober duties of life', p. 13; Quane, 'Quaker schools in Dublin', p. 49.

¹⁴⁸ De Gaillard to du Bourdieu, 10 Oct. 1695, Angélique Day, 'Marie Angélique de La Cherois: life of a Huguenot heiress, 1700-1771', G. E. J. Caldicott, H. Gough, J-P Pittion (eds), *The Huguenots and Ireland: anatomy of an emigration* (Dublin, 1987), pp 377-97.

The French pastor Jacques La Fontaine's school for both sexes at Stephen's Green, Dublin taught French, Latin, Greek, mathematics and drawing, and, with a view to future military careers, the 'art of fortification' from 1709.¹⁴⁹ Fontaine's school continued until 1721. Emphasising at this early stage the importance of education, another school was quickly established by wealthy Huguenots to educate children of those less fortunate in their community in Myler's Alley, Dublin. Here pupils were taught to read, write and sing psalms in French and to attend each of the French churches on successive Sundays.¹⁵⁰ A classical school was opened in 1716 by the Huguenot convert Rev. Viridet for children of all religious persuasions and the Huguenot clergyman Rev. Gast successfully ran his school in Fishamble Street for twenty years from 1741 to 1761.¹⁵¹

In 1750 a Methodist chapel and orphanage was established in Dublin's Whitefriar Street to maintain and teach twenty boys. Also supported by the society was a charity school educating forty boys, which was later enlarged to accommodate twenty-four girls. By the end of the century a large Methodist charity school existed in Hendrick Street, Dublin educating 200 boys and girls, mainly children of army parents. Adopting a similar educational philosophy to Quakers, by 1759 Conference expected that Methodist children be educated in a Methodist school.

Ulster Presbyterians¹⁵² were 'almost a complete society in themselves' and as a religious group maintained a similar cohesiveness to Quakers and Methodists.¹⁵³ A school was built in connection with most Presbyterian churches and charity and Sunday schools were also established. Their organisation and supervision was under the direct control of the kirk-sessions.¹⁵⁴ Though they were well supervised, the problem of non-attendance arose frequently and sometimes led to a child's expulsion.¹⁵⁵ Again, financial assistance was offered to encourage poor children to attend. In February 1690/1 Templepatrick kirk-sessions, county Antrim, advanced

¹⁴⁹ O'Mullane, 'The Huguenots in Dublin', p. 121.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., p. 132.

¹⁵² The strength of the Presbyterian Church lay in the north but there were scattered communities throughout Ireland.

¹⁵³ Peter Brooke, *Ulster Presbyterianism, the historical perspective 1610-1970* (New York, 1987), p. 152.

¹⁵⁴ The kirk-sessions were the basic unit of the Presbyterian Church consisting of the minister and elders of a single congregation.

¹⁵⁵ These applied to the Abbey Church, Dublin. Abbey kirk-Sessions, 6 May 1757, John Barkley, *Short history of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland* (Belfast, n.d.), p. 100.

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money to 'widow Graham' for her 'child's schooling',¹⁵⁶ and similarly in July 1693 to the 'two Thomsons',¹⁵⁷ while Kirkdonald (Dundonald, county Down) kirk-sessions gave a premium in 1703 to John Thomson 'for good (progress) in his learning'.¹⁵⁸

In contrast to the poor, most elite and gentry children, both male and female, were initially educated at home by their parents (usually their mother) and later entrusted to the care of private tutors. For both sexes this took place within the domestic environment. Boys were generally able to access further education at one of the many small private fee paying schools and academies established over the course of the century, but particularly from the 1760s; though, as will be discussed later, from mid-century girls were increasingly able to do so too. Rev. Saumarez Dubourdieu, formerly an usher at Shem Thompson's school at Hillsborough, county Kildare, opened a 'private' school at Lisburn, Antrim in 1756.¹⁵⁹ Although he could accommodate only a small number of boarders, Rev. Dubourdieu was quick to point out that 'there is good accommodation for lodgers' in the town.¹⁶⁰ Further south, John Bourke opened a school near 'Skiddy's Castle' county Cork in 1760,¹⁶¹ but as Bourke was a single man he could not accommodate boarders and instructed only 'day boys'.¹⁶² Likewise James Carr opened a school on Hammond's Marsh, Cork in 1760,¹⁶³ while another 'native of France', Mr Lefebure, opened a 'French School' on the Grand Parade in 1785.¹⁶⁴ In Wood Street Dublin, Thomas Ford 'teacher of mathematics' offered to instruct 'young gentlemen ... for business, the army, or the sea' at his school in 1771.¹⁶⁵

Initially educated by their mother, Charles Francis and Richard Brinsley Sheridan attended Samuel Whyte's academy when it opened in 1758 though their mother considered them 'dunces'.¹⁶⁶ Others did likewise. Young James Traill moved

¹⁵⁶ Templepatrick kirk-sessions, 11 Feb. 1690/91, *ibid.*, p. 104.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 16 Jul. 1693, p. 104.

¹⁵⁸ Kirkdonald kirk-sessions, 1703, *ibid.*, p. 105.

¹⁵⁹ *The Belfast Newsletter*, 28 Sep. 1756.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁶¹ *Cork Evening Post*, 4 Feb. 1760 (NLI, Quane Papers, Ms 17981(6)). John Skiddy, a member of one of the merchant families that controlled Cork in medieval times, built Skiddy's Castle, an urban tower house in 1445. It was used as a gunpowder magazine for much of the seventeenth and eighteenth-centuries. Recognising the dangers of an explosion in the heart of Cork city the Corporation requested its removal in the 1760s as John Bourke opened his school, but it was still used as a munitions store in the 1770s.

¹⁶² *Cork Evening Post*, 4 Feb. 1760 (NLI, Quane Papers, Ms 17981(6)).

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, 3 Apr. 1760.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 28 Apr. 1785.

¹⁶⁵ *Hibernian Journal*, 9-12 Aug. 1771, p. 183.

¹⁶⁶ Samuel Whyte, *Poems on various occasions* (3rd ed., Dublin, 1795), p. 277.

from the Latin School at Killyleagh, county Down to Mr McBride's in Belfast in 1703. In August 1793 Cork schoolteacher John Fitzgerald taught 'Whetham's son and Parker Dunscombe' at 'Mr. Hincks' School' and Henry Fortescue at 'Mr. Maguire's house'.¹⁶⁷ Here the child's original home schooling was expanded and boys prepared for university entrance; the schools acting as a transitional phase between their domestic and university education. Alternatively elite children such as Lucius (later third bar) and Donat O'Brien attended 'pre-university' schools such as Shem Thompson's at Hillsborough, county Kildare. In 1747, Thompson reported to Sir Edward O'Brien that his son 'Master Donat', 'a boy of quickness', was so much improved that 'by next Christmas or the following Easter ... [he] will be very well qualified for admission into the College & will appear there with good reputation.'¹⁶⁸

The regular and ongoing creation throughout the eighteenth-century of private schools catering for children of all religions attests to the weakness in church and state educational facilities in eighteenth-century Ireland. This was in keeping with the fact that, as Brooke notes, the principle that education was a 'responsibility of government'¹⁶⁹ was still far from being established and as a result parents sought to rectify and direct the development and provision of children's educational needs. With financial reward at stake, the emerging educational market responded positively to those demands.

Education for pauper children however became more socially and religiously entrenched. The first manifestation of the church and state's commitment to providing education to those for whom private, fee paying education was beyond their resources was the establishment of charity schools from the 1690s.¹⁷⁰ Designed to recall poor Protestant children 'to their religion' and at the same time 'instil ... the virtues of hard work and obedience',¹⁷¹ the combination of legislation, persuasion and 'pious example' would, it was anticipated, encourage Roman Catholic conversion. So, as the Established Church assumed a more confident and proactive role in education, for some reformers the true zeal for children's education became close to a sacred duty.¹⁷² As David Hayton observes:

¹⁶⁷ Lunham (ed.), 'John Fitzgerald's Diary, 1793', p. 105.

¹⁶⁸ Shem Thompson to Sir Edward O'Brien, 19 May 1747 (NLI, Inchiquin Papers, Ms 45353/2).

¹⁶⁹ Brooke, *Ulster Presbyterianism*, p. 150.

¹⁷⁰ See Hayton, 'Did Protestantism fail in early eighteenth-century Ireland?', pp 166-86.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 181.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 171.

the prospect of bestowing basic literacy, useful skills, industrious habits, and above all a real knowledge and understanding of religion, and thereby transforming hapless waifs into model Christians, touched every impulse in the reforming mind.¹⁷³

By aligning virtue and religion with labour into a pedagogical theory it was observed that 'a Christian and useful education of the children of the poor is absolutely necessary to their piety, virtue and an honest livelihood'.¹⁷⁴

Beginning in the cities where the needs were greatest, charity schools educating pauper children spread rapidly throughout the country in the first two decades of the eighteenth-century. David Hayton has identified a total of 192 charity schools established between 1695 and 1733, twenty-eight per cent (fifty-two) of which were located in large cities or towns (twenty six in Dublin and five each in Cork and Limerick).¹⁷⁵

By 1704, there were charity schools in the Cathedral Liberties of St Patrick's, Dublin providing for 'forty or fifty boys';¹⁷⁶ by 1706 'at the sign of the Buck in Mitre-alley near Kevin's-street', again for 'fifty poor boys'; for girls at Channel-row, and another in St John's parish.¹⁷⁷ In 1712, Edward Nicholson, an early supporter of the Charity school system praised the charity schools in Connacht 'where so many ... are already on a sudden set up, and more daily expected'.¹⁷⁸ Public support for the education of poor children is attested by the provision of bequests throughout the country; in 1719 Alderman Draper bequeathed fifty pounds to the support of the charity school for 'Black-boys of the town of Sligo'.¹⁷⁹ Also indicative of public approval, between 1721 and 1724 the increased money collected at the annual sermons for the support of Dublin's St Andrew's Parish Charity School enabled the governors to admit eight extra girls and to increase the salaries of the master and mistress.

¹⁷³ Hayton, 'Did Protestantism fail in early eighteenth-century Ireland?', p. 168.

¹⁷⁴ *An account of Charity-Schools lately erected in England, Wales and Ireland*, (London, 1706), p. 3.

¹⁷⁵ Hayton, 'Did Protestantism fail?', pp 183-6.

¹⁷⁶ *An account of the charity Schools in Ireland* (3rd ed., Dublin, 1721); Corcoran, *Selected texts on education systems*, p. 33.

¹⁷⁷ *An account of Charity-schools lately erected in England, Wales and Ireland*, p. 9.

¹⁷⁸ Edward Nicholson, *A method of charity-schools, recommended, for giving both a religious education and a way of livelihood to the poor children in Ireland ...* (Dublin, 1712).

¹⁷⁹ W. G. Wood-Martin, *History of Sligo County and town from the close of the revolution of 1688 to the present time* (Dublin, 1892) (facsimile ed., Sligo, 1990), p. 164.

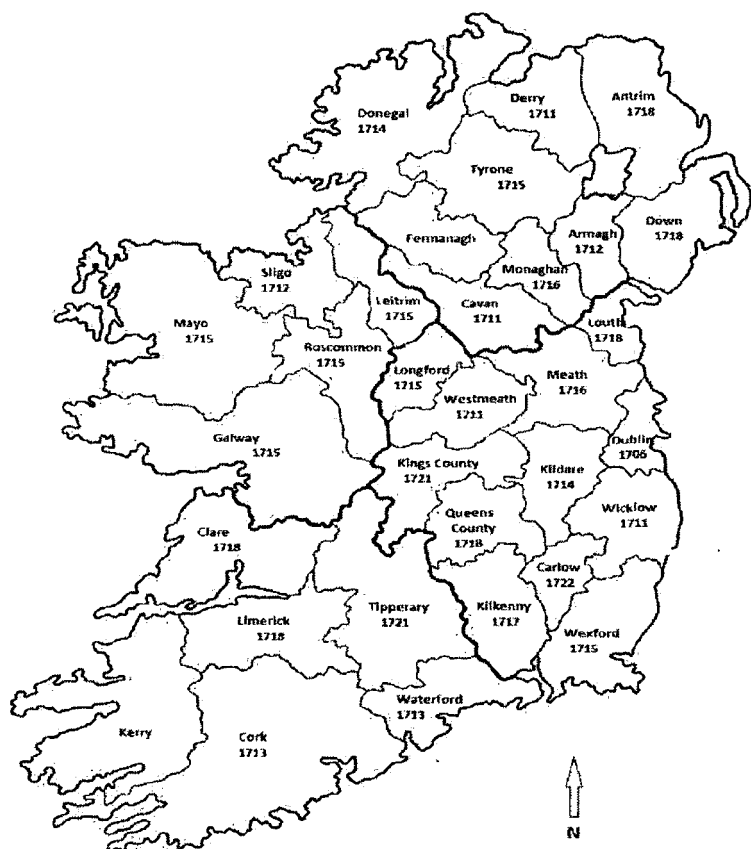
Charity Schools established in Ireland 1695-1733
numbers by county



Left Map 4.5: Charity schools established in Ireland 1695-1733

Source: M. G. Jones, *The Charity School movement: a study of eighteenth-century Puritanism in action* (Cambridge, 1938).

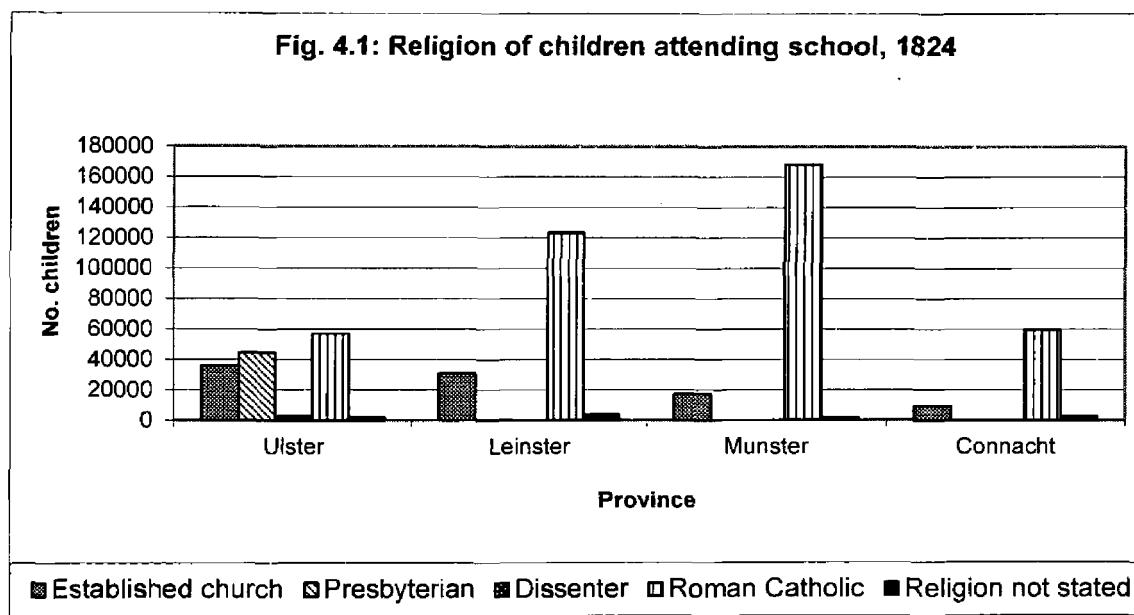
Provincial Charity Schools established 1706-24



Map 4.6: Provincial Charity Schools established 1706-24, by county
 Source: M. G. Jones, *The Charity School movement: a study of eighteenth-Century Puritanism in action* (Cambridge, 1983).

By the latter part of the century there was a recognition that not all children were in a position to attend daily schools, that many had to assist their parents or masters during the week 'so that few have opportunity ... or means of acquiring any degree of learning or knowledge of their duty to God or man, except on Sundays'. Sunday Schools were established to cater for the educational needs of such children. Despite the Sunday school on Dublin's North Strand being considered 'at such a distance from many parts of the city',¹⁸⁰ the number of children attending increased rapidly with 'above 200 poor children of both sexes' attending on one Sunday in 1786.¹⁸¹ The fact that between January 1786 and March 1787, 532 boys and 285 girls of all religions were admitted to St Catherine's Sunday school is indicative of the enthusiasm among pauper parents and children to obtain an education, albeit a basic, elementary and religiously bound one.¹⁸²

Even though the total number of pupils in the charity schools remained small, it is significant that by 1725 a minority of children in a geographically expanded area had access to some form of education however rudimentary.¹⁸³ It is notable also that, as a group, Roman Catholic children quickly dominated the number of children enrolled, and as figure 4.1 illustrates, that continued to be the case into the nineteenth-century.



Source: *Second report of the Commissioners of Irish education inquiry* (Dublin, 1826), p. 5.

¹⁸⁰ *General rules for St Mary's daily and Sunday school (no. 40), Great Strand-street, Dublin 1796* (Dublin, 1796), p. 4.

¹⁸¹ *Freeman's Journal*, 17 Aug. 1786.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, 1 Mar., 17 Mar. 1787.

¹⁸³ Hayton, 'Did Protestantism fail?', pp 180-2.

Yet, despite the increase in the number of charity schools, they were never widespread or numerous enough to provide educational facilities for more than a minority of children. A majority of Roman Catholic children, particularly in rural areas, had little choice but to attend ‘pay’ or ‘hedge schools’¹⁸⁴ if they aspired to receive any education.¹⁸⁵

There is overwhelming evidence that pay, hedge or Popish schools provided children throughout Ireland with access to an education, albeit rudimentary, not only during the course of the eighteenth-century but also into the nineteenth. Between 1711 and 1724 twenty men accused of being popish schoolmasters were tried at Limerick,¹⁸⁶ and in June 1714 alone, six Tralee county Kerry men had warrants issued against them, all ‘Popish schoolmasters’.¹⁸⁷ In the absence of statutory rural educational provision, the continuing popularity of these schools was vividly revealed by the 1731 House of Lords inquiry that estimated the number of ‘illegal’ or ‘popish’ schools at least at 549, with forty-five operating in Dublin city and twenty-nine in the environs (table 4.2 and map 4.7), though why none were recorded in Derry is not clear.¹⁸⁸ Moreover, their number grew thereafter. In 1824 the Commissioners of Irish education inquiry recorded 394,732 scholars attending a total of 9,352 pay, hedge or Popish schools.¹⁸⁹

Table 4.2: Abstract of Diocesan Returns, Popish Schools, 1731					
Achonree	7	Dromore	6	Kilmaduagh	15
Ardmagh	40	Dublin, city of	45	Kilmore and Ardagh	49
Cashell	28	Dublin, outside the city	29	Leighlin	24
Clogher	13	Elphin	19	Limerick	9
Clonfert	7	Fenabor, <i>alias</i> Kilfenora	10	Meath	41
Cloyne	17	Ferns	14	Ossory	34
Corke & Ross	48	Kildare	24	Raphoe	4
Derry	not stated	Killala	many	Tuam	32
Down	4	Killalow	20	Waterford and Lismore	13
				Total	549

Source: 1731 *Inquiry*, p. 103.

¹⁸⁴ Dowling’s book still remains the most comprehensive survey of hedge schooling in Ireland: Dowling, *The hedge schools of Ireland*. See also Antonia McManus, *The Irish hedge school and its books 1695-1831* (Dublin, 2004).

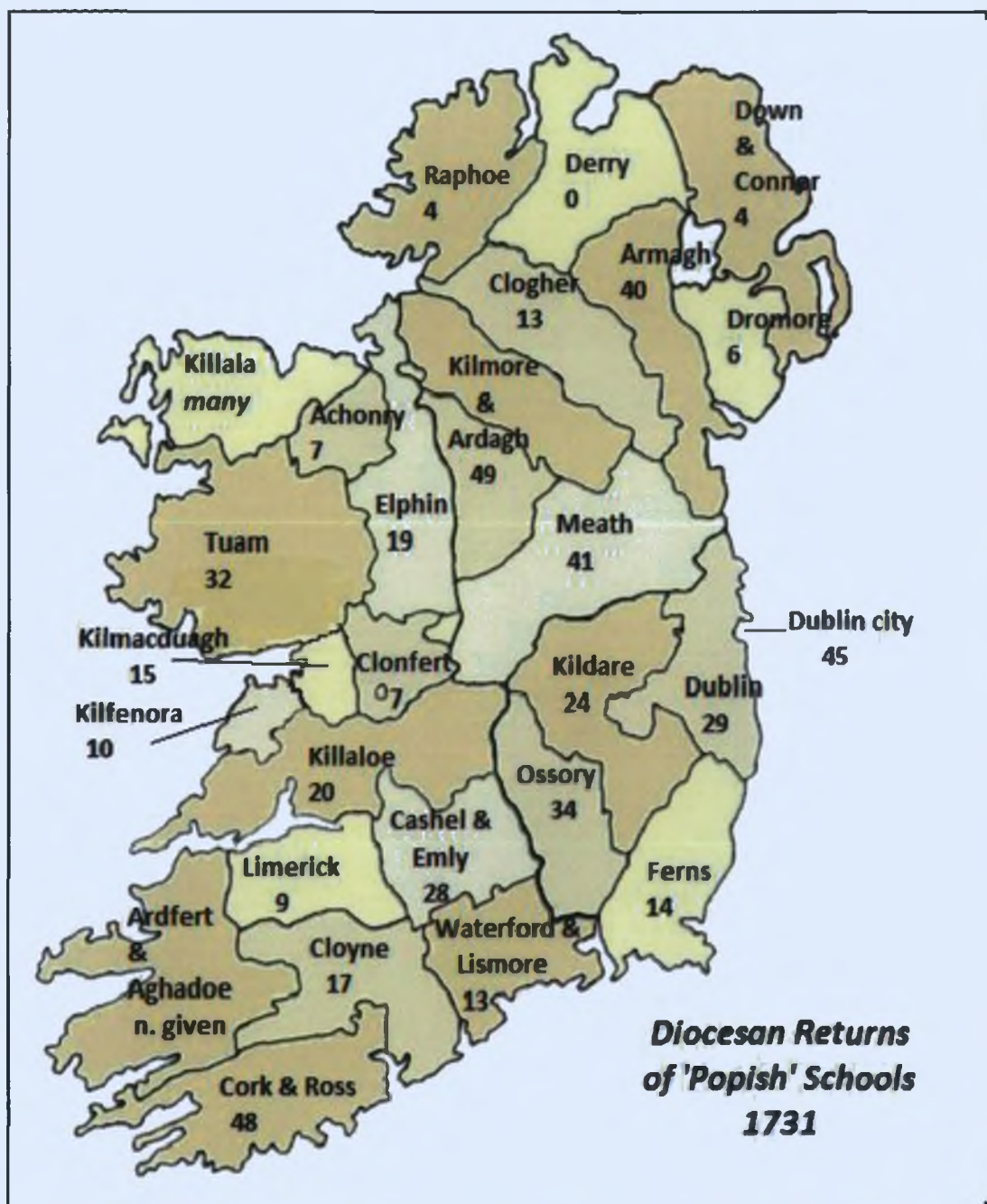
¹⁸⁵ Dowling, *The hedge schools of Ireland*, p. 35.

¹⁸⁶ Corcoran, *Selected texts*, pp 53-4.

¹⁸⁷ Corcoran, *Selected texts*, p. 52.

¹⁸⁸ 1731 *Inquiry*, pp 103-7.

¹⁸⁹ These were schools unconnected with any of the educational or improving societies which, by 1824 many hedge schools had joined. It must also be noted that there is a discrepancy between the Protestant clergy returns and the Roman Catholic of 9042 pupils, although they both agree on the number of schools: *Second report of the Commissioners of Irish education inquiry*, p. 18.



Map 4.7: Diocesan returns of 'Popish' schools, 1731
Source: 1731 *Inquiry*, p. 103.

Contemporary travellers frequently commented on the existence of hedge schools and the numbers of children attending. In 1775, Richard Twiss observed in Dunleer, county Louth 'about a dozen bare-legged boys sitting by the side of the road scrawling on scraps of paper',¹⁹⁰ as did Arthur Young in 1776-8,¹⁹¹ and the French

¹⁹⁰ Richard Twiss, *A tour in Ireland* (London, 1776), pp 73-4.

traveller De Latocnaye at Dunmanway, Cork in 1796-7.¹⁹² Similarly, the visitation book of Archbishop Butler of the Catholic archdiocese of Cashel testifies to the existence of pay and classical schools of good reputation in that diocese at mid-century.¹⁹³ Hedge schools were normally denominationally exclusive but several early schools taught both Catholic and Protestant children. For instance, children of Catholic and Protestant faiths attending schools in Derrybursk and Derryvullen parishes in county Fermanagh in 1731 were 'taught to read together'.¹⁹⁴ While this comment may reflect the better quality of this school it might also represent the lack of any official educational provision in the vicinity for children of all faiths other than 'popish' pay schools.

Thus the demand for education, the lack of official provision, the continuing popularity and children's attendance at 'popish' schools highlighted by the 1731 inquiry into the state of popery, combined to alarm the authorities. As a result, the movement for social and moral reform that sustained the establishment of the charity schools at the beginning of the century was overtaken in the 1730s by the distinctively proselytising Charter school system.¹⁹⁵

Initially supported by voluntary subscriptions, from 1745 The Incorporated Society for Promoting English Protestant Schools in Ireland [Charter schools] was underwritten by the Dublin and London parliaments. This was the first significant attempt by an Irish administration to support a system of educational provision for children in Ireland. Between 1745 and 1824, the substantial sum of £1,027,715 was advanced for the support of the Charter schools, and an educational system specifically targeted at pauper children, mainly Roman Catholic.¹⁹⁶ Moreover, the enthusiasm with which those in authority backed this system not only reflected a fundamental shift in attitudes towards children's education but also highlights the adoption of basic pedagogical theories promoted by educationalists such as John Locke – though with a specific Irish and religious dimension.

At first the Charter schools were unable to keep pace with the number of children seeking access. Exemplifying the keenness with which pauper parents

¹⁹¹ Young, *A tour in Ireland*, Maxwell (ed.), p. 202.

¹⁹² De Latocnaye, *A Frenchman's walk through Ireland*, pp 90-1.

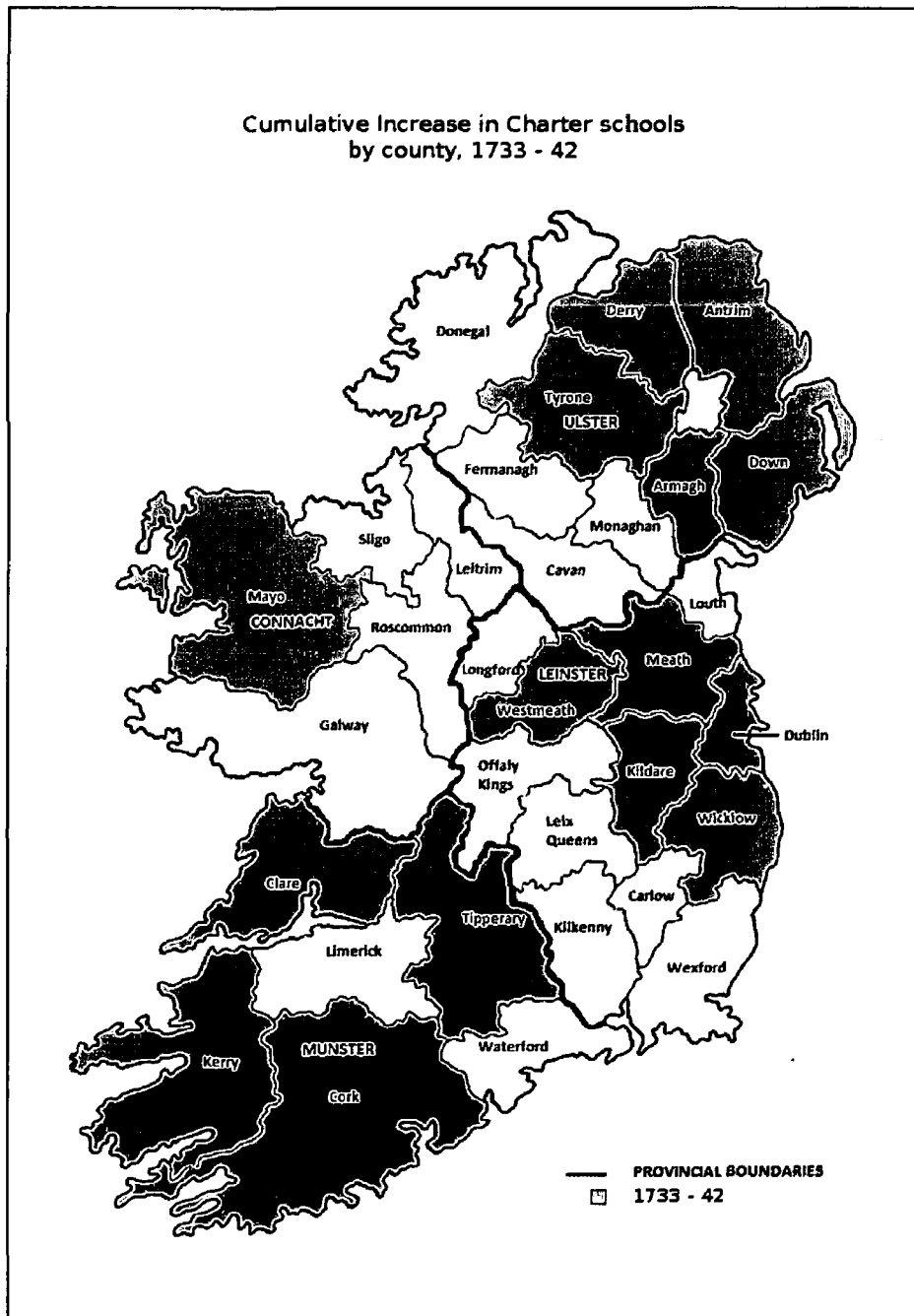
¹⁹³ Christopher O'Dwyer (ed.), 'Archbishop Butler's visitation book', *Arch. Hib.*, 33 (1975).

¹⁹⁴ 1731 *Inquiry*, p. 104.

¹⁹⁵ For a comprehensive and detailed assessment of the Charter school system see Milne, *The Irish Charter schools*.

¹⁹⁶ Corcoran, *Selected texts*, p. 187.

embraced children's education when available, additional schools were quickly erected. Between the foundation of the first Charter school at Castledermot, county Kildare in 1734 and Bishop Pococke's Lintown Manufactory near Kilkenny in 1779, a total of fifty-nine Charter schools were established, many in remote locations (maps 4.8, 4.9, 4.10, 4.11, 4.12).



Map 4.8: Cumulative increase in Charter schools by county, 1733-42

Source: Kenneth Milne, *The Irish Charter schools 1730-1830* (Dublin, 1997), pp 347-8.

Cumulative Increase in Charter schools
by county, 1743 - 52



Map 4.9: Cumulative increase in Charter schools by county, 1743-52
Source: Kenneth Milne, *Irish Charter schools 1730-1830* (Dublin, 1997),

Cumulative Increase in Charter schools
by county, 1753 - 62



10: Cumulative increase in Charter schools by county, 1753-62
Kenneth Milne, *Irish Charter schools 1730-1830* (Dublin, 1997), pp 347-8.

Cumulative Increase in Charter schools
by county, 1763 - 72



Map 4.11: Cumulative increase in Charter schools by county, 1763-72
Source: Kenneth Milne, *Irish Charter schools 1730-1830* (Dublin, 1997),

Cumulative increase in Charter schools
by county, 1773 - 82



12: Cumulative increase in Charter schools by county, 1773-82
 : Kenneth Milne, *Irish Charter schools 1730-1830* (Dublin, 1997), pp 347-8.

Despite the fact that children once admitted into a school became the property of the society, parents actively sought their children's admission, and not only in times of economic distress. Vagrant and beggar children were also legally taken into the custody of these schools. The initial popularity among parents for the Charter schools may be due to the fact that many of the original more moderate Charity schools were subsumed into the Charter school system but this is difficult to clarify.

As the century progressed, public and parental unease grew with the proselytising activities to which the children were subject to in the schools; at their meagre education, and at the physical abuse suffered, and the neglect children endured therein. Regardless of the lack of alternative facilities, Catholic parents became increasingly reluctant to enrol their children, and the Incorporated Society found it increasingly difficult to fill vacant school places.¹⁹⁷ In spite of these problems, government continued to fund the work of the Incorporated Society, and the Charter school system remained the primary state educational provision for Irish peasant and pauper children through the eighteenth and into the nineteenth-century.

Catholic Church authorities were understandably uneasy at the sustained assault on the religious beliefs of Catholic children in Charter schools, but there was no comprehensive framework of religious instructors to combat proselytism and resistance was sporadic. Furthermore, the overwhelming majority of poor children were members of the Catholic Church, a church that crucially was supported to a significantly lesser extent by private philanthropy than its Protestant counterpart and so was at a distinct financial disadvantage. Nonetheless, the Catholic Church responded as best it could.

The lay tradition of involvement in Catholic sodalities and confraternities of the seventeenth-century was revived in the second half of the eighteenth; one of the first was established in the 1740s to teach children catechism in what were termed 'chapel schools'. In Killosty chapel in the archdiocese of Cashel the schoolmaster Pat Ryan had 'ab[ou]t 30 boys learning the Christian Doctrine', while James Ryan did likewise at Cloneen chapel. Similarly Daniel Ryan and Tom Kenedy of Drangan and Mary Wailsh of Ballylusky [Magowry parish] all taught children catechism.¹⁹⁸ Thus by mid-century, the Catholic Church was developing a visible educational response in

¹⁹⁷ Attempting to address this shortage they established Provincial Nurseries designed to supply children to fill vacancies as they arose in the Charter schools.

¹⁹⁸ O'Dwyer (ed.), 'Archbishop Butler's visitation book', pp 66-7.

wealthier dioceses. Archbishop Butler of Cashel's visitation book highlights the provision of an elementary though religious education in that diocese's chapel schools, and also the fact that this was enthusiastically supported by Catholic parents.¹⁹⁹

The gradual relaxation of the penal laws against education encouraged the open establishment of Catholic schools and the continued proliferation of hedge schools. Even though there was a requirement for Roman Catholic teachers to obtain a licence, Nano Nagle (1728-84), accepted poor Catholic children by degrees into her Cork schools in 1769 and contrived to avoid official notice by seeking 'not to make any noise about it in the beginning'.²⁰⁰ In about nine months she had 200 children in her school and was 'financing seven schools ... two for boys and five for girls'.²⁰¹ Meanwhile Teresa Mulally (1728-1803) established a school in 1766 for Roman Catholic children in Dublin.

So where schools were available parents supported them though most, including hedge schools, were fee-paying. Although the number of schools throughout the country increased over the course of the century, the education they provided was variable in character. But the crucial point is that many more children had access to some form of education at the close of the century than at the beginning. Even though more boys accessed education than girls, the development of specific female educational provision, particularly from mid-century, was a notable feature of eighteenth-century Ireland and was in direct response to changing attitudes towards children in Irish society, male and female.

Female educational facilities

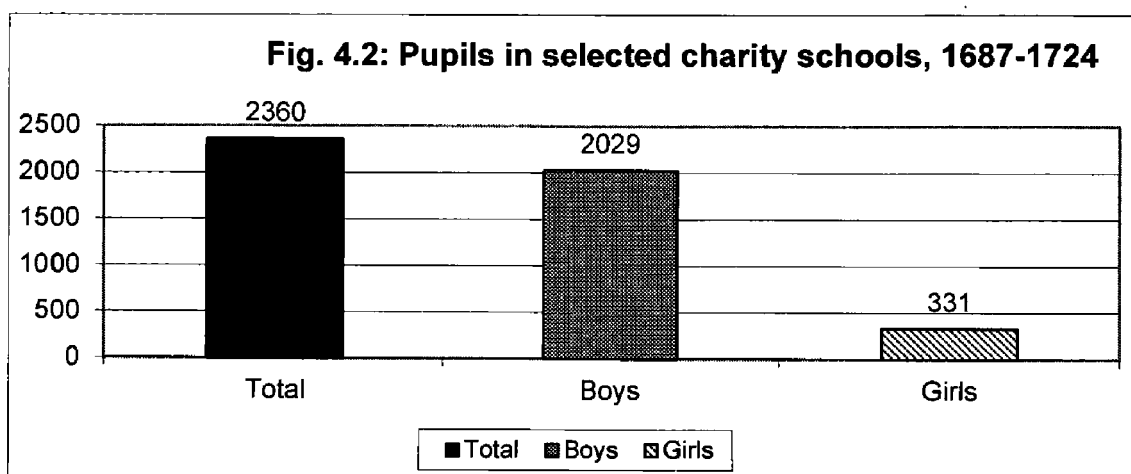
Throughout the eighteenth and into the nineteenth-century significantly more boys were provided with an education than girls and this was the case whatever the social class. The gender imbalance is particularly apparent for the eighteenth-century in early Charity school admissions (figure 4.2) but its attested also in the Commissioners of Education inquiry of 1824 (figure 4.3).²⁰²

¹⁹⁹ O'Dwyer (ed.), 'Archbishop Butler's visitation book', p.65.

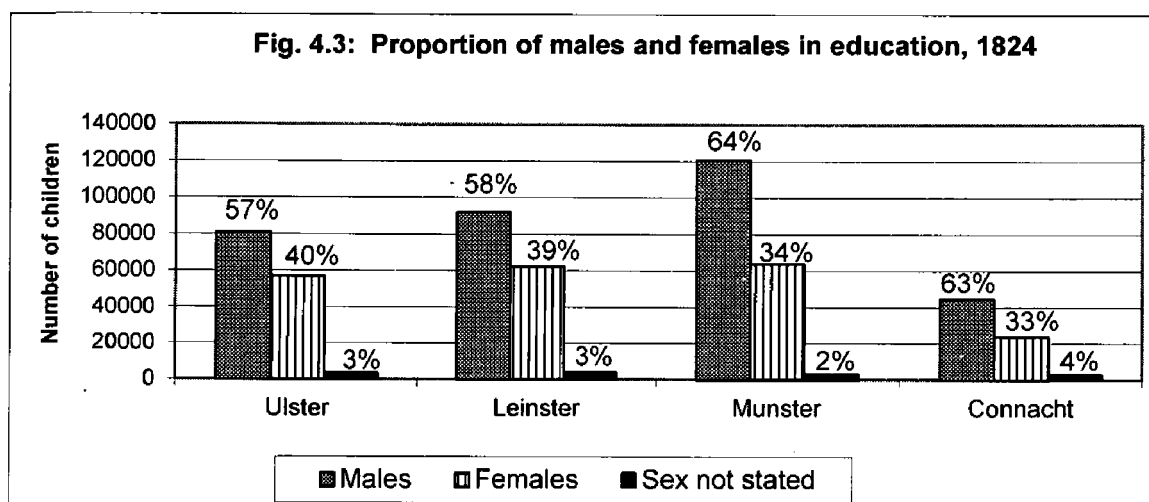
²⁰⁰ William Hutch, D.D., *Nano Nagle, her life, her labours and their fruits* (Dublin, 1875), p. 33.

²⁰¹ O'Dowd, *A history of women in Ireland*, pp 198-9.

²⁰² Using the website associated with this thesis, 'Irish children in 18th schools and institutions', a similar analysis may be carried out [<http://dev.dho.ie/~sday/gaye/> accessed Mar. 2011].



Source: *An account of the Charity Schools in Great Britain and Ireland* (London, 1706-24); M. G. Jones, *The Charity School movement. A study of eighteenth-century Puritanism in action* (Cambridge, 1938), pp 384-5.



Source: *Second report of the Commissioners of Irish education inquiry* (Dublin, 1826), p. 5. Note there was a discrepancy between the returns of the Protestant clergy with those of the Roman Catholic clergy of 8415. This graph uses the returns of the Protestant clergy.

Yet consistent with the evolving educational debate discussed in section one, by the 1780s there was a significant increase in the availability of private day and boarding schools directed specifically at the education of female children of middling families. Those that advertised in newspapers catered for girls aged ten or eleven and were ‘intended to develop the basic literacy skills that many middle-class children’ acquired in the home.²⁰³ For example, the daughters of David Murray opened a school in 1771 in ‘Great Strand-street’, Dublin ‘for the reception of young ladies’²⁰⁴ and Thomas Moore attended Samuel Whyte’s Academy with ‘one of the three

²⁰³ O’Dowd, *A history of women in Ireland*, p. 211.

²⁰⁴ *Hibernian Journal*, 18-21 Oct. 1771.

beautiful Misses Montgomery' during the 1780s.²⁰⁵ Meanwhile six year-old Emelia Adlercron and her sister Maria were admitted to Miss Reanshant's school in Dublin in May 1786.²⁰⁶

Though relatively few in number, schools directed to the education of females spread rapidly throughout Ireland. In 1782 a Miss Pothet and her sister opened their house in Paul Street, Cork for the instruction of 'young ladies'.²⁰⁷ Mrs Redman ran a boarding school for young ladies in Dublin Street, Carlow in 1788,²⁰⁸ Mrs Smith and Miss Holland operated one in Graige[namanagh],²⁰⁹ and Miss McMahon and Miss Younge another in Waterford in 1789.²¹⁰ Appealing to the anglophile parent, in 1794 Rev. and Mrs Jones advertised their Dublin girls' boarding school run under a 'system of instruction' as good 'as any in the most eminent of the London schools'.²¹¹

Yet opinions differed on the benefits of boarding schools for girls. On the one hand the aristocratic Lady Caroline Holland thought 'nothing so desirable' or advantageous for a girl as being at home and learning from her mother.²¹² On the other, Anne Venables, a member of the gentry class, was of the opinion 'that young women are only in danger when they come home to their mothers'.²¹³ These two differing opinions are reflective of the debates taking place within society and of the importance that female education had assumed by the latter half of the century.

While these schools educated Protestant, middle-class girls, the return of nuns to Ireland during the eighteenth-century facilitated the development of convents with female boarding schools attached, which provided an education for wealthy Catholic females. The Dominican nuns opened a boarding school in Channel Row, Dublin in 1719²¹⁴ and Richard Pococke specifically commented on the Dominican nuns' boarding school in Galway in 1752. The fact that wealthy Roman Catholic girls attended private boarding schools is indicative of the existence of a Catholic middle-class with the financial means to educate their daughters, which was comparable to

²⁰⁵ Russell (ed.), *Memoirs, journal and correspondence of Thomas Moore*.

²⁰⁶ Adlercron diary 1782-94, 16 May 1786 (NLI, Ms 4481).

²⁰⁷ *Cork Evening Post*, 12 Dec. 1782 (NLI, Quane Papers, Ms 17981(6)).

²⁰⁸ Lucas's *Directory*, Carlow (1788).

²⁰⁹ *Finn's Leinster Journal*, 29 Jul. 1789.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 31 Jan. 1789.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, 25 Jan. 1794.

²¹² Lady [Caroline] Holland to Marchioness of Kildare, 19 Dec. 1762, Fitzgerald (ed.), *Leinster correspondence*, i, 355.

²¹³ Anne Venables to Margaret O'Hara, n.d. (NLI, O'Hara Papers, Ms 20366).

²¹⁴ Cited in Margaret MacCurtain, 'Women, education and learning in Early Modern Ireland', MacCurtain and O'Dowd (eds), *Women in early modern Ireland*, footnote no. 29, p. 178.

the situation developing in England among the newly industrialised and wealthy middle-classes. However, the tradition of educating girls in continental schools and convents persisted, especially among wealthy families such as the Nagles of Cork and may partly be attributed to the social esteem attached.²¹⁵

Pauper Catholic girls, where possible, accessed an education in one of the less proselytising charity and Sunday Schools as nuns were initially reluctant to address the educational needs of the poor. Responding to this gap Teresa Mulally opened a pauper girls' school in Dublin in 1766 and three years later Nano Nagle financed five schools for pauper girls of the Roman Catholic persuasion in Cork.²¹⁶

Even though the century began with a paucity of educational provision, by mid-century a greater number of children of all classes – elite, middling, peasant, pauper, Protestant, Catholic or dissenting – availed of an increased educational provision, a provision that was further expanded in the latter half of the century. The legal restrictions provided by the penal laws, the degree to which Roman Catholic parents circumvented those restrictions, and the potential dangers, both domestic and foreign to which they exposed their children in order to obtain an education, indicates their determination to access schooling for them. Their actions clearly demonstrate an awareness among eighteenth-century Irish parents of the benefits children's education held. The importance of education was further reflected in the positive response to demands for female education from mid-century. While the provision of children's educational needs in general remained uneven until the first quarter of the nineteenth-century, the enthusiasm with which parents supported the combination of schooling available at the close of the century is testimony to the importance of education in the expanding concept of childhood in eighteenth-century Ireland.

SECTION III: THE MECHANICS OF EDUCATION

As early as 1693 John Locke concluded that education, which he saw as more than 'reading' and 'writing', but included the moral development of the child was 'the duty and concern' of parents. He noted that the most difficult decision parents had to make

²¹⁵ O'Dowd, *A history of women in Ireland*, p. 213. See also Hutch, *Nano Nagle, her life, her labours*, pp 6-7.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp 198-9.

was the type of education their children received, private or public,²¹⁷ and that both had risks attached. Locke was not alone in expressing these views but echoed the sentiments and debates surrounding education at the beginning of the eighteenth-century; how and where was it best to educate children – at home or away at public school?

Even though Locke recommended that children be educated at home, thus coming under the sole influence of their parents and a carefully chosen tutor,²¹⁸ he was keen not to blame schoolmasters for the defects or limitations of public schooling. Locke believed that a master, charged with the care of so many pupils, could not possibly ‘study and correct everyone’s particular defects and wrong inclinations’, ‘form their minds and manners’, while ensuring children attended to their studies.²¹⁹ Indeed the methods adopted in public school education throughout the eighteenth-century were in general directed at the totality of a classroom rather than towards the individual child.

Rousseau was far more vehement in his opposition to public education, basing his educational policy as outlined in *Émile* on a private and ‘natural’ education. Rousseau described contemporary educational institutions as ‘ridiculous establishments’ teaching children to be selfish and deceitful, unable to make for themselves ‘a consistent character’ of use to themselves or others.²²⁰ Rousseau believed that a private education allowed parents to ‘guard’ their children’s ‘heart from vice and their mind from error’,²²¹ which were both fundamental issues in the public/private education and moral reform debates of the eighteenth-century.

Parents were aware that at public school children’s peers became their primary influence and children were liable to develop unwelcome habits and vices. As Jamie Gianoutsos notes, eighteenth-century parents were acutely aware that ‘a loss of virtue is seldom recovered’.²²² By contrast, children educated at home ran the risk of remaining ignorant of the world and appearing so when taking their place as adults in

²¹⁷ This chapter accepts Sophia Woodley’s definition of ‘public education’ as being educated with other children in school and ‘private education’ as being educated at home. Woodley notes that by the late eighteenth-century English educational theory was firmly ‘structured as a battleground between two distinct kinds of education, public and private’: Woodley, ‘Oh miserable and most ruinous measure’, pp 21-2.

²¹⁸ Locke, *Some thoughts concerning education*, p. ix.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 48.

²²⁰ Jamie Gianoutsos, ‘Locke and Rousseau: early childhood education’, *The Pulse*, 4, no. 1 (n.d.), p. 61.

²²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 99.

²²² *Ibid.*, pp 5-6.

society. William Buchan held strong views on children's education and warned particularly against 'an effeminate' one for boys.²²³ These issues were still pertinent in 1787 when the subjects for discussion at a meeting at the Capel Street Opera House, Dublin were: 'Are public schools or private tuition best adapted for the education of youth?' followed by: 'which is the more contemptible character, the masculine woman, or the effeminate man?'²²⁴

For parents of children setting forth on their education the choice of schooling, public or private, was an important matter. In recognition, elite and middling Irish parents adopted a combined approach – initially educating children at home and later at public schools and universities.²²⁵

Domestic education

The seventeenth-century philosopher and teacher Comenius highlighted the role of mothers in education, and in *The school of infancy, an essay on the education of youth during the first six years* (n.d.) placed the family as central and crucial to children's education. There are many instances in Irish correspondence where the role played by mothers in the early education of their children is noted. The county Tipperary clergyman's daughter Dorothea Herbert received her early education at home from her mother, and only received instruction from local masters later.²²⁶ The Welsh born Jane Lovell, mother to the educationalist Richard Lovell Edgeworth, 'acquired an early and a decided taste for knowledge of all sorts' though her mother 'was singularly averse to all learning in a lady, beyond reading the Bible and being able to cast up a week's household account'.²²⁷ Even so, Jane Edgeworth 'stored her mind with more literature, than she ever allowed to appear in common conversations'²²⁸ and her son Richard was the grateful recipient of her enthusiasm (though with her own particular adjustments) for the educational theories and philosophy of John Locke.

Fathers too took an interest. The attention Bishop Edward Synge paid to the education of his daughter Alicia who had her own governess, attests that some fathers played a role in home education.²²⁹ Despite employing tutors for his sons at Birr

²²³ Buchan, *Domestic medicine* (19th ed.), p. 25.

²²⁴ *Freeman's Journal*, 10 Feb. 1787.

²²⁵ This thesis does not address itself to the topic of university education.

²²⁶ Herbert, *Retrospections*, p. 25.

²²⁷ Edgeworth and Edgeworth, *Memoirs*, i, 106.

²²⁸ *Ibid.*

²²⁹ See Legg (ed.), *The Synge letters*.

Castle up to the time they graduated from Trinity College, Sir Laurence Parsons (1758-1841) on occasion took charge of lessons himself, enjoying the experience enough to record:

with what delight I used at that time to enjoy this [Homer] exercise. I most carefully read over every morning the part which they were to say, and examined every peculiar expression carefully ... I was particular in making them acquainted with all the niceties of the language and in grounding them accurately in grammar. ... they received my instruction with such pleasure that a looker-on would have thought that we were engaged in the most agreeable pastime.²³⁰

Similarly, and despite his initial flirtation with Rousseau, Richard Edgeworth intimately involved himself in the semi-structured education of his own large family. As his daughter Maria noted, though often busy with other pursuits, her father 'always found time to attend to his children's education and in some way or other turned to account for their improvement whatever active employment engaged his attention'.²³¹ The fact that his ten year-old son Sneyd Edgeworth (b. 1786) was capable of translating – before his father returned from his morning's ride – Darwin's *Zoonomia* is testimony to the success of Edgeworth's educational endeavours.²³²

But while Edgeworth and Parsons felt qualified to instruct and educate their children many parents did not, perhaps reflecting their own inadequate schooling. Despite her personal misgivings, the Irish raised Lady Sarah Bunbury sought to educate her daughter Louisa (1768-85) herself. Aware that she had not 'the talent of teaching', Lady Sarah bemoaned the fact that she contrived 'to make ... [Louisa] hate what she learns with *me* and like it with other people'.²³³ Though well educated, Lady Frances Keightley, the wife of Thomas Keightley²³⁴ the Irish revenue commissioner, had an idiosyncratic command of grammar and spelling, a trait she shared with Queen Mary II,²³⁵ yet Lady Frances was intimately involved in her daughter's and grandson's education. The irregular grammatical and spelling practices of many

²³⁰ The children were William (1800-67) who built the telescope at Birr Castle, John Clere (1802-28) and Laurence (1805-69). Sir L. Parson, 'History of John Clere Parsons' (Parsons Mss) cited in Atkinson, *Irish education*, pp 84-5.

²³¹ Edgeworth and Edgeworth, *Memoirs*, ii, 300.

²³² *Ibid.*, ii, 174.

²³³ Lady Sarah Lennox to Duchess of Leinster, 1 Apr. 1777, Fitzgerald (ed.) *Leinster correspondence*, ii, 219.

²³⁴ Lady Frances was the youngest daughter of Edward Hyde first Earl of Clarendon. Her husband Thomas Keightley was admitted to the Irish Privy Council, appointed to the revenue commission and sat in the Irish parliament for Inistioge, county Kilkenny (1695-9) and for county Kildare (1703-11, 1713-14) and was Commissioner for the Great Seal. See Ashford, 'Advice to a daughter'.

²³⁵ *O.D.N.B.*, vol. 37, p. 125.

ladies, illustrated by Lady Drogheda (figure 4.4) certainly did not qualify them to teach.²³⁶

Melefont March the 16 [1698]

Sir, I reseved ys yesterday with the inclosed; that from my Ld Rochester wod mortify mee extreamly wear it not of soe antient a date; but becaus I wod follow yt ... to let nothing truble mee; ... that too months time may have acomplyshed what his Ldsp then semed to dispair of ... this affair being so very uncertain the litell towne of Dublin soe sensorious maks me decline it for noe reson one my side but for fear it shod doe Mits Keatly the least predjidiz ...

Fig. 4.4: Lady Drogheda's idiosyncratic spelling and syntax, 1698.

Source: Lady Drogheda to Thomas Keightley, 16 Mar 1698 (NLI, Inchiquin Papers, Ms 45722/3).

In light of such parental difficulties and the importance education assumed by mid-century, employing tutors or governesses was generally the preferred option of elite and gentry parents who opted for a domestic education.

Tutors

The comments of Mr Sandford, librarian to Rev. Dean Delany, indicate that many elite and middling parents not only took an active part in their children's home education but also, were acutely aware of the dynamics involved in tutoring a child. Mr Sandford expressed reluctance to accept the position as tutor to the nine year-old grandson of the Earl Grandison 'if he is to be the slave of a silly woman and a teasing child, and not allowed a proper authority'.²³⁷ Having taken on the education of the 'most unreasonably indulged' though 'good-natured and tractable' six year-old Sir John Meade in 1750, his tutor Mr Mount felt his job was made easier as Lady Meade gave 'him full authority over the child'.²³⁸ But this was not always the case.

According to Samuel Whyte writing in 1772, a tutor's lesson plans could be disrupted by parental fickleness and/or the child's boredom with a subject. In the face of parental interference, the tutor, he noted, will not persevere with the subject but move onto another. The result, he claimed, was a child who excelled at nothing.²³⁹ Indeed Margaret King (later Lady Mountcashel/Mrs Mason), home educated by

²³⁶ Lady Drogheda to Thomas Keightley, 16 Mar. 1698 (NLI, Inchiquin Papers, Ms 45722/3).

²³⁷ Day (ed.), *Letters from Georgian Ireland*, 20 Jan. 1760, p. 83.

²³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 44; *ibid.*, 28 Sep. 1750, p. 45.

²³⁹ *Walker's Hibernian Magazine*, Jun. 1772, p. 291.

numerous masters and governesses, bewailed as an adult the fact that she had 'learnt a little of many things and nothing well'.²⁴⁰

As tutors and governesses oversaw the social, moral and intellectual development of young children, their selection was of the utmost concern to parents and the many references in family correspondence testifies to this fact.²⁴¹ Aware of the significance of children's early education, Locke and later Rousseau laid great stress on the correct choice of tutor, though for different ideological reasons. Locke believed that education, directed gently but firmly by the tutor, should be an enjoyable business for the child, that they should view it as 'a play and recreation' so that they might be brought to a desire to be taught'.²⁴² Rousseau proposed similar views, though in *Émile* his tutor surreptitiously directed the child's education.

While tutors were expected to be proficient in Latin, logic and other subjects, Locke recommended that parents should also seek a 'person of eminent virtue and prudence, ... good sense ... good humor [sic] and the skill to carry himself with gravity, ease and kindness in a constant conversation with his pupils'.²⁴³ What Locke and many parents sought was a person who would dedicate his life to their pupil's education and have the child's interests foremost in their consideration in preparation for their adult role in society. Reflecting the mood for moral improvement prevalent throughout the eighteenth-century, these 'interests' encompassed the temper, disposition, moral and intellectual education of the child; that is their individuality.

Although tutors and governesses were expected to correct any faults in their pupil's temperament and disposition,²⁴⁴ children did not make it easy for them.²⁴⁵ Dorothea Herbert recorded in 1775 that 'with the help of their neighbours, the young Jephsons' they kept their new French governess 'in proper subjection'.²⁴⁶ Similarly the King children later informed their governess Mary Wollstonecraft that 'they had been determined to plague and annoy her' but found her to their liking and 'merely hung about her with affectionate demands'.²⁴⁷ Indeed, the rapidity with which

²⁴⁰ Tomalin, *The life and death of Mary Wollstonecraft*, p. 55.

²⁴¹ For example see correspondence dated Oct. 1721 between Lady Frances Keightley and Lady Catherine O'Brien (NLI, Inchiquin Papers, Ms 45348/5).

²⁴² Locke, *Some thoughts concerning education*, p. 114.

²⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 135.

²⁴⁴ William, Marquis of Kildare to Emily, Duchess of Leinster, 4 Nov. 1767, Fitzgerald (ed.), *Leinster correspondence*, iii, 496; Locke, *Some thoughts concerning education*, p. 113.

²⁴⁵ Edgeworth and Edgeworth, *Memoirs*, i, 273-5.

²⁴⁶ Herbert, *Retrospections*, p. 25.

²⁴⁷ Tomalin, *The life and death of Mary Wollstonecraft*, p. 53.

families changed tutors suggests that their authority over the education of their students was in many cases severely limited.

Given that the majority of elite and middling children were initially home educated this educational arrangement allowed parents ‘the opportunity of raising children within a society of their own creation – the family’.²⁴⁸ What this meant in practice was that the child’s early education was pursued at home, followed by a transition to the more formalised school environment generally after the age of seven. Although not in favour of sending ‘very young children to school’, Rev. Patrick and Mrs Delany recommended sending their nephew Bunny [Bernard Dewes] to school ‘as soon as his health is established’ as ‘nothing will so effectually spur him on to learn as emulation (which he *cannot have at home*)’.²⁴⁹ Significantly this decision was based on ‘the excellent foundation’ his mother laid in her ‘children’s early education’.²⁵⁰

Having thrived under a private tutor at home, Dorothea Hamilton, a close friend of Mary Delany, moved house to Finglas, Dublin in 1751/2 to ‘have her son go to a very good school’ there.²⁵¹ Though the Marchioness of Kildare was ‘not so desirous’ as her sister Lady Caroline Holland of her children being scholars, they were in agreement that public school education ‘certainly renders a man fitter for any business or employment he takes to’²⁵² besides keeping them ‘out of harm’s way’.²⁵³

Parental oversight

Though sending children away for their schooling separated parents and children, parents were aware that eighteenth-century school education took place in an environment children often found challenging. In most cases parents kept abreast of their children’s educational progress – or lack of. Teachers, tutors, governesses, or an agent issued reports to parents outlining not only children’s physical but also their educational progress. In 1729, schoolmaster Hugh Graffan reported favourably to Kean O’Hara’s (1713-82) mother in Bath on the progress of his studies in Dublin.²⁵⁴

²⁴⁸ Woodley, ‘Oh miserable and most ruinous measure’, p. 28.

²⁴⁹ Day (ed.), *Letters from Georgian Ireland*, 16 Mar. 1750, p. 194.

²⁵⁰ Ibid.

²⁵¹ Dorothea Forth, wife of the clergyman Frank Hamilton: *ibid.*, Feb. 1751, p. 102.

²⁵² Lady Caroline Fox to Marchioness of Kildare, 19 Jan. [1762], Fitzgerald (ed.), *Leinster correspondence*, i, 309-10.

²⁵³ Lady [Caroline] Holland to Marchioness of Kildare, 19 Aug. [1764], *ibid.*, i, 404.

²⁵⁴ Hugh Graffan to Elinor O’Hara, 29 Mar. 1729 (NLI, O’Hara Papers 1715-29, Ms 20278).

Daniel Cronine warned Lord Kenmare (1695-1736) that ‘little Mr Thomas (1726-95) should be kept close to know his letters lest he should grow stiff or stubborn’.²⁵⁵ The reputable Shem Thompson, schoolteacher to Edward (d. 1787) and Donat O’Brien, at Hillsborough, county Kildare in 1747 advised their father that ‘Ed[ward] O’Brien is very slow and idle withal and therefore his advances not considerable’.²⁵⁶ Master Donat however ‘improves and has more application than usual’, observing that ‘he is a boy of quickness, and I hope will doe very well.’²⁵⁷

Evidentially, most parents were mindful of the treatment, good or ill, their children received at school. Mary Mathew kept a careful eye on her unhappy nephew Arthur Brownlow, and was on hand to deal with his many crises at school in Finglas, county Dublin.²⁵⁸ Aware that children required time to adjust to school life, Mary hoped that Arthur would soon ‘be reconciled to it’.²⁵⁹ Lady Caroline Fox did likewise. She made regular visits to her sons and their cousins the Fitzgeralds at Eton, reporting their health and educational progress to their family in Ireland.²⁶⁰ Determined to access the economic opportunities opening for Roman Catholics in 1780s Ireland, Thomas Moore’s mother was ‘ever watchful’ of her son’s educational development and attainments in Whyte’s Academy in Dublin and quizzed him on his daily lessons each evening, regardless of the time.²⁶¹

Responses to education

Even if eighteenth-century parents responded positively to education, it was not always a happy experience for children; some made reluctant students. The harsh conditions and punishments prevailing in all schools and institutions, where flogging was commonplace may in some measure account for children’s antipathy. Flogging as a method of imparting knowledge was, Lawrence Stone notes, ‘the last thing that the Humanist educational reformers’ had in mind,²⁶² and the excessive use of corporal

²⁵⁵ Daniel Cronine to Lord Kenmare, 18 Jan. 1730, Edward MacLysaght, *The Kenmare manuscripts* (Dublin, 1942), p. 47.

²⁵⁶ Shem Thompson to Sir Edward O’Brien, 19 May 1747 (NLI, Inchiquin Papers, Ms 45353/2).

²⁵⁷ Ibid.

²⁵⁸ Arthur was frequently returned from school to his aunt’s home, Seamount [St Helens], Booterstown, county Dublin suffering from headaches and fevers; ailments that quickly disappeared once there:

Diary of Mary Mathew, 26 Aug., 26 Sep. 1772; 22 May, 24 May, 5 Jun., 7 Jun. 1773 (NLI, Ms 5102).

²⁵⁹ Ibid., 26 Sep., 29 Sep. 1772.

²⁶⁰ Lady Caroline Fox to Countess of Kildare, 10 Jul. [1758], Fitzgerald (ed.) *Leinster correspondence*, i, 170; *ibid.*, i, 21 Jun. [1759], *ibid.*, i, 236.

²⁶¹ Russell (ed.), *Memoirs, journal and correspondence of Thomas Moore*.

²⁶² Stone, *The family, sex and marriage* (Abridged ed., 1979), p. 119.

punishment in sixteenth and seventeenth-century schools encouraged the resort to the domestic based education generally followed by elite and middling parents in the eighteenth.

In general Locke dismissed the use of corporal punishment in homes and schools believing that 'great severity of punishment does but very little good, nay, great harm in education'.²⁶³ Instead the child's will should be 'suppl'd' not broken.²⁶⁴ Locke's view of the child as a *tabula rasa*, 'a blank sheet', was crucial in shifting parental attitudes away from an acceptance of corporal punishment within children's education.²⁶⁵

David Manson banished the use of the rod as a means of punishment in his school, agreeing with Locke that the 'frequent use of the rod either breaks the child's spirits, or makes him incorrigible.'²⁶⁶ Like Locke who urged parents and tutors to use 'softer ways of shame and commendation',²⁶⁷ Manson's approach was built upon a foundation of praise and blame. Children misbehaving were exposed 'to ridicule' or 'by letting ... [classmates] sing as if to pacify a sucking'; the 'spirit of revenge' was not encouraged; the child was to see justice operating – always. In an era of near totalitarian authority, Manson was unusual in his belief that:

every tutor should endeavour to gain the affection and confidence of the children under his care; and make them sensible of his kindness, and friendly concern for their welfare: and, when punishment becomes necessary, should guard against passion, and convince them 'tis not their person, but their faults which he dislikes.²⁶⁸

Similarly, at mid-century Thomas Sheridan avowed that the only instruments used in the Hibernian Academy to 'incite boys to go cheerfully thro' their course, are a sense of honour; a sense of shame, and a sense of pleasure.'²⁶⁹ The Cork schoolteacher John Fitzgerald reluctantly discharged his pupil Ned Daly in 1793 'as his mother would not allow me to whip him'.²⁷⁰ As Ezell perceptively notes, the view

²⁶³ Locke, *Some thoughts concerning education*, p. 32.

²⁶⁴ Ibid.

²⁶⁵ Stone, *The family, sex and marriage* (Abridged ed., 1979), pp 177-8.

²⁶⁶ 'Life of David Manson', *The Belfast Monthly Magazine*, 28 Feb. 1811, p. 131.

²⁶⁷ Locke, *Some thoughts concerning education*, p. 61.

²⁶⁸ 'A plan for the improvement of children in virtue and learning: without the use of the rod' cited in J.J. Campbell, 'The play school of David Manson (1726-92) of Belfast', *The Capuchin Annual* (Dublin, 1956-7), p. 164-5.

²⁶⁹ Thomas Sheridan, *A general view of the scheme for the improvement of education* (Dublin, 1758), p. 2.

²⁷⁰ Lunham (ed.), 'John Fitzgerald's diary, 1793', p. 33.

expressed by Daly's mother confirms the 'existence of an alternative attitude and practice' towards children, education and corporal punishment.²⁷¹ Yet punishment continued to be administered and perceived as necessary throughout the eighteenth-century, particularly in institutions such as the Dublin Workhouse and Foundling Hospital. Here corporal punishment of children was administered not only as a form of punishment but also of control and to instil subordination to the proper authority, which were considered essential precepts for adult life. John Bishop and John Allen, foundlings, both testified in 1758 that flogging and incarceration in 'stocks' and Bedlam was a regular punishment in the Dublin Foundling Hospital. On one occasion bolts, weighing 'upwards of eighteen pounds' were placed on Allen's hands and the next morning his hands were:

put into the stocks, and ... he received sixty lashes of a cat-a-nine tails upon his bare back, and ordered ... to walk round the hall to shew the correction he received, and from thence to Bedlam naked.²⁷²

Severe punishments such as this drew significant criticism from reformers such as John Howard and Sir Jeremiah Fitzpatrick but even so, these practices continued.

Children of all social classes frequently manifested their dislike of school. William Stacpoole the Clare gentry farmer recorded that he had a 'mem[orable] riot' with his sons John and George about returning to school in 1791.²⁷³ John Fitzgerald was 'terribly vexed' when two of his students burned his coat while he was teaching them,²⁷⁴ and Richard Wellesley (1760-1842), the eldest son of the Earl of Mornington, was expelled from Harrow in 1771-2 for playing a leading role in a 'barring-out'.²⁷⁵ There were 'rebellions' at Winchester school in 1774, 1793 and 1818, and a serious incident involving the use of firearms against the Sovereign of Belfast Rev. William Bristow who was summoned to read the 'Riot Act' to pupils at the Belfast Academy in 1792. When the siege ended the boys were whipped, then expelled.²⁷⁶ Those

²⁷¹ Ezell, 'John Locke's images of childhood', p. 153.

²⁷² This punishment continued for a week: *Commons Jn. (Irl.)*, 1758, vol. 6, appendix xcix.

²⁷³ McNamara (ed.), 'The diary of an eighteenth-century Clare gentleman', pp 25-6.

²⁷⁴ Lunham (ed.), 'John Fitzgerald's diary, 1793', 15 Feb. [1793], p. 155.

²⁷⁵ R. B. McDowell, *Ireland in the age of imperialism and revolution 1760-1801* (Oxford, 1991), p. 143.

²⁷⁶ There was another serious incident of barring out at Armagh College in 1823: Mary Lowry, *The story of Belfast and its surroundings* (c. 1913), chapter 8, <http://www.libraryireland.com/Belfast-History/Contents.php> [accessed 20 Aug. 2010].

involved in a barring out led by Henry Graham at Ballitore Quaker School in 1734 were also whipped, though no mention is made of any expulsions.²⁷⁷

Challenges such as these to the authority of the school were of considerable concern to the civil authorities, and in a society that valued law, order and control, especially in children, these confrontations disturbed many parents. Lady Caroline Holland, for example, was 'grieved' to observe 'the least disposition' towards 'that same spirit of rebellion [that] reigns in all parts of the world' in her son Harry when in 1768 he and 200 other boys walked out of Eton, a popular boarding school for Irish children.²⁷⁸ She justified his behaviour however by noting that he 'was forced into it against his will'.²⁷⁹

Once at school, if unhappy, children could make strenuous efforts to return home. Reacting to the harsh school conditions and unwelcome constraints, children of all social classes 'mitched', 'eloped' or absented themselves from school on a regular basis. Charity children's behaviour both within and without school was closely monitored and regulated according to rules laid down by the governors. As early as 1706 the master or mistress recorded on a daily basis in 'a Monthly Fault-Bill' whether children were 'absent', 'playing truant' or 'late', if they were caught 'lying', 'playing at church', 'cursing', 'swearing' or 'stealing' (appendix no. 3).²⁸⁰ When outside school, children were expected to wear their 'caps, bands, cloaths and other marks of distinction' every day so that the 'trustees and benefactors may know them, and see what their behaviour is abroad'.²⁸¹ Thus children caught playing at 'dice in wheelbarrows' in the street or elsewhere when they should be attending school were easily identified and reprimanded.²⁸²

Eloping was a common occurrence in institutional schools, especially Charter schools where runaway children had a bounty on their heads. It was also a feature of 'middling' children's schools throughout the century. James Trail a day pupil at the Latin school in Killileagh, county Down, in 1698, absented himself on a daily basis

²⁷⁷ Michael Quane, 'Ballitore school', *Journal of the County Kildare Archaeological Society*, 14 (1964), p. 178. Graham was killed during the retreat of the English at the battle of Fomentoy in 1745.

²⁷⁸ Lady [Caroline] Holland to Duchess of Leinster, 3 Nov. [1768], Fitzgerald (ed.), *Leinster correspondence*, i, 549.

²⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, i, Dec. 1768, *ibid.*, i, 553.

²⁸⁰ *An account of Charity-Schools: the methods used for erecting charity schools with the rules and orders by which they are governed. A particular account of the London charity schools: with a list of those erected elsewhere in Great Britain & Ireland ...* (London, 1706), p. 22 (3rd ed., Dublin, 1721) p. 50).

²⁸¹ *An account of Charity-Schools* (12th ed., London, 1713), p. 7.

²⁸² *Ibid.* (17th ed., London, 1718), p. 9.

and once spent a fortnight happily with his friends in a 'nut wood' until discovered by a servant.²⁸³ Sent at fifteen years of age to Mr McBride's school in Belfast, James again absented himself, preferring to play 'billiards' instead of attending school'.²⁸⁴ The 'general factotum' of Ballitore Quaker School, James McConaghty was so successful at retrieving runaways that he earned the nickname 'Bloodhound'.²⁸⁵ Despite punishment by confinement 'for some hours in the coal vault ... deprived of shoes and stockings for three days' and remaining supper-less for three nights, children 'mitching' from the King's Hospital remained a problem for the authorities throughout the eighteenth-century.²⁸⁶

Given the restrictions placed on children's behaviour and the dangers of travel in eighteenth-century Ireland, the dramatic escape from school in 1777 of Henry Bennis is remarkable and highlights one child's determination and independent spirit. Having attending the Methodist Kingswood School near Bristol, England²⁸⁷ for three years, Henry, though initially enthusiastic, refused to accept the harsh regime employed there. He eloped and returned home safely to his mother Elizabeth in Limerick, 'a poor starved, dejected figure'.²⁸⁸ Convinced of and distressed by her son's 'ill-usage' at the school and despite pressure from the authorities, Elizabeth supported Henry's refusal to return.²⁸⁹ In light of her strong religious views and her standing in Limerick's Methodist community, this was a significant stand and is indicative of the more lenient and caring attitude towards disciplining children that emerged in the second half of the century.

The transition within education from an acceptance of corporal punishment at the beginning of the century to more moderate physical punishments such as food deprivation by mid-century identified in the King's Hospital, was a crucial step in a recognition of children's vulnerability. However, corporal punishment and physical deprivation retained credence in institutions such as the foundling hospitals and Charter schools and, despite public criticism, continued into the nineteenth-century.

²⁸³ Diary of James Traill (PRONI, D1460/1).

²⁸⁴ Ibid.

²⁸⁵ Quane, 'Ballitore school', p. 190.

²⁸⁶ The King's Hospital minute book, 1779-1801, p. 136; Whiteside, *A history of the King's Hospital*, pp 17-8, 64.

²⁸⁷ The boarding Kingswood School near Bristol, England was founded by John Wesley in 1748 to educate Methodist children 'in the fear of God'.

²⁸⁸ Raughter (ed.), *The journal of Elizabeth Bennis*, 3 Sep. 1777.

²⁸⁹ Ibid., 21, 28 Nov. 1777.

Financial costs of education

If children sometimes made reluctant students, the sacrifices parents made to access education cannot be underestimated, particularly for middling, peasant and pauper families.²⁹⁰ Children's schooling was not without its costs²⁹¹ – real or hidden – for all social classes. The loss to the family unit of a child's economic contribution was specifically noted in Zelva School on Valentia Island in 1776.²⁹² Even though more children accessed schooling as the century progressed, children's education was a luxury many parents could little afford.

Throughout the eighteenth-century, the cost element determined which school a child attended; those who could afford it paid more, but crucially, everyone paid. At mid-century, elite children attending English public schools such as Eton or Harrow paid fees of approximately twenty-five pounds per annum, but this did not include extras.²⁹³ The private London school fees for Charles and Kean O'Hara of county Sligo in the late 1750s were £13 10s. 3d. per annum each plus extras such as French (16s. 6d.) and fencing at two guineas per month. As can be seen from figure 4.5, travel costs between school and home substantially increased the costs of schooling abroad.²⁹⁴

1 Dec 1760.	Due to John George:
For 5 horses from Holyhead to Chester	4 0s. 0d.
A horse to Parkgate	2s. 0d.
A horse to London from Chester	<u>1 5s. 0d.</u>
Total	£5 7s. 6d.
Rec'd the contents by me John George	
His mark X	

Fig. 4.5: Travelling costs from Ireland to a London school, 1760
Source: NLI, O'Hara Papers, Ms 36393/2.

²⁹⁰ Heywood, *A history of childhood*, p. 166.

²⁹¹ Frequently school fees are noted in guineas, the value of which rose and fell with the price of gold. In 1717 Great Britain adopted the gold standard and a guinea's value was fixed thereafter at twenty-one shillings.

²⁹² PRONI, DIO 4/8/9/3/8 cited in Brún, 'Some documents concerning Valentia Erasmus Smith school, pp 70-81.

²⁹³ By comparison, the fees for Eton College in 2010 were £32,715.

²⁹⁴ NLI, O'Hara Papers, Ms 36393/2.

By comparison the cost of education in a pay school, exemplified by Carysfort Free School in county Wicklow in 1788 (table 4.3) varied between 1s. and 5s. 5d. per quarter, dependent on the subject.²⁹⁵

Table 4.3: Subject charge per quarter, Carysfort Free School, Wicklow, 1788

	s.	d.
Spelling	1	-
Reading and writing	1	6
Reading, writing and cipheryng	2	6
Book-keeping	5	5

Source: N.L.I., Quane Papers, Ms 17919.

By 1809 pay school fees in Carrigoline parish, county Cork for reading were 3s. 3d. or 4s. 4d. and for writing plus arithmetic, 6s. 6d. Those in Barryroe Barony, also in county Cork, varied between 2s. 2d. to 3s. 6d. for reading and between 3s. 3d. and 6s. for writing plus arithmetic per quarter.²⁹⁶ It is interesting to note that by 1811, reading, writing and arithmetic were offered as separate subjects and in Roman Catholic pay schools in county Wicklow, reading fees ranged from 2s. 2d. to 5s. 5d., writing from 3s. 3d. to 6s. 6d. and arithmetic from 5s. 5d. to 6s. 6d. per quarter. These were broadly in line with fees charged in Protestant schools though here arithmetic fees could be as high as 8s. 8d. per quarter,²⁹⁷ which would have been a considerable expense for peasant parents.

Boarders at Ballitore Quaker School in county Kildare paid six pounds per quarter (twenty-four per annum) in 1728, seventeen pounds per annum in 1771 when the school was at its height, and thirty-two pounds per annum 'washing included' in 1798.²⁹⁸ In 1770 Sam Weldon, who attended Mr Acton's school in Abbey Street, Dublin paid five guineas entrance and twenty guineas per annum.²⁹⁹ In 1783, day pupils attending the Catholic Brunswick Street Academy in Cork paid one guinea entrance and four guineas tuition per annum, while boarders paid four guineas

²⁹⁵ NLI, Quane Papers, Ms 17967.

²⁹⁶ Thomas Newenham, *A view of the natural, political, and commercial circumstances of Ireland* (London, 1809), p. 36.

²⁹⁷ NLI, Quane Papers, Ms 17967.

²⁹⁸ Quane, 'Ballitore school', pp 176, 189, 199.

²⁹⁹ Sadlier (ed.), 'Diary of Anne Cooke 1761-76', 12 Nov. 1770, p. 210.

entrance and twenty guineas per annum for tuition³⁰⁰ the same amounts charged to upper class Catholic children attending St Kieran's College in Kilkenny (1783).³⁰¹

The education Emilia and Maria Adlercron received at Miss Raval's Boarding School in Dublin in 1788 involved an initial entrance fee of £5 13s. 9d.; thereafter six months board and tuition cost £18 5s. 4½d. per child, significantly more than the £11 12s. 8d charged by Mr Bonafon for their brother William's schooling.³⁰² But Bonafon's may have been a day school and his fee does not include extra payments to writing, Latin or French masters.

In 1788 the grammar school at Drogheda under the direction of Dr Norris educated 123 boys (seventy-two boarders and fifty-one day pupils) who paid entrance fees of £6 5s. 1½d., which were split between two teachers: the master receiving £5 13s. 9d., and the second master 11s. 4½d. (table 4.4).³⁰³

Table 4.4: Drogheda Endowed School, pupil costs and fees, 1788		
Item:		Cost:
A boarder with a single bed for lodging diet and tuition		£34 2s. 6d.
Since the rise of provisions		2s. 6d.
Present to ushers annually, which sums Dr Norris retains to himself		£1 2s. 9d.
Washing		£1 10s. 0d.
A boarder with half a bed for diet, tuition, etc		£27 6s. 0d.
Since the rise of provisions		£2 5s. 6d.
Private tuition is optional, and the charge		From 4 guineas to 20 guineas a year
Subject:	Cost:	Total cost per quarter:
For dancing entrance	£1 2s. 9d.	£1 14s. 1½d.
Fencing do	[blank]	£1 2s. 9d.
Writing and accounts do	11s. 4½d.	
Do & mathematics do	£1 2s. 9d.	£1 2s. 9d.
French do	[blank]	[blank]

Source: Drogheda Endowed school (NLI, Quane Papers, Ms 17.929).

Table 4.4, identifying the extras costs parents faced, is interesting in that it itemises clearly the total cost of elite and middling male children's education and the

³⁰⁰ William D. O'Connell, 'An eighteenth-century Cork manuscript: The Augustinian Academy at Brunswick Street, 1783-1787', *Journal of the Cork Historical and Archaeological Society*, 45, 2nd series (1940), p. 34.

³⁰¹ Atkinson, *Irish education*, p. 59.

³⁰² Adlercron diary 1782-94. Apr.-Dec. 1788 (NLI, Ms 4481).

³⁰³ Drogheda Endowed school (NLI, Quane Papers, Ms 17929).

choices parents made. Annual ‘presents’³⁰⁴ to ushers increased costs substantially and despite John Locke’s warning of its potential for vice, boys were expected to share a bed and parents to pay extra otherwise. Given that parents already paid for tuition, an extra payment for ‘private’ tuition indicates that there were limitations to the standard of education money bought. But it might also reflect the varied quality and character of the earlier domestic education boys received, or perhaps was a recognition of individual children’s varied abilities and capacities for education. Mirroring the situation in female schools and academies, parents paid extra for tuition in the more ‘genteel’ accomplishments such as dancing, French and fencing.

Fees paid to home tutors such as William Ford of Bride Street, Dublin, a ‘teacher of writing and accompts’, were substantially less. In 1771 Ford advertised a scale of fees for a single scholar ranging from ‘a guinea entrance’ and ‘a guinea a month’ for morning tuition, but half that price for evening. Perhaps responding to the demand for pre-school or university tuition, Ford was willing to attend pupils’ homes during the ‘summer season, within four miles’ of Dublin ‘at two guineas a month’.³⁰⁵

Cash circulation was a proverbial problem in eighteenth-century Ireland and if parents such as Meliora Adlercron paid school fees routinely and regularly,³⁰⁶ others were less reliable. Sir Edward O’Brien had serious liquidity issues and prioritised his horses above his children’s education. Recognising the root cause of O’Brien’s financial pressures, though reluctant to forego the prestige of O’Brien’s patronage, Shem Thompson wrote acerbically to O’Brien in 1747 that he would ‘be extremely obliged to you for remitting to me the contents from the next Curragh meeting’ the substantial and long outstanding sum of ‘£119 4s. 3d. due for Lucius O’Brien’s school fees.’³⁰⁷

Compounding schoolmasters’ financial difficulties was the fact that many also purchased clothes, books, paid barbers and even gave pocket money to their students, later claiming it from parents in the half-yearly accounts. For example, in 1747 Shem Thompson purchased for Lucius O’Brien additional goods to the value of £3 15s. 6d. (table 4.5).

³⁰⁴ Rewarding teachers was a practice supported by James Nelson who cautioned against parents seeking not the best but the cheapest education and this included teachers: Nelson, *An essay on the government of children* (3rd ed), p. 343.

³⁰⁵ *Hibernian Journal*, 18-21 Oct. 1771.

³⁰⁶ See Adlercron diary 1782-94 (NLI, Ms 4481).

³⁰⁷ Race meetings took place on The Curragh in county Kildare prior to the first official race meeting in 1727. Shem Thompson to Sir Edward O’Brien, 22 Aug. 1747 (NLI, Inchiquin Papers, Ms 45353/2).

Table 4.5: Additional purchases for Lucius O'Brien, 1747			
	£	s.	d.
Books		13	-
Six pairs of shoes & pumps	1	5	4
Pocket money		11	4
Barber		7	-
Ribbon		2	-
Letters		2	-
Paper		6	4
Washing		6	6
Tailor		2	-
Total	3	15	6

Source: NLI, Inchiquin Papers, Ms 45353/2.

Children's education in eighteenth-century Ireland was an expense incurred regardless of social class. If pay schools throughout the country charged similar fees there were wide variations in the fees charged in elite and gentry schools, though all maintained 'hidden' charges, a situation mirrored in eighteenth-century England.³⁰⁸ Elite and gentry children's schooling, tuition, lodging, diet, books and sundries all combined to form a substantial outlay for parents, especially where two or more children received an education, and particularly for those who boarded.³⁰⁹ As Mary O'Dowd observes, the financial costs of children's education in eighteenth-century Ireland put it firmly out of the reach of many but especially the poor.³¹⁰

The impact of 'teachers' qualifications

'How can a child be well educated unless by one who is well educated himself'³¹¹ was a question applicable to all children's education throughout the eighteenth-century. Parents were critical of the teaching quality available generally to children in Irish schools but it was not until mid-century that their criticisms became vocal and forceful. Even if he addressed his comments towards male children of the gentry classes only, Thomas Sheridan succinctly identified one of 'the many evils' attending education already well known to parents – the 'obstinacy and ignorance of pedantic

³⁰⁸ See Fletcher, *Growing up in England*, particularly chapters 11 to 13. Fletcher found wide variations in fees charged and that parental priority was to achieve a sound education at a reasonable cost.

³⁰⁹ Gillespie, 'Church, state and education', pp 40-59.

³¹⁰ O'Dowd, *A history of women in Ireland*, p. 211.

³¹¹ Boyd, *Emile for today*, p. 19.

masters and unskilful tutors' – in the care of whom 'too many of the youth of these kingdoms have been committed.'³¹²

Throughout the century a school's success oscillated according to its academic reputation and the master set the standard. Having established his school at Ballitore, county Kildare in 1726, the Yorkshire Quaker Abraham Shackleton quickly gained a reputation that attracted children from many of the leading families of the day. When he retired as headmaster in 1756 his son Richard succeeded him, and he too attracted scholars from near and far. John Beatty notes that by 1766 the school 'consisted of fifty and sometimes sixty boarders besides day scholars, including several French and two Norwegians'.³¹³ At the other end of the spectrum, the Commissioners of Education noted in 1791 that the failure of the Erasmus Smith School in Tipperary town was the fault of the master who had openly declared 'a dislike to scholars'.³¹⁴ The 'gross misconduct' of John Beckett, master to the Presbyterian Abbey School forced his dismissal in April 1771 but his replacement William White was also found lacking and he was swiftly replaced by James Evans who held the position for twenty-years.³¹⁵ Thus governors were acutely aware that if a school lost its academic reputation, parents reacted accordingly and pupil numbers rapidly declined.

Many masters were untutored in the methods of teaching, a situation that persisted for most of the century. Penal Law restrictions imposed on Roman Catholic schoolmasters effectively reduced the numbers of suitably qualified teachers, while the deplorable state and administration of the parish and diocesan schools was particularly ill suited to attract those with secure qualifications. The Raphoe Visitation Book of 1692 notes that the parish clerks acted as schoolmasters in the six parish schools in the diocese.³¹⁶ This was not uncommon, even in private education. Dorothea Herbert received some of her early instruction from her father's parish clerk, Thomas Wimpe.³¹⁷

³¹² Sheridan, *British education*, p. xxi.

³¹³ Leadbeater, 'Mary Leadbeater: the Account [of 1798]', Beatty (ed.), *Protestant women's narratives of the Irish rebellion of 1798*, pp 194-5. Ballitore school broke with the Quaker tradition of educating children of all religious persuasions in 1789 and refused entry to non-Quaker children. As a result there was a marked decline in pupil numbers. Not surprisingly this decision was quickly reversed. See Quane, 'Ballitore school'.

³¹⁴ Corcoran, *State policy in Irish education*, p. 169.

³¹⁵ Barkley, *Short history of the Presbyterian Church*, p. 101.

³¹⁶ The parishes were Raphoe, Taughboyne, Conwall, Clandehorah and Clandevadock: NLI, Smyth of Barbavilla Papers, Ms 41576/6.

³¹⁷ Herbert, *Retrospections*, p. 18.

Gentry children attending Royal Schools of Stuart foundation³¹⁸ fared little better. Teaching appointments were under patronage, teaching assistants were ill paid and of low calibre and motivation. Children attending private schools were also vulnerable to the vagaries of their master's behaviour. Mr Malone who kept a school in Dublin attended by Thomas Moore spent 'the greater part of his nights in drinking at public-houses', and was frequently unable to attend to his scholars next morning.³¹⁹ Likewise the master of a Dublin school in 1785, Dr Burrowes – 'a good natured and friendly man' – was according to his pupil Lord Cloncurry 'no scholar', preferring the gaming tables to running a school. The reputation of his usher was high, which accounted for the eighty to one hundred pupils of all rank and from the 'first families in the country' that attended the school.³²⁰ Shem Thompson's school at Hillsborough, county Kildare also enjoyed a superior reputation and attracted pupils from near and far.³²¹

Overall children's education in 'hedge' schools, particularly in the Munster region, compared more than favourably.³²² Hedge schoolmasters with academic reputations drew pupils from across the country, especially children destined for the priesthood.³²³ The education of John Cumin born at Duniskeagh, county Tipperary in 1734 illustrates this point. He attended his first schoolmaster Edmund English (fl. 1743)³²⁴ in Duniskeagh for two and a half years where he learned to read, write and 'the most part of his grammar'.³²⁵ He then spent nine months with Malachy Dwyer (fl. 1746) learning Latin, eighteen months with John Patswell of Carrickbrishure, followed by three months with Tim Ryan (fl.1749) at Soloheadbeg, all in county Tipperary. Cumin then attended Edmund Commen for two years, presumably to improve his Latin. Only after seven years tuition did he begin to teach in a public school in the parish of Crook where he was still recorded as teaching in 1758. Charles Smith noted in his survey of county Kerry in 1756 that 'the lower and poorer kind in

³¹⁸ Established by Royal Letter in 1614 at Mountjoy (Dungannon) (1614), Enniskillen (Portora) (1618), Armagh (c. 1621), Cavan (1621), Raphoe and later at Banagher, county Offaly (1629) and Carysfort, county Wicklow (1629).

³¹⁹ Russell (ed.), *Memoirs, journal and correspondence of Thomas Moore*.

³²⁰ Cloncurry, *Personal recollections of the life and times*, pp 6-7.

³²¹ See G. D. Burtchaell and T. N. Sadlier, *Alumni Dublinensis: a register of the students, graduates, professors, and provosts of Trinity College, in the University of Dublin 1593-1860* (Dublin, 1935).

³²² See McManus, *The Irish hedge school and its books 1695-1831*.

³²³ See Dowling, *The hedge schools of Ireland*.

³²⁴ These and other dates are drawn from Mary Heaphy, 'Some Tipperary teachers', <http://www.igp-web.com/tipperary/teachers.htm> [accessed 12 Jul. 2010].

³²⁵ T. Corcoran, *Some lists of Catholic lay teachers and their illegal schools in the later penal times with historical commentary, special maps, and illustrations* (Dublin, 1932), p. 32.

this country ... have greater knowledge ... than some of the better sort, in other places'.³²⁶ It is clear from Smith's and other contemporary commentaries that by mid-century the standard of education children received in hedge schools might, on occasion, equal if not exceed that received in better appointed establishments by elite and gentry Irish children.

Charity schoolchildren's education was purportedly entrusted to the supervision of a member of the Church of England or Ireland – a man of 'sober life and conversation', not less than twenty-five years of age.³²⁷ Reflecting contemporary political fears, the 1717 regulations stipulated not only that the schoolmaster had to 'be a person of known affection to his present majesty King George and to the Protestant succession as by law established' but (indicative of the acceptance of Locke's pedagogical theory), that he have 'a genius for teaching'.³²⁸ Clearly this was not a consideration within the Charter school system as the appointment of Mr William Reed, 'carpet weaver', as master of the 'Royal Charter school on the Strand', attests.³²⁹

The deplorable level of education children in Charter schools received prompted Dominick Kilty's parents to make application in 1790 to the local committee of Primrose Grange to remove him, as they believed they could 'educate him better than by leaving him there'.³³⁰ Even though some Charter schoolgirls such as Elinor Brenan from Dundalk were trained as 'monitors' and employed as mistresses from the early 1800s,³³¹ Charter schoolchildren's education continued to be subject to sharp public criticism into the third decade of the nineteenth-century. By 1800 the governors of the Dublin Workhouse and Foundling Hospital also recognised the necessity of providing properly trained teachers for children in their care and ruled that each mistress 'be qualified' to teach reading, spelling and so forth.³³²

Thomas Sheridan's mid-century call for improvements in the quality of educational instruction children received fell on receptive ears, particularly among the middling classes, but improvement was slow, and there was a varied level of

³²⁶ Dowling, *The hedge schools of Ireland*, pp 38-9.

³²⁷ This qualification was reduced in 1716 to twenty-three. *An Account of charity-schools* (London, 1706), p. 4 (London, 1717), p. 7; [Davies], *An account of the present state of the Green-coat charity School*, p. 34.

³²⁸ *An Account of charity-schools* (London, 1718), pp 7-8.

³²⁹ *Cork Evening Post*, 3 Oct. 1763 (NLI, Quane Papers, Ms 17982(6)).

³³⁰ Orders, 1757-96, 2 Jul. 1790 (TCD, Ms 5646).

³³¹ Bagott Street Register of children 1791-1826 (TCD, Ms 5622), no. 58, Elinor Brenan, 22 Jun. 1811.

³³² *Rules for conducting the education of the female children in the Foundling Hospital*, p. 3.

scholarship in most schools throughout the eighteenth-century. Yet the policy adopted by the governors of the Hibernian Society for the Care of Soldiers' Children illustrates more emphatically how attitudes to children's education and teaching practices had changed by the close of the century. Though previously employing only ex-army personnel as masters, by the end of the century, the school 'found it necessary to provide a head teacher of great attainments and better acquainted with the improved methods of instruction' for both male and female children.³³³ However, a national system of teacher training was not inaugurated until 1815, and was then applied only to the 'lower' classes.³³⁴

SECTION IV: THE FOUNDATIONS OF STRUCTURED PROGRAMMES OF EDUCATION

Notwithstanding parents' and children's responses to education, the acknowledgement of the importance of children's abilities and capacities identified by Locke and promoted by Nelson was a crucial step not only in the recognition of the individuality of the child but also of the understanding of childhood, and was key to the development of nineteenth-century structured programmes of education. Given that children were firmly centred within eighteenth-century educational theory, philosophy and debate, was due recognition given to their individual capacities and abilities? Were children's proficiency and attainment levels measured according to their 'genius' as Nelson suggested? Was the school routine adapted to suit children's needs or adult requirements? Were their subjects suitable to their station in life and what concessions were made to children's welfare?

Entering education

Choosing the right time when children were ready for school was a crucial moment in parents' (especially mothers') and children's lives, which required careful attention to what Locke described as the child's 'favourable seasons of aptitude and inclination' –

³³³ As a result, by 1827 all masters and mistresses then employed were considered as qualified to teach: *Sixth report of the Commissioners of Irish Education inquiry*, p. 5

³³⁴ The Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor of Ireland (Kildare Place Society) inaugurated formal teacher training in 1815 and failing to gain the confidence of Roman Catholic leaders it was replaced in 1831 by the government-sponsored National Board of Education: Joseph Doyle, 'The training of national schoolteachers, 1831-75', James Kelly (ed.), *St Patrick's College, Drumcondra: a history* (Dublin, 2006), pp 69-90.

their abilities and capacity.³³⁵ The recognition of the importance of individual children's abilities and capacities identified by Locke was a recurring theme in the educational debate during the eighteenth-century, and in many cases was the bar by which education was measured. Recognising that it was not the general rule then applying in education, Locke cautioned that 'the fittest time for children to learn anything is when their minds are in tune and well-disposed to it'.³³⁶ Push children too hard and they will be lost; he recommended that children's lessons be appropriate to their age, abilities and capacities.³³⁷

More concerned with children's health, Tissot warned in 1766 that he had seen boys of 'a penetrating genius, tinctured with learning beyond what could be expected from their years, ... always with some concern, as I saw how it would end'.³³⁸ William Buchan observed in 1769 that 'fixed to a seat seven or eight hours a day ... cannot fail to produce the worst effects upon the body; nor is the mind less injured'.³³⁹ Buchan forewarned that 'early application weakens the faculties' and fixed in children's minds an 'aversion to books, which continues for life'.³⁴⁰

The issue was still relevant in 1772 when the pedagogue Samuel Whyte argued that 'the time of putting a child to the Latin school should not be determined by his years, but by his abilities and the manner he is fitted for it'.³⁴¹ Indeed the 'noise, ... bustle and roughness' of his schoolfellows 'confounded' the eight year-old Richard Edgeworth when he first entered boarding school in Warwick in 1752.³⁴² Even so, by his own admission Edgeworth erred when sending his son Richard (1765-96) to his first boarding school. Initially raised according to Rousseau's plan he failed to prepare him 'sufficiently' for the change between his home education and the 'public seminary'.³⁴³ Although his 'strength, agility, good humour, and enterprise' made young Richard a 'great favourite with his school-fellows', he failed to apply himself to scholarship. Similarly Valentine Lord Cloncurry, dispatched at eight years-old to public boarding school in Portarlinton, Laois, found the transition difficult.

³³⁵ Locke, *Some thoughts concerning education*, pp 51-2.

³³⁶ *Ibid.*

³³⁷ *Ibid.* p. 114.

³³⁸ Tissot, *Three essays*, p. 42.

³³⁹ Buchan, *Domestic medicine* (19th ed.), p. 23.

³⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

³⁴¹ *Walker's Hibernian Magazine*, May 1772, p. 269.

³⁴² Edgeworth and Edgeworth, *Memoirs*, i, 47-8.

³⁴³ *Ibid.*, i, 353-4.

There he was treated as a 'fag' and 'initiated into an experience of the rude course of life',³⁴⁴ situations Locke warned parents against.³⁴⁵

The age at which a more formal education and the break from maternal care should begin was therefore a matter of debate, and there is considerable evidence to suggest that Irish parents took into consideration the individual child's ability to cope with their new environment when deciding the matter. In some cases this was clearly self-interested. Elizabeth Bennis recorded in her diary her sorrow at her youngest son's departure for school in England in November 1774: 'nature feels the separation: I have felt much heaviness of soul for some time past ... my spirit much depressed'.³⁴⁶ Diary entries such as this describing the moment when children were considered old enough to leave the safe confines of home and maternal care for the more robust environs of male boarding schools are illustrative of the strong affection that bound many parents and their children. They also illustrate the recognition of a natural and expected progression through childhood, one that led onto children's more formal education, an education in preparation for adult life. As the Earl of Leitrim advised his son Robert Clotworthy Clements (d. 1828)³⁴⁷ when he was beginning at Harrow public school in 1804, this was the time:

for improving yourself, and making yourself acquainted with the laws and constitutions of your country. What you read now will make more impression on you and you will remember better, than anything you may read or study hereafter.³⁴⁸

James Shee of Sheepstown, county Kilkenny sailed for Rotterdam and a continental schooling at thirteen years of age in April 1748 followed a few years later by his younger brother.³⁴⁹ Although he considered his five year-old son William (1766-1816) had reached 'the age when he may go to Eton',³⁵⁰ his father William Tighe (1738-82) of Rossana, county Wicklow was reluctant to send him there so

³⁴⁴ Cloncurry, *Personal recollections of the life and times*, p. 5.

³⁴⁵ Locke, *Some thoughts concerning education*, pp 46-7.

³⁴⁶ Raughter (ed.), *The journals of Elizabeth Bennis*, 17 Nov. 1774.

³⁴⁷ Robert Clotworthy Clements first attended Harrow in 1798 until 1803/4, when he entered Oriel College, Oxford.

³⁴⁸ Lord Leitrim to Hon. Robert Clotworthy Clements, 7 May 1804 (NLI, Killadoon Papers, Ms 36030/3).

³⁴⁹ John O'Reilly, Jun., 'The family of William Shee of Sheepstown, Co. Kilkenny', *The Journal of the Kilkenny and South-East of Ireland Archaeological Society*, 3, new series (1860-61), pp 90-7.

³⁵⁰ William Tighe to Earl of Darnley, 19 Feb. 1771, Davis, 'The upbringing of children in Ireland', p. 37.

young and enrolled him instead in school at Portarlington.³⁵¹ Tighe's misgivings concerning Eton persisted and William did not enrol there until 1775 when he was a more capable nine years-old. Even though his parent's anxiety about conditions at the school persisted, they were hesitant to remove him because they did 'not know what to do better for him'.³⁵²

Reluctant to part from her son Sam in 1771, Anne Cooke adopted a happy medium. Though her stepson attended school in Drogheda,³⁵³ Sam attended Mr Acton's boarding school in Abbey Street, Dublin. While there, his mother stayed at their Dublin townhouse and removed Sam every week, usually on Sundays, to dine with her at home.³⁵⁴ In 1800 Marianne Fortescue waited anxiously for letters from her nine year-old son Matt at school in Dungannon. The importance of these letters to Marianne may be judged from the fact that she noted with relief the arrival (or anxiously the lack) of each letter in her diary.³⁵⁵ According to Lady Caroline Fox in 1762, sending her seven year-old son Harry to Wandsworth school was a 'proof how much I wish mine to be [scholars]', although Harry was 'quite pleased' with the thoughts of it.³⁵⁶

Foundling hospital children³⁵⁷ and Charter school children began school at six (see pages 171-2) and King's Hospital children entered that institution at nine years old. Hibernian Society and Hibernian Marine Society children began their education at seven years of age, while those in Dublin's Female Orphan House commenced their overwhelmingly vocational based education between five and ten years-old.³⁵⁸

Many elite and middling children attended private schools or academies for a short time only, using them as a transition stage from home or private tutoring to public schools such as Eton (1440), Harrow (1572) or university.³⁵⁹ The record of

³⁵¹ Given the family's close connection with Methodism it was probably the Methodist school there that William attended prior to Eton. Davis, 'The upbringing of children in Ireland', pp 44-48.

³⁵² Ibid., p. 64.

³⁵³ Sadlier (ed.), 'Diary of Anne Cooke 1761-76', Jan. 1764; 22 Jan. 1766, pp 115-6.

³⁵⁴ Ibid., 4 Feb., 30 Jun. 17, 27 Jun. 1771.

³⁵⁵ Ross (ed.), 'The diary of Marianne Fortescue, 1797-1800', 24, no. 3 (1999), pp 375-9.

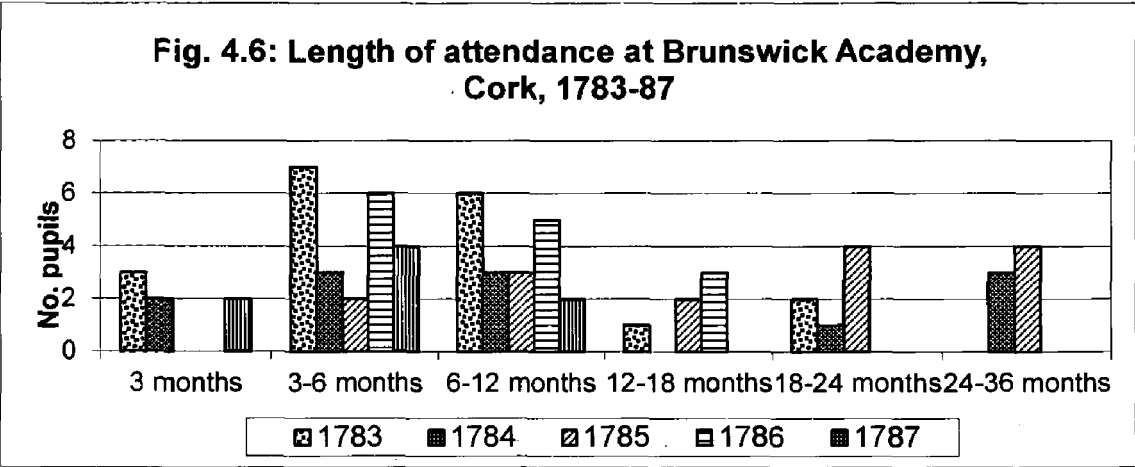
³⁵⁶ Gen. Henry Edward Fox later attended Westminster School (1560), as did John Locke and Jeremy Bentham.

³⁵⁷ Foundling Hospital children returned to the Dublin institution from their country nurses at five or six years of age.

³⁵⁸ *Sixth report of the Commissioners of Irish Education inquiry*, pp 12, 94.

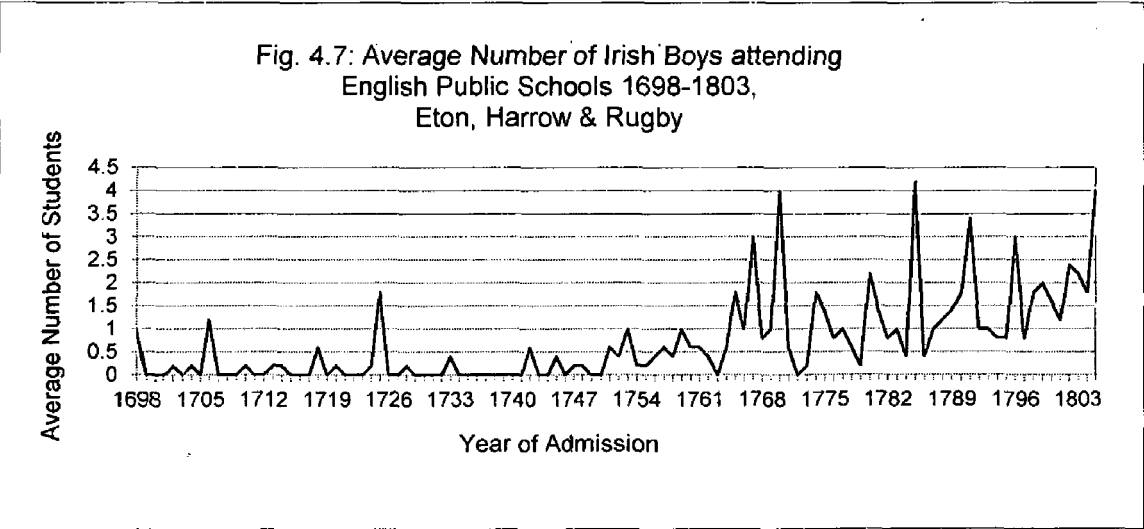
³⁵⁹ This thesis addresses children's education only to pre-university level.

attendance at Brunswick Street Academy, Cork (figure 4.6) between 1783 and 1787 clearly illustrates children’s brief attendance there.³⁶⁰



Source: William D. O’Connell, ‘An eighteenth-century Cork manuscript: The Augustinian Academy at Brunswick Street, 1783-1787’, *Journal Cork Historical and Archaeological Society*, 65, 2nd series (1940), pp 33-37.

An analysis of registers for elite public schools such as Eton or Harrow indicates that from mid-century a small though increasing number of elite Irish families sent their sons to school in England (figure 4.7). This may have been in reaction to what Lady Louisa Stuart observed in 1790 as ‘a bad account of Irish schools’,³⁶¹ but it may also have reflected Ireland’s improved economic status – families could now better afford the cost of a public school education.



Source: R. Austen-Leigh, *A Eton College Register 1678-1790* (2 vols, London, 1927); H. E. C. Stapylton, *The Eton School Lists 1791-1850* (London 1863); W. J. J. Gunn, *Harrow School Register 1571-1800* (London, 1934); R. Welch Courtenay, *The Harrow School Register 1801-1893* (London, 1894); G. A. Solly, *Rugby School Register 1675-1857* (London, 1933).

³⁶⁰ O’Connell, ‘An eighteenth-century Cork manuscript: The Augustinian Academy at Brunswick Street, 1783-1787’, pp 33-37.

³⁶¹ Lady Louisa Stuart to Countess of Portarlington, 1790, Clark (ed.), *Gleanings*, ii, 153.

Despite the increased availability of Irish schools the Tipperary land agent Samuel Cooper brought his thirteen year-old son William to England in 1785 to attend Shrewsbury School. As Marnane notes, the close connection Cooper had with the Erasmus Smith Foundation and the fact that Shrewsbury School was in decline at that time, makes his decision difficult to understand, except perhaps in social terms.³⁶²

The daily school routine

Children's schooldays began early and were adapted to make use of natural light according to the winter or summer season. Children attending charity schools in 1706 began at 7 a.m. in summer and 8 a.m. in winter, finishing at 5 p.m. in summer and 4 p.m. in winter, which meant that the winter school-day was two hours shorter.³⁶³ Reflecting their future employment as domestic servants, those in Dublin's Female Orphan House rose earlier, at 5 a.m. in summer and seven in winter.³⁶⁴ Children in the Hibernian Society's School for soldier's children rose at 6 a.m. and retired at 9 p.m. in summer, and rose at 7 a.m. and retired at 8 p.m. in winter. In winter they attended school for five hours daily, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and from 2.30 p.m. to 4.30 p.m. and in summer for seven hours daily, from 9 a.m. to 12.30 p.m. and 2.30 p.m. to 6 p.m. But the actual amount of time engaged in learning is questionable as their labouring hours are unaccounted for.³⁶⁵

Routine was slightly less rigidly structured in smaller establishments (tables 4.6 and 4.7). In 1770, girls attended Townley Hall School from 7 a.m. until 7 p.m. in summer and from '8 or 9' or, 'as early as the light will admit of' in winter.³⁶⁶ As children were daily scholars, the school closed in winter 'in good time for [them] to beat [sic] home before dark'.³⁶⁷ One hour was allowed for dinner and recreation. Although children spent three hours each day in school reading, they spent more at labour (four). In recognition of children's physical abilities, teachers were advised that, 'if any of the girls are very little, more ... time may be given to their books.'³⁶⁸

³⁶² Denis G. Marnane, 'Samuel Cooper of Killenure (1750-1831) – a Tipperary land agent and his diaries', *Tipperary Historical Journal* (1993), p. 116.

³⁶³ The hours were – summer: 7 a.m. to 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.; winter: 8 a.m. to 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.: *An account of Charity-schools lately erected in England, Wales and Ireland*, (London, 1706), p. 5.

³⁶⁴ *Sixth report of the commissioners of Irish education inquiry*, p. 93.

³⁶⁵ [Hibernian Society], *Regulations of the Hibernian Society for maintaining, educating and apprenticing the orphans and children of soldiers* (Dublin, 1799), p. 51.

³⁶⁶ NLI, Townley Hall Papers, Ms 10250.

³⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

Table 4.6: Daily Routine, Townley Hall School, Drogheda, Co. Louth, 1770

Hour	1 May-1 Aug	1 Aug-1 Sep	1 Sep-1 Oct	1 Oct-1 Nov	1 Nov-1 Feb	1 Feb-1 Mar	1 Mar-1 Apr	1 Apr-1 May
05.30	Rise							
06.00	School – prayers & work	Rise						Rise
06.30		School – prayers & work	Rise				Rise	School – prayers & work
07.00			School – prayers & work	Rise		Rise	School – prayers & work	
07.30				School – prayers & work	Rise	School – prayers & work		
08.00	Lessons	Lessons	Lessons	School – prayers & work	School – prayers & work	Lessons	Lessons	Lessons
08.15				Lessons				
09.00	Breakfast & play	Breakfast & play	Breakfast & play	Breakfast & play	Breakfast & play	Breakfast & play	Breakfast & play	Breakfast & play
09.30					School – prayers & lessons			
10.00	School – prayers & lessons	School – prayers & lessons	School – prayers & lessons	School – prayers & lessons	Read Psalms & Bible	School – prayers & lessons	School – prayers & lessons	School – prayers & lessons
13.00	Dinner & play	Dinner & play	Dinner & play	Dinner & play	Dinner & play	Dinner & play	Dinner & play	Dinner & play
14.00	School - work & lessons	School - work & lessons	School - work & lessons	School - work & lessons	School - work & lessons	School - work & lessons	School - work & lessons	School - work & lessons
18.00	Play	Play	Play	Play	Play	Play	Play	Play
19.00	Supper & prayers	Supper & prayers	Supper & prayers	Supper & prayers	Supper & prayers	Supper & prayers	Supper & prayers	Supper & prayers
20.00	Bed	Bed	Bed	Bed	Bed	Bed	Bed	Bed

Source: N.L.I., Townley Hall papers, Ms 10250.

By 1792 children enrolled in the Abbey Presbyterian school attended lessons from 9 a.m. until 1 p.m. and from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. between 1 April and 1 October, but from 10 a.m. until 3 p.m. between 1 October and 1 April (table 4.7).³⁶⁹

Table 4.7: Abbey Presbyterian School, Dublin, daily routine, May 1792					
	Rise	Breakfast	Dine	Sup	Retire
Summer	6 a.m.	8 a.m.	2 p.m.	7p.m.	10 p.m.
Winter	7 a.m.	9 a.m.	3 p.m.	8 p.m.	9 p.m.

Source: John Barkley, *Short history of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland* (Belfast, n.d.), p. 101.

For most of the century no regulations applied in the Dublin Workhouse and Foundling Hospital concerning children's education. New policies were implemented in 1800 in reaction to the appalling conditions highlighted in the 1797 parliamentary report, not least concerning female children's education, which assumed a more 'academic' focus. The children's day began early, in spring and autumn at 6 a.m., in summer at 5 a.m., and in winter at 7 a.m. In 1800 children attended school for an hour before breakfast returning to school at 9.30. Following a break for dinner they returned to lessons at 4 p.m. and remained in school until 7 p.m., retiring at 8 p.m.³⁷⁰

As institutional children's education was combined with labour the exact hours of tuition are difficult to assess. Notwithstanding this, the fact that throughout the century children engaged in physical labour suggests that the authorities paid scant regard to children's abilities and capacities. Indeed, Sir Jeremiah Fitzpatrick observed in 1788 that sitting carding and spinning at their linen wheels was 'injurious' to many of the children.³⁷¹ Yet this situation continued into the nineteenth-century.

Teaching methods

When John Locke made his observation that 'an impression made on beeswax or lead will not last so long as on brass or steel' he was referring disparagingly to the teaching methods then in use in grammar schools.³⁷² By 1736, the educationalist John Clarke also criticised contemporary methods of instruction.³⁷³ As both Locke and Clarke observed, besides the content and quality of instruction children received, the

³⁶⁹ Barkley, *Short history of the Presbyterian Church*, p. 101.

³⁷⁰ *Rules for conducting the education of the female children in the Foundling Hospital*.

³⁷¹ *First report of the Commissioners of Irish Education Inquiry* (London, 1825), p. 7.

³⁷² Locke, *Some thoughts concerning education*, p. 133.

³⁷³ John Clarke, *An essay upon the education of youth in grammar-schools* (4th ed., Dublin, 1736), p. 5.

pedagogical methods employed were of crucial importance to children's intellectual advancement.

Given the state of Irish children's education in the first half of the eighteenth-century it is not surprising that there was no appreciation of the advantages of structured programmes of spelling, reading and writing concurrently. The system of rote learning (which requires no more than a good memory) that Locke was so opposed to held sway. Locke passionately believed that children could not simply memorise and understand 'rules and precepts' by rote.³⁷⁴

Despite Locke's injunctions there was little attempt in Ireland to address education according to children's abilities and capacities prior to mid-century. Locke had early recognised that 'curiosity, pride, desire for liberty and a want of dominion' were fundamental qualities in all children and rational beings.³⁷⁵ For Locke the child's desire for liberty and duty formed an important part of his educational ideas and combined with curiosity would, he believed, motivate them towards knowledge. The Belfast schoolmaster David Manson who was educated at home by his mother, adapted Locke's philosophy and in 1755 made his pedagogical intentions very clear, to 'teacheth by way of amusement'.³⁷⁶ Manson's method of instruction, to 'make ... tuition a labour of love to both teacher and pupil'³⁷⁷ was based on a merit system. But of crucial importance, it was specifically designed to appeal to children.³⁷⁸

Manson was innovative not only in his approach but also in his teaching methods³⁷⁹ believing that in education children should be convinced that:

they are free; ... they act from choice, not compulsion. ... Their lessons must be proposed as an amusement, not a task. That which renders learning disagreeable to some children, is the abrupt manner in which it is proposed; the harsh treatment they meet with on account of non-performance; or confining them too long at once to any particular study; for such usage would soon tire them of their most favourite amusements.³⁸⁰

³⁷⁴ Locke, *Some thoughts concerning education*, p. 39

³⁷⁵ Gianoutsos, 'Locke and Rousseau: early childhood education', p. 2.

³⁷⁶ Marshall, 'David Manson, schoolmaster in Belfast', pp 61-2.

³⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, pp 62-6.

³⁷⁸ 'Life of David Manson', *The Belfast Monthly Magazine*, 28 Feb. 1811, p. 130.

³⁷⁹ For details of Manson's pedagogical methods see Marshall, 'David Manson, schoolmaster in Belfast', *Ulster Journal of Archaeology* (May-Aug., 1908), pp 59-72; 'Life of David Manson', *The Belfast Monthly Magazine*, 6, no. 31 (Feb., 1811), pp 126-32; J. J. Campbell, 'The play school of David Manson (1726-92) of Belfast', *The Capuchin Annual* (Dublin, 1956-7), pp 159-69.

³⁸⁰ Marshall, 'David Manson, schoolmaster in Belfast', p. 63; 'Life of David Manson', *The Belfast Monthly Magazine*, 28 Feb. 1811, p. 127.

He printed his own version of a primer and spelling book and sold them at cost price to the children. Significantly the words in the primer and spelling book were 'so arranged that children could not be induced from the sound to spell them by rote'.³⁸¹ He printed playing card shaped 'spelling, reading and numerical cards' so that children would be 'induced ... to read, spell and do easy accounts' at home in the evening, and for the schoolroom walls had large sheets printed with the alphabet and 'monosyllables' from his primer and spelling books.³⁸² The result of these innovations in eighteenth-century children's education was that each child had a clear educational objective to strive for. But Ireland was not ready to accept such revolutionary educational and childrearing ideas.

Class attendance and size

Difficulty sustaining an appropriate level of teaching within schools was problematic on a number of levels, for teacher and pupil. Many children attended day schools irregularly, erratically or only stayed for a short time. The master at Zelva School on Valentia Island, county Kerry remarked in July 1788 that at certain times of the year few scholars came in the mornings, being detained 'at their country business' but 'great crowds came in the afternoons'.³⁸³ Likewise, attendance at Lurgan Free School in 1786 was indifferent. Many of the children are recorded as 'attended but seldom' or 'staid but a short time' and this applied to children of all religious persuasions.³⁸⁴ As such any structured educational programme was destined to fail.

Moreover, there were wide variations in the number of children attending individual schools, with urban schools attracting more students than rural (table 4.8). For example, between 1716 and 1730 forty-two pupils attended St Anne's Charity school in Dublin city while only four were listed attending Clonmethan Charity School, Oldtown, county Dublin.³⁸⁵ As can be seen from table 4.8, this remained a consistent pattern throughout the eighteenth-century though class sizes in small fee paying academies or schools were generally smaller than hedge schools.

³⁸¹ 'Life of David Manson', *The Belfast Monthly Magazine*, 28 Feb. 1811, p. 128.

³⁸² Multiplication cards were used during evening play by the Leitrim children in 1809: Lady Leitrim to Earl of Leitrim [27 Oct. 1809] (NLI, Killadoon [Leitrim] Papers, Ms 36033/1).

³⁸³ For example see Lurgan Free school, 1786 (PRONI, D1928/S/1/1); PRONI, D104/8/9/4/14 cited in de Brún, 'Some documents concerning Valentia Erasmus Smith school, 1776-95', pp 71, 76.

³⁸⁴ Lurgan Free school, 1786 (PRONI, D1928/S/1/1).

³⁸⁵ M. G. Jones, *The Charity school movement*, pp 384-5.

Table 4.8: Pupil numbers in selected schools 1687-1811

School Name	Date	Males	Females	Total number of pupils
Halls Charity School, Limerick	1687	20	20	40
Mitre-alley Charity School, Dublin	1706	50	0	50
St John's Charity School, Dublin	1706	24	0	24
Bishop Foy's School, Waterford	1713-15	25	0	25
Old Ross Palatine School, Wexford	1715-18	24	0	24
St Patrick's Cathedral Charity School, Dublin	1718	20	10	30
St Anne's Charity School, Dublin	1724	30	0	30
Naas Charity School, Kildare	1724	10	0	10
King's Hospital, Dublin	1764	170	0	170
Blue Coat School, Limerick	1771	20	0	20
St Thomas's Parish School, Dublin	1786	0	16	16
Drumcondra Parish School, Dublin	1786	11	11	22
Waterford Grammar School	1787	36	0	36
Bishop Foy's School, Waterford	1787	75	0	75
Hibernian Marine School, Dublin	1790	190	54	244
Tipperary Grammar School	1791	18	0	18
Zelva School, Valentia Island, Kerry	1795			58
Drogheda Grammar School, Louth	1807	60	0	60
Birr parish school, Tipperary	1796	8	0	8
Clonagad parish school, Tipperary	1796	20	20	40
Mt. Ussher, Wicklow	1811	6	6	12
Ballinalea [R.C.] School, Wicklow.	1811	115	66	181

Source: M. G. Jones, *The Charity school movement: a study of eighteenth-century Puritanism in action* (Cambridge, 1938); Thomas Newenham, *A view of the natural, political, and commercial circumstances of Ireland* (London, 1809).

The Sunday School in Dublin's St Catherine's parish established in 1786 grew so rapidly that by 1798 it necessitated using the substantial three-story building of the Dublin Free (Weekly) School in School Street.³⁸⁶ In 1809, the average attendance at each of the twelve unendowed schools in the barony of Barryroe, county Cork was seventy-two; in the parish of Carrigoline, also in county Cork, the average attendance at each of the four Roman Catholic schools was seventy-five,³⁸⁷ and in each of the 259 schools in Cloyne diocese the average was sixty-nine.³⁸⁸ In 1811, the average number of children attending each of the seven schools in the parish of Dunganstown,

³⁸⁶ Thomas A. Markus, *Buildings and power: freedom and control in the origin of modern building types* (London, 1993), p. 48.

³⁸⁷ The total number of scholars in the barony of Barryrow was 871 and in the parish of Carrigoline 300: Newenham, *A view of the natural, political and commercial circumstances of Ireland*, p. 36.

³⁸⁸ The total number of scholars was 17,600: *ibid.*

county Wicklow was fifty-nine and in the Union of Wicklow an average of forty children attended each of the thirteen schools, though individually numbers ranged from six to 115 pupils.³⁸⁹ Highlighting a consistent difficulty in any eighteenth-century statistical analysis, contemporaries believed that these figures were underestimated, a view borne out by Thomas Newenham who observed that the number of Cork children attending school in summer exceeded those present in winter.³⁹⁰ Likewise the commissioners of Irish education inquiry noted discrepancies between the returns of the Protestant clergy and those of the Roman Catholic clergy.³⁹¹

The number of children of varying abilities and standards educated in one room hindered individual children's educational development. The limitations of large class sizes were recognised by Thomas Sheridan in 1758. Although pupils attending the Hibernian Society Academy were 'engaged in the same, or nearly the same studies ... without the least deviation or neglect', they were divided into separate classrooms of ten, fifteen, or at most twenty scholars.³⁹² Likewise, by 1791 children attending St Catherine's Sunday school in Dublin were divided into classes 'under the care of one or more teachers'.³⁹³

Attainment levels

If by mid-century the limited benefits of large class sizes was accepted as detrimental to a child's educational advancement, attempts to formalise a classification system of pupil proficiency and attainment reflects a growing appreciation of children's individuality – of their abilities and capacities – as highlighted by Locke.

Responding to increased interest in children's education and to the awareness of individual children's specific abilities and capacities, educational 'examinations' to assess children's attainment and proficiency levels were held by all schools and

³⁸⁹ NLI, Quane Papers, Ms 17967.

³⁹⁰ Newenham, *A view of the natural, political and commercial circumstances of Ireland*, p. 36.

³⁹¹ This was frequently attributed to Catholic fears of closer involvement in their schools by members of the Protestant clergy or the authorities. *Second report of the Commissioners of Irish education inquiry* (Dublin, 1824).

³⁹² Hibernian Society for the Improvement of Education, *A General account of the regulations, discipline, course of study and expences, attending the education of youth in the seminary to be opened on Monday the 8th day of January 1759* (Dublin, 1758), p. 1.

³⁹³ *The plan and general rules by which the Sunday schools of St Catherine's parish, Dublin, are at present and designed in future to be conducted* (Dublin, 1791), p. 6.

institutions from the mid eighteenth-century. Indeed, in 1758 Thomas Sheridan anticipated holding ‘public examinations ... in reading, speaking and composition’ as a central element of the curriculum of the Hibernian Society Academy.³⁹⁴ This type of examination, reported in newspapers, was a public manifestation of children’s educational achievement and a source of parental pride. William Stacpoole noted proudly in his diary that ‘my son George got the premium in the first class with great credit, my nephew Andrew got a medal for a speech & George got a medal for a theme’ at Ennis School’s public examinations in 1788.³⁹⁵ Reflecting highly on the school and ‘to the pleasure of a very numerous assemblage of polite company’, it was reported in the *Hibernian Journal* that girls (some not quite eight years old) at the Boarding School in Exchequer Street, Dublin gave ‘a very singular display of excellence in grammatical knowledge, accurate reading, and graceful elocution’ in 1791.³⁹⁶

Similarly by 1793 the educational achievements of individual children in St Mary’s Charity School in Dublin were publicly promoted. While each pupil presented their copybook for examination to the governors at their monthly board day,³⁹⁷ the governors further encouraged children’s efforts in reading, writing, accounts and religion by awarding medals twice a year to the boys, and ‘four premiums ... to the four best answerers ... their names to be published’.³⁹⁸ The governors were hopeful that the public recognition of these particular children’s success would recommend them ‘as deserving to be well provided for in life by such persons as may choose to take them apprentices.’³⁹⁹ Likewise, children in the Hibernian Marine Society School were examined and a premium given annually to one boy, one girl, and one overall winner.⁴⁰⁰

The publication of educational premium winners became a well-established practice in the second half of the eighteenth-century, which reflected well not only on the winner but also served to advertise the school’s reputation, a needful exercise in

³⁹⁴ Hibernian Society, *A general account of the regulations, discipline, course of study and expences*, p. 1.

³⁹⁵ McNamara (ed.), ‘The diary of an eighteenth-century Clare gentleman’, pp 25-65.

³⁹⁶ *Hibernian Journal*, 15 Jun. 1791.

³⁹⁷ St Mary’s Charity school, Minutes, 31 Mar. 1798 (NLI, Ms 2664).

³⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 16 Nov. 1793.

³⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰⁰ Hibernian Marine Society. *By-laws agreed to and confirmed by the Hibernian Society, according to the rules prescribed by their charter* (Dublin 1775), p. 12.

light of the increased competition schools faced as the century progressed.⁴⁰¹ But more significantly, public examinations serve to illustrate how appreciative late eighteenth-century society was of individual children' and how deeply Locke's theories had entered the public consciousness.

The systems employed in early eighteenth-century institutions to establish children's proficiency levels and appropriately address their education were rudimentary. Successful educational progress in some early charity schools was a child who could 'read well and distinctly' and also 'say the *Church Catechism* by heart'.⁴⁰² But in line with developments in fee-paying schools, by the latter half of the century, institutional and charitable schools increasingly applied more rigorous assessment processes.

In 1786 the governors of Lurgan Free School and Sunday School for 'the education of the poor children [aged four to thirteen] of the Parish of Shankill', county Armagh, marked the educational level of each child at entry such as 'reading monosylls', and recorded improvements made during 'their continuance in it' and when leaving school.⁴⁰³ Progress could be slow. In 1786, nine year-old Anthony Wright was recorded as a 'runaway' having 'made but a small progress'.⁴⁰⁴ Notwithstanding these difficulties, the majority of children were taught to read.

A more structured and formalised assessment procedure was followed in Dublin's St Catherine's Sunday school in 1791. On entry children were divided into classes 'according to their proficiency in learning' and moved at each quarterly examination from one class to another as they improved or 'oftner if the attending governors judge necessary'.⁴⁰⁵ Similar to Manson's 1755 playschool, children were actively encouraged to strive for improvements through a merit system. As many children as the governors considered as 'the best writers, readers, or spellers in each class' were awarded 'premiums' of clothes or books quarterly.⁴⁰⁶ In a society where

⁴⁰¹ For example see: Hibernian Academy, *Freeman's Journal*, 7 Apr. 1763; Hibernian Academy, *Freeman's Journal*, 22 Dec. 1764; Rev. Mr. O'Connor's school, *Cork Evening Post*, 19 Jan. 1784; Exchequer-street Boarding school, Dublin, *Hibernian Journal*, 15 Jun. 1791.

⁴⁰² *Methods of erecting, supporting, and governing Charity-schools, with an account of the Charity-schools in Ireland and some observations thereon* (3rd ed., Dublin, 1721), Corcoran, *State policy in Irish education*, p. 101.

⁴⁰³ Lurgan Free school, 1786 (PRONI, D1928/S/1/1).

⁴⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰⁵ See rule xv: *The plan and general rules by which the Sunday schools of St Catherine's parish, Dublin, are at present and designed in future to be conducted*, p. 7.

⁴⁰⁶ See rule xx, *ibid.*

many had few private possessions, these rewards must have been of immense significance to the children and a source of great pride to their parents.

Local committees monitored charter schoolchildren's educational progress. By the 1770s their reports to the committee in Dublin clearly illustrate the deplorable state of children's education in the schools. Those transplanted from Monastereven Nursery, county Kildare to Ballinrobe Charter school, county Mayo in 1771 were so 'deficient in learning that except one or two, they know not the bare letters of the alphabet'.⁴⁰⁷ Children in Castledermot Charter school, county Kildare were assessed according to their proficiency in reading and reciting the catechism, but with 'no observation whether as well as ought to be expected'.⁴⁰⁸ By 1773, local committees were instructed to examine children 'one by one, in spelling, reading, catechisms, writing etc.' at every future meeting⁴⁰⁹ and submit a signed report to Dublin. But the Dublin committee quickly realised this was open to fraud and deceit. In 1789 however, children at Primrose Grange Charter school were assessed as:

the 1st Class ... of seven boys and six girls, read the *History of the Bible* tolerably well, ... In the Church Catechism, perfect. Some of them write pretty well ... the 2nd Class, eight boys and one girl, read the *Psalter* indifferently, are however pretty perfect in their prayers and catechism. 3rd class, one boy and five girls, are read[in]g the *Spelling Book* and spelling tolerably well and answered decently in their prayers and catechism. 4th class four boys and two girls, all young and not yet able to spell words of more than two or three syllables are learning their prayers.⁴¹⁰

A more formalised assessment structure (table 4.9) had emerged by 1802 that allowed teachers to measure and assess not only individual children's attainment levels but also their ability and capacity to engage with a structured educational programme.

⁴⁰⁷ Committee Book 1771-74, 23 Sep. 1772 (TCD, Ms 5236).

⁴⁰⁸ Ibid., Oct. 1773.

⁴⁰⁹ Ibid.

⁴¹⁰ Primrose Grange school, Orders 1757-96, 6 Jan. 1789 (TCD, Ms 5646).

Table 4.9: Primrose Grange Charter school, pupil assessment, 1802

Name	Age	Attended	Spells	Reads	Writes
James McDonnell	13		Words of two syllables	Lessons of two syllables	Joining hand badly
J. Frewin	11		Words of three syllables	New Testament	Joining hand indifferently
George Cary	10		Words of four syllables	Lessons of three syllables	Joining hand indifferently
Henry McKeon	9	6 months	Words of two syllables	Easy lessons of one syllable	
Robert Park	9	1½ years	Words of four syllables	Lessons of three syllables	
John O'Neal	9		Words of four syllables	New Testament	Joining hand indifferently
Michl Frawley	8	1½ years	Words of three syllables	Lessons of two syllables	
Jos. Vernon	8	1½ years	Words of two syllables	Lessons of one syllable	
Henry Charlton	8	1½ years	Words of two syllables	Lessons of one syllable	
Thos. Dogherty	7	1½ years	Words of one syllable	Does not read	

Source: Primrose Grange Charter school, Reports 1801-4, 22 Mar. 1802 (TCD, Ms 5647).

By 1800 the girls in the Dublin Workhouse and Foundling Hospital were also classified according to their ability to read and spell. Divided into ten different schools with four classes in each, children who could read perfectly were in the first class, those who could read in the Psalter only in the second class, those who could read 'in the spelling book' were in the third, and children still 'in the primer' were in the fourth and lowest class.⁴¹¹

Although established at the close of the eighteenth-century, the Charitable Society for the Roman Catholic Poor Schools in Cork adopted a more cohesive and fundamental approach to the classification of pupil proficiency and attainment levels. Similar to Manson's earlier educational practices,⁴¹² by 1805 they divided their schools into three classes, 'the first for spelling and reading, the second for writing and arithmetic, the third for book-keeping and navigation'.⁴¹³ By 1806 their classification system had expanded to encompass ten different classes of ability (table 4.10).

⁴¹¹ *Rules for conducting the education of the female children in the Foundling Hospital*, p. 12.

⁴¹² In 1755 Manson divided children into three separate classes under separate instructors and within each class were subsequently subdivided into a 'low class' and a 'first class': Marshall, 'David Manson, schoolmaster in Belfast', *Ulster Journal of Archaeology* (May-Aug, 1908), p. 63.

⁴¹³ Extracts from the Cork Charitable Society Minute Book. 1793-1851, Corcoran, *Selected texts*, pp 80-1.

Table 4.10: Cork Poor schools, pupil classification, 1806	
1 Class	Boys only learning their letters
2 Class	Boys of Ab Eb, etc.
3 Class	Boys spelling words of one syllable
4 Class	Boys spelling words of two syllables
5 Class	Boys spelling words of three and four syllables.
6 Class	Boys spelling words of five and six syllables
7 Class	Young readers
8 Class	Advanced readers
9 Class	Young writers
10 Class	Advanced writers.

Source: Cork Charitable Society minute book, 1793-1851 in T. Corcoran, *Selected texts on education systems in Ireland from the close of the Middle-Ages* (Dublin, 1928), pp 80-1.

By the mid eighteenth-century, educational thinking and practice was more centred on the child. Yet it was not until the latter part of the century that schools developed and adopted a cohesive system for measuring individual pupil performance and attainment. Nevertheless, the systems of pupil classification of children's educational abilities and capacities that evolved in the latter part of the eighteenth-century were crucial in facilitating the development and implementation of the structured and progressive educational programmes adopted in the nineteenth.

Curriculum

Reading, writing, arithmetic, Latin and religion were central to children's education; though the emphasis on religion in Irish pauper education during the eighteenth-century was a matter of some public notoriety. The publication of *Some thoughts concerning education* in 1693 brought the methods by which children were instructed and the purpose of subjects such as writing, maths and Latin into sharper focus. Highlighting the importance of children's abilities and capacities in education, by mid-century Rousseau argued that boys between two and twelve years of age were unable to comprehend or understand subjects such as geography, history, languages and literature and so these were best avoided.⁴¹⁴

Even so, all children began with the basics – reading then writing. Once a child could read English well, Locke proposed following a three-step system to teach writing.⁴¹⁵ Although few pauper children were offered the opportunity of learning arithmetic, Richard Edgeworth considered it 'the most useful; its rules are logical ...

⁴¹⁴ Boyd, *Émile for today*, p. 31.

⁴¹⁵ Locke, *Some thoughts concerning education*, p. 119.

the powers of the mind [are] improved; and what end can be proposed more advantageous to society in the education of the poor than to give them good sense and reasoning minds?’⁴¹⁶ Arithmetic was also a standard subject in middling and gentry schools and many Irish children were familiar with Voster’s *Arithmetic* book.⁴¹⁷ Disliking the normal system of rote learning, Voster defended the large number of questions students completed in the *Arithmetic* stating that:

youth do not learn so much by apprehension as exercise, which not only fixes the rules of this art upon their memories, but by degrees opens their judgment to conceive the grounds and reasons of it.⁴¹⁸

Representative of traditional classical education, Latin as a subject was particularly contentious. The American Quaker and educationalist Anthony Benezet (1713-84)⁴¹⁹ believed that ‘heathen authors’ such as Ovid, Virgil, Homer and so forth, ‘nourish[ed] the spirit of war in youth ... and [fed] the corrupt passions of the human mind.’⁴²⁰ Locke acknowledged that where a child was destined for life in ‘trade’, Latin was of no use to him.⁴²¹ Yet he was also conscious that ‘a man can have no place amongst the learned ... who is a stranger to ... [Latin and Greek].’⁴²² Acutely aware of children’s differing abilities it was the method by which they learnt languages that upset Locke, and he proposed a radical solution for its time – that children learn Latin in a similar fashion to French – through conversation. Only then should they advance to reading an ‘easy Latin book’ such as Justin or Eutropius.⁴²³ Indeed, Richard Edgeworth blamed the Latin construction of his adult writing style to his early childhood writing Latin.⁴²⁴

Initially promoted by Sheridan, the 1758 curriculum of the Hibernian Academy drew its inspiration from classical Athens and Rome. Aside from the necessary attention required to children’s religion and morality, Sheridan also promoted as ‘a necessary branch of the education of youth’, perfection in poetry,

⁴¹⁶ Edgeworth and Edgeworth, *Memoirs*, ii, 456-7.

⁴¹⁷ Indicative of Voster’s reputation is his death notice in the *Cork Evening Post*, 12 May 1760. Voster, *Arithmetic*, p. iv.

⁴¹⁸ Voster, *Arithmetic*, p. iv.

⁴¹⁹ Anthony Benezet was an American educator and abolitionist.

⁴²⁰ Anthony Benezet to John Pemberton, 29 of 5 month 1783 (FHL, Portf. 8, no. 12).

⁴²¹ Locke, *Some thoughts concerning education*, p. 121.

⁴²² *Ibid.*, p. 128.

⁴²³ *Ibid.*, p. 126.

⁴²⁴ Edgeworth and Edgeworth, *Memoirs*, ii, 334.

music, painting and sculpture.⁴²⁵ But while promoting the expansion of children's education it is significant that Sheridan also located that expansion within the traditional classical curriculum.

Despite the lively debate on the merits of a classical education there is ample evidence to indicate that children continued to be taught in this fashion. As late as 1807, Rev. Marshal Clarke, master of The Abbey School in Tipperary reported to the Commissioners of Education that 'the subjects of instruction' in his school were Latin, Greek, English, Arithmetic, Euclid, the use of globes and geography' – a classical education.⁴²⁶

Children's religious instruction (and ultimately conversion) was central to the early eighteenth-century Protestant reformist ethos. Recognising young children's particular vulnerability, Rowland Davies, the Dean of Cork, observed in 1717 that:

in these green and tender years ... while the reason is weak and the sensual appetite very strong, the devil is most apt to seduce them by temptations ... to prompt them to be sinful, in order to supply their wants.⁴²⁷

And Thomas Sheridan warned in 1756 that 'knowledge without practice is useless':

to persuade men to practise ... [moral precepts of Christianity], it is necessary that they should be forcibly inculcated, and frequent impressions made, till practice ripens into habit. Even then those impressions cannot be too often repeated considering the frailty of human nature, for fear of a relapse.⁴²⁸

Given these views were widely accepted, religious instruction took up a considerable part of children's schooldays throughout the eighteenth-century.⁴²⁹ Every educational activity engaged with in Townley Hall School began with prayers, and on Sundays children were immersed in religious instruction. Psalms and lessons were read on a daily basis and a chapter from *The whole duty of man*, 'learned by heart during the

⁴²⁵ Sheridan, *British education*, p. title page.

⁴²⁶ Quane, 'The Abbey school, Tipperary', p. 64.

⁴²⁷ Davies, *The right use of riches*, pp 22-3.

⁴²⁸ Sheridan, *British education*, pp 62-3.

⁴²⁹ Even if sixteenth and seventeenth-century religious emphasis was on adult catechising, children were not neglected. Ian Green has drawn up a useful appendix of catechisms used in or intended for use in Ireland between c.1560 and 1800 that includes catechisms specifically addressed to children. For example: Bellarmine's *Dottrina Cristiana breve* (1597) which was in a question and answer format intended for students; [Sylvester Lloyd, Bishop of Killaloe], *The Doway catechism, in English and Irish. For the use of children and ignorant people* (Dublin, 1738, 1752) (Cork, 1774); [James Butler], *A catechism for the instruction of children* (1777), versions in Irish dated Dublin 1784 and Cork 1792: Ian Green, 'The necessary knowledge of the principles of religion': catechisms and catechising in Ireland, c.1560-1800', Ford, McGuire and Milne (eds), *As by law established*, pp 69-88.

day', was repeated to the mistress at night.⁴³⁰ Similarly on Sundays, the 'thoughts and conversations' of children in the Hibernian Society School in 1758 were 'turned entirely to religious subjects'.⁴³¹ Those enrolled in Charity schools attended church twice every 'Lord's day and holy day'.⁴³² In the Hibernian Society's School for Soldier's Children, two hours a day were devoted to prayers and Catechism in winter (one hour before breakfast and one before bed), and three in summer. Besides daily prayers in the parish church the master of Cork's Green Coat School catechised the children 'thrice every week', on Sunday, Wednesday and Friday afternoons.⁴³³ Even in Manson's child-centred Belfast 'play-school', the catechism and divine songs were committed to memory at home and repeated in school before breakfast.⁴³⁴

If every educational activity revolved around religion, for institutional children it was frequently enforced in an environment that was educationally and personally unsound. According to Archibald Rowan Hamilton, the education of children in the Dublin Workhouse and Foundling Hospital was neglected, yet they 'went constantly to church'.⁴³⁵ Children on the Foundation side attended prayers in the hall every morning and evening despite it being 'extremely cold', 'damp and wet'.⁴³⁶ In the Hibernian Marine Society School, children who could read were given prayer books and closely supervised by the chaplain who oversaw prayers to ensure they made 'proper responses in church',⁴³⁷ and administered punishment for any 'vices' or 'irregularities' detected.⁴³⁸ To prevent scholars 'turning from or continuing Papists' the governors of the Erasmus Smith Foundation in 1712 ordered that:

Prayers be read morning and evening ... by the master or usher out of the Liturgy by law established at which every youth shall be oblig'd to attend. That every youth ... shall be instructed by the master or usher in the Church Catechism, and upon Sundays be publickly examin'd in the same in church. That every person ... shall duly attend the publick service in the parish church where each school is scituated [sic] every Lord's Day, and such other time as the master or usher shall appoint and upon neglect thereof after due admonishment to be expell'd the said schools. That every person so educated,

⁴³⁰ NLI, Townley Hall Papers, Ms 10250.

⁴³¹ Hibernian Society, *A general account of the regulations, discipline, course of study and expences*, p. 2.

⁴³² *An account of Charity-schools lately erected in England, Wales and Ireland* (London, 1706), p. 6.

⁴³³ [Davies], *An account of the present state of the Green-Coat Charity-schools of the parish of St Mary Shandon, Corke*, pp 34-6.

⁴³⁴ 'Life of David Manson', *Belfast Monthly Magazine*, 6, no. 31 (28 Feb. 1811), p. 129.

⁴³⁵ Archibald Rowan Hamilton to Rev. Dr S. White, 16 Feb. 1788. (LMA, A/FH/M/01/003/145-148).

⁴³⁶ *Commons Jn. (Irl.)*, 1758, vol. 6, appendix xcvi.

⁴³⁷ Hibernian Marine Society. *By-laws agreed to and confirmed by the Hibernian Society*, p. 6.

⁴³⁸ *Ibid.*

when he is sufficiently instructed in the aforesaid catechism, shall be brought by the master or usher to the bishop to be confirmed.⁴³⁹

No opportunity was missed to instil through education the religious principles of both the Established and Roman Catholic churches in peasant and pauper children. Even if at a disadvantage, Catholic chapel schools and sodalities flourished and Archbishop Butler's mid-century visitation book makes clear the large number of such schools in the Cashel diocese directing children's religious instruction.⁴⁴⁰ Children attending Nano Nagle's Cork school read the Douay Catechism in question and answer sessions.⁴⁴¹ Furthermore, pupils attended mass every day, said prayers morning and night, went to confession every month and 'communion when the confessor thinks proper'.⁴⁴²

The methods adopted for their religious instruction often – though not always – militated against the placement of the child at the centre of educational theory and practice. As Jamie Gianoutsos remarks, children's natural curiosity prompts them to discover the world but 'it is quickly killed by answers that are not comprehensible to them'.⁴⁴³ But as Green notes, there was an obsessive concern with religious clarity and comprehension, especially at elementary level which is consistent with a more focused view of children's religious instruction. Accordingly, many eighteenth-century catechisms adopted a specific format of short question and answer sessions designed to appeal to children's understandings. The *Abstract* (1717) and the *Church catechism broke into short questions* (1718) contained simple phraseology, questions and a list of difficult words with explanations.⁴⁴⁴ As the century progressed these works, specially adapted for children's use were added to, some particularly addressed towards Sunday school education.⁴⁴⁵

Despite the initial language and literacy difficulties institutional school children worked under,⁴⁴⁶ the eighteenth-century religious tracts and books utilised in

⁴³⁹ Quane, 'The Abbey school', pp 58-9.

⁴⁴⁰ For example in the parish of Loughmore, Tipperary, Thom Craffort, Theobald Blacke, Derby Blacke, Willm Ryan, Jams Hanharty, Micheal Keogh, Patrick Campin, John Hease and Willm Sturat were listed as having 'the Christian Doctrine': O'Dwyer (ed.), 'Archbishop Butler's visitation book', p. 65.

⁴⁴¹ Hutch, *Nano Nagle, her life, her labours*, pp 33-4.

⁴⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 34.

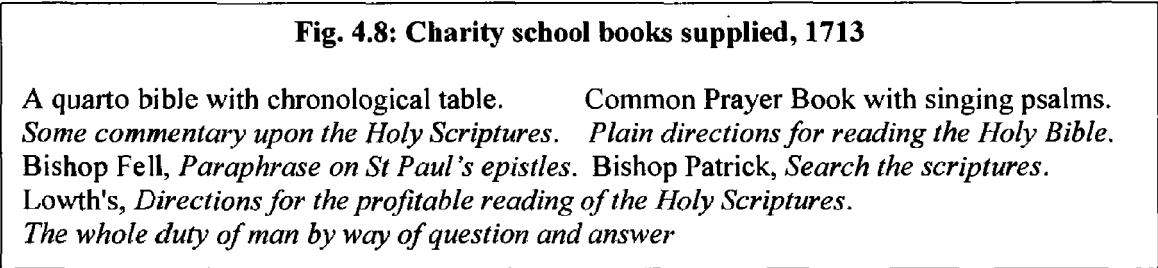
⁴⁴³ Gianoutsos, 'Locke and Rousseau: early childhood education', p. 7.

⁴⁴⁴ Green, 'The necessary knowledge', p. 77.

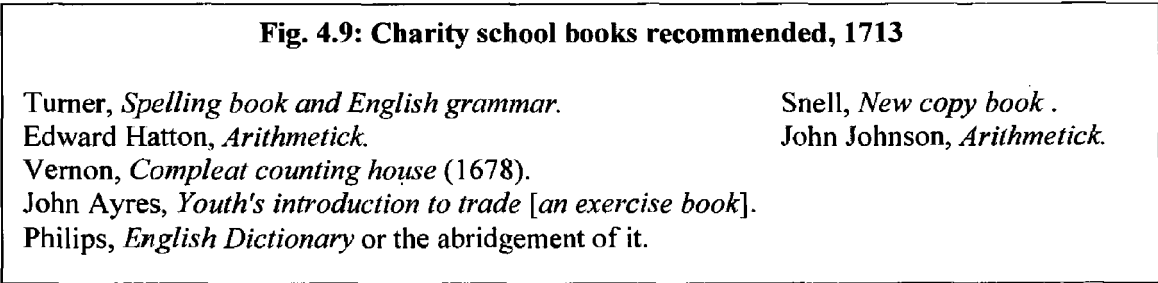
⁴⁴⁵ Green identifies this as *Lessons for children* (1789): Green, 'The necessary knowledge', pp 77-8.

⁴⁴⁶ The early eighteenth-century Irish language policy of Archbishop King supported the religious instruction of children and adults through their native language. Notwithstanding the fact that it was contrary to the act of 28 Henry VIII to promote the Irish language and habit, members of the

charity schools were often beyond children’s comprehension. Without the benefit of qualified instruction, ‘the mere sound, without the sense, will do ... no more good than a tune on the bagpipe.’⁴⁴⁷ Moreover, it is interesting to note that the books supplied to charity schools in 1713 (figure 4.8) were all of a religious nature while those ‘recommended’ (figure 4.9) were educationally based.



Source: *An Account of Charity-Schools: the methods used for erecting charity schools with the rules and orders by which they are governed. A particular account of the London charity schools: with a list of those erected elsewhere in Great Britain & Ireland* (12th ed., London, 1713), pp 76-78.



Source: *An Account of Charity-Schools: the methods used for erecting charity schools with the rules and orders by which they are governed. A particular account of the London charity schools: with a list of those erected elsewhere in Great Britain & Ireland* (12th ed., London, 1713), pp 76-78.

No doubt the books in Cork’s Green Coat School such as *The whole duty of man*,⁴⁴⁸ Bishop Beveridge’s (1637–1708) *Private thoughts on religion, and church catechism explained* (London, 1709),⁴⁴⁹ and Bishop Taylor’s (1613-1667) *Hold living and dying*⁴⁵⁰ (figure 4.10) also made dull reading for children.

Established church and government circles vigorously resisted it. The impetus was lost in 1712 but the debate continued sporadically throughout the eighteenth-century and was revived in the early years of the nineteenth.

⁴⁴⁷ Hamilton, *The cottagers of Glenburnie*, pp 279-80.
⁴⁴⁸ *The whole duty of man* is an English Protestant devotional work, first published anonymously, with an introduction by Henry Hammond in 1658. It remained popular and influential for two centuries.
⁴⁴⁹ William Beveridge (1637–1708) was an eminent English prelate and orientalist. In 1688 he became chaplain to William and Mary and in 1704 Bishop of St Asaph. In 1709 he published *Private thoughts on religion, and church catechism explained*: Joseph Thomas, *The universal dictionary of biography and mythology* (4 vols, 1887), i, 351.
⁴⁵⁰ Jeremy Taylor’s (1613-1667) chief fame is the result of his twin devotional manual *The rules and exercises of holy living* (1650) and *The rules and exercises of holy dying* (1651). *The rule and exercises of holy living* provided a manual of Christian practice, which has retained its place with devout readers. It deals with the means and instruments of obtaining every virtue and the remedies against every vice, and consideration to resisting all temptations together with prayers containing the

Fig. 4.10: Green Coat school, Cork, library books, 1716

<p>A quarto Bible. All the works of the author of the <i>Whole duty of man</i>, one volume, folio. <i>A visit to prisoners: the faith and practice of a Church of England-man. The Common-Prayer Book the best companion. A view of our Saviour's passion. A dialogue between two Protestants in answer to a Popish catechism</i> Beveridge, Bishop, <i>Thoughts of religion; Thoughts of prayer.</i> Bonnell, Mr, <i>Of the Gospel; Of life.</i> Brevint, <i>Reflections on the devotions of the Roman Church.</i> Bingham, <i>Antiquities of the Christian Church</i>, four volumes. Burnet, <i>History of the reformation</i>, two volumes in folio. Cave, Dr, <i>Primitive Christianity.</i> Charron, <i>Of wisdom</i>, two volumes. Comber, Dr, <i>On the common-prayer.</i> Drelincourt, <i>Against the fears of death.</i> Du Pin, <i>Life of Christ.</i> Groom, <i>Of the clergy.</i> Grotius, <i>Of the truth of the Christian religion.</i> Hole, <i>Exposition of the Church catechism</i>, two volumes. Howell's, <i>Letters.</i> Hyammond, Dr, <i>Practical catechism.</i> Jenett, <i>Devotions.</i> Lincoln, Bishop of, <i>The Epistles of the primitive fathers.</i> Littleton's, <i>Dictionary.</i> Lucas, <i>Of happiness</i>, three volumes. Monro, <i>Of education.</i> Nelson, <i>Address to persons of quality; Christian sacrifice; On the festivals and fasts of the church; Great duty, etc.</i> Nichols, Dr, <i>On the common Prayer-Book.</i> Nicholson, Rev., <i>Of charity-schools.</i> Ostervald, <i>Of the Old Testament</i>, two volumes. Parson, <i>Christian directory.</i> Puffendorf, <i>Law of nature.</i> Sherlock, <i>Of providence; Of death; Of judgment; Of the immortality of the soul.</i> Stanhope, Dr George, <i>A paraphrase and comment upon the Epistles and Gospels</i>, four volumes; <i>Thomas á Kempis.</i> Talbot, Dr, <i>Christian school-master.</i> Tate and Brady, <i>Psalms.</i> Taylor, Bishop, <i>Life of Christ</i>, and <i>Cave of the Apostles</i>, one volume, folio; <i>Hold living; Hold dying.</i> Tillotson, Bishop, <i>Sermons</i>, first volume. Ulysses, <i>Exposition of the Church catechism</i>, two volumes. Wall, <i>On infant-baptism.</i> Worthington, <i>Of self-resignation.</i></p>	<p>A quarto Common-Prayer Book.</p>
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Source: [Rowland Davies], *An Account of the present state of the Green-Coat Charity-Schools of the parish of St Mary Shandon, Corke; Erected in the Year 1716* (Corke, 1716), pp 30-2.

Addressing children's religious instruction by Locke's precept to observe children's abilities and capacities, the Presentation sisters were bound by papal rule not only to teach the Catechism daily but also to explain it to children 'briefly and

'Whole duty of a Christian'. *Holy dying* was perhaps even more popular. At the Restoration Taylor was made Bishop of Down and Connor and became vice-chancellor of the University of Dublin (TCD).

simply,' to adapt their language 'to the age and capacity of the children', and to 'accustom them to think and speak reverently of God and holy things'.⁴⁵¹ Ian Green however suggests that Charter schoolchildren's religious instruction was more specifically targeted through the use of the *Protestant catechism* of 1740, a catechism designed explicitly for use in the Charter schools. He notes that the negativity of the *Protestant catechism* was in direct contrast to the positive message contained in the more ecumenical *The young child's catechism*, *The child's catechism* and *The youth's catechism* all published in Dublin in 1759.⁴⁵² Although enthusiasts such as Henry Maule (1679-1758), Bishop of Meath, envisaged the Charter schools as 'little nurseries of religion',⁴⁵³ religious instruction therein was ultimately minimal. Even if books were available, the very nature of the system held little incentive for children to learn or understand whatever instruction they received. Yet religious conversion remained a matter of abiding concern. The Charter schools transplantation policy was designed not for any educational purpose but implicitly to break the dangerous influence 'Popish parents and relations' exerted on children.⁴⁵⁴ This fear persisted and formed a fundamental part of the Commissioners of Irish education inquiry in 1824.⁴⁵⁵

The gendered bias identified earlier in educational provision also followed through to the subjects deemed most appropriate to female education, and from mid-century there was significant debate over what subjects girls should be taught, which was a crucial consideration given their expected role in life. As Mary O'Dowd notes, literacy was essential to access the word of God,⁴⁵⁶ but as the century progressed the increasing amounts of leisure time available to girls and female adults also required filling. Many women saw the answer in an improved female education that would provide a 'resource against the irksomeness of solitude' during their married lives.⁴⁵⁷ Men however saw female education not as a useful means of developing children's

⁴⁵¹ Atkinson, *Irish education*, p. 75.

⁴⁵² Green, 'The necessary knowledge', p. 80.

⁴⁵³ Milne, *The Irish charter schools*, p. 31.

⁴⁵⁴ *A brief review of the rise and progress of the Incorporated Society in Dublin*, Corcoran, *State policy in Irish education*, p. 146.

⁴⁵⁵ The commissioners interviewed thirty-one foundlings (nineteen girls and twelve boys) returned to the Dublin Foundling Hospital in 1824 concerning their foster parent's religious practices. Boys were asked an average of forty-six questions, of which their religious practice was the ninth. Similarly girls were asked on average sixty-three questions and the sixth concerned their religious practices. Previous questions confirmed their name, age and foster parent's details: *Third report of the Commissioners of Irish Education Inquiry* (1826), pp 87-118.

⁴⁵⁶ O'Dowd, *A history of women in Ireland*, p. 213.

⁴⁵⁷ 'The female advocate', *Walker's Hibernian Magazine*, Aug. 1779, p. 468.

abilities and capacities, but in keeping them from ‘gossipings, slander and cards’ as adults.⁴⁵⁸

Drawing on his knowledge of female nature, James Nelson remarked that ‘the education of a woman should rather be sprightly than grave’ and recommended ‘reading, writing, working, dancing, French, Italian and music’ as suitable subjects for female education. A girl spelling without ‘exact propriety’ was he noted ‘frightful beyond expression’, while ‘Italian and music for a fine lady should be inseparable’. Nevertheless, Nelson drew the line at recommending further studies in subjects such as ‘maths and more learned languages’ as they often ‘instil a wish for further study in women’ he warned.⁴⁵⁹ Above all a girl should know that ‘her province is to please, and that every deviation from it, is thwarting nature’.⁴⁶⁰

The standard female education for elite and middling females, both public and private, had by mid-century become purely ornamental, a training in the social graces. Mirroring the aspirations of boy’s schools, proper attention was also paid to the instilling of virtue and the development of morals in girl’s schools. But, as Stone correctly observes, though it was a busy education it was not an intellectual one.⁴⁶¹ Girls were taught English grammar, history, the use of the globes and ‘all necessary branches of the arts and sciences’ by the 1790s, but they were still instructed in the obligatory skills of gentility such as manners, tambour, embroidery and so forth.⁴⁶² Ironically given the heated debate, by the end of the century the broad sweep of educational subjects offered to girls resulted in many instances in an education that was often more comprehensive than the narrow classical schooling of boys.

Although the economic prosperity and political stability that emerged in Ireland through the course of the eighteenth-century is reflected in the debate surrounding female education, it is also indicative of the role women were expected to play. It is undeniable that the opening of education to girls in the eighteenth-century had the potential to bring about profound change – a fact not lost on men. If the late eighteenth-century acceptance of improved female education can be seen as the foundation of feminist advocacy, there were limits. As Maria Edgeworth observed:

⁴⁵⁸ ‘The female advocate’, *Walker’s Hibernian Magazine*, Aug. 1779, p. 468.

⁴⁵⁹ Nelson, *An essay on the government of children* (2nd ed.), pp 263-8.

⁴⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 304.

⁴⁶¹ Stone, *The family, sex and marriage* (Abridged ed., 1979), p. 230.

⁴⁶² For example see *Finn’s Leinster Journal*, 29 Jul. 1789; 31 Jan. 1789; 25 Jan. 1794.

the manners of society must totally change before women can mingle with men in the busy and public scenes of life. They must become amazons before they can affect this change; they must cease to be women before they can desire it. The happiness of neither sex could be increased by this metamorphosis.⁴⁶³

Even so, the fact that from mid-century, society drove these debates and enthusiastically supported female education is a further acknowledgement of the acceptance among eighteenth-century Irish society of a more inclusive appreciation and understanding of childhood, both male and female.

Recreation time

The increased interest, manifest in the domestic environment from the 1760s, in maintaining children's health and well-being also had an impact in many schools and a more rounded approach was adopted towards children's education. Although Locke promoted fresh air as 'of great advantage' to everyone's health, it was, he stated, of particular importance to children.⁴⁶⁴ Exercise and recreation were both recommended by Buchan, not only to promote children's growth but also to strengthen their constitutions.⁴⁶⁵ He perceptively noted that, 'so strong is this principle, that a healthy youth cannot be restrained from exercise, even by the fear of punishment.'⁴⁶⁶ From mid-century recreation or playtime was specifically allotted within children's schooldays and remained a part of their timetable.

Progressive educationalists such as David Manson and later Richard Edgeworth skilfully combined children's recreational pursuits and education. Manson purchased a small farm, Lilliput, outside Belfast so his pupils could avail of the fresh air and exercise it afforded them (figure 4.11).⁴⁶⁷ A small bowling green, which Manson used as part of his educational 'merit' award scheme, was added, and 'good' pupils were permitted to use it on summer evenings.⁴⁶⁸

⁴⁶³ Edgeworth, *Letters for literary ladies* cited in Kenyon, *800 years of women's letters*, pp 73-4.

⁴⁶⁴ Locke, *Some thoughts concerning education*, p. 14.

⁴⁶⁵ Buchan, *Domestic medicine*, (19th ed.), p. 24.

⁴⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 76.

⁴⁶⁷ 'Life of David Manson', *The Belfast Monthly Magazine*, 6, no. 31 (Feb. 28, 1811), p. 131.

⁴⁶⁸ Marshall, 'David Manson, schoolmaster in Belfast', p. 65.

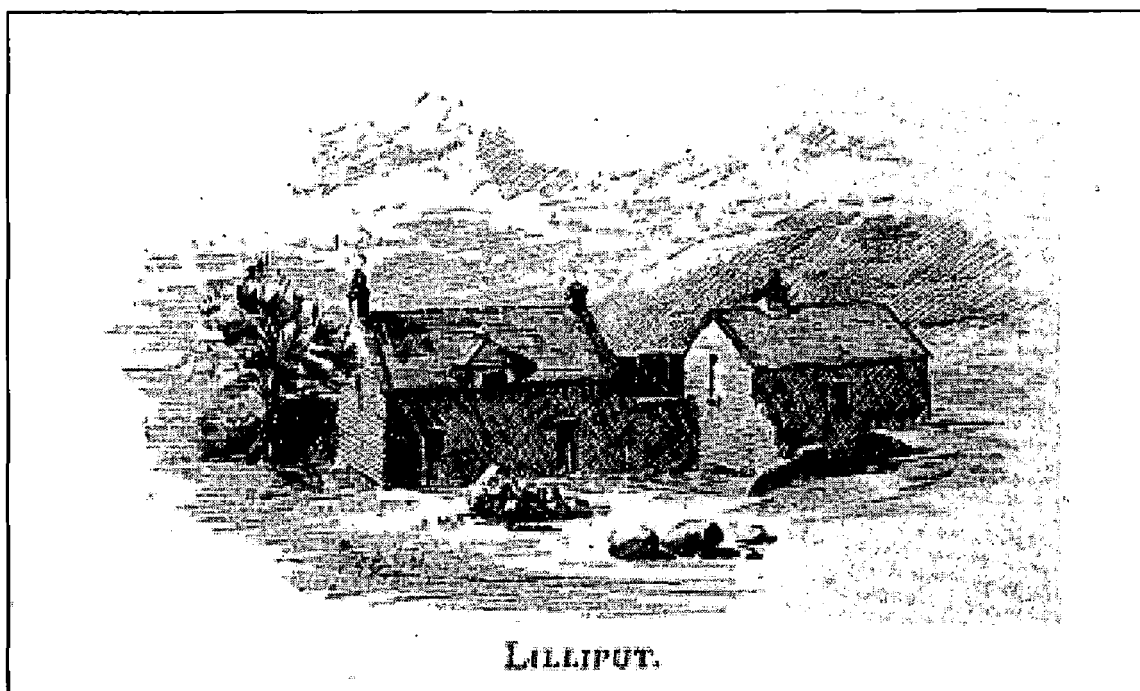


Fig. 4.11: David Manson's farm, Lilliput, 18th century

Source: Thomas McTear, 'Personal recollections of the beginning of the century', *Ulster Journal of Archaeology*, 5, no. 3 (1899), p. 80.

Although Richard Edgeworth is best noted for promoting constant learning, even in play, Thomas Sheridan first promoted this concept in 1758. Outlining his plans for the Hibernian Society School he advertised leisure time as 'directed towards some amusements and relaxations to some useful purposes.'⁴⁶⁹ Drawing from Locke, if indoors, pupils were entertained with 'familiar experiments in natural philosophy or natural history, geographical observations, mechanical performances, English authors etc.'⁴⁷⁰

By the 1780s time devoted to physical activity or recreational play alone increasingly formed a specific part of a school's daily routine, though children in Dublin's Female Orphan House (1790) were employed constantly, except for one half hour after every meal.⁴⁷¹ Three periods throughout the day were allocated to 'play' in Townley Hall School in the 1770s, and two periods in 1800 to girls in the Dublin Workhouse and Foundling Hospital. Foundling Hospital children were permitted to play in the hall, 'courts' or garden after breakfast until 9.30 when they returned to school. After lunch they were again allowed to play, closely supervised by two mistresses. None were permitted indoors and children were also forbidden to gather

⁴⁶⁹ Hibernian Society, *A general account of the regulations*, p. 2.

⁴⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁷¹ *Sixth report of the Commissioners of Irish Education Inquiry* (London, 1827), p. 94.

in 'corners in parties' during this time.⁴⁷² In summertime, girls were encouraged to play outdoors for an hour after supper, but in winter were locked in the schoolroom for that hour.⁴⁷³ Likewise children in the Hibernian School for Soldiers Children had two and a half hours (4.30 p.m. to 7 p.m.) allocated each day to recreation and exercise, although the two-hour summer lunch break also included playtime.⁴⁷⁴

As early as 1759, Primrose Grange Charter school committee recognised that the size of the schoolyard was too small for children 'to play and exercise in' and recommended using an adjoining field.⁴⁷⁵ Despite the fact that there was no playground in the King's Hospital, in 1790 the governors declined the pupil's petition to be allowed play in the nearby Phoenix Park but permitted them to play ball in the dining-room and schoolroom.⁴⁷⁶ By 1794, the costs incurred in replacing broken windows encouraged the governors to allot a small playground to the rear of the school.⁴⁷⁷

Similarly, by 1788 Drogheda Grammar School's half-acre playground, though recently 'much enlarged' was not considered 'adequate'. Aware of the benefits arising from outdoor play a report noted that 'the almost continual confinement of boys in so narrow a space ... must be very irksome' and recommended the purchase of an additional piece of land.⁴⁷⁸ The master of Ennis Endowed School also considered their one and three-quarter acre playground too confined and 'the bounds ... not high enough'.⁴⁷⁹

Reflecting the increased interest from mid-century not only in the benefits of fresh air and exercise but also sea-bathing, schools adjacent to the coast frequently brought their pupils to bathe. Accompanied by an usher, boys at Drogheda Grammar School were brought to the beach for 'the sake of airing, amusement and bathing' in 1788,⁴⁸⁰ while Mr Barry, master of a boarding school in Dingle advertised the fact that he not only took the 'greatest care of the morals and health of his scholars', but also 'attends them in the summer season to bathing every morning [in] the salt

⁴⁷² *Rules for conducting the education of the female children in the Foundling Hospital.*

⁴⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷⁴ [Hibernian Society], *Regulations of the Hibernian Society for maintaining, educating and apprenticing the orphans and children of soldiers*, p. 51.

⁴⁷⁵ Primrose Grange school, Orders 1757-96, 15 Mar. 1759 (TCD, Ms 5646).

⁴⁷⁶ The King's Hospital minute book, 1779-1801, p. 136.

⁴⁷⁷ Whiteside, *A history of the King's Hospital*, p. 64.

⁴⁷⁸ Drogheda Endowed school, Jun. 1788 (NLI, Quane Papers, Ms 17929).

⁴⁷⁹ Rev. Michael FitzGerald was master of Ennis Endowed school: Ennis Endowed school, 24 Jun. 1788 (NLI, Quane Papers, Ms 17934).

⁴⁸⁰ Drogheda Endowed school, Jun. 1788 (NLI, Quane Papers, Ms 17929).

water.⁴⁸¹ The King's Hospital likewise sent pupils to bathe in the sea, paying £16 16s. 11d. in 1799 and a striking £32 2s. 5d. in 1800, but the high costs involved forced the governors to discontinue this custom in 1805.⁴⁸²

By the closing years of the eighteenth-century, schools accepted the benefits of fresh air and exercise promoted by Locke, Buchan, Sheridan and Edgeworth and in general allocated specific times during the school day for children to play. The regard paid by school authorities to children's leisure needs at the end of the century was a manifestation of the acceptance of an expanded sense of childhood within education, which was one of the more significant legacies of the eighteenth-century for educational provision and practice in the nineteenth and beyond.

CONCLUSION

Tracking the development of educational provision from the historical record illustrates most clearly the dynamic nature of the concepts of childhood operating over the course of the long eighteenth-century. The publication of *Some thoughts concerning education* by John Locke encouraged a shift in attitude not only towards raising children but also in parental expectations and approaches to children's education. Locke's theories – attributed and un-attributed – were the bedrock upon which eighteenth-century educational theory and practice were built and were crucial to the development of a structured educational provision and practice in the nineteenth. But it was not without its debates.

From the sixteenth-century control of Irish children's education oscillated between church and state. The gradual loss of ecclesiastical power reflected the weak position of the Established Church in Ireland, and required the development of 'domestic' education among elite and gentry families as the eighteenth-century began. Others made do as best they could. The religious ethos and drive of certain dissenting groups such as Quakers, Huguenots and Methodists ensured that most if not all children in these faith groups received an education. Although Akenson maintains that the Penal Laws governing Catholic education were enforced in the first half of the eighteenth-century and 'remained a threat for a considerable time thereafter',⁴⁸³ this

⁴⁸¹ *Cork Evening Post*, 17 Jul. 1769 (NLI, Quane Papers, Ms 17981 (6)).

⁴⁸² King's Hospital account book; Whiteside, *A history of the King's Hospital*, p. 71.

⁴⁸³ Akenson, *The Irish education experiment*, p. 43.

did not inhibit Catholic education and still less many Catholics from accessing education from non-religious providers. Bishop Butler's visitation book and the number of popish teachers appearing in court attest to the fact that pay schools not only functioned but grew in number and that they were enthusiastically supported by parents and educated children. As a result, the impact of the penal laws on the totality of educational provision in Ireland during the eighteenth-century has to be severely qualified.

Though education was largely driven by charitable and philanthropic desire, self-interest was a primary motivating factor for much of the century. Even though proportionally numbers in parish and charity schools remained small, their spread and vigour in early eighteenth-century Ireland are indicative not only of parental aspirations, but also of the drive for moral reform and of the commitment of an increasingly confident Protestant ascendancy to reinforce the existing social structures.

Throughout the eighteenth-century official peasant and pauper educational provision was overwhelmingly based on political rather than educational principles.⁴⁸⁴ The extent to which the Charter schools received official funding as opposed to that given to the King's Hospital confirms that pauper children's education was not the primary concern of government. Rather, the official collaboration of church and state in the establishment of the Charter school system in 1733 demonstrates that the 'provision of public education institutions was an accepted weapon in the Irish state's arsenal of social control devices.'⁴⁸⁵ Consequently, there was more state intervention in eighteenth-century education in Ireland than in England.

Yet, as educational provision expanded, the intensifying educational debates became more focused, accentuating the type of education most suitable to children of all ranks and sex. Moreover parents and authorities were acutely aware that the economic opportunities emerging as the century progressed required a literate and educated population not only to serve the newly affluent but also to drive economic progress. Theoretical differences notwithstanding, one crucial aspect of the educational debate first identified by Locke in 1693 remained unshakeable over the

⁴⁸⁴ Atkinson, *Irish education*.

⁴⁸⁵ Akenson, *The Irish education experiment*, p. 37.

course of the eighteenth-century – children should not be educated above their expected station in life.⁴⁸⁶

Combined, these developments encouraged the more focused engagement of parents in children's education. They also underline an acceptance and understanding from mid eighteenth-century by parents and educationalists alike of children's individual abilities and capacities. But, if there was a clearer understanding of the concept of childhood, and children were more firmly placed at the centre of education, the mid-century debates reveal that what was best for children's education was increasingly decided not by parents but by 'reformers' and 'improvers'.

Skilfully combining the principles of two of the most influential educational theorists of the eighteenth-century – John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau – and building on the contribution of Thomas Sheridan, Richard Edgeworth served at the close of the eighteenth-century clearly and irrevocably to bring the child firmly into the centre of formal educational thinking. But if it had taken a century to unfold, the endeavours of educational reformers such as Sheridan, Edgeworth and Orde⁴⁸⁷ were ultimately successful because parents, society and the state were already half prepared to accept their ideas.



Fig. 4.12: An Irish hedge school, 19th century
Source: Antonia McManus, *The Irish hedge schools and
its books, 1695-1831* (Dublin, 2006).

⁴⁸⁶ See Locke, *Some thoughts concerning education*; Nelson, *An essay on the government of children*.

⁴⁸⁷ See Edgeworth and Edgeworth, *Memoirs*, ii, 453-72.

CONCLUSION

CONCLUSION

As Hugh Cunningham observes in the *Invention of childhood*, if children have ‘in some ways changed over time, much more subject to change have been ideas about childhood’.¹ The eighteenth-century ushered in new approaches towards children, their upbringing, welfare, education and preparation for adult life. At the beginning of the century childrearing was based on seventeenth-century precepts. That is, it was premised upon the beliefs and practices that parents had experienced as children. Over the course of the long eighteenth-century, people’s views and disposition towards children and childhood shifted, and a new understanding emerged that had taken firm hold by the second decade of the nineteenth.

The changes that occurred in parental and societal beliefs and practices regarding childhood in eighteenth-century Ireland are most noticeable from mid-century, and are particularly apparent in the years between 1750 and 1780. That is not to say that the early years of the century witnessed no change, and still less that this and allied subjects were not enthusiastically debated in the public sphere. The impact of the publication of John Locke’s *Some thoughts concerning education* in 1693 was crucial during the first decades of the eighteenth-century in the dissemination of new ideas about children and childhood. Locke offered a new perspective on childrearing – one that provoked parents to question their own views – which was further enhanced by the mid-century works of Nelson, Buchan and others. By the second half of the century the debates had expanded, but Locke’s views remained influential and would continue so for the rest of the century.

There were four pivotal adjustments in the understanding of childhood that emerged in eighteenth-century Ireland: the legal definitions of the duties owed by the parent to particular children and *vice versa* advanced by Blackstone; the advances in children’s healthcare; the expansion of female education and the role of women; and crucially, the recognition of a child’s abilities and capacities first identified by Locke in 1693. These all served to individuate the child and bring she/he firmly into the centre of parental, religious and state concerns. As a result, the negotiation of

¹ Cunningham, *The invention of childhood*, pp 13, 102.

eighteenth-century childhood became both a public (state) and private (family) concern.²

In line with economic and political opinion and developments, there was a clearer distinction between ideas of childhood operating at the start of the century than at the close, though age as a categorisation of childhood egress remained problematic. A classification by age impinged on all aspects of childhood in eighteenth-century Ireland, yet it was the one area that remained largely unresolved and is still problematical in historical research. For example, the implications of adolescence have yet to be teased out.³ Nonetheless, there were specific rites of passage that denoted the end of childhood, though they varied according to class and gender. By the close of the century a child's age increasingly defined the parameters of childhood and this was most noticeable within medicine and education.

Although men retained ultimate authority, women were pivotal in shaping the interpretation and comprehension of childhood that emerged in Ireland throughout the century. As the expectations and behaviours of childhood changed, so the maternal role adapted to embrace these transformations and adjustments, most notably in the medical field. Even so, women remained the driving force in the domestic environment, and in the charitable and philanthropic fields concerned with children.

A significant feature of the eighteenth-century and an important contributor to developments within childhood was the expansion in the availability of print, and the proliferation of books, pamphlets, and newspaper comment offering childrearing advice. Though John Locke was not the first to enter this field, his was the most influential and provided practical day-to-day advice in a manner that appealed to Enlightenment parents. Fundamental to Enlightenment theory was the development of reason and the creation of a rational being, and Locke firmly located this developmental phenomenon within childhood. Locke's influence and, at mid-century that, of James Nelson and William Buchan among others pervades all aspects of childcare addressed in this thesis. Rousseau's influence was more limited; Lockeian rationalism held sway throughout the century. Still the expanded availability of childrearing manuals served to link the ideology with the practice and as children increasingly entered the public arena, as spectators and/or participants, they raised the

² Benzaquen, 'The doctor and the child', p. 23.

³ For a relevant study see Ilana Krausman Ben-Amos, *Adolescence & youth in early modern England* (New Haven, 1994).

bar by which childrearing was judged. Societal expectations were more and more determined by these texts, with the result that the negotiation of childhood became increasingly challenging for parents, and children, as the century progressed.

Notwithstanding the ambivalence towards wet-nursing that encouraged many women to decline to nurse their children, and, if they could afford so to do, to farm them out to others, it is clear that at all times parents cared deeply for their children (a few as always excepted), and keeping them healthy and well was a vital consideration throughout the century. What emerged was a clear correlation between medical and parental practice, and childrearing advice advanced by Locke, Rousseau and others, though Locke and Rousseau promoted two completely different concepts of childhood. Even though some of their schemes were faulty and their methods unsuccessful, there was a positive pursuit of health throughout the century symbolised in the late century emphasis upon leisure and recreation.

As parents sought the safeguarding of their children, doctors responded – though with a perceptible lack of alacrity in the early decades of the century. By mid-century however there was an enhanced emphasis on the diagnosis and treatment of children's diseases, most noticeably with respect to smallpox (a particular scourge of childhood) and inoculation. Of all developments concerning children in eighteenth-century Ireland, inoculation was the most beneficial.⁴ The clearest indication that Ireland's peasant children, who remained for most of the eighteenth-century outside the medical model, were slowly absorbed into it is provided by smallpox inoculation. Inoculation ensured more children's survival and the enthusiasm with which it was adopted across all classes of society attests to parental determination to protect children and ensure their continuation to adulthood. The development of charitable institutions and hospitals in the second half of the eighteenth-century provided a medical centre for the poorer sorts, though not for children. So while home remained the central arena of the medical encounter for elite and gentry families, it was also so for children of the poorer sorts.

⁴ L. A. Clarkson observes that Ireland's mid-century population grew appreciably faster than the population in England then the question of mortality requires re-examination. The mid-century introduction of inoculation may be the answer to this conundrum. It is now accepted that the benefits of inoculation were two fold, a reduction in children's mortality rates and a decrease in infertility levels among men. An increase in local population was noted by contemporaries following the introduction of inoculation in some parts of Ireland. L. A. Clarkson, 'Irish population revisited, 1687-1821', Goldstrom and Clarkson (eds), *Irish population, economy, and society*, pp 30-1.

As the century progressed, parental and medical concerns increasingly served to reinforce each other.⁵ Parents were faced with new responsibilities interpreted and defined by medical and conduct books. Although women remained firmly in control of children's health and well-being, their role, knowledge and authority were being challenged by the emerging 'professional' medic and the demands of the state for healthy and useful adult citizens.⁶ This facet of childcare does not stand alone however. It was one part of the structural changes taking place in the wider 'medical' community. Though William Bynum has claimed that the eighteenth-century was 'a time of impressive medical entrepreneurialism'⁷ yet with the exception of smallpox inoculation there were no seminal developments in Ireland in children's medical treatments. At the beginning of the century children were viewed medically as mini adults, which reflected the limitations of medical knowledge generally. Still, the situation was not static. Though some ambiguity remained concerning childhood diseases, by mid-century the advances visible in medical knowledge served to bring the child increasingly into the medical market place. The changes that can be identified were part of a transitional process that found full expression from mid-century onwards and formed an essential component of the childhood experience for most eighteenth-century children. Furthermore, the increased specificity of their diagnoses and treatments, and the emergence of child-centred medical practices facilitated the establishment of the foundations of nineteenth and twentieth-century 'paediatrics.'

Although children were afforded legal protection there was a chasm separating the theory and practice. The legal protection afforded vulnerable children was often just a concept, as practice throughout the eighteenth-century prioritised property above children's welfare. Furthermore, Blackstone's mid-century interpretation of the duties owed by parents and children provided a legal definition which had implications for all children's well-being, but particularly those born outside wedlock.

Given human nature, parental care set alongside its opposite, parental neglect or cruelty, must run through a history of children and childhood.⁸ Abandonment and infanticide was a feature of all countries and societies throughout the eighteenth-century. English parishes had their Poor Law to fall back on but Ireland did not. By

⁵ Benzaquén, 'The doctor and the child', pp 22-4.

⁶ Ibid., pp 13-24.

⁷ Bynum, *History of medicine*, p. 41.

⁸ Cunningham, *The invention of childhood*, p. 21.

the end of the seventeenth-century, increased vagrancy, begging, prostitution, abandonment and infanticide prompted a heightened interest in pauper children. These problems were not new; they were clearly visible in the seventeenth century but they increased in the eighteenth. As Hugh Cunningham points out, it took a long time for society and the authorities to acknowledge that begging and vagrancy were the outcome of extreme poverty, not idleness.⁹ Moreover, infanticide and abandonment were an adult response to societal norms. Therefore children should be considered the innocent victims of adult behaviour. In eighteenth-century Ireland this was not the case. The sins of the mother were firmly imprinted on their child. As a result the socio-economic status of the child in life and death consistently determined the view of and eighteenth-century societal attitudes towards it.

It would be incorrect to say that the creation of the Dublin Workhouse and Foundling Hospital was a response to a heightened consciousness of childhood among the ruling class or the sad plight of vulnerable children. Never was this the case. Both were and remained for nearly one hundred years solely a means of concealing from public view and consideration the social problem of visibly destitute children. Despite the expenditure of large sums of public money, the disinterest and lack of oversight by institutional governors combined with the self-interest of staff were the single biggest contributors to the high rates of institutional child mortality throughout the eighteenth-century. What makes this indictment so grievous is that from the beginning of the century the vulnerability of children was clearly recognised in the domestic environment. Notwithstanding the steadily increasing numbers of children entering the Dublin Workhouse and Foundling Hospital, little compassion was exhibited by those charged with the care of the children therein. Despite parliamentary inquiries, the work of ladies' committees and rising adverse public opinion, hardly any attempt was made by the men charged with their care to permanently amend the conditions for children, and in the case of the houses of industry, to accept responsibility for them at all.

The fact that smaller establishments such as the charity schools and Dublin's Female Orphan House were more successful in their endeavours to protect children's health and well-being indicates that direct governance was crucial to children's survival when in care. Though charity and philanthropy presented patrons with their

⁹ Cunningham, *The invention of childhood*, p 98.

own sense of moral purpose, for those children who died from neglect, charity was indeed a severe penalty. Consequently, the institutional care available in eighteenth-century Ireland benchmarks the limitations of a child-centred society, particularly when compared with the care provided within the family environment. As Thomas Newenham observed in 1809, the English poor laws were 'dictated by a spirit of humanity, which the English seem to have totally lost on being transplanted into Ireland.'¹⁰

Parent-child relationships are integral to our understanding of the nature of childhood. By the second half of the eighteenth-century parenting practices were changing and as a consequence, so did children's behaviour. Although subordination to the patriarch continued, increasingly parent/child relationships were ones of friendship and demonstrable affection, particularly among elite and gentry families. The situation among the poorer sorts is less clear.

The late eighteenth-century saw the emergence of the child into the public sphere through its participation in leisure activities and as a consumer. Though gender was a pervasive issue through all aspects of childhood in eighteenth-century Ireland, by mid-century the female child had begun to emerge for the first time with a distinct and public identity (most notably within education). This expanded role for girls – though the ultimate goal still remained a suitable marriage – placed them more firmly within the public arena. Consequently their behaviour, morals and virtue were subject to more intense scrutiny. So while on the one hand female children's lifestyles expanded, on the other it became increasingly controlled and monitored. Childhood was acknowledged as a training ground for adulthood and by the closing decades of the century a child's social position defined by gender and class was more firmly, and publicly, established. The elite, gentry, peasant, pauper, legitimate, illegitimate, male and female child were assigned their role and position in society and adult attitudes towards children and childhood served to reinforce those positions.

Education is of particular significance in the evolving concepts of childhood because it embraced the three parties involved; the children who availed of it, the parents who actively sought it for their children, and for the poorer sorts the government who were ostensibly the providers of it. Though the quality and quantity of education was varied, consistently parents of all classes actively sought it for their

¹⁰ Newenham, *A view of the natural, political, and commercial circumstances of Ireland*, p. 166.

children and adapted to the less than ideal situation to suit their own needs. The lack of official moves to provide statutory education for the poorer sorts reflects attitudes prevailing within elite and gentry education throughout the century. There was little enthusiasm there to change the narrow classical schooling operating from previous centuries and even less to furnish the peasant or pauper child with formal education.

The purpose of education and the systems adopted to provide it were designed to reinforce the social hierarchies and political aspirations of eighteenth-century Ireland. The success of the early charity schools in England was also reflected in Ireland. They offered children a rudimentary education and from society's point of view they provided some control of otherwise 'idle' children. The popularity of Sunday schools was 'consistent with the requirement that children work on the other six days of the week', but crucially it allowed them the opportunity to pick up key skills such as reading.¹¹ So while two distinct concepts of childhood operated here – religious/state and parental – both in their own ways served the needs of children. Consistent with the view that childhood was a preparation for adulthood, children's education increasingly prepared them to embrace the expanding economic opportunities available.

The expansion of the female role within the domestic environment visible from mid-century was also reflected in an expansion in female education. Though this occurred with less rapidity, it was more inclusive and embraced elite, middling, peasant, pauper and institutional female children. Moreover, it did not stand alone. It was part of a more comprehensive shift in attitude towards children generally, and the debates and support it generated mirrored the acceptance among eighteenth-century Irish society of a more inclusive and all-embracing concept of childhood, both male and female.

Though John Locke supported the idea of combining education with labour, in Ireland it was taken to its extreme by the Charter school system. As Hugh Cunningham observes, 'the ambitious hopes that institutions ... could gain economic viability through the labour of their children nearly all foundered.'¹² Though the miserable condition of children in the care of the Incorporated Society was a pervasive feature throughout the century, the establishment of and funding received by the Society revealed the increasingly hard-edged religious and political attitudes of

¹¹ Cunningham, *The invention of childhood*, p. 131.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 98.

the Established Church and government towards pauper children, the majority of whom were Irish and catholic. Where the Dublin Workhouse and Foundling Hospital and the Charter schools were concerned, the reality never matched the ideal, yet their systems of care remained in place into the nineteenth-century

Consistent with prevailing attitudes towards children in the Dublin Workhouse and Foundling Hospital, those charged with the education and care of Charter school children were often negligent, which contrasts with the approach to childhood that increasingly held sway in the domestic environment, particularly among elite and gentry families. This is consistent with the view that two concepts of childhood operated in eighteenth-century Ireland. Only rarely was it considered that there could be one. The first – the nurturing, increasingly child-centred concept – was applied most visibly by the elite, gentry and middling sort to their children who were protected and guided through life; the other, far more limited, restrictive and (in certain circumstances) potentially dangerous to children, was experienced to a greater or lesser extent by the children of those lower down the social order; they enjoyed a less extended, supported and scaffolded and distinctive phase of development that corresponds with childhood. The experience varied depending on location, access to resources, and the commitment to care provided, but it was manifestly worst for those consigned to institutional care who experienced few of the advantages or benefits of the expanding concept of childhood that was a feature of the eighteenth-century. In a very real sense therefore, the institutional care of children illustrates the limits of the permeation and embrace of an idea of childhood as a phase in development in which care, nurture and support was forthcoming in order to enable the child to evolve into a functioning, productive, healthy adult.

This was so, though by the close of the eighteenth-century children's individual abilities and capacities were increasingly acknowledged and recognised. They were engaged within society, in their own right and as companions to their parents. The assumption that the key to adult life lay in childhood was firmly embedded – as a phase in life childhood mattered. The influence of the Romantics, in particular Wordsworth, was to take this forward, and to foster the view that it was important to 'stay in touch with childhood, to remember as an adult what it felt like to be a child.'¹³

¹³ Cunningham, *The invention of childhood*, p. 134.

In conclusion, it is not possible to view eighteenth-century Irish childhood ‘as a set of assumptions and practices, varying locally, but having sufficient in common so that life for one’ is not hugely dissimilar for another.¹⁴ The structures of Irish society impinged too decisively on the individual and on childhood. There was however a definite awareness and understanding of children and childhood operating in Ireland which expanded over the course of the long eighteenth-century. By the end of the century there was a greater appreciation of what childhood was about and people were more aware of the distinctiveness of children.



Fig. 5.1: Henry and Zella Campbell, circa 1830s
Source: Campbell Family Papers, private collection.

¹⁴ Cunningham, *The invention of childhood*, p. 21.

APPENDICES

No. one Foundling children's welfare,
parliamentary acts proposed and enacted, 1697-1800

No. two Definition of school type

No. three Charity school, 'Form of a Fault Bill', 1721

Appendix no. 1:

Foundling children's welfare, parliamentary acts proposed and enacted, 1697-1800			
Session	Short title	Title	Statute number
1697	Workhouse and hackneys in Dublin	For the erecting of a public workhouse in Dublin, and for the support and maintenance of the same, as also for the better regulating of hackney and stage coaches, wagons, carts, drays and cars within the city of Dublin and liberties thereof.	Not enacted
1697	Hospitals and workhouses	To erect hospitals and workhouses in this kingdom.	Not enacted
1703	Workhouse in Dublin	For erecting a workhouse in the city of Dublin for employing and maintaining the poor thereof.	2 Anne c.19
1703	Hospitals and workhouses in Dublin	For erecting hospitals and workhouses within the city of Dublin, for the better employing and maintaining thereof.	Not enacted
1705	Improvement of commons, and workhouses	For the better improvement of the commons in this kingdom, and for applying part of the profits of the same for erecting of Workhouses.	Not enacted
1725	Workhouse in Dublin	For the better regulating the Workhouse of the city of Dublin.	Not enacted
1727	Workhouse, and gunpowder, in Dublin	For better regulating the Workhouse of the city of Dublin, and to regulate and provide for the poor thereof, and to prevent mischief which may happen by keeping gunpowder within the said city.	1 George II c.27
1729	Workhouse in Dublin, vagabonds, lunatics and foundling children	For enabling the governors of the Workhouse of the city of Dublin to provide for and employ the poor therein, and for the more effectual punishment of vagabonds, and also for the better securing of and providing for lunatics and foundling children.	3 George II c.17
1731	Workhouse, and gunpowder, in Dublin, and vagabonds, lunatics and foundling children	To explain and amend an act, entitled, an act for the better regulating the Workhouse in the city of Dublin, and to regulate and provide for the poor thereof, and to prevent mischief which may happen by keeping gunpowder within the said city, and also for explaining and amending one other act, entitled, an act for the better enabling the governors of the Work-house of the city of Dublin to provide for and employ the poor therein, and for the more effectual punishing the vagabonds, and also for the better securing of and providing for lunatics and foundling children.	5 George II c.14
1735	Cathedral of St Finbar's, Cork, and workhouse in Cork	For rebuilding the Cathedral Church of St. Finbarry, in the city of Cork, and for erecting a workhouse in the city of Cork, for employing and maintaining the poor, punishing of vagabonds, and providing for and educating foundling children.	9 George II c.25

1749	Maintenance of bastard and foundling children	To provide for the maintenance of bastard and foundling children.	Not enacted
1771B	Workhouse in Dublin	For better regulating the Foundling Hospital and Workhouse in the city of Dublin, and increasing the fund for the support thereof, also for making a provision for appointing a locum tenens in case of the death or absence of the lord mayor or the president of the court of conscience.	11 & 12 George III c.11
1773	Workhouse in Dublin	For granting to his majesty, his heirs and successors the yearly sums therein mentioned, and for the better support of the Foundling Hospital and Workhouse of the city of Dublin and for increasing the fund thereof.	13 & 14 George III c.17
1773	Foundling Hospital and Workhouse in Dublin	To alter and amend an act entitled an act for better regulating the Foundling Hospital and Workhouse in the city of Dublin, and increasing the fund for the support thereof, also for making a provision for appointing a locum tenens in case of the death or absence of the lord mayor or the president of the court of conscience.	Not enacted
1775	Foundling Hospital and Workhouse in Dublin	To amend an act passed in the 11th and 12th years of his present majesty's reign entitled an act for better regulating the Foundling Hospital and Workhouse in the city of Dublin, and increasing the fund for the support thereof, also for making a provision for appointing a locum tenens in case of the death or absence of the lord mayor or the president of the court of conscience.	15 & 16 George III c.25
1785	Foundling Hospital and Workhouse	For granting the sum of £10,000 to the governors of the Foundling Hospital and Workhouse for the purposes therein mentioned.	25 George III c.29
1785	Foundling Hospital	For the better support and maintenance of the Foundling Hospital.	25 George III c.50
1786	Foundling Hospital and Workhouse	For granting the sum of £5,000 to the governors of the Foundling Hospital and Workhouse for the purposes therein mentioned.	26 George III c.51
1787	Workhouse and hackneys in Dublin, and commissioners of police	For the better regulation of hackney carriages, hackney sedans and porters plying for hire in the city of Dublin or within seven miles thereof, and for transferring the receipt and management of certain duties from the governors of the Foundling Hospital and Workhouse in the said city to the commissioners of police.	27 George III c.38
1791	Foundling Hospital in Dublin	For the better regulation of the Foundling Hospital of the city of Dublin, and for repealing the several laws now in being which relate thereunto.	Not enacted
1796B	Foundling hospitals and county infirmaries	For the better regulation of the Foundling Hospital of the city of Dublin, and for establishing a foundling hospital in every county in this kingdom, and for the further regulation of county infirmaries.	Not enacted

1796B	Foundlings	For the better care of foundlings and other deserted children in this kingdom.	Not enacted
1798	Workhouse and Foundling Hospital, and House of Industry, in Dublin	For the better management of the Workhouse and Foundling Hospital in Dublin, and to continue for a limited time the government and management of the House of Industry for the relief of the poor in Dublin, under the present acting governors thereof.	Not enacted
1798	House tax in Dublin	For the better collection of the duties now payable on houses in the city and liberties of Dublin for the better support of the Foundling Hospital and Workhouse, of a parochial watch, and for the paving, cleansing and lighting the streets of Dublin.	Not enacted
1798	Workhouse and Foundling Hospital in Dublin	For the better management of the Workhouse and Foundling Hospital in Dublin.	38 George III c.35
1798	Workhouse and Foundling Hospital in Dublin	To authorise the issuing and payment of the sum of £5,000, granted as a further supply for the Foundling Hospital and Workhouse in the city of Dublin.	38 George III c.64
1799	House of Industry in Dublin	To continue an act passed in the 38th year of his present majesty's reign, entitled, an act to continue for a limited time the government and management of the house of industry for the relief of the poor in Dublin, under the present acting governors thereof, and also, one other act passed in the same year, entitled, an act for the better management of the Workhouse and Foundling Hospital in Dublin.	39 George III c.38
1800	Workhouse and Foundling Hospital in Dublin	For the better management, support and maintenance of the Foundling Hospital in Dublin, and for amending and further continuing an act passed in the 38th year of his present majesty's reign, entitled, an act for the better management of the Workhouse and Foundling Hospital in Dublin.	40 George III c.33

Table: Foundling children's welfare, parliamentary acts proposed and enacted, 1697-1800

Source: Extracted from Irish Legislation Database http://www.qub.ac.uk/ild/?func=help§ion=general_index [accessed 6 May 2011].

Definition of school types

Public schools are those schools where children were specifically instructed in groups with other children and where parents paid set annual or quarterly fees.

Private education is that obtained in the home through a tutor or governess or single instructor.

Pay Schools also known as *Hedge Schools* or *Popish Schools* are those schools generally conducted in contravention of the Penal Laws and acting independently of government and the Established Church authorities.

Parish schools are those established under the reign of Henry VIII. Diocesan and Free schools are those schools established under the reign of Queen Elizabeth.

Royal Schools are those established by Charter of the Stuart monarchy.

Charter Schools are those schools established from 1733 by a Charter of George II by The Incorporated Society for Erecting English Protestant Schools in the Kingdom of Ireland.

Erasmus Smith Schools are those established under the terms of the bequest of the London merchant Erasmus Smith from 1657 by the Erasmus Smith Trust.

Charity schools are those promoted by Rev. Edward Nicholson and Rev. John Richardson and established from 1704 throughout the country by individuals and groups.

French schools were established in Ireland both as small public and charity schools by the Huguenot refugees in Ireland. A French or continental education was also obtained by those children sent in contravention of the Penal Laws abroad for their education.

Quaker schools are those established by The Society of Friends.

A rudimentary education was provided by the governors of the Workhouses at Dublin and Cork but by 1800 a more formal curriculum had been adopted.

Appendix no. 3: Charity school, ‘A Form of a Fault-Bill’, 1721

A Form of a Fault-Bill										
An Account of certain Faults committed by some of the Children of the <i>Charity-School</i> of <i>L</i> in the Month of 1721										
1721 <i>February</i>	Sa. 1	Su. 2	M. 3	Tu. 4	W. 5	Th. 6	F. 7	Sa. 8	Su. 9	&c.
John Snow		Pc.			Sw.					
Peter Field			Sw.							
			Ls.							
William West	T	Ac.								
						Ls.				
James Green				St.			Cur.			
Robert Cross					Ly.			Un.		
Ann Stitch		Lc.								
Eliz. Wheeler				T					Ac.	
&c.										
N. B. The Top column shews the time in Years, Months, Days of the Week, and Days of the Month. The first side Column to the Left Hands, contains the Childrens Names. The other Columns shew the Childrens Faults.										
The following Faults are express by the Marks subjoin'd. <i>Absent from church</i> , Ac. <i>Late at Church</i> , Lc. <i>Playing at Church</i> , Pc. <i>Late at School</i> , Ls. <i>Absent from School, or Truanting</i> , T. <i>Cursing</i> , Cur. <i>Swearing</i> , Sw. <i>Stealing</i> , St. <i>Unmannerly</i> , Un. <i>Lying</i> , Ly. When a fault has a stroke under it, 'twas committed in the Morning; when over it, in the Afternoon. When you find a Fault in a Square, go first to the Children's Names, and you see by whom 'twas committed; then again look first up to the Top Column, and you fin at what Time.										

Source: *Methods of erecting, supporting & governing Charity-Schools: with an account of the Charity-Schools in Ireland; and some observations thereon. To which is added and appendix, containing certain forms, &c. relating thereto* (3rd ed., Dublin, 1721).

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IRISH CHILDREN IN 18TH CENTURY SCHOOLS AND INSTITUTIONS

A digital humanities PhD project
submitted in part fulfilment of the PhD thesis

CHILDHOOD: STUDIES IN THE HISTORY OF CHILDREN IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY IRELAND

By

Gabrielle M. Ashford, BA (Hons)

The current iteration of this project is available online at:
<http://dev.dho.ie/~sday/gaye/index.html>

ABSTRACT

The digital project 'Irish children in 18th schools and institutions' is presented in part fulfilment of the PhD thesis 'Childhood: studies in the history of children in eighteenth-century Ireland.' It was developed in collaboration with Anne Marie Herron, Teresa O'Donnell,¹ and in conjunction with St Patrick's College, Drumcondra (SPD) and *An Foras Feasa* (AFF). The written component is presented as volume two to the accompanying PhD thesis.

This volume of the dissertation sets the digital project in the overall context of digital humanities and presents a rationale for its inclusion as part of the thesis, as well as a formal methodology outlining the development of the three projects but with reference to this particular study. It will be shown how the same set of tools were applied to three separate digital humanities PhD projects located within three diverse strands of the humanities: eighteenth-century Irish history; twentieth-century Irish literature, and twentieth-century Irish music archives.

It examines the academic, organisational, technological and personal factors that shaped the outcome of the project. In addition, it analyses the support structures provided by various agencies in connection with the SPD PhD Digital Humanities programme, the limitations that emerged and the challenges that had to be addressed. Based on the experience gained in the course of this study, some observations are offered and suggestions put forward that may be of benefit to those pursuing similar digital humanities programmes both at undergraduate and postgraduate levels within SPD and the wider academic community.

Ultimately, the purpose of this volume is to evaluate each specific digital project and our engagement with the collaborative process within which digital humanities works best. Even though academic, technological and personal limitations are exposed, this collaborative PhD digital humanities project serves to highlight agendas for change and the opportunities available in the scholarly field of digital humanities.

¹ The corresponding digital projects are: Anne Marie Herron, The published works of Eilis Dillon: Editions and translations <http://dev.dho.ie/~sday/annemarie/index.html> and Teresa O'Donnell, Concert programmes of the Music Association of Ireland, 1950-1984 <http://dev.dho.ie/~sday/teresa/index.html> [accessed March 2011].

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List of Abbreviations, volume two

ACLS	American Council of Learned Societies
AFF	An Foras Feasa
AHRC	Arts and Humanities Research Council
ATILF	Analyse et Traitement Informatique de la Langue Française
BL	British Library
BSD	Berkeley Software Distribution/Berkeley Unix
<i>Commons Jn. (Irl.)</i>	<i>Journal of the House of Commons of the kingdom of Ireland, 1613-1800</i> (21 vols, Dublin, 1796-1802)
CSS	Cascading Style Sheets
DCU	Dublin City University
DHEP	Digital Humanities Education Programme
DHO	Digital Humanities Observatory
DKIT	Dundalk Institute of Technology
FOSS	Free open-source software
GIS	Geographical Information Systems
HTML	Hyper Text Mark-up Language
INIST	L'Institut de l'Information Scientifique et Technique
JSON	Schema definition/a standard data interchange format
MAI	Music Association of Ireland
MIT	Massachusetts Institute of Technology
MIT CSAIL	Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence Laboratory
MLA	Massachusetts Library Association
Ms(s)	Manuscript(s)
NAI	National Archives of Ireland
NINES	Networked Infrastructure for Nineteenth-Century Electronic Scholarship
NLI	National Library of Ireland
NUIM	National University of Ireland, Maynooth
<i>ODNB</i>	<i>Oxford Dictionary of National Biography</i> (60 vols., Oxford, 2004)
OSS	Open-source software
PHP	PHP Hypertext Preprocessor/conversion script
PRTL	Programme for Research in Third-Level Institutions
QUB	Queen's University, Belfast
RIA	Royal Irish Academy
SPD	St Patrick's College, Drumcondra, Dublin
TCD	Trinity College, Dublin
TEI	Text Encoding Initiative
UCD	University College, Dublin
W3C	World Wide Web Consortium
XML	Extensible Mark-up Language

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INTRODUCTION

Reflecting a world where information technology has been placed at the very core of the way we communicate, transact our business and function as a society, the concept of a digital humanities thesis is innovative in an Irish academic context. Even if it has not been fully embraced *per se*, technology has a place in every academic discipline. Examining how new and emerging technologies are or could be used in academic research and writing is a crucial factor in enhancing and suggesting new research and learning directions. The small cohort of post-graduate students at SPD, NUIM and DCU are the first to engage in a structured ‘Digital Humanities PhD’ programme of this type in Ireland. But while the digital element is central to the doctoral programme, it forms just one part of the PhD and is accompanied by a completed written dissertation, ‘Childhood: studies in the history of children in eighteenth-century Ireland,’ suited to the more traditionally accepted view of the humanities.

This volume provides a detailed description of the digital project ‘Irish children in 18th century schools and institutions’ – an experiment to form a quantifiable template from eighteenth-century records of Irish children, from its origin and conception to its delivery online. It outlines the methodologies and processes involved in its creation; explains the role of the different agencies involved, both academic and technological; the supports provided by them, and validates the adaptability of digital technology to a quantitative analysis of eighteenth-century Irish records. The collaborative approach taken towards the three individual projects funded under this initiative and the decisions made to enable a viable collaboration are fully discussed. In addition, the approach to the digitisation process and the factors that impinged on its implementation are reviewed. Furthermore, this work not only demonstrates the valuable learning outcomes that emerged through participation in a digital humanities initiative, but it also assesses the benefits gained and identifies and examines the shortfalls encountered in knowledge, expertise and support structures. As a result, careful consideration is given to issues pertaining to academic assessment and evaluation procedures for a ‘double thesis’, as well as the difficulties encountered by SPD students in meeting those demands.

In conclusion, the written component contained in volume two of the thesis ‘Childhood: studies in the history of children in eighteenth-century Ireland’ evaluates

the SPD Digital Humanities PhD programme as it relates to this project and comments on its implications and possible benefits, for future similar post-graduate studies within a structured PhD of this type.

ORIGINS OF THE PROJECT

The PhD thesis ‘Childhood: studies in the history of children in eighteenth-century Ireland’, incorporating the digital project ‘Irish children in 18th century schools and institutions’ was undertaken within the Digital Humanities Education Programme (DHEP) of An Foras Feasa, an organisation that ‘has emerged from pioneering and longstanding partnerships between humanities and computer science researchers at the National University of Ireland Maynooth and its partner institutions’.¹ An Foras Feasa: The Institute for Research in Irish Historical and Cultural Traditions takes its name from the title to Irish poet and priest Geoffrey Keating’s (1569-1644)² work *Foras Feasa ar Éirinn* (circa 1634), which translates from the Irish language as ‘foundation of knowledge on Ireland.’ Keating collected material from some of the oldest manuscript sources available and evaluated them using ‘the most modern historiographical methods of the time’ and was as a result, ‘highly influential in forming a national consciousness in Ireland’.³

The institute An Foras Feasa has similar aims in that it ‘seeks to apply the most modern scholarly and technological resources available to the study of the historical and cultural traditions of this island, including relationships with Europe and with the wider world’. St. Patrick’s College, Drumcondra, along with the National University of Ireland Maynooth (NUIM), Dundalk Institute of Technology (DKIT) and Dublin City University (DCU) form part of a consortium within AFF that supports individual and collaborative projects in the areas of humanities and technology. Research opportunities for the period 2007–10 under which this digital humanities PhD are funded are provided within four streams:

- ICT innovation and the humanities
- Multiculturalism and multilingualism: textual analysis and linguistic change
- Ireland and Europe: history, literature and the cultural politics of migration
- Cultural heritage and social capital in a global context

¹ <http://www.forasfeasa.ie>

² Irish language name *Seathrún Céitinn*

³ <http://www.forasfeasa.ie>

This digital humanities PhD thesis falls into the third category mentioned above and is also supported under the Higher Education Authority's (HEA) 'Programme for Research in Third-Level Institutions' (PRTLII) as one of three fellowships granted to SPD as a participating member of An Foras Feasa.

Given that much eighteenth-century information is incomplete and since historical information regarding the history of children and childhood in eighteenth-century Irish institutions is scattered across repositories and sources, it was conceived that the creation of a database that brought together elements of such disparate information would compliment the overall study and enhance the exploration of childhood in eighteenth-century Ireland by providing a platform for a quantitative analysis. Where possible the database aspired to provide information on the name, sex, age and number of children living in such institutions as foundling hospitals, charter, charity and foreign schools, to display it spatially, both geographically and over time, and ultimately to make it available through easily accessible web pages. It was envisaged that the completed website should include enough information to facilitate researchers to compare and contrast the different experiences of children and, at the same time, permit the on-going input of newly sourced information, thus allowing for a dynamic analysis of one aspect of children and childhood in eighteenth-century Ireland.

The digitisation of this data – though it must be stressed that only a small percentage of the actual data collected is utilised – complements the written dissertation presented in volume one and, though by no means complete, will enhance social historians experience when engaging with digital technologies, and promote further discussion and digital developments in eighteenth-century Irish history.

SECTION 1

DIGITAL HUMANITIES – ‘A NEW CULTURAL COMMONWEALTH’⁴

While the development of digital humanities is relatively new in an Irish academic context, the use of information technology within the humanities worldwide has a longer history having begun with the work of the often-cited pioneer in the field Fr Robert Busa (1923-2011), who developed algorithmic processes for linguistic analysis, thereby ‘connecting the dots between informatics and the written word’, a process which enabled text searches through vast volumes of ancient literature.⁵ His *Index Thomisticus*,⁶ a computerised index of the works of medieval theologian Thomas Aquinas, conceived in 1946 and completed thirty years later in the 1970s, was ground breaking for its time. This was followed in the 1960s by Antonio Ampolli and his application of computer techniques in literary and linguistic research, and, more recently, by other well-known literary projects such as *Project Gutenberg* (1971),⁷ the first single collection of free electronic books, the *Trésor de la Langue Francaise* (1982),⁸ which provided digital text for most works of classical French literature, and *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* (2009),⁹ which digitized most literary texts written in Greek from Homer to the fall of Byzantium. These academic achievements made possible the popular applications of e-books and other electronic media. With the development of the *Million Book Project*,¹⁰ *Google Books*,¹¹ and Amazon’s

⁴ *Our Cultural commonwealth: The report of the ACLS on cyber-infrastructure for the Humanities and Social Sciences*, www.acls.org/cyberinfrastructure/ourculturalcommonwealth.pdf. The mission of the American Council of Learned Societies is "the advancement of humanistic studies in all fields of learning in the humanities and the social sciences and the maintenance and strengthening of relations among the national societies devoted to such studies." <http://www.acls.org/about/default.aspx?id=236> [accessed 20 Mar. 2010].

⁵ Dr Ernesto Priego, ‘One academic’s impact on HE and my Career’, Guardian Professional [London], <http://www.guardian.co.uk/higher-education-network/blog/2011/aug/12/father-roberto-busa-academic-impact> [accessed 25 Sep. 2011].

⁶ *Index Thomisticus* is a collection comprising about nine million words consisting of fifty-six printed volumes and was completed in collaboration with Thomas Watson, founder of IBM. It is now available on CD Rom and on the web at <http://www.corpusthomisticum.org/it/index.age.jsessionid=69BCAEA0B4FDA82406A652828B3052C4> [accessed 20 Mar. 2010].

⁷ <http://www.gutenberg.org> [accessed 20 Mar. 2010].

⁸ A comprehensive etymological and historical dictionary of the French language. ARTFL Project [<http://humanities.uchicago.edu/orgs/ARTFL/>]. "Trésor de la Langue Française" is freely accessible on the site of the ATILF laboratory <http://www.inalfr.fr/tlfi> [accessed 20 Mar. 2011].

⁹ <http://www.tlg.uci.edu/> [accessed 20 Mar. 2010].

¹⁰ <http://www.archive.org/details/millionbooks> [accessed 20 Mar. 2010].

*Search Inside*¹² initiatives, more than one million books in the English language are searchable online to those with access to computers and the Internet.

Combined, these innovations have been responsible in leading the way towards achieving the dream the former President of the United States Bill Clinton outlined in his 1998 State of the Union Address of:

an America where every child can stretch a hand across a keyboard and reach every book ever written, every painting ever painted, every symphony ever composed.¹³

This dream is fast becoming a reality worldwide thanks to the breadth and scope of what Julia Flanders terms 'technological progressivism',¹⁴ and humanities scholarship has contributed to this progress.

Computerisation, Internet usage and online journals have for some time been seen as part of 'the tissue of the world' of study,¹⁵ and there is an expectation that what scholars want to read or learn will be easily available to them electronically and at any hour.¹⁶ As the report from the American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS)¹⁷ on 'Cyber-infrastructure for the Humanities and Social Sciences' has noted, the Internet has radically 'transformed the practice of the humanities and social sciences'.¹⁸ As more personal, social and professional time is spent online, it has become increasingly important to have an 'online environment that cultivates the richness of human experience, the diversity of human languages and cultures, and the full range of human creativity'.¹⁹ Scholars in all disciplines have adapted to the use of various digital tools to enhance their study and for some time now have actively engaged with the use of analytical software, increasingly complex databases, electronic manuscripts and texts.

John Unsworth (2002) distinguishes between using the computer for its many practical purposes and 'humanities computing', which involves using it as a tool for

¹¹ <http://books.google.com> [accessed 20 Mar. 2010].

¹² <http://www.amazon.com/Search-Inside-Book-Books/b?ie=UTF8&node=10197021> Microsoft discontinued plans for its *Books Live* digitization project in 2008 [accessed 20 Mar. 2010].

¹³ <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/politics/special/states/docs/sou98.htm> [accessed 30 Mar. 2010]

¹⁴ Julia Flanders, 'The productive unease of 21st century digital scholarship', *Digital Humanities Quarterly*, Summer 2009, Vol. 3, no. 3.

<http://www.digitalhumanities.org/dhq/vol/3/3/000055/000055.html> [accessed 30 Mar. 2010].

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ <http://www.acls.org/about/default.aspx?id=236> [accessed 20 Mar. 2010].

¹⁸ *Our Cultural commonwealth.*

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

modelling humanities data, and our understanding of it.²⁰ Patrik Svensson summarises Willard McCarthy's (2005) three useful denotations of this development as moving through the stages from 'computers and the humanities' when the relationship was desired but largely unrealised, via 'computing in the humanities' when entry has been gained, and, 'humanities computing' of the final 'confident but enigmatic stage'.²¹ Svensson also explains that the term 'humanities computing' – a more catch-all description for the wide range of activities involved – is now more usually replaced by the term 'digital humanities'.

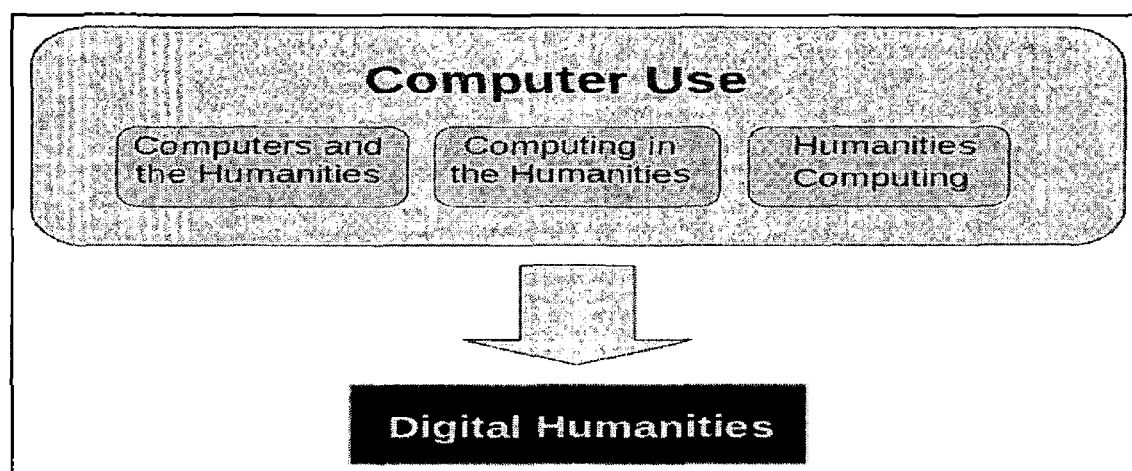


Fig. 1.1: Development of humanities computing.

The world of digital humanities has been described as a 'new cultural commonwealth in which knowledge, learning, and discovery can flourish'.²² The word *commonwealth* (author's italics) is apt in that it implies a richness of ownership within the digital and humanities communities, a knowledge that is currently being pooled for the benefit of all. Humanities resources, combined with computer networks and software tools, are increasingly shaping the way scholars explore, discover and make sense of 'the human record', and at the same time shape the way their findings are communicated.²³ Without doubt, the humanities community contributes to and benefits from this new merger.

Humanities scholars with their tried and tested ability to engage in 'clarity of expression'; their capacity to 'uncover meaning, even in scattered or garbled

²⁰ Cited in Flanders, 'The productive unease of 21st century digital scholarship'.

²¹ Patrik Svensson, *Humanities computing as Digital Humanities*

<http://www.digitalhumanities.org/dhq/vol/3/3/000065/000065ml> [accessed 30 Mar. 2010]

²² *Our Cultural commonwealth*.

²³ Ibid.

information'; and 'centuries of experience in organizing knowledge',²⁴ not only have much to offer to the process but also much to gain in knowledge gleaned from computer scientists who can make dreams a reality.

SECTION 2

BENEFITS OF DIGITISATION TO THE HUMANITIES

As with any innovative research activity it is reasonable to question the ultimate benefits of such research to its relevant field of study. With more recently developed and ever-changing technological advances, the application of computing to the humanities has become more attractive and useful to scholarship. Digitisation serves a number of functions for scholars and the general public including:

- Preserving records in the interests of posterity
- Presenting fully searchable texts
- Making available fully searchable catalogues, databases and indexes
- Creating tools for spatial analysis of data and visualisation
- Making possible data modelling
- Enabling direct publishing online and subsequent peer review
- Encouraging collaboration, sharing of information and transferral of data

Consequently, digitisation tools have the ability to satisfy the demands of a wide range of humanities disciplines including anthropology, classics, language, literature, history, music, philosophy, theology and the performing and visual arts, to name but a few.

Moreover, Flanders argues that the increased speed and computing power now available has 'given us tools that finally propel us over the threshold of possibility'.²⁵ She further suggests that modern text encoding tools are 'good enough and fast enough' to allow novices to master them for their own purposes. These new developments have led to a widespread interest among scholars in the potential of the digital humanities, and as a result, more avenues of funding are becoming available

²⁴ *Our Cultural commonwealth*.

²⁵ Flanders, 'The productive unease of 21st century digital scholarship'.

for the fulfilment of digital humanities initiatives across all disciplines. For example, the collaboration between Oxford University and The Leverhulme Trust resulting in the production of a digital edition of *The Diary of William Godwin* (1788-1836);²⁶ the fully searchable Irish Legislation Database²⁷ developed in collaboration between SPD and Queen's University Belfast (QUB) and hosted by QUB, and the Women in Modern Irish Culture²⁸ database developed as a collaborative work between researchers at the University of Warwick and University College Dublin (UCD) and funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), are notable examples of this new endeavour.

The humanities disciplines cover a wide range of subjects including, anthropology, classics, language, literature, history, music, philosophy, theology and the performing and visual arts. In addition, they span the history of the universe, deal with theories and artefacts that are new or are thousands of years old and involve presentation through and within a variety of media such as text, image, sound, spatial data and digital data. As the field broadens and more data is discovered, increasingly complex and adaptable methods of storage, presentation and accessibility are required. Digitisation in the main satisfies these demands. Thus digital technologies offer humanists 'new methods of conducting research, conceptualising relationships, and presenting scholarship',²⁹ thereby enhancing our research, understanding and presentation of a topic or issue.

Digital humanities projects have been of practical benefit to research and scholarship in various ways; for example in the development of digital tools to increase the availability and long-term preservation of humanities collections and resources as illustrated by the hugely successful digitisation and online availability of

²⁶ Victoria Myers, David O'Shaughnessy, and Mark Philp (eds), *The Diary of William Godwin* (Oxford: Oxford Digital Library, 2010). <http://godwindiary.bodleian.ox.ac.uk> [accessed 17 Nov. 2010]. The digital publication of William Godwin's diary (1788-1836) was supported by the Leverhulme Trust, the Bodleian Libraries and Oxford University Computing Services. The diary has been transcribed and encoded so that it is fully searchable. High resolution scanned images of the manuscript are also provided. The diary maps the radical intellectual and political life of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, as well as providing extensive evidence of publishing relations, conversational coteries, artistic circles and theatrical production over the same period.

²⁷ <http://www.qub.ac.uk/ild/?func=help§ion=sources> [accessed 17 Jul. 2010].

²⁸ www.arts-humanities.net/projects/women_niderb_irish_culture [accessed 11 Aug. 2010].

²⁹ The National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) is an independent grant-making agency of the United States government dedicated to supporting research, education, preservation, and public programmes in the humanities. <http://www.neh.gov/whoweare/index.html> [accessed 30 Mar. 2010].

Ireland's 1911 Census.³⁰ The creation of online reference works³¹ such as encyclopaedias, historical, etymological and bilingual dictionaries, references and grammars are all research tools of major importance to the humanities scholar.

The creation and online provision of fully searchable descriptive catalogues such as the National Library of Ireland (NLI) holdings³² or that of the British Library (BL)³³ have proved of enormous benefit to researchers at a local and global level allowing them to allocate and direct their often-limited resources in the most useful and productive direction. Digital humanities projects have also fostered the creation of tools for spatial analysis and representation of humanities data through the use of databases and electronic archives that codify or integrate humanities materials such as 'Mapping death, boundaries and territories in Ireland, 1st to 8th centuries AD',³⁴ or Cory Homuth's intriguing biogeography geographic information system (GIS)³⁵ which has highlighted a direct correlation between obesity and the ratio of McDonalds to people per state in the United States.³⁶ But ultimately and perhaps most successfully, the provision and application of digital tools facilitates the development of humanities resources that in turn permits the sharing and exchange of humanities information, all of which combine to prompt researchers to partake and contribute to larger projects in a global digital environment.

Whatever the undertaking, it is generally agreed that all digitisation projects should be designed to facilitate sharing and an easy exchange of humanities

³⁰ For example see <http://www.census.nationalarchives.ie>; <http://www.1901censusonline.com>; <http://www.scottishdocuments.com> all of which allow researchers access to digitised versions of primary source documents online [accessed 30 Mar. 2010].

³¹ Some sites require a subscription for example see the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* at <http://www.oxforddnb.com/auth/login.jsp> See also the *Dictionary of Irish Biography* at <http://dib.cambridge.org>; <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/page/askoxfordredirect>

³² <http://www.nli.ie/en/intro/catalogues-and-databases-introduction.aspx> Using a single discovery interface you can now search simultaneously across the library's printed, manuscript, visual and digitised material (including 33,000 photographic images). Significantly other important collections will be added to the database on an ongoing basis, in particular *Sources - A database for Irish research*.

³³ http://catalogue.bl.uk/F/?func=file&file_name=login-bl-list This catalogue lists over 13 million items in the British Library's collections. You can use it to find information on books and other documents held or order material prior to visiting.

³⁴ <http://www.mappingdeath.ie> A collaborative project between U.C.D.s Micheál Ó'Cléirigh Institute for the Study of Irish history and civilisation, The School of History and Archives, The Discovery Programme, The Digital Media Centre, Gwynedd Archaeological Trust, the Department of Archaeology and anthropology at the University of Bristol and Irish Archaeological Consultancy Ltd, Co. Wicklow [accessed 17 Mar. 2011].

³⁵ A geographic information system (G.I.S.), geographical information system, or geospatial information system is the system that captures, stores, analyses, manages, and presents data with reference to geographic location data. In the simplest terms, GIS is the merging of cartography, statistical analysis, and database technology and crosses numerous disciplines.

³⁶ <http://coryhomuth.weebly.com/gis.html> The states with the highest obesity percentage also have the most McDonalds restaurants per capita [accessed 17 Mar. 2011].

information.³⁷ As Unsworth observes, they must be ‘shaped by the need for efficient computation’ on the one hand, and on the other, ‘for human communication’.³⁸ What is important is that digitisation provides scholars with the ability to organise and research their material in a way that ‘satisfies the scholarly criteria of each of the humanities disciplines which have both commonalities and differences’.³⁹ But because diversity exists within the humanities, Unsworth⁴⁰ has also identified the common skills or ‘primitives’ that form the basis for study as:

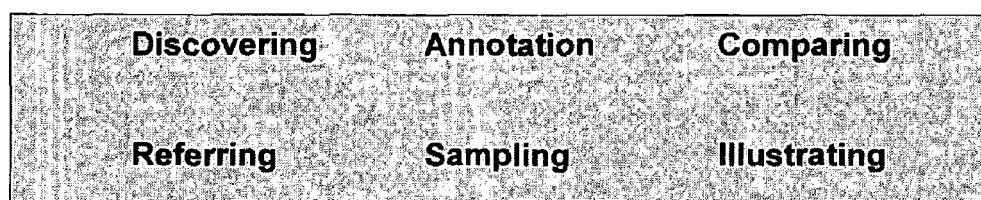


Fig. 2.1: Primitives of study basis.

The result is a ‘methodological commons’ of computational techniques shared among the humanities disciplines.⁴¹ These include database design, text analysis, numerical analysis, data imaging, information retrieval, and communication. The primary task of digital humanities according to Jessop is to:

provide the technological tools to allow academics to apply these primitives to the range of digital data and resources available across computer networks and to ensure the viability of these resources into the future.⁴²

The aim is not to replace traditional scholarship but to enhance its methodology. Although it is self evident that computers can make research easier, crucially they cannot replace the sort of questioning and critical analysis that is unique to the human brain. As Michael Lesk remarks, computer programmes can count the number of times words or phrases appear in an author’s work and display them in enhanced graphic digitised formats such as ‘word clouds’, but they are unable to ‘discuss the

³⁷ <http://www.neh.gov> [accessed 30 Mar. 2010].

³⁸ Flanders, ‘The productive unease of 21st century digital scholarship’.

³⁹ Martyn Jessop, ‘Computing or Humanities’ (2004), <http://ubiquity.acm.org/article.cfm?id=1040561> [accessed 25 Mar. 2010].

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

source of an author's inspiration or the relationship of somebody's texts to contemporary culture.'⁴³ Lesk succinctly summaries it as follows:

Today computers can count; they can read a little, see a little, hear a little, and feel a little. But as yet they do not read, see, hear, or feel at the levels needed to provide insights for humanities scholars.⁴⁴

SECTION 3

DIGITAL HUMANITIES, A COLLABORATIVE APPROACH – 'NO MAN IS AN ISLAND ENTIRE OF ITSELF' ⁴⁵

Collaborative research is now 'the most common way in which research is conducted in the sciences, whether experimental or theoretical'.⁴⁶ Many science projects are increasingly co-funded by international bodies, executed by teams of researchers, and co-authored by groups. This has not been as common within the humanities where individuals at a separate level complete most work. But new patterns are emerging even within what Walsh and Kahn call 'the traditional domain of the lone scholar at work in the archive or library'.⁴⁷ They point to the breaching of established academic divides that have been initiated by shifts in funding regulations and institutional agendas, and they welcome the ensuing merging of the talents of 'humanities savvy techies and techie savvy scholars in the humanities'.⁴⁸

Collaboration in digital humanities projects is a relatively recent phenomenon. Humanist List (1987) and Romantic Circles (1996) have led the way in fostering and promoting the exchange of information on line. Romantic Circles,⁴⁹ a 'refereed scholarly' website promoted by an 'ever-expanding community of editors, contributors and users around the world', overseen by a distinguished advisory board, has built an online community focused on romanticism, not only 'fostering

⁴³ Michael Lesk, *From data to wisdom: humanities research and online content*.
<http://www.academiccommons.org/commons/essay/michael-lesk> [accessed 25 Mar. 2010]

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ John Donne, *Devotions upon emergent occasion* (1624). Free e-book download at
<http://manybooks.net/titles/donnej2377223772-8.html> [accessed 14 Jan. 2011].

⁴⁶ Lorriane Walsh and Peter E. Kahn, *Collaborative working in higher education* (New York, 2010), p. 56
http://books.google.com/books?id=WGZlqK5fP9oC&pg=PA56&dq=collaborative+working+in+humanities&hl=en&ei=AyIItdKBMs6YhQfV_8zGBw&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=1&ved=0CDMQ6AEwAA#v=onepage&q=collaborative%20working%20in%20humanities&f=false [accessed 25 Feb. 2011].

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 56.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 56.

⁴⁹ <http://www.rc.umd.edu/editions> [accessed 24 Feb. 2010].

communication among researchers but also collaboratively developing content'.⁵⁰ Humanist List (1987), the Humanist Discussion Group provides a 'forum for discussion of intellectual, scholarly, pedagogical and social issues, as does H-Albion (1995) for British and Irish history and H-Childhood for children's history'.⁵¹ The Networked Infrastructure for Nineteenth-century Electronic Scholarship (NINES) has built a community that supports digital scholarship and helps to 'legitimise and recognise emerging scholarly forms' by providing suitable training, content and software.⁵²

Within digital humanities, collaboration is considered as both a critical and desirable element for the development of many projects. Specialists working together as a team bring a variety of skills and expertise that would be difficult for a single scholar to attain or access to bring to completion many projects unaided. As the influential researcher of collaborative authorship Lisa Spiro records:

Building digital collections, creating software, devising new analytical methods, and authoring multimodal scholarship cannot be accomplished by a single scholar; rather digital humanities projects require contributions from people with content knowledge, technical skills, project management experience, metadata expertise, etc.⁵³

Spiro cites an initiative by the Massachusetts Library Association (MLA) in 2000 to consider alternatives to the 'adversarial academy' that would encourage collaborative scholarship, and quotes Ede and Lunsford as saying that collaborative authorship can lead to a 'widening of scholarly possibilities'.⁵⁴ Spiro also recognises the 'genuine enthusiasm' that collaborative work engenders, an enthusiasm that allows scholars and researchers to engage in a wider community, to consider alternative perspectives to their own, and to undertake ambitious projects that require a diverse range of skills and or knowledge.⁵⁵

⁵⁰ Lisa Spiro, *Collaborative authorship in the humanities* (2009) <http://digitalscholarship.wordpress.com/2009/06/01/examples-of-collaborative-digital-humanities-projects> [accessed 30 Mar. 2010].

⁵¹ <http://www.digitalhumanities.org/humanist> [accessed 24 Aug. 2010]; <http://www.h-net.org/~albion> [accessed 28 Mar. 2010]; <http://www.h-childhood@h-net.msu.edu> [accessed 3 Jun. 2011]

⁵² http://www.nines.org/about/what_is.html [accessed 28 Mar. 2010].

⁵³ Spiro, *Collaborative authorship in the humanities*.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

SECTION 3.1

Digital project selection

Enabling collaboration was identified as a key feature of ‘the humanities cyber-infrastructure’ by the American report *Our cultural commonwealth* in 2006⁵⁶ and, following lengthy discussions with and the approval and support of the Dean of Research at SPD,⁵⁷ it was agreed that a collaborative approach would be the most efficient way to bring the three digital projects undertaken as part of the structured Digital Humanities PhD to fruition. Even though each of the digital humanities PhD topics were located within its own humanities field, specifically history, music and literature, it was quickly realised that each shared a common ground – a digital element based on a written humanities thesis. Not only would each digital component benefit from a collaborative approach, but also working in such a way would enhance and develop the skill sets each student possessed. Advantages would accrue in terms of time management and the sharing of knowledge and skills.

The initial difficulty lay in finding direct compatibility between the three areas of research. Fortunately, it was possible to select a format that could be approached in a similar manner from a technical point of view and the creation of a database structured project relative to each individual area of research was considered most suitable. While there were differences in the scope and scale of individual project data to be collated, experts in digitisation from the DHO provided guidance in arriving at a common mode of data collection and entry, thereby facilitating the use of the same digital tools in creating the databases for each project.

SECTION 3.2

Institutional supports and collaboration

In essence, the digital projects at the centre of these PhD studies together form a model of collaboration between individuals and agencies. For instance, multi-institutional collaboration was seminal to this project in terms of funding and support structures. Specific support was provided by AFF through a series of seminars that explained the role and potential of digital humanities and introduced students to a wide range of projects produced under this umbrella discipline. Initial advice and

⁵⁶ *Our cultural commonwealth*.

⁵⁷ Dr Mary Shine Thompson retired as Dean of Research in August 2010. Dr Ciarán Mac Murchaidh, was appointed Dean of Research in September 2010.

guidance regarding digital projects appropriate to individual humanities projects was also provided. Seminars provided opportunities for discussion while also developing an important sense of collegiality among the participants from the participating academic institutions.

The Deans of Research at St Patrick's College were instrumental in assisting this team in finding common ground and encouraged the formation of an intellectual kinship. With great insight they proposed and supported the collaborative approach, and facilitated encounters with agencies and individuals who provided guidance and expertise that led to the successful completion of the digital aspect of the three individual theses. Funding was provided for attendance at the summer schools conducted by the Digital Humanities Observatory (DHO),⁵⁸ an organisation of the Royal Irish Academy (RIA) that manages and coordinates the increasingly complex e-resources created in the Irish arts and humanities, and also promotes research and development in the area of digital resources. The schools organised by the DHO proved invaluable not only in developing the 'digital' skills required to bring each project to completion, but also in the introduction to other scholars working in diverse disciplines in the field of digital humanities in Ireland and across the globe.

SECTION 3.3

Collaboration at work

Recognising Doz's assertion that 'the early stages of cooperation have a disproportionate impact on the long term evolution' of collaborative alliances,⁵⁹ the primary consideration was the identification of the most appropriate method for collaborative working. Unlike large-scale collaborative projects that face a number of challenges such as an unwieldy number of researchers, geographical dispersal, or a variety of time zones, this small-scale project was relatively low risk. Since distance was not an issue, essential face-to-face contact was easily organised and set the tone for the project. This personal approach is seen as the optimal way of working and 'the richest medium for all communication'⁶⁰ as it not only allows a climate of trust to be

⁵⁸ <http://dho.ie/about>

⁵⁹ Walsh and Kahn, *Collaborative working in higher education*, p. 62.

⁶⁰ Muruga Anandarajan and Ashokan Anandarajan (eds), *E-Research collaboration: theory, techniques and challenges* (Heidelberg, 2010), p 37, <http://books.google.com/books?id=OAtaB7S6OzMC&pg=PA39&dq=digital+collaboration+in+humanities&hl=en&ei=PiplTevSHZOKhQfw9OGUBw&sa=X&oi=bo> [accessed 25 Mar. 2011].

built, but also provides avenues for early clarification and immediate feedback. As Anandarajan and Anandarajan articulate, these regular meetings reinforced the working relationship, provided ‘the crucial atmosphere of personal obligation’, allowed the participants to address ‘thorny issues’, built up social capital ‘in tangible ways’ and presented opportunities ‘to reboot the machine’ when enthusiasm waned.⁶¹

The essential ingredients for success identified by Kezar (2005) were also in place.⁶² These included an enthusiasm to engage in the project itself and in connected professional dialogue as well as in social networking. All of this was made easy in that this group was working within a single institution, had a suitable location on campus conducive to group work, and ample opportunity for face-to face meetings. Moreover, each of the three participants had the ‘willingness to persist’ and the ‘sense of self-efficacy’ essential when ‘working at the borders of knowledge’.⁶³ Agreement was quickly reached regarding the following:



Fig. 3.1: Collaborative working agreement template.

⁶¹ Anandarajan, and Anandarajan, p. 42.

⁶² Cited in Walsh and Kahn, p. 63.

⁶³ Walsh and Kahn, p. 68.

As Wendell Piez notes, the transition for humanities scholars into the digital process should be relatively easy, since through their studies – if they have been ‘lucky’ – they have been initiated into a worldview that is not only critical, ‘but tolerant of criticism and therefore capable of vitality, creativity and growth’.⁶⁴ A critical feature of the collaborative process was to highlight that no individual was the leader; rather there was a inter-dependence for overall performance. Regular contact was maintained both online and through weekly face-to-face meetings where specific goals were targeted and time frames drafted. Individual roles were defined and assigned with each student opting to develop a particular vital skill, namely TEI expertise, visualisation development and an overall understanding of web design. This skill sharing was evidenced in many ways. For example, maximum benefit was achieved as each researcher attended a different workshop at the DHO spring and summer schools and reported back to the group with a summary of knowledge gleaned and skills developed.

SECTION 3.4

Challenges met

Crucially participants in collaborative digital humanities projects require an acceptance of the problems, technical and otherwise, which may have to be faced and overcome, both individually and as a team. As such, much time was afforded to drafting realistic and specific goals, gathering information on similar projects and strategic planning. Even so, a number of challenges, both practical and philosophical face those concerned with the development of collaborative digital humanities projects and there were of course some challenges encountered in the harmonisation of these three diverse projects. Limitations presented affected not only the student, but also the technology and the project itself. (These issues are fully evaluated in Section 5). But they were not insurmountable and a pro-active approach was adopted that engendered an extremely productive experience.

For example, working within various disciplines each student employs a particular citation style suited to their own work such as ‘Rules for Contributors to *Irish Historical Studies*’ (Moody’s Rules) for Irish historical presentation, and MLA for literary works. As such there is no consensus available to the student on the

⁶⁴ Wendell Piez, *DHO, something called “digital humanities”*, <http://www.digitalhumanities.org/dhq/vol/2/2/1/000020/000020.html> [accessed 30 Mar. 2010].

‘correct’ citation style when presenting a digital humanities PhD project. As a result, in collaboratively writing this supporting text for the projects, prior agreement was reached on a specific formatting style and citation suited to all, and crucially, best suited to the presentation of each work.

As each member of the team brought with them different skills, opinions and interests, their diverse approaches, methodologies, time-tabling and time-lines were confronted in the early stages of the collaborative process. While on-line communication proved effective, there were times when face-to-face discussion was required and the different geographic locations of the three participants presented some difficulties, but again these were addressed in a pro-active manner and difficulties were quickly resolved. There may have been disagreements over methodological approach, but the group dynamics worked well and any issues were dealt with in a fair and reasoned manner. Issues requiring academic clarification were delegated and the results minuted, circulated and reported.

Where challenges, both personal and technological could not be resolved satisfactorily, they were noted and the negative issues arising were accepted as part of the ‘learning process,’ thus a positive attitude was maintained throughout the project development.

SECTION 4

ELECTRONIC PUBLICATION PROCEDURES, EDITORIAL METHODOLOGY AND ENCODING STANDARDS

The three digital projects were completed within a reasonable time frame and the websites went live on the DHO host site on 15 December 2010. The current iterations of all exhibits are online at: dev.dho.ie/~sday/ They are:

<http://dev.dho.ie/~sday/gaye/index.html>

Irish Children in 18th Century Schools and Institutions, the work of Gabrielle Ashford;

<http://dev.dho.ie/~sday/teresa/index.html> *Concert Programmes of the Music Association of Ireland, 1950-1984*, the work of Teresa O'Donnell;

<http://dev.dho.ie/~sday/annemarie/index.html> *The Published Works of Eilís Dillon: Editions and Translations*, the work of Ann Marie Herron.

The methodology used in the creation and generation of these three web projects is given below but with particular reference to that employed by each researcher.

The web pages ‘Irish children in 18th century institutions’ makes available in an easily accessible electronic format the unique, but scattered information relative to the personal details of a group of more than five hundred Irish children listed as being resident and or educated in schools and institutions during the eighteenth-century. Although it is designed as a working template, it is hoped that ultimately this resource will enable researchers to undertake investigations into the children’s lives with particular reference to geographical origins, occupations, age profile and family composition; to challenge historical, familial and institutional stereotypes and to provide a powerful quantitative tool for researching children’s lives in eighteenth-century Ireland.

SECTION 4.1

Planning and Metadata

Although it is impossible to predict every need that these digital project designs may be called upon to fulfil or every issue that is likely to arise, careful planning can help mitigate against any potential problems. A good database is built with forethought, with proper care and attention given to the needs not only of the data that will inhabit it but also the needs of the end user. An analysis of the documentation and information available to each project was scrutinised with a view to isolating and extracting the most useful and appropriate data to present as a digital resource to serve as wide a variety of users as possible but, in this instance, one specifically addressed to those within the historical research community. As such extensive consideration was initially given to two broad questions applicable to all projects, namely what do we want to describe and how do we want to describe it? That is, what type of digitisation is most appropriate to display the collected data?

Table 4.1: Initial specific project option considerations		
Desired product?	Type of digitisation?	Appropriate to?
Metadata and page images only		
Full-text search with page images		
Full-text search, highlighted words on page images		
Transcription of text		
Transcription of information		
Ability to do simple searching		
Ability to do complex searches		

An early decision was made to include a number of data visualizations on the finished website and that these would be chosen with a view to their potential use within all three projects. The purpose of the incorporation of data visualizations was not just to enhance the appearance of the potential website but also to make information more accessible to the end user. A number of criteria were applied in selecting from the wide range of visualization tools available. These included the ability to:

- Allow the end user to process information quickly and effortlessly in a fast and effective way
- Highlight relevant features that are otherwise not easily or directly visible
- Answer a range of search questions
- Focus the user’s attention on particular aspects of the data
- Allow for comparative analysis showing trends and patterns
- Provide for ‘pre-attentive processing’, i.e., the facility to absorb information at a glance without the need for focused attention

The process involved in data visualisation can be represented as follows:

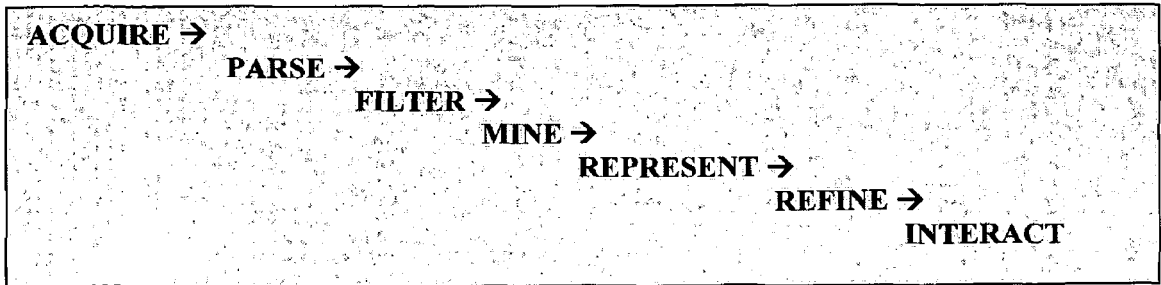


Fig. 4.1: Representation of data visualisation
 Source: Paolo Battino, Visualisation Workshop, DHO Summer School, Dublin, June/July 2010.

Essentially this involves engaging with the following processes:

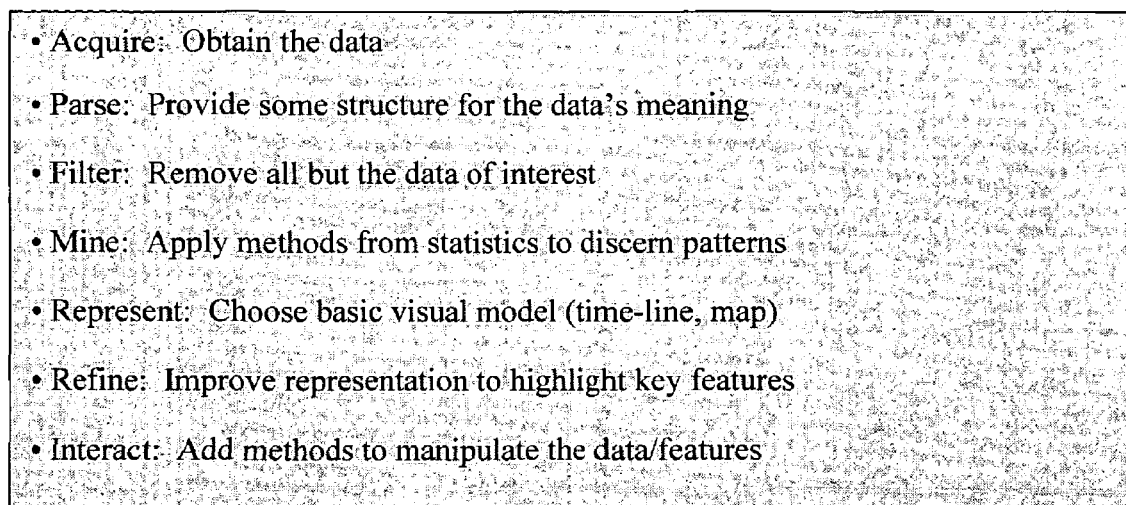
- 
- **Acquire:** Obtain the data
 - **Parse:** Provide some structure for the data's meaning
 - **Filter:** Remove all but the data of interest
 - **Mine:** Apply methods from statistics to discern patterns
 - **Represent:** Choose basic visual model (time-line, map)
 - **Refine:** Improve representation to highlight key features
 - **Interact:** Add methods to manipulate the data/features

Fig. 4.2: Data visualisation processes

Source: Paolo Battino, Visualisation Workshop, DHO Summer School, Dublin, June/July 2010.

Even so, the choice of visualisation tools was limited by our ability to access the particular tool either free of charge, or by license, and by our own technical limitations and the range of skills required to implement certain specific visualizations. Foremost however was the consideration of cross compatibility with each individual project.

It was agreed that the personal information compiled for this database would include children's names, sex, religion, parents, institution, education and apprenticeship details, where available. However, given the nature of Irish historic documentation not all information fields were traceable. Initially the core database information was compiled from a number of archival sources, namely:

Table 4.2: Project archival sources	
Institution:	Repository:
St Mary's Charity school, Dublin.	National Library of Ireland, Ms 2664.
Incorporated Society for Promoting English Protestant schools in Ireland.	Trinity College Dublin, Mss 5225-5859.
Dublin Workhouse and Foundling Hospital.	Papers and reports, Marsh's Library; <i>Commons Jn (Irl.)</i> .
French school, Dublin.	Marsh's Library, Receipts relating to the French school.
Ballitore Quaker school, County Kildare.	E. J. McAuliffe, <i>An Irish genealogical source, the roll of the Quaker school at Ballitore County Kildare</i> (Dublin, 1984).
Augustinian Academy, Cork.	William O'Connell, 'An eighteenth-century Cork manuscript: the Augustinian Academy at Brunswick Street, 1783-87', <i>Cork Historical and Archaeological Society Journal</i> , 45 (1940), pp 33-7.
Kilkenny school, Kilkenny.	T.V.Sadlier, 'The register of Kilkenny School (1685-1800)', <i>Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland</i> , 54 (1924), pp 55-67, 152-69.
Harrow school, England	William T. Jackson Gun, <i>The Harrow school register, 1571-1800</i> (London, 1934); Milverton G. Daughlish and Pleydell K. Stephenson, <i>The Harrow school register, 1800-1911</i> (London, 1894).
Eton College, England	Sir Wasey Sterry, <i>The Eton College register 1441-1698</i> ; R. A. Austen-Leigh, <i>The Eton College register 1753-1790</i> (London, 1921).
Rugby school, England	Frederick Temple, <i>Rugby school register from 1675-1867</i> (London, 1867).

SECTION 4.2

Source code

Working in collaboration with the Digital Humanities Observatory (DHO) and with a view to the future and further development of these projects, the use of Open-source software (OSS) or Free open-source software (FOSS) was agreed as the most sustainable way forward. OSS or FOSS is computer software that is available in source code form for which the source code and certain other rights normally reserved for copyright holders are provided under a software license that permits users to study, change, and improve the software. FOSS and OSS is distinguishable from commercial or proprietary software in that you cannot see, modify or distribute the latter source code.⁶⁵ Unlike many proprietary products FOSS and OSS are often

⁶⁵ Michelle Murrain, *Choosing and using free and open source software: a primer for nonprofits* (2007), <http://nosi.net/node/463> [accessed 2 Aug. 2010].

based on open standards, which enhance not only the potential interoperability of software, the ability of different software to communicate with each other, but also help to prevent 'lock-in' should data migration from one system to another be required at some future date.⁶⁶ This was an important consideration given the speed with which digital technologies can progress. Therefore, it was agreed to adhere to the TEI (Text Encoding Initiative) (www.tei-c.org) guidelines as being those most suitable, appropriate and protective of each project both now and in the future.⁶⁷

TEI is a joint industry, educational and government non-profit initiative with many worldwide participants hosted by the University of Virginia, Brown University, Oxford University, University of Lethbridge and a collaborative group based in Nancy, France that includes ATILF (Analyse et Traitement Informatique de la Langue Française), INIST (L'Institut de l'Information Scientifique et Technique) and Loria. The mission of the TEI is to:

develop and maintain a set of high-quality guidelines for the encoding of humanities texts, and to support their use by a wide community of projects, institutions, and individuals.⁶⁸

SECTION 4.3

Definition of fields – standardisation

Working in collaboration with and supported by the DHO team to create the appropriate TEI schema to support each project's data, the first task was the coding and standardisation of that data. Coding and standardisation refers to the 'process of translating ambiguous source data into standardised codes for data processing'.⁶⁹ Standardisation processes are important in the establishment of compatibility and interoperability. In general, 'standardization determines and promulgates criteria to which objects or actions are expected to conform',⁷⁰ for example 'School 1' and 'School 2'. Although it can be seen as inflexible, standardisation also allows for customisation⁷¹ and initial project preparation identified each of the descriptive fields

⁶⁶ For a fuller discussion of the benefits of using FOSS and OSS see <http://opensource.org/docs/osd> <http://open-source.gbdirect.co.uk/migration/benefit.html> <http://webdevstudios.com/support/faq/why-use-open-source-software/> [accessed 23 Apr. 2010].

⁶⁷ <http://www.tei-c.org> [accessed 10 Aug. 2010].

⁶⁸ <http://www.tei-c.org/About/mission.xml> [accessed 10 Aug. 2010].

⁶⁹ http://www.arts-humanities.net/user_tags/coding_standardisation [accessed 10 Aug. 2010].

⁷⁰ <http://www.referenceforbusiness.com/encyclopedia/Sel-Str/Standardization.html#ixzz0wICQwHld> [accessed 10 Aug. 2010].

⁷¹ <http://www.referenceforbusiness.com/encyclopedia/Sel-Str/Standardization.html#ixzz0wICQwHld> [accessed 10 Aug. 2010].

requiring standardisation. For example within an excel spreadsheet the following fields for this project were identified as most appropriate.

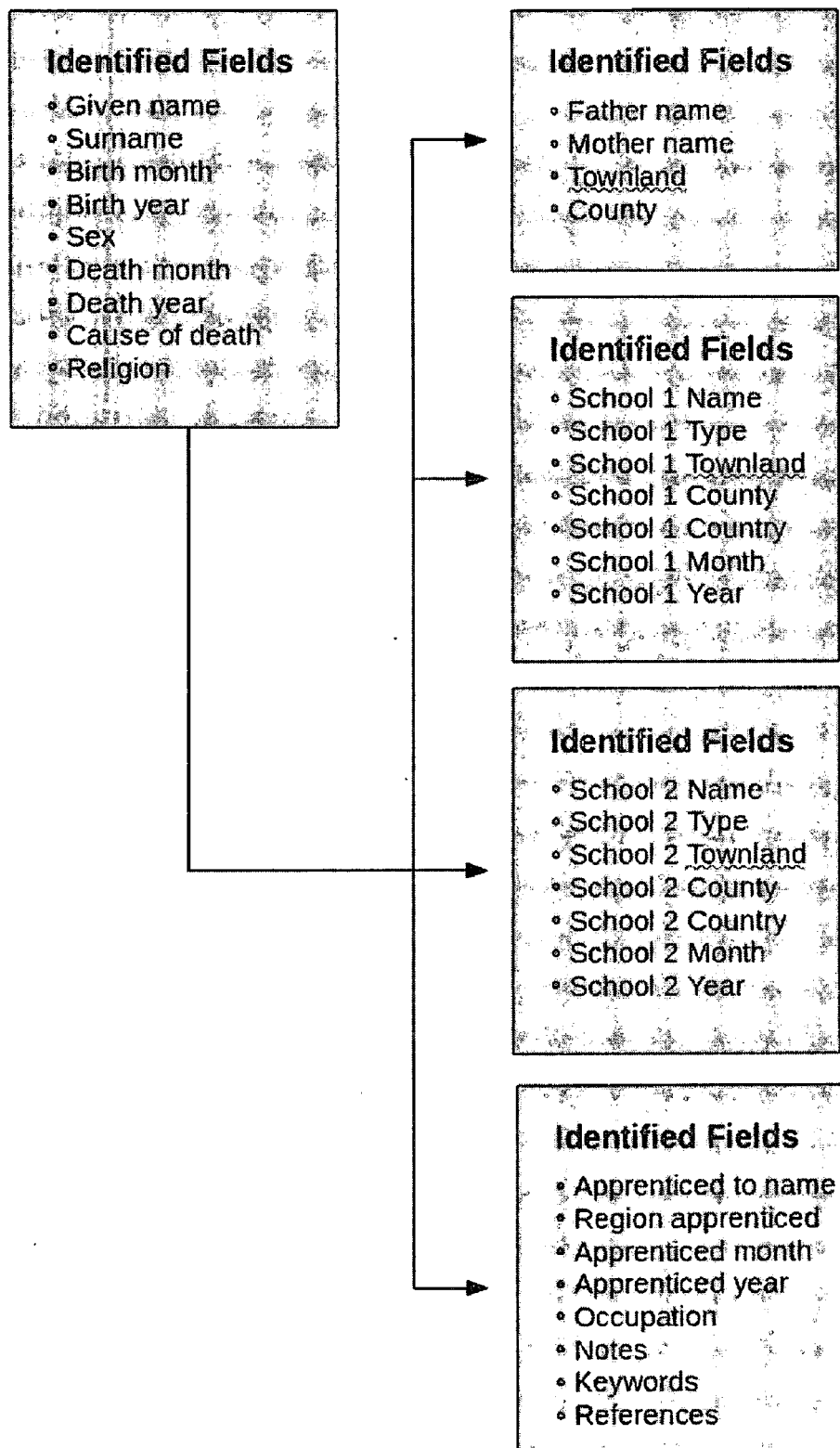


Fig. 4.3: Identified fields.

Careful consideration was given to the standardisation of fields and names when adding TEI tags and attributes. For example, in TEI religion is tagged as:

```
<faith>Church of Ireland</faith>
```

However, for the purpose of this project, death was not a general date of death but one that took place in the institution only and again required careful consideration in representing this fact. It was agreed that the format:

```
<death when="1807-09">
    September 1807
    <note
      type="cause">Smallpox</note>
</death>
```

was most appropriate to this particular entry and field. Defining townlands and counties also required careful consideration. Given the imprecise nature of the historical records being used for this project, a townland address could be a religious parish, a house, town or street name. For example:

St Andrew's Parish.	The Alms House.	Kinsale.
Dublin City.	Britain Street.	

Fig. 4.4: Townland definition and standardisation.

Likewise, the definition and standardisation of institutional names also required careful consideration. The separation into two distinct fields of school name and type was adopted with the 'type' being standardised into Charity, Charter, Workhouse, Public and so forth. Standardisation was also adopted in relation to names given to schools of The Incorporated Society for Promoting English Protestant Schools in Ireland – the Charter schools – as not all of their schools contained the word 'Charter' in their title. For example:

Ardbacken Charter school.	Provincial Nursery.
Primrose Grange Charter school.	Baggot Street/House of Refuge.

Fig. 4.5: School and institution definition and standardisation.

In order ultimately to be able to do a faceted browse by type, the name and location of the school also required standardisation. Additionally, for schools to be geo-referenced the address had to be broken down into component parts – town, county, country. These were required for both school 1 and school 2.

Table 4.3: School data standardisation.

Id	School1Name	School1Type	School1Townland	School1County	School1Country	School1 month	School1Year
60	Ballycastle Charter school	Charter	Ballycastle	Antrim	Ireland	March	1775
61	Castlecaulfield Charter school	Charter	Castlecaulfield	Tyrone	Ireland	June	1778

To facilitate further historical research the inclusion of ‘notes’, where appropriate and repository references was considered essential.

Table 4.4: Reference data standardisation

Id	Notes	References
3	Mother a widow	NLI Ms 2664 Minutes of Governors of St Mary's Charity school Dublin 2 Feb 1799
5	Father late of His Majesty's Fleet Feb 1799	NLI Ms2664 Minutes of Governors of St Mary's Charity school Dublin 2 Feb 1799
20	Possibly brother to John Dooglass	Marsh's Library Z3.1.1.(CXLVIII) 20 March 1725-6
21	Possibly brother to William Dooglass	Marsh's Library Z3.1.1.(CXLVIII) 20 March 1725-6
45	Listed as blind. Sister to Elizabeth Farrel	TCD MS 5646 Primrose Grange Charter school Orders 1757-96 11 Oct 1762

SECTION 4.4

Metadata format

Although the data entry requirements for each digitisation project were different, each required a structured representation of data object properties. As such one master document in XML (Extensible Mark-up Language) format was established for each project. XML allows for combining and interoperability and again is an open, non-proprietary standard. This was an important step as having one master document and an automated process allows for additional or revised data to be easily run through a PHP conversion script to produce new data files for use with web functions. The data

in the structured excel document was then transformed into both TEI, a variant of XML, and JSON a standard data interchange format. A HTML (Hyper Text Mark-up Language) page that provides the basic exhibit functionality being demonstrated was also created. Further customisation of the HTML code to provide graphic enhancements and to 'tweak' the information being displayed could then easily be undertaken later.

```
<?xml version="1.0" encoding="utf-8"?>
  <name>
    <name_given>William</name_given>
    <name_surname>Dingly</name_surname>
  </name>
```

The formal documentation produced by the TEI Consortium defines and describes the encoding system and working with the formal schema makes explicit certain features of a text in such a way as to aid the processing of that text by computer programs.

What does TEI make explicit?

- **Structural divisions within a text**
- title-page, chapter, scene, stanza, line, etc.
- **Typographical elements**
- changes in typeface, special characters, etc.
- **Other textual features**
- grammatical structures, location of illustrations, variant forms, etc.

Fig. 4.6: Textual features of TEI

Source: Susan Schreibman, 'Text Encoding Initiative, an introduction', DHO Summer School (2010).

All TEI documents essentially follow the same format and the common textual features are easily shared across communities. Additional specialist features are easy to add or remove from a text while mark-up is user defined.⁷² However, in sustaining the concept of open source software and the philosophy of the creative commons community, TEI also provides adequate documentation of the text and its encoding. For example the TEI header documents the electronic edition being created while the TEI body contains the content being created.

TEI Header:

```
<TEI xml:id="children in eighteenth-century Irish institutions">
  <teiHeader>
    <encodingDesc></encodingDesc>
    <fileDesc></fileDesc>
    <profileDesc></profileDesc>
    <revisionDesc></revisionDesc>
```

TEI Body:

```
<residence>
  <placeName type="townland">St Andrew
  Parish</placeName>
  <settlement type="county">Dublin</settlement>
</residence>
```

Additionally, TEI allows the search engine to find similar strings within the search even when spelled differently, or referred to by another name, an essential aid especially when using primary literary and biographical source material. It allows the editor to add this intelligence to the document via attribute values without altering the original text.⁷³

```
<name key="Dillon, Éilis">Éilis</name>
<name key="Dillon, Éilis">Miss Dillon</name>
<rs key="Dillon, Éilis">the author</rs>
```

A TEI template was generated for each project and the collected data encoded and converted into a TEI compliant schema. The converted data was checked and rechecked for any errors. It was agreed that each child's record would be divided into a division and would include as much information attributable to that particular child. For example:

```
<div type="person">
  <head>Jane Goyer</head>
  <listPerson>
    <person>
      <persName>
        <forename>Jane</forename>
        <surname>Goyer</surname>
      </persName>
      <birth when="1761">1761</birth>
      <sex>female</sex>
      <faith>Church of Ireland</faith>
      ..... </div>
```

TEI body:

```
<text>
  <body>
    <p>page content here</p>
  </body>
</text>
```

SECTION 4.5

Web page development

There are two approaches to working with a dataset. Starting with a blank slate and in-puting values hoping something may show up, and browsing a dataset by showing available information and targeting that which is pertinent to your research. It was agreed that the web page framework for each of the projects would be based on the open source software EXHIBIT,⁷⁴ developed by Massachusetts Institute of Technology Libraries (MIT Libraries) and its Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence Laboratory (MIT, CSAIL) under the SIMILE Project and freely available under a Berkeley Software Distribution (BSD) style license.⁷⁵

'The SIMILE Project and its members are fully committed to the open source principles of software distribution and open development and for this reason, it releases the created intellectual property (both software and reports) under a BSD-style license.'

Fig. 4.7: SIMILE Project aims

Source: <http://smilie.mit.edu/wiki/SIMILE:About>

The EXHIBIT software, a lightweight structured data publishing framework, enables web site authors to create dynamic exhibits of their data without resorting to complex database and server technologies.⁷⁶ EXHIBIT is foremost a tool to browse a dataset. Each dataset can be fully searched and browsed using Internet browsers. The advanced user interface, or 'lenses and views' provided by EXHIBIT such as tile view, timelines, word clouds, information presentation and so forth were considered important elements for each project and display a dataset very quickly and efficiently allowing the user to browse through data by selecting from what is available. As a result, the use of this framework would allow for a simple, but powerful presentation and sharing of our research data.

⁷⁴ <http://simile.mit.edu/wiki/Exhibit> [accessed 24 Apr. 2010].

⁷⁵ Berkeley Software Distribution (BSD, sometimes called Berkeley Unix) is a UNIX operating system derivative developed and distributed by the Computer Systems Research Group (CSRG) of the University of California, Berkeley, from 1977 to 1995; David F. Huynh, David R. Karger, Robert C. Miller, 'Exhibit: lightweight structured data publishing', <http://people.csail.mit.edu/dfhuynh/research/papers/www2007-exhibit.pdf> [accessed 24 Apr. 2010].

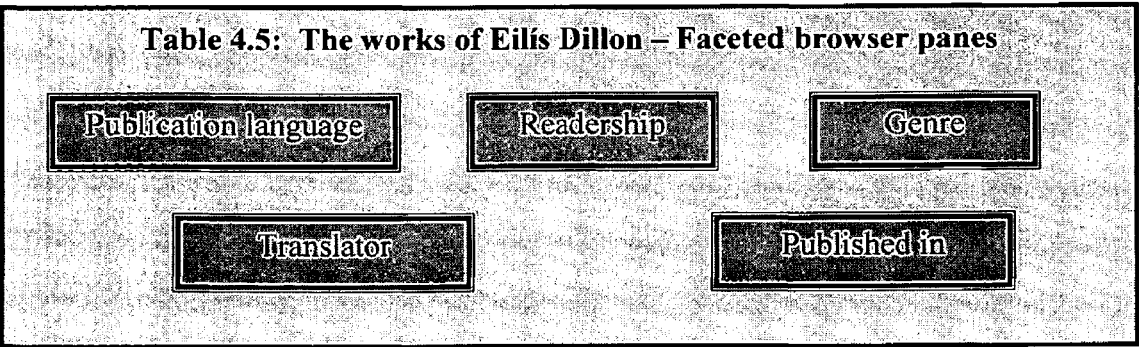
⁷⁶ http://simile.mit.edu/wiki/ExhibitFor_Authors [accessed 24 Apr. 2010]. This site contains a helpful tutorial.

There are however limitations on the EXHIBIT platform or framework. On the one hand it allows for a rich browsing experience using a variety of visualisations, but on the other it can only be modified for individual use so far. For example, during early testing one of the most significant issues was the failure of the browser Internet Explorer (though not Firefox or Chrome) to load a page. This error was resulting from Internet Explorer throwing a warning over dataset size that other browsers ignored. If the ‘warning’ was repeatedly acknowledged the page would eventually load. However this ‘remedy’ would be unsatisfactory to the end user and considerable time was spent rectifying the problem by reducing the number of columns of information being referenced.

The dataset size however continued to cause problems within the EXHIBIT framework. As a working template, priority was given to the successful operation of the web page functions and as a result the number of children’s records was reduced from 1,600 to 646, while still endeavouring to retain enough data for comparative and analytical purposes.

Although the EXHIBIT framework is remarkable in its simplicity and on providing a rich set of features all within a page, not all functions presented were suitable to an individual’s project. It was agreed to adopt an overall simple interface design for the web page giving due recognition to the funding and supporting bodies involved in the projects. As such and in line with best practice among institutions, sponsorship logos were placed at the bottom of the web page.

A working template was crafted so as to be usable by the widest collection of projects, and one that accounted for all of the various components that must be served. Working initially with the full set of EXHIBIT features, each project crafted their own set of requirements. A series of faceted browser panes were coded for individual projects. For example:



**Table 4.6: Concert Programmes of the Music Association of Ireland
– Faceted browser panes**

Date	Region	Surname	Venue	Role
------	--------	---------	-------	------

**Table 4.7: Irish Children in 18th Century Schools & Institutions
– Faceted browser panes**

Surname	Institution	Sex	Country
---------	-------------	-----	---------

The ‘faceted browser pane’ code for this particular project is represented in HTML as:

```
Search: <div ex:role="facet"
ex:facetClass="TextSearch"></div>
```

```
<div ex:role="facet" ex:expression=".Surname"
ex:facetLabel="Surname"></div>

<div ex:role="facet" ex:expression=".Occupation"
ex:facetLabel="Occupation"></div>

<div ex:role="facet" ex:expression=".School1Name"
ex:facetLabel="School Name"></div>

<div ex:role="facet" ex:expression=".Sex"
ex:facetLabel="Sex"></div>

<div ex:role="facet" ex:facetClass="Cloud"
ex:expression=".Surname"></div>

</td>
```

Each project added or deleted features as appropriate by deleting that line of code from the HTML page. For example, the basic ‘word cloud’ was deemed superfluous to the project’s requirements and was simply removed from the HTML page.

```
<div ex:role="facet" ex:facetClass="Cloud"
ex:expression=".Surname"></div>
```

SECTION 4.6

Style sheets

Simply providing appropriate Cascading Style Sheets (CSS) styles within the HTML code itself controls the way that particular information appears on the web page,⁷⁷ that is ‘styles’ define how to display HTML elements. For example, the need to provide italicisation within the reference sources is controlled by applying appropriate CSS in the HTML for that output, as also are decisions about the font size of a line or a particular line of text. HTML was never intended to contain tags for formatting a document rather it was intended to define the content of a document such as:

```
<h1>This is a heading</h1> or <p>This is a paragraph</p>
```

Initially the addition of fonts or colour information had to be added to every single page, involving a lot of time and effort especially when developing large web sites. With the creation of CSS by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) in HTML 4.0 all formatting could be removed and stored in a separate CSS file.⁷⁸

Each project’s page opens with a brief introduction setting it within a contextual basis. A brief editorial record and outline of the sources used was also considered essential giving clear indications to the end user of original editorial decisions made when inputting and presenting the data.

SECTION 4.7

Licensing issues

Advice was sought from St Patrick’s College, Drumcondra IT and Library department concerning the most appropriate license to adopt. In line with the ‘open access’ ethos of the projects overall careful consideration was given to the various types of Creative Commons Licenses available.⁷⁹ Due regard had to be given not only to each project

⁷⁷ The styling and customisation of the exhibit framework is adequately outlined on their Google forum at <http://www.simile-widgets.org/exhibit/> [accessed 24 Apr. 2010].

⁷⁸ http://www.w3schools.com/css/css_intro.asp [accessed 25 Nov. 2010].

⁷⁹ <http://creativecommons.org/about/licenses> [accessed 25 Aug 2010].

author's own copyright but also to any conflicting copyright issues that might arise from the sources used. Despite the lack of academic guidelines, ultimately consideration had also to be given to the final host site of the projects and any limitations that might present in the future. The licenses available under the Creative Commons were:

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This license lets others remix, tweak, and build upon your work even for commercial reasons, as long as they credit you and license their new creations under the identical terms. This license is often compared to open source software licenses. All new works based on yours will carry the same license, so any derivatives will also allow commercial use

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This license lets others remix, tweak, and build upon your work non-commercially, and although their new works must also acknowledge you and be non-commercial, they don't have to license their derivative works on the same terms.

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This license is the most restrictive of our six main licenses, allowing redistribution. This license is often called the "free advertising" license because it allows others to download your works and share them with others as long as they mention you and link back to you, but they can't change them in any way or use them commercially.

Following extensive consultation and in agreement with the Dean of Research and with library staff at SPD, it was agreed that the license *Attribution Non-Commercial Share Alike* or *cc by-nc-sa* would be best suited to each of the projects, at present and in the future (see appendix no. 1).

SECTION 4.8

Testing and technical limitations exposed

As the projects neared completion, it was agreed to request three people to act as ‘end user testers’. These testers would bring their own diverse experiences and skills as an amateur historian/genealogist, a computer engineer and an educator to bear on the merits or otherwise of each project. Their feed-back not only identified issues that had escaped the notice of the development team, but also suggested areas for improvement and overall, was an invaluable and necessary exercise to undertake prior to completion.

As previously noted there are limitations to the EXHIBIT framework and indeed its use as FOSS for these projects development. One of the less desirable consequences of using OSS or FOSS technologies is generally a lack of documentation, although some proprietary software packages are similarly guilty. The inability to increase the size of the school or institution ‘pop-up bubble’ to encompass all children’s names, especially those containing a significant number of names of children in schools or institutions was a drawback of the EXHIBIT framework that could not be reconciled satisfactorily. Due to the lack of documentation the DHO members were unable to develop new software for and within the EXHIBIT framework to address this issue that would ensure it would remain both compatible and retain its interoperability in the future.

As EXHIBIT initially searches the entire dataset and not individual fields, it provides a limited rather than an advanced search. As stated previously, limitations emerged on the actual size of the data entries being accessed, especially for the eighteenth-century children’s project, necessitating the removal of a substantial

amount of records. Because of the limitations on the size of the data set it was agreed that a 'static view' page of a child's total record would be generated. While this would not be fully searchable, it did allow the end user to gain access to the whole record.

Although EXHIBIT was deemed most adaptable for these projects development, not all were equally suitable to the framework. For example the MAI requirements emerged as being the most difficult to develop in EXHIBIT. With hindsight, a relational database format would have been more suitable to this project. Nevertheless, both students and DHO members carried out considerable work to facilitate a web page display of cross-referenced data that would be of benefit to all three projects. For example, similar to the Eilis Dillon project, which has grouped publications and editions in one display, the MAI project required the linking of all concert performance information in one search, a function not carried out within the EXHIBIT framework. Again working collaboratively with the DHO it was agreed that the best option would be to draw up a code that would enable the sharing of the information in the Excell dataset that would allow for the display of the requested information.

The creation of printable reports from the EXHIBIT browser was not discussed. Work was initially predicated upon providing an online dataset browse tool rather than a printable browser. However, feedback from the panel of 'testers' suggested the potential benefits of a printable version, but the project lacked such resources.

While the EXHIBIT framework does provide these projects with a multiplicity of benefits, especially visualisations such as the time-line and the 'google map', there are architectural issues that simply cannot be enabled using this particular framework. Creating database driven solutions (especially ones that suit a generic usage such as printable versions) can take months and months of dedicated development activity, a development beyond many student's skills and increasingly limited financial resources.

SECTION 5

DESCRIPTION AND EVALUATION OF THE WEBSITE – IRISH CHILDREN IN 18TH CENTURY SCHOOLS AND INSTITUTIONS

<http://dev.dho.ie/~sday/gaye/index.html>

The homepage of the website opens with a short introduction contextualising the project:

Although it is to state the obvious, there has always been a history of children. However unlike the more obvious economic trends and political views, children's histories have for the most part remained hidden. Although there is disagreement amongst historians as to when childhood was invented, it is generally accepted that there was a profound change in attitudes towards children during the seventeenth and eighteenth-centuries which reached its climax in the nineteenth.

Eighteenth-century Ireland witnessed immense economic and political changes and these were paralleled in the domestic sphere as the increasingly private realm of eighteenth-century family life underwent adjustment and change. The beginning of the century saw the development of the ascendancy class, the big house and the improving landlord while on the other hand the continuing lack of industrial development and the increase in population presented the poor and vulnerable with more forbidding challenges as the century progressed. All Irish children, but especially poor Catholic children were seen as a means of expanding and stabilising the Protestant religion in Ireland, thus ultimately reinforcing the authority and power vested in the emerging ascendancy.

There are no specific organisations or archives dedicated to the history of children in eighteenth-century Ireland. Indeed a perusal of National Library of Ireland catalogues would indicate a definite bias in favour of political events. Thus the information for this study has to be extracted from a broad range of primary sources such as family papers – an under-appreciated source – journals, biographies, newspapers, government and institutional records, and a range of manuscripts, the majority of which have been deposited for safekeeping in Irish repositories.

While the above sources can yield much valuable information about the elites and 'the middling sorts', information establishing the actuality of children's lives for the peasant/pauper and 'the unwanted' is slightly more difficult and perhaps reflects their position in eighteenth-century Irish society. Nevertheless, papers such as the House of Commons reports, the Incorporated Society for promoting Protestant Schools in Ireland archive, and reports made by individuals throughout the eighteenth-century provide details and testimony of the children being cared for in institutions.

Fig. 5.1: Homepage introduction.

A side panel explains the origins and background to the project:

This digital humanities project was supported and funded by St Patrick's College, Drumcondra, Dublin (SPD), Dublin City University (DCU) and An Foras Feasa: The Institute for Research in Irish Historical and Cultural Traditions (AFF) in collaboration with the Digital Humanities Observatory (DHO).

The collaborative nature of the project was enhanced by the support, encouragement and collegial spirit of my fellow PhD candidates Anne Marie Herron and Teresa O'Donnell.

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Database development followed TEI Guidelines and is presented using the Exhibit Framework from MIT's SIMILE project.

Fig. 5.2: Origin and background project data.

Further details are given of the sources used, editorial decisions made and crucially, the precise definitions used in the context of this study of those institutions accessed:

Sources

As this project is ongoing the information does not claim to be a comprehensive database of all Irish children in eighteenth-century schools and institutions, and researchers should be aware of this limitation when drawing conclusions. It is however a representative sample of a cross section of children's records.

The personal information of children incorporated in this database includes their name, sex, religion, parents, institution, education and apprenticeship details where available. However, given the nature of Irish historic documentation not all information fields are traceable.

Because of the attitude adopted towards peasant/pauper children by those in authority, personal information concerning those entering institutions was frequently not recorded and often what was, has not survived. Likewise not all school registers have survived. Those that have are often scattered in public and private repositories. For example the registers of Dublin's Blue Coat School are held in The King's Hospital, Palmerstown, Dublin while the papers of The Incorporated Society in Dublin for Promoting English Protestant Schools in Ireland are held in Trinity College Dublin.

Register transcriptions such as that of 'The Augustinian Academy at Brunswick Street (1783-87)', Cork may be found as printed primary sources in journals such as *The Journal of the Cork Historical and Archaeological Society* as often may details of registers that have since been lost or disappeared. Other details may be extracted from minute books of school governors, newspapers, family diaries and personal correspondence. The records of Irish children attending Eton, Harrow and Rugby public schools were drawn from their school registers, available online.

To facilitate further historical research, the original source location and reference number accompanies each child's individual record. However it is advisable to contact any repository before making a personal visit. While every effort has been made to maintain an accurate and scholarly approach towards record transcriptions, errors and omissions may occur.

Fig. 5.3: Project sources.

Editorial Notes

No editorial corrections of personal names have been made, although the modern form of geographic locations has been utilised. For example, Offaly is used rather than King's County. The transcription of dates and year are as they appear in the original source. Only titles that appear in the original entry or transcription such as 'Hon.', 'Lord', 'Earl' and so forth have been included in the given name of the record where appropriate. As such they will appear within a browse or 'given name' search.

Date of death is that of children while in the care of an institution and not as an adult. Additional biographical information has been added where available and appropriate.

The field 'Townland' covers the home location of the child when given, which may be an institution, a house, street or parish and is accompanied by that townland's county location.

Fig. 5.4: Editorial notes.

Definition of School Types

Public schools are those schools where children were specifically instructed in groups with other children and where parents paid set annual or quarterly fees.

Private education is that obtained in the home through a tutor or governess or single instructor.

Pay Schools also known as *Hedge Schools* or *Popish Schools* are those schools generally conducted in contravention of the Penal Laws and acting independently of government and the Established Church authorities.

Parish schools are those established under the reign of Henry VIII. Diocesan and Free schools are those schools established under the reign of Queen Elizabeth.

Royal Schools are those established by Charter of the Stuart monarchy.

Charter Schools are those schools established from 1733 by a Charter of George II by The Incorporated Society for Erecting English Protestant Schools in the Kingdom of Ireland.

Erasmus Smith Schools are those established under the terms of the bequest of the London merchant Erasmus Smith from 1657 by the Erasmus Smith Trust.

Charity schools are those promoted by Rev. Edward Nicholson and Rev. John Richardson and established from 1704 throughout the country by individuals and groups.

French schools were established in Ireland both as small public and charity schools by the Huguenot refugees in Ireland. A French or continental education was also obtained by those children sent in contravention of the Penal Laws abroad for their education.

Quaker schools are those established by The Society of Friends.

A rudimentary education was provided by the governors of the Workhouses at Dublin and Cork but by 1800 a more formal curriculum had been adopted.

Fig. 5.5: Definition of school type.

Users may then view the collection by clicking as required on the drop down menu of ‘List of children’; ‘Register of children’; ‘Timeline of admissions’ and ‘Map of schools and institutions’.



Fig. 5.6: Website navigation menu.

A number of criteria apply in any evaluation of a website. These include authority and accuracy, purpose and content, currency, design organisation and ease of use.⁸⁰ It was possible, thanks to the DHO, to secure a reputable host and domain giving academic credibility to these three digital projects. The purpose of the site is clarified in the introduction and the content is easy to access and navigate. It is hoped that these websites can and will be modified, revised, and updated as the software becomes more proficient and if additional funding is made available at a future date.

With regard to design, there are some navigational issues, which were briefly outlined in the preceding methodology but are dealt with more specifically here. The initial intention was to provide a large enough dataset to enable a coherent statistical analysis but EXHIBIT limits the number of entries it can absorb and as a result the data set was limited to 646 entries. Moreover, the data set is not a fully representative sample of Irish children in eighteenth-century schools and institutions. Given that eighteenth-century personal information is sparse, particularly for peasant and pauper

⁸⁰ <http://www.lib.umd.edu/guides/evaluate.html> [accessed 15 Jan. 2011].

children, the browseable nature of the dataset by ‘surname’, ‘institution’, ‘sex’, and country should prove useful to genealogists and family historians.

The ‘Timeline of admissions’ and the ‘Map of schools’ present the most difficulties, not only from a user’s point of view, but also the web developers. The ‘Timeline of admissions’ is confusing in that there are two levels within it, each functioning at different speeds. As a result the split view is not user friendly but it does serve a specific function – to plot children’s locations over time. As entries are plotted according to a date within a school or institution, the fact that forty-three results out of 646 cannot be plotted highlights the limitations of eighteenth-century data. The ‘pop-up bubble’ is useful as an eliminator in a person search by location.

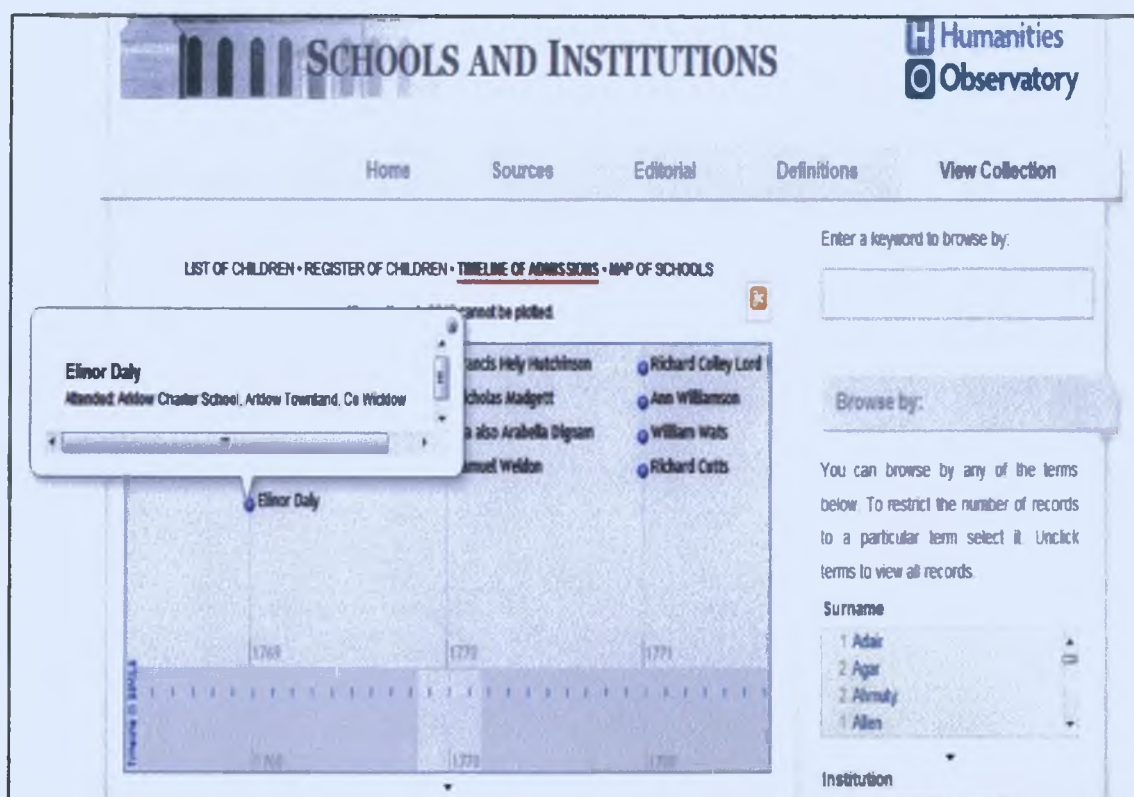


Fig. 5.7: Individual data point.

But the fact that all the names only appear when the timeline box is dragged down is not user friendly and the opportunity to do so could be easily missed.

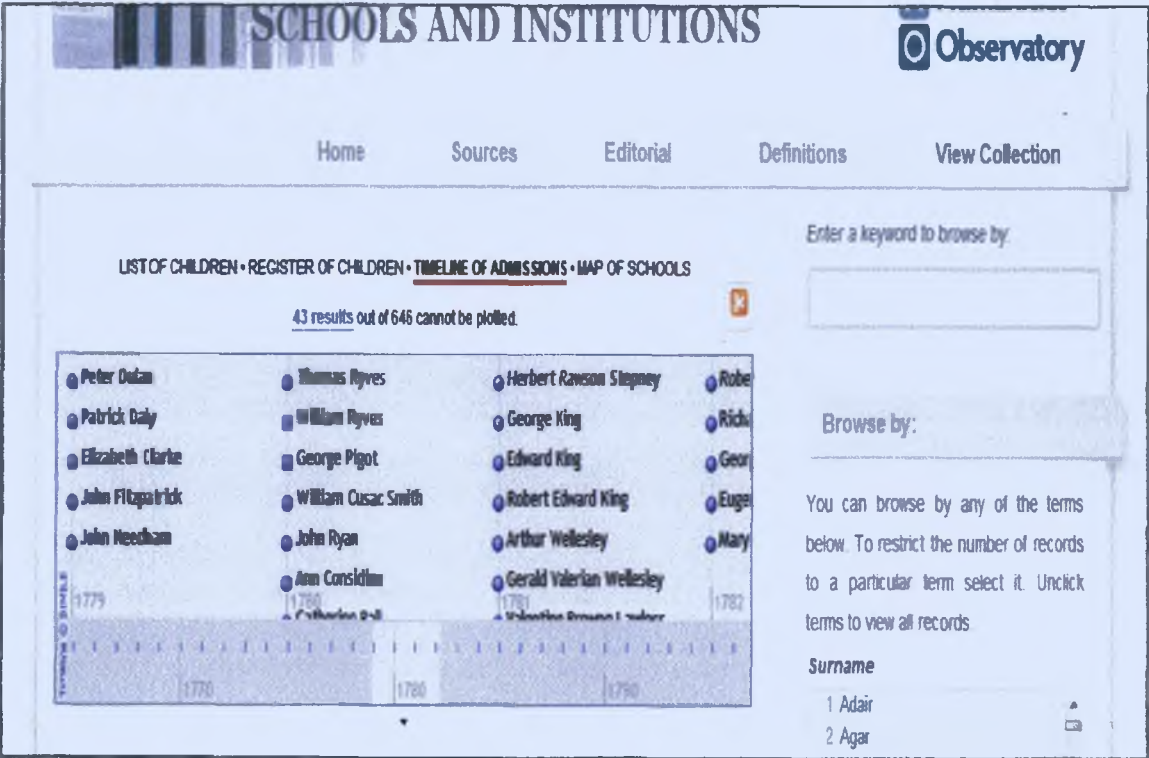


Fig 5.8: Timeline of admissions.

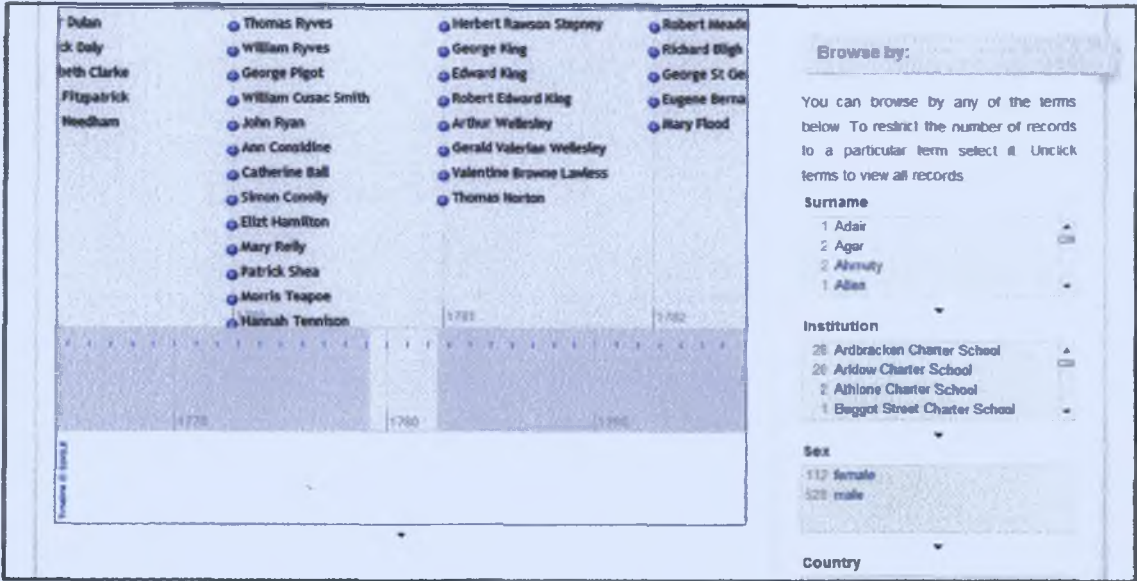


Fig. 5.9: Timeline of admissions.

The ‘Map of schools’ proves useful in identifying a particular child’s location once their record has been chosen. But because of the number of location entries the ‘zoomed out’ view is confusing.

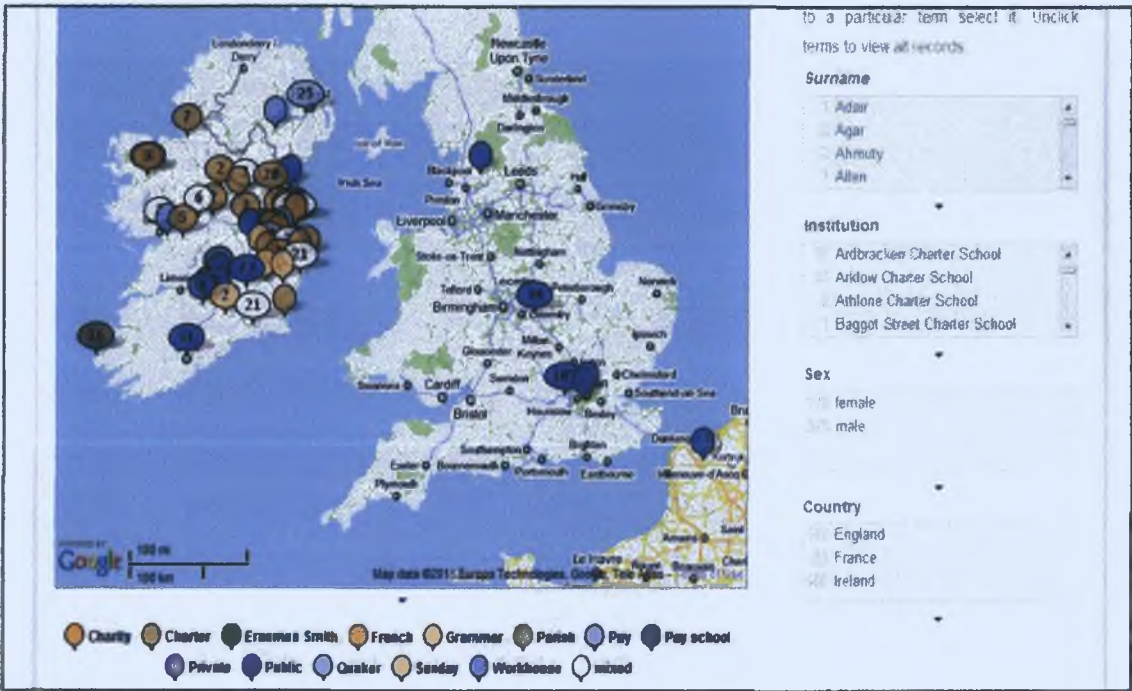


Fig. 5.10: School and institution location by map.

Moreover, the colours in the legend are not distinctive enough to visually distinguish the type of schools. Given extra resources this issue could be resolved. Where there are a large number of entries in a particular school or institution, the ‘pop-up bubbles’ are not big enough to incorporate all the names. The static size of the bubbles is a limitation of EXHIBIT and was not fully realised at the outset of the project. This issue may possibly be corrected by inserting a scroll bar at the side of the bubble, but this would require a professional adjudication and a particular software expertise to correct.

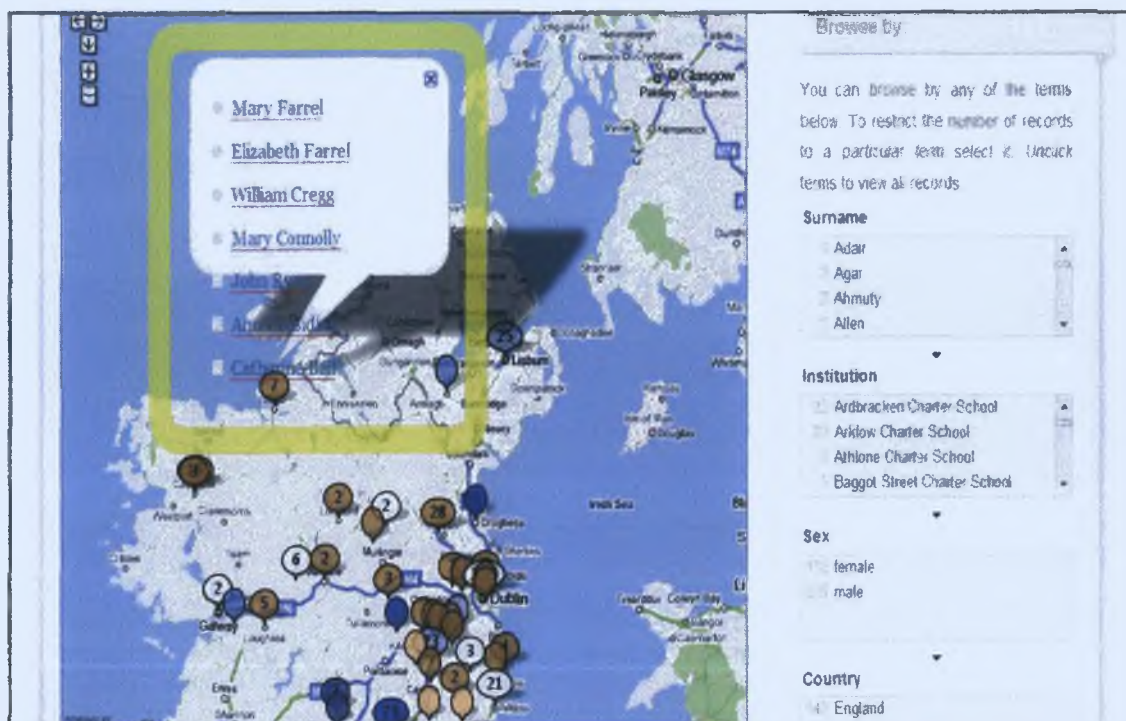


Fig. 5.11: Admission pop up bubble.

SECTION 6

EVALUATION OF THE DIGITAL HUMANITIES PHD PROGRAMME

The concept of a digital humanities PhD is innovative and exciting, and it has been a privilege to be a part of this initiative supported by SPD and An Foras Feasa, a pioneering body in this field. However, the fact that such a structured PhD programme is by its nature ground-breaking has also led to certain difficulties for all parties involved.

Since in this instance the conferring of a PhD is contingent on the production of a digital component, by default this group of students absorbed an added workload yet the work is to be completed within the normal time frame. The challenges were numerous, among them, the identification of a suitable digital project; the acquisition of technical skills; the division of labour within a collaborative study; the lack of digital humanities PhD role models, and the absence of a template for a digital project of this nature within a doctoral programme.

For the students, the prescribed three-year time frame proved exceptionally demanding in integrating the digital project into the normal humanities PhD framework. In particular, the immediate requirement to gain a skills set suited to the task proved daunting, particularly for those students without prior knowledge or experience in what was a new area of study and technological development. While seminars were provided it was not possible, given the various levels of technical knowledge within the group to cater adequately to individual needs. Future students would benefit from a fourth year of support in order to complete digital projects to a higher standard, or perhaps digital studies would be better suited to post-doctoral work on completed humanities doctoral material.

Given that digital humanities are at the cutting edge of global research, questions also arise about the preparedness of an Irish university to develop digital humanities programmes since the security of these three university funded projects when completed has not been fully addressed at administrative level. Copyright issues, licensing, intellectual property, hosting and maintenance of the finished digital humanities web projects are all of particular concern and require a re-interpretation of traditional university practices and procedures.

Digital humanities copyright issues however differ from the sciences in that it is not about how one manages the data or what is done with it, 'but what you are allowed to do with it'⁸¹ without being mired in copyright law or breaches of confidentiality. This is particularly relevant to film, photography and twentieth-century literature and discussion abounds on how to 'reconcile the financial interests of rights holders with the scholarly interests of researchers'.⁸² This was a particular consideration in the presentation of the Eilís Dillon project. It is unfortunately, still an issue awaiting clarification.

Even though they are supported and funded by SPD, there is no facility for hosting these projects on the SPD web site. During the development process they were initially hosted on the DHO development site and while the DHO Discovery site have agreed to be the final host site, the longevity of the DHO as a body cannot be guaranteed and as a result the life of these projects may similarly be curtailed.

Even though in this case the award of a PhD is contingent on the production of a digital element relevant to the written thesis, academic council make no provision

⁸¹ Lesk, *From data to wisdom*.

⁸² Ibid.

for the inclusion of such a project within a 'normal' PhD word count. It was therefore agreed that the most appropriate solution was to submit the digital project as an appendix to the whole contained in a separate volume. Similarly, there were few previously conferred digital humanities PhD theses from which to draw guidance or to examine the optimal presentation of a digital humanities methodology write-up. The students were also acutely aware of their role in pioneering a new form of PhD research and as a result carried a heavier burden of stress than normally applies.

CONCLUSION

The completion of a successful structured digital humanities PhD programme requires considerable commitment from students, their academic communities and supporting bodies, which involves the allocation of appropriate resources both financial and technological. But most importantly, it demands an enthusiastic and positive attitude on the part of academics and, a recognition that digital humanities is at the forefront of scholarly research and innovation.

The bringing to fruition of the three digital projects that were undertaken as part of this innovative PhD programme was a significant challenge overall considering the relative lack of experience and expertise of the students involved. Furthermore, time management was crucial given the large amount of data to be gathered initially and later collated while still operating within the parameters of a normal PhD programme. Although the website, *Irish children in 18th century schools and institutions* was not wholly successful, it is illustrative of the possibilities digital technologies can offer towards the compilation of a quantitative analysis of eighteenth-century historical records. For example, by extracting the information contained in the extant Charter school pupil registers, a comprehensive quantitative and qualitative analysis may be performed, indicating children's initial and subsequent locations, children's mortality rates over time, and the gendered aspects of the charter school system.

Commenting on the fact that representational technologies like XML, TEI, databases and digital visualisation tools are often viewed as segregated from the study

of humanities, Flanders remarks that humanities scholarship ‘has historically understood this separateness as indicating an ancillary role – that of the handmaiden, the good servant/poor master – in which humanities insight masters and subsumes what these technologies can offer’.⁸³ This, in her view, can lead to an ‘unease’⁸⁴ between the two communities, but one which can prove productive, in that it challenges pre-conceptions, questions traditional notions of learning and leads to meaningful interdisciplinary engagement. This sense of unease is positive, involving ‘the same oscillating, dialectical pulsation that is the scholarly mind at work.’⁸⁵ She states that ‘while digital tools add a challenge and give us a new set of terms – like a new planet in the system, they change the vectors of all the other things we have in our universe.’ But the questions continue as they always have, and she urges us to judge the state of progress in the digital humanities by asking: ‘does it make us think? Does it make us keep thinking?’⁸⁶ These continue to be at the heart of successful research within all disciplines old and new.

⁸³ Flanders, ‘The productive unease of 21st century digital scholarship’.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Flanders, ‘The productive unease of 21st century digital scholarship’.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

Glossary:

Coding and standardisation	Refers to the process of translating ambiguous source data into standardised codes for data processing.
CSS	Cascading Style Sheets define styles such as borders, margins, font size and so forth for HTML pages.
Free Software	<p>Free, Open Source Software (OSS) and Free Open Source Software (FOSS) are all different.</p> <p>Free relates to a monetary value and can include proprietary software.</p> <p>OSS implies that the source code is available but there may still be a monetary charge for its use.</p> <p>FOSS combines the two criteria of 'Free' and OSS.</p>
GIS	A geographic information system (GIS), geographical information system, or geospatial information system is the system that captures, stores, analyses, manages, and presents data with reference to geographic location data. In the simplest terms, GIS is the merging of cartography, statistical analysis, and database technology and crosses numerous disciplines.
HTML	Hyper Text Mark-up Language, the language used to write and create web pages.
Interface design	The design of the system or interface with which a user has direct contact, and with which they interact to conduct activities.
Libre	A term used by free software advocates to talk about software freedom, not in terms of cost, but in terms of what you can do with it such as read the source code, modify it and/or redistribute it.
namespace	Namespaces are collections of XML elements that belong to some common vocabulary. All TEI elements belong to the TEI namespace.
ODD	One document does it all: document describing a TEI schema.
Open Standards	An open standard is a standard for data or file format that is approved by a standards body, documented, and anyone can adopt without cost. Most FOSS software uses open standards, most proprietary software does not.
Proprietary software	Software that is a closed source. Users cannot see the source code, copy the software, or use it in any way other than specified by the strict licensing provided by the vendor.

Resource sharing	Provision of data on a peer-to-peer network or similar means, allowing users to share information and content and conduct research collaboratively.
Source Code	The instructions, written in a form readable and understandable by programmers that direct how an application should run. When changes or bug fixes are made to an application, these changes must be made in the source code. After the source code is complete, most applications are compiled into a binary form. A computer can read the binary form of an application more quickly and easily. However it is impossible to understand or modify an application in binary form if you do not have access to the original source code that created it.
Standardisation	Determines and promulgates criteria to which objects or actions are expected to conform.
TEI	Text Encoding Initiative.
URL	Uniform Resource Locator. An internet address. A URL need not be absolute but can also be relative to the current address such as 'image/page5.jpg'
Version numbering	All software that is released to the public is assigned a version number, which helps to keep track of the status of that software, and allows users to know whether it is the most up to date.
XML	Extensible Mark-up Language. Used within the TEI as a generic syntax for encoding properties, structural and others, of texts. The TEI encoding scheme is applied using XML, but non-textual data structures can also be expressed using XML.
XML Schema	A schema describes the elements and attributes that can occur in an XML document. A schema is necessary for XML validation. The TEI uses three schema languages DTD, XSD (also known as W3C Schema) and Relax NG.
XSLT	Extensible Stylesheet Language – Transformations. Language that is used to define transformations from XML documents into new XML documents, HTML documents, or plain text documents.

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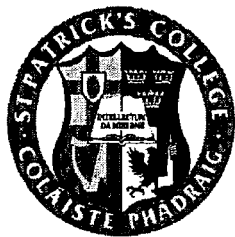
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<http://simile.mit.edu/wiki/Exhibit>
http://simile.mit.edu/wiki/ExhibitFor_Authors
<http://webdevstudios.com/support/faq/why-use-open-source-software/>
<http://www.amazon.com/Search-Inside-Book-Books/b?ie=UTF8&node=10197021>
<http://www.archive.org/details/millionbooks>
http://www.arts-humanities.net/user_tags/coding_standardisation
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Tel./Fax.: 00353 1 884 2078
Mobile: 00353 86 854 9626
Email: Mary.Thompson@spd.dcu.ie
25 August 2010

Dear Gaye

In response to your request for clarification on license agreements in relation to the website that forms part of the digitized element of your PhD study, I outline some recommendations below, but leave the ultimate decision to yourself.

Of the choices available to you, I suggest that you consider option 1, Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 3.0 (cc-by-sa) if you do not intend to use your material commercially, in a book, or in a subscription website. After discussion with the DHO and SPD library and after referring the matter to the IT staff, we had considered recommending another option, Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike (cc-by-nc-sa)—and recommend that you study this option carefully also—but now believe that 'I' may be appropriate although it does allow for commercial use.

I recommend you have a look at the 4C Initiative web page at http://4cinitiative.com/?page_id=39. On this there is a lecture given by Ahrash Bissell in which he explains the logic behind decision-making, entitled Session 2: Copyright for Educational Digital Content & Creative Commons (Ahrash Bissell). Bissell notes that there has been a good deal of unnecessary use of the 'Non-Commercial' (NC) licence within education, and that NC is for people who think that they themselves will make a commercial product (eg. a book or subscription website) from their material and wish to prevent rival products. He goes on to say that where the creators do not intend to use their material commercially, NC is probably not necessary. Any commercial users would have to attribute your (freely available) original material, so presumably their product would have to have some kind of added value from the original. He argues that you may not wish to prevent such work - eg. a book which uses your research (and attributes it to you).

As you know, it is important for your status as a scholar that your work be cited by other scholars. Therefore you want to encourage any means that facilitates this and option 1 is probably most effective.

There is no single solution to issues such as these: the choice depends on the aspects I have mentioned already above, *inter alia*. Ultimately, the decision is yours. If you wish to discuss the matter further, please contact Liam O'Dwyer in the library who has expertise in this area and will help you tease out the implications of the various options open to you.

I recommend that you document the process of seeking permission and the response (ie, this letter) as part of your methodology.

As discussed, I will send a version of this letter to the other An Foras Feasa doctoral fellows with a recommendation that they also acknowledge you in their methodology.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of further assistance.

Yours sincerely



Mary Shine Thompson PhD
Dean of Research and Humanities
An Déan Taighde agus Léinn Dhaonna
St Patrick's College
Drumcondra