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ROUGH-HEADED URCHINS AND BONNETLESS GIRLS

A Study of Irish Childhood in Derby in the
Mid-Nineteenth Century

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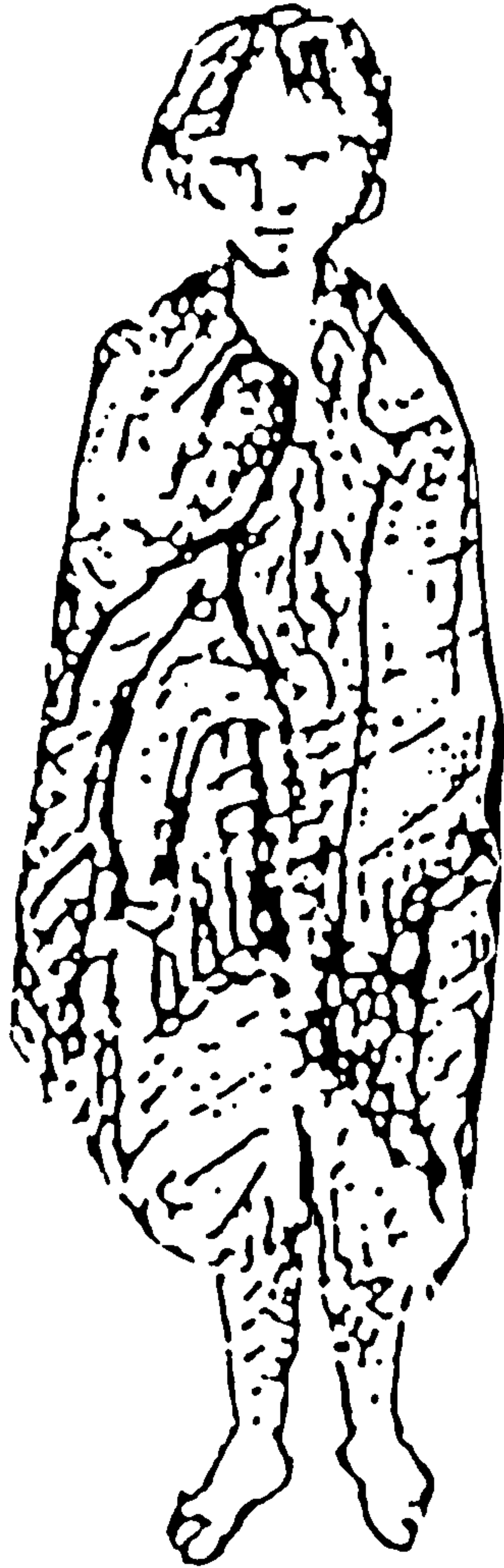
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*Irish girl selling stockings in Connemara: detail from illustration on page 82
Sketches in Connemara, 1845.*

As you walk down 'the lane', and peep through the narrow openings between the houses, the place seems like a huge peep-show, with dark holes of gateways to look through, while the court within appears bright with the daylight; and down it are seen rough-headed urchins running with their feet bare through the puddles, and bonnetless girls, huddled in shawls, lolling against the door-posts.

Henry Mayhew, 1985:57

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A view from the meadows by Henry Burn, *The Silk Mill, St. Peter's Street, The Corn Market, Irongate*, illustrations from the Penny Magazine and the advertisement for *Manders' Menagerie*.

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ABSTRACT

This inter-disciplinary study explores the entry into childhood made by migrant Irish children who lived in the urban, industrialised environment of Derby in the English Midlands between 1830 and 1870. It shows how these children were inserted into an area of childhood experience as they moved between the town's factories, mills, schools and the workhouse, entering a psychological and social state of childhood that was available for the children of the poor in mid-nineteenth century Britain.

The study argues that Irish children's moves into childhood were largely accomplished through their association with the Roman Catholic church. In particular, they were encouraged to enter an experience of childhood through the work of the Sisters of Mercy, who played a key role in enabling them to make the transformation from 'worker' to 'child'. An exploration of schooled literacy will demonstrate that certain reading texts Irish children met in school took them into a world of childhood that opened up learning possibilities for them.

The study argues that the particular childhood experience under review needs to be inserted into the cultural debate about childhood; a debate which at present defines working-class childhood in *general* terms, largely as a single a-cultural state. Yet as migrants, Irish children experienced cultural shift and change, and were possibly bilingual. Their distinctive physical features, their dress, their language, their cultural traditions, and above all their religion, set them apart from local children. The story of these Irish children and their move into childhood is therefore another story to add to the complex of stories about nineteenth-century childhood.

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Note on Abbreviations

- B.P.P. British Parliamentary Papers
- Doctrine A Catechism of Christian Doctrine. London, Catholic Truth Society, 1985 [first published in 1889].
- C.P.S.C. Catholic Poor School Committee
- P.L.R. Poor Law Records. These are the Derby workhouse records, comprising the Minute Book and the Returning Officer's Weekly Returns.
- Poor Inquiry British Parliamentary Papers (B.P.P.) Report on the State of the Irish Poor in Great Britain, 1836. Vol.XXXIV,427.
- R.O.W.R. Returning Officer's Weekly Returns. A Derby workhouse record giving details of applicants' names, ages, addresses, occupations, and relief given to them.
- T.C.S. The Catholic School. Publication of the Catholic Poor School Committee. It appeared between 1848 and 1856, then ceased publication.

PART I

Background to the study

INTRODUCTION: JOURNEYING TOWARDS CHILDHOOD

The subjects of this study are the first and second-generation Irish children who lived in Derby, or passed through the town, between 1830 and 1870. Some emigrated from Ireland to England with their families; others were born in England to Irish parents. It is impossible to know how many Irish children there were altogether, but counts at each census date reveal a child population (of Irish-born and second-generation children) of 198 in 1841; 247 in 1851 and 292 in 1861.

From the old world to the new

This is the story of a journey; or rather, of a series of journeys, both real and symbolic, that were played out in the mid-nineteenth century by labouring Irish children as they left their homeland in Ireland to embark on a new life in Derby in the industrial Midlands of England, between 1830 and 1870. That was one journey, the geographical one. There were others. The wheel turns slowly, taking the children forward through their lives. They are connected to their parents and their homeland at the wheel's hub, centred together as it were, and they turn slowly, together. But though the wheel turns for them all, it has at least four spokes and the children are pulled along them by some powerful yet inevitable force towards the rim, out into a different world; sometimes their parents are by their side, but at other times the children are alone, because they

travel too quickly and their parents cannot keep up with them; or perhaps it is because the parents are excluded from childly things. One spoke leads the children towards a life of industrial work, another into the English form of the Roman Catholic church, and the wisdom of the nuns; yet another guides them into a world of literacy and new ideas, while a fourth leads the paupers into the workhouse.

And always, when the children reach the wheel's rim, they encounter yet another strange world. This they must go to alone, without their parents, just as Robert Browning's children did when they walked from Hamelin into the opening in the mountain, forever separated from the adult world:

When, lo, as they reached the mountain-side,
A wondrous portal opened wide,
As if a cavern was suddenly hollowed;
And the Piper advanced and the children followed,
And when all were in to the very last,
The door in the mountain-side shut fast (Browning, c.1840 -1850)

I am talking about a journey into the world of childhood, a social and psychological space that was increasingly available to the children of the labouring poor as the century progressed. Irish children who had been, in Dymphna McLoughlin's terminology, 'lesser workers' or 'minor wage earners' in Ireland (1988:150) climbed over the wheel's rim and emerged as 'children.' In Structure of American Life W.L. Warner wrote: 'the assimilative forces which the dominant society exerts upon the ethnic groups are exerted on the child, and he rather than the parent, becomes the transmitting agent of social change' (1952:126). I have kept these words in mind throughout. There were pressures on Irish children to change, to become different from their parents - to be, in effect, 'children' - but in the end it was the children themselves who forged a new culture out of what

was offered to them when they came to Derby; they were complicit in the process of constructing a form of working-class childhood.

Nineteenth-century visions of childhood will be the subject of Chapter 3; but in this introduction I want to suggest that Irish children will move over the edge of the wheel's rim into their own physical and psychological *space*, and into their own *time-world*. They will be segregated from the adult world and placed in groups with people of their own age, superintended by a small number of adults. In these groups they will be blessed, educated, amused, admonished, or praised by adults. The space they occupy, symbolised as a Romanticised 'garden of childhood' can be, variously, classrooms, reading primers, children's tea parties, children's masses, or even institutionalised punishments. It can be other things too, and these will emerge as the story unfolds. Children who are workers will slowly be removed from the workplace into a school. The successful ones will gradually learn to construct themselves as children, to play the role of a child, appearing innocent and happy, appreciative and educated, clean and tidy. They will know they are no longer responsible for earning a wage, and helping their family to survive financially.

Children's other world is a *time-world*. There are several intertwining themes here. First, there is the marking of biological time through which a child develops physically into an adult. Secondly, there is the ordered and compartmentalised time of schooling, work or amusement. Thirdly, there is the time which encapsulates what Alison James and Alan Prout call the 'highly complex and engineered trajectory towards adulthood' (1990:226). This is the childhood time that is in a state of preparation for the adult the child will become. It is a time of

waiting - waiting to be grown up - and of learning that there is a time to be a child.

My own journey through this interdisciplinary study has been to discover Irish children's journey into that world of childhood; a childhood located at a particular period in time, in a particular culture. The problem has been to understand how accepted definitions of 'childhood' - discussed in Chapter 3 - can be matched against real Irish children's lives, and to ask how these Irish children, who after all had their own personal and cultural histories, were inserted into the idea of childhood. This has been my central research question. 'When we draw a social distinction between an infant and an adult the boundary is artificial', Edmund Leach tells us, and each individual child asks 'What am I?' and 'Where is the boundary of myself?' (Leach, 1976:62). Irish children increased their own boundaries when they stepped out over the wheel's rim and discovered they had a childhood. I have tried to understand what it was they learnt in the world of childhood that they could not have discovered if they had remained in rural Ireland, tilling the unyielding soil, or carrying heavy loads of turf, their whole family working as one.

And just as they moved through a world of institutions towards this new space, the world of childhood moved closer to them. The host population changed and adjusted to meet many of their perceived needs, in what John Jackson calls 'a complex situation of interchange and inter-relationship' (1963:162). In a subtle system of negotiation Irish immigrant children became part of British society, and their presence changed the behaviour of different sets of people who encountered them - government officials, priests and nuns, factory managers, school teachers - who all made new decisions and adjusted their practices to meet the needs of this new immigrant group.

I shall argue that Irish children were inserted into the idea of childhood. The provision of a childhood for the children of the wealthy had long been understood and accepted, but the extension of childhood to the children of the poor was a relatively new idea. Agitation from the government, the churches, and from liberal reformers, ensured that factory children were gradually moved out of a world of labour into their own sphere, and Irish children were swept along with this reforming zeal.

The Irish-born children in this study belonged to a migrant group. But what does that really mean? The stark facts of migration are known: when people leave their country of birth, possibly to escape persecution, poverty, war or famine, they usually do so in order to secure a better future for themselves and their children. Perhaps the adults understand that their children will enter a world of 'childhood', one that is already in place in the new country, and will inevitably take their children away from them.

Immigrants who arrive in a new country and intend to stay there immediately begin the process of adaptation, adjusting to the discontinuity of their former lives, and living at the interface between the old life and the new, in an environment that will have a shaping influence on their lives. For some - the young, perhaps, or the eager - adaptation is not difficult; if they need to learn a new language, they do it quickly, and they adopt a new set of customs and work habits with ease. Others find the process of assimilation more difficult, but nonetheless find themselves gradually absorbed into new modes of living they feel relatively comfortable with. And still others, perhaps those who are older or perplexed by rapid change, protect their language and their identity.

Consciously or otherwise they resist attempts to assimilate and strive for continuity of familiar culture and tradition. Many continue to meet together to celebrate sacred observances or family events and to share music or stories that bind them together as a community.

What I have just described is part of an experience of migration and assimilation that will be familiar to some, and is probably general enough to provide a starting point for thinking about the processes of migration that were experienced by Irish children in the last century. But being general, this kind of description obscures the way separate groups of immigrants adapt to life in a new country, since they each bring with them their own particular culture and their own memories. More significantly, it can tell us nothing about the way *individual* Irish boys and girls adapted and changed as they learnt to live in a new country over one hundred and fifty years ago. I have therefore been conscious of the need to draw out small biographies of Irish children at relevant points in this study, and to insert their personal histories into the text, to show the direction of their lives and to discuss some of their problems.

Nineteenth-century Irish children's sense of the past in Ireland, and their vision of the future in Derby, was necessarily different from that of their parents, who grew up and lived part of their adult lives in a rural context. These children moved long distances - often across the breadth of Ireland - and once in Derby they had no direct access to the place they had left behind. All they could do was to carry it within them, as part of their personal history, in what Carolyn Steedman has described as the 'self within, created by the laying down and accretion of our own childhood experiences, our own history, in a place inside' (Steedman, 1995:12). I have tried to recreate the sense of trauma caused by the

dislocation of those early years spent in rural Ireland, and the sense of being re-born as children into urban English life. Children's feelings about that abrupt physical and psychological shift are of course impossible to examine because their individual and subjective experiences went unrecorded. Nevertheless, I have used what evidence I have to speculate on the emotions aroused by travelling from one world to another. A social historian would not perhaps attempt to construct the mind-world of a child who after all is invisible and silent, because she would feel that there was no evidence that allowed her to do so. But providing as I do, a study of childhood, I believe I am able to enter the territory of the mind and the emotions, and at times throughout this study I have speculated, often with the help of literature, on the thoughts and feelings of individual children.

Although the material in this study belongs to the historical past, I have written not a history, but what is essentially a study of *childhood*, set within the life histories of migrant Irish children who happened to live over a century ago and encountered new mid-nineteenth century conditions of urban industrial living. In some ways this study is therefore similar to twentieth-century accounts of childhood, particularly those whose subjects moved from rural to urban environments, and sometimes crossed countries and continents. Two modern studies come to mind: both are of Asian communities in Britain and each discusses the ways adults and children in those communities adapted to new environments, in a new language. The main differences between my account of mid-nineteenth century Irish immigrant children and these studies of Asian communities, is that my study takes a historical situation as its focus and specifically studies a move towards childhood. In Sikh Children in Britain (1974) Alan G. James explored the lives of Sikh families whose children he taught in Huddersfield. He travelled out to meet their relations in the Punjab, and explored how social traditions of Punjabi

villages were maintained in Sikh households in Huddersfield. Similarly, and more recently, the authors of Hindu Children in Britain examined many of the distinctive cultural experiences of British-born Hindu children living in Coventry, and discussed major factors that contribute to the processes of cultural transmission, through what the authors describe as an 'ethnographic snapshot' of the experiences of children aged between eight and thirteen (Jackson and Nesbitt, 1993:2).

Each of these two modern accounts of Asian communities traces the pattern of children's lives, telling their stories and connecting individual lives to their sense of belonging to a particular culture, in much the same way as I have tried to do in this study. Collectively, they are accounts of family life, housing and the use of space within the home, the upbringing of children, the rituals of eating, the uses of dress and language, the significance of religious worship, education and work, and the wider social contacts that children inevitably make in a new environment with different kinds of opportunities. They do not document, as I have done, the move into a world of childhood, and therefore in this respect have not been a 'model' for me to follow.

One of my tasks has been to record the existence of Irish children in Derby and to show how they learnt to become adults, thus giving them a place within the literature of childhood - a literature which at present gives a predominately English version of childhood experience. Though Irish children contributed to the family economy and the wider economy of the country, often living lives of hardship and poverty, there seems to be an implicit understanding in most modern accounts that childhood is a single a-cultural state, and hence there is no sense of children as travellers, and no discussion of the process of migration and

cultural change which migrant children experienced. The notion that each culture has its own characteristics, its own dignity, is not apparent in the writing.

Inevitably, I have had to draw on a large amount of historical material to research and write this study. Indeed, the presentation of this evidence has been a problem. The task of collection was arduous, yet fulfilling, and I needed reserves of self-discipline to 'background' much of the fascinating research material I uncovered, and to keep my central research question in mind. I have used the historical evidence to explain events in Irish children's lives in relation to their cultural, historical and social contexts, embedding it within the narrative whenever possible, and producing figures in table form where appropriate. The account, though, should be read primarily as a study of a *particular experience of childhood*, one in which Irish children, in the process of cultural change and adaptation, were significantly affected by migration and movement.

I have borne in mind throughout the social and cultural development of Irish children who had different origins; both the Irish-born and those who were *not* born in Ireland (mostly Derby-born, but sometimes born in other British towns and cities, and occasionally overseas - America, Ceylon, Malta, particularly when their father was in the armed forces). Most second-generation children were born into an urban society, though perhaps they were still connected to a homeland they had never seen. M.L. Hansen believes that the children of immigrants are 'in a most uncomfortable position' because of what he calls their 'strange dualism.' 'Their problem,' he writes, lies in understanding how to 'inhabit two worlds at the same time' - the world of their parents, and the world of industrial and urban living (Hansen, 1938:6-7). But if, as Hansen suggests, the processes of adjustment and assimilation were difficult for second-generation children, how much more

complex were they for those who were actually born in Ireland? Family tensions were inevitable. Bishop Scott, Roman Catholic bishop of Glasgow, recalled 'several instances of parents returning to Ireland in their old age from a desire of being buried at home, and taking with them their children reared in this country.' But the grown-up children could not settle in Ireland because 'they disliked the habits and customs' and soon returned to Scotland from where 'they sent part of their earnings to support their aged parents'(Poor Inquiry,1836:445). The conflict remains unsolved for modern children. Maude Casey, in her autobiographical novel Over The Water (1990), writes movingly of her Irish-born mother's need to go 'home' each year, taking the family with her. The daughter watches as her mother's 'wild excitement at going home' builds 'to a frenzy' and she wonders why her mother 'should feel so foreign here, when she's been here for years and Ireland is so near' (1990:4).

Perhaps the Irish-born who lived in England one hundred and fifty years ago also felt 'foreign'. There seems little doubt that they stood out as a group, both culturally and physically, as indeed they do today. Donall MacAmhlaigh, who described himself as an Irish 'exile' in the 1950s, said that 'one thing (he) noticed on coming here - that you'd know an Irish person easier than anyone else.' Their identifying features, he said, were their 'curly black hair and high reddish cheek-bones,' though he added that 'even without these traits you can pick them out easily' (1964:20). Contemporary accounts suggest that the appearance of the Irish in Britain was quite startling: their ethnicity, their dress and their language all set them apart from the native working classes. Both Henry Mayhew and Frederic Engels wrote about the distinguishing characteristics of the Irish poor in England. In 1845 Engels talked of the 'Celtic faces which one recognises at the first glance as different from the Saxon physiognomy of the native' (Engels,

1993:102) while Mayhew described the lifestyle, dress and appearance of Irish girls and women he encountered in the 1840s living in the 'poorer districts of London':

Every court entrance has its little group of girls and women, lolling listlessly against the sides, with their heads uncovered, and their luxuriant hair fiery as oakum. It is peculiar with the Irish women that - after having been accustomed to their hoods - they seldom wear bonnets, unless on a long journey. Nearly all of them, too, have a thick plaid shawl, which they keep on all the day through, with their hands covered under it (1985:57-58 - first published 1849-1850).

Testimony of this kind calls into question Steve Fielding's discussion about the integration of the Irish in Manchester in the nineteenth century. He compared their experiences with those of immigrant black peoples, and argued that the process of assimilation was easier for the Irish since they could 'escape any unpleasant consequences of birth by changing their names or accents and by abandoning their faith.' He added that 'for those merely of Irish descent the escape route would have been more clear' (1988:16). I am not convinced about this. It is too easy to suggest that the Irish could conceal their nationality (even if they had wanted to) beneath an assumed persona, and thus be assimilated into English culture without difficulty, avoiding prejudicial treatment by abandoning not only their religion but their accent and their names. Fielding appears to deny cultural attributes that are not easily shed, and his statement takes no account of inherited Celtic features. Those who did choose to abandon 'unpleasant consequences of birth' did so at a price, because they lost something of their past.

The Victorian photographer John Gregory Crace photographed two Irish couples in the 1850s. His picture on page 25 shows them standing side

by side, the women wearing cloaks with hoods, just as Mayhew describes. One has her hood drawn up over the back of her hair, and the other is bare-headed. The men appear rugged and unkempt and perhaps they were used to being stared at by the English. Certainly, breeches had not been part of men's everyday dress in England since the Battle of Waterloo in 1815 (Laver,1929:12). The men are dressed like the harvesters that John Denvir watched getting off the boats in Liverpool in the 1830s and 1840s:

The majority were from Connaught. They generally landed at the Clarence Dock, Liverpool, a wiry, hardy-looking lot, with frieze coats, corduroy breeches, clean white shirts with high collars, and blackthorn sticks. I have seen them filling the breadth of Prescott Street, as they left the town, marching up like an army on foot to the various parts of England they were bound for. This was before special cheap trains were run for harvestmen (1910:35)

Possibly the men in Crace's photograph were harvesters, newly-arrived with their wives - and perhaps their children were there too, somewhere in the background. According to Lionel Rose, Irish men often came over from Ireland first, and their wives and children followed separately, begging their way across England to the farms where the menfolk were working, and then begging around nearby towns and villages until it was time to return home (Rose,1988:7). Some of the women and children found their way to lodging-houses, while those who were destitute presented themselves at the workhouse because their men had 'gone harvesting.' I shall be investigating some of the children of these homeless Irish women and suggesting how a framework of childhood was placed over their lives.



Rural Irish couples, photographed by John Gregory Crace: c. 1850

These harvesters and their children are the same rural Irish who Roger Swift and Sheridan Gilley describe as standing out 'from the host population by poverty, nationality, race and religion' (1985:1). Subsequent discussion will show that a proportion of Irish migrants spoke only Irish, and I believe that some of the children in this study from the western Irish counties were native Irish speakers. This was yet another major reason why they might have formed a distinct group among the host population. The language experiences of bilingual Irish children living in Derby in the mid-nineteenth century will form part of later discussion.

I have had a personal as well as an academic interest in carrying out this study. A search for my own origins and family identity initially uncovered a population of Irish children in Derby. My former experience as a primary school teacher gave me insights into children's learning and an interest in their educational, social and cultural development which I wanted to explore in a new context. This study enabled me to bring both these interests together. My desire to learn about the Irish in Derby arose initially because my paternal great-grandmother, Mary Holmes (formerly Tracey) was one of the Irish-born people who settled in Derby as a young woman during the 1850s or early 1860s. She worked as a servant in a town house in Derby before marrying a local man, a widower and a Protestant, who already had a child from a first marriage. They were married in 1863 in the Roman Catholic church of St. Mary's in Derby after receiving special dispensation from the Bishop. They had four sons. Mary died in the 1870s and was buried in Roscommon Town, Co. Roscommon, Ireland. Like many Irish who regarded themselves as living in exile, she wanted her body to be returned to Ireland for burial.

My academic interest in the study of childhood has its roots in my own history as a teacher in Coventry primary schools in the twenty or so years between 1968 and 1989, when I had an opportunity of observing children's learning experiences and reflecting on their uses of language and literacy in the classroom. My interest became sharply focused when I researched the lives of five pre-school children and their families in Coventry, in order to find out more about the social and cultural significance of their literacy practices at home and at school (Minns,1990). Three of these children were second-generation immigrants whose parents came from the West Indies and the Indian sub-continent, and two of the children were bilingual learners whose home language was Punjabi. Working with their families gave me insights into the ways the children interpreted their lives within the culture of their homes and religious communities and, at the same time, learned to become literate inside a school community that offered them a different set of experiences from those of their home. I have used my knowledge of modern children's language and literacy, and their bilingual experience, to discuss Irish children's learning in these areas, in both the Roman Catholic schools and the workhouse school where they were taught. This study is therefore a contribution towards our knowledge of nineteenth-century literacy practices and to the study of bilingualism in the last century.

The Irish population in Derby

The Baptismal Records for the Old Catholic Chapel reveal a small but steadily increasing Irish population in Derby from 1814 onwards (Appendix 1, page 323).

The census returns for Derby for the years 1841, 1851 and 1861 show an Irish population which formed a tiny minority in the town's five parishes. Indeed, the small percentages of Irish-born among the total population of Derby might at first sight appear to be an insignificant number on which to base an entire study, particularly when the statistically-small number of children becomes the main focus. If numbers of people alone are important, then this is undoubtedly true, but the Irish in Derby merit attention because their experiences showed them to be culturally different from the English labouring poor. They were also perhaps representative of similar populations in towns like Stafford where small numbers of Irish people lived. The *Irish-born* population in Derby grew steadily over the twenty-year period between 1841 and 1861, though the percentage stays around 2%, and even drops slightly by 1861:

<u>Year</u>	<u>No. of Irish-born</u>	<u>Total population</u>	<u>%</u>
1841	634	35,902	2.0%
1851	983	44,582	2.2%
1861	1090	52,048	2.1%

Fig. 1: Number of Irish-born people in the five parishes in the centre of Derby in 1841, 1851 and 1861, compared with the total population of the same five parishes (Source: Census data for Derby, 1841, 1851 and 1861).

The sharp rise in the number of Irish-born people in Derby between 1841 to 1851 (over 300 people) is likely to have been a direct result of their decision to leave Ireland during the famine years, and to travel from Liverpool to Derby where

family and friends were prepared to offer a hand of welcome, and where the silk mills provided steady employment.

An analysis of the census data (see fig.2 below) shows that almost one quarter of the Irish-born population living in Derby in 1840 and 1850 were children aged between one and fifteen years, though the percentage falls dramatically by 1861:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Total of Irish-born</u>	<u>Irish-born children</u>	<u>2nd-generation children</u>
1841	634	145	53
1851	983	228	19
1861	1090	98	194

Fig.2: number of Irish-born and second-generation Irish children between the ages of 0 and 15 living in Derby in 1841, 1851 and 1861 (Source: Census data for Derby, 1841, 1851, 1861.).

The 266 second-generation children were those born to Irish-born parents, either in Derby or other British towns or cities, and occasionally overseas.

Their numbers increased significantly by 1861, suggesting that they might have been the children of first-generation Irish settlers born in the 1840s. Some Irish-born children had brothers and sisters who were not born in Ireland, while other second-generation children had no Irish-born siblings. The families with children from different origins should be borne in mind throughout, particularly since in 1861 there were twice as many second-generation children compared with those who were Irish-born. Appendix 2 (p.324) shows the number and ages of second-generation children living in Derby at each census date.

Information from the census returns and the Poor Law records shows something of the composition of Irish families in Derby. There were nearly five hundred two-generation families, consisting typically of parents and children. Most of the Irish children who lived in Derby between 1830 and 1870 lived with their families, but a small minority lived in lodgings with non-family members, and a few who were orphaned were given a home in the Convent, brought up by the Sisters of Mercy. A small group made up of pauper children lived in the workhouse.

Appendix 3 (p.325) shows a breakdown of the Irish-born population in Derby by sex and age for the years 1841, 1851 and 1861. These figures, which can only sample the population at each census date, reflect a predominately young group of Irish settlers, particularly in 1841 and 1851, showing an emigration pattern of the young and fit, and a consequent small group of middle-aged and older Irish-born people within the whole Irish population in Derby. The subsequent population imbalance meant that many children grew up without the influence of grandparents and other older family members. There are only nineteen records of older unspecified relations living in Derby, and these people could have been grandparents, aunts or uncles. As a result, many Irish-born children must have grown up without the experience of interacting with grandparents and therefore lost a crucial link with Irish tradition, because older relatives were not there to influence the transmission of cultural heritage.

All but a handful of these Irish families in Derby were poor. Some were paupers, living between the workhouse and overcrowded lodging-houses in the town, and many worked in the silk mills, or as labourers or hawkers; a growing number of

children went to school in Derby. Some died before they reached the age of seventeen, but others lived, worked, and grew up in Derby, raising their own families there. Most were Roman Catholics, and they entered a predominantly Protestant environment which distrusted, and was often violently opposed to, Roman Catholicism. Some families remained in the town for a long period, and their descendants are still there today. The census data reveal that forty-five families lived in Derby between two and twenty years or more, so it would appear that although many people did move on, there was a small stable Irish population (unlike in York, for example, where Frances Finnegan found that the Irish population almost replaced itself at each census year (1982:158-9). The figures shown above cannot of course include the unrecorded numbers of children and parents who passed through Derby between census years, though some of these transient people are listed in the Derby Poor Law records, and will be discussed in later chapters.

Relatively little has been written about the condition of Irish settlers in England in the mid-nineteenth century, even though they formed the oldest and most numerous of all the immigrant groups in Britain during this period (Joyce, 1990:142). This study has been undertaken at a time when settlements of Irish-born people in Britain's smaller towns are beginning to receive attention from historians. John Herson, who studied the Irish in Stafford (with an Irish population of just 496 people in 1851) maintains that 'historians have neglected the Irish in small towns in favour of those in the major cities or industrial areas, and this emphasis (has tended) to oversimplify our picture of Irish immigration' (1989:84). The picture clearly needed complicating. Frances Finnegan's research into the Irish population of York (1982) and David Large's study of the Irish in Bristol (1985) have made important contributions to our knowledge of the Irish in

Britain, though none sets out to be a history of childhood. I hope that my study, like these, will usefully enlarge the picture of Irish immigration in Britain in the mid-nineteenth century, by documenting the settlement of Irish people in a previously little-researched town with a population of Irish. However, this study differs from the others in one respect: its specific focus on Irish children in Derby has allowed investigation into a particular world of childhood; no study of the lives of Irish-born children in Derby has previously been undertaken.

Part I of this study, the first three chapters, provides the background, setting the context for the unfolding story of Irish children's lives in Derby. After the general introduction in this Chapter, Chapter 2 sets out the research methods I used in my search for as realistic a description of these children's lives as I could produce and interpret, and discusses the historical sources which form the basis of my evidence. Chapter 3 gives the historical context necessary for gaining a perspective on the lives of Irish children in Derby. Crucially, it examines representations of childhood that underpinned nineteenth-century thought and discusses important twentieth-century historical texts that take childhood as their theme. The chapter gives a frame in which to place the work of Irish labouring children in Derby, and shows how the growing emphasis on their schooling as the century progressed was part of a general movement towards mass education for poor children.

Part II of this study, Chapters 4 and 5, focuses on the transition of the Irish child from rural Ireland to the industrial Midlands. The first part of Chapter 4 discusses the lives of labouring Irish children in Ireland, exploring their role as workers who did not usually receive a particular experience of childhood, and setting out the reasons for emigration. The second part of the chapter briefly

documents their move to Derby, their housing conditions in the new environment, and the work of parents and other adults. The central purpose of Chapter 5 is to begin to place Irish children in a world of urban childhood; it focuses specifically on five areas: the composition of families, the care and upbringing of children, the workhouse system, language use, and children's aspirations. The chapter argues that Irish children began to be part of a wider community as they met new social situations, and came into contact with different groups of people.

These children lived at a time when the government, and others in authority, were in the process of reviewing their legal and moral obligations to the children of the labouring poor, especially in terms of work and schooling. In Derby the authority figures who had responsibility for employing or educating Irish children - the Roman Catholic church, the Parish Poor Law officials and the factory owners - had their own distinct views about the position of labouring children. The Irish children who came under their control developed a range of perceptions of themselves as workhouse paupers, or as scholars and workers, that reflected the opportunities, or the restrictions, placed upon them, and this discussion will be taken further in Part III.

Part III of the study presents much of the crucial evidence of Irish children's entrance into childhood. It demonstrates that Irish children were at the forefront of change, living and growing in a wider social setting than that of their parents. Chapter 6 argues that the Roman Catholic Church played a key role in the institutionalisation of childhood, particularly when the nuns arrived in Derby in 1846. Chapter 7 discusses the experiences of work for Irish children in Derby in a range of occupations and shows how some took advantage of wider opportunities in the work place to extend their learning.

Chapter 8 compares the kinds of schooling these children experienced in Derby at the workhouse school and the Roman Catholic schools in the town. This chapter looks particularly at one set of reading books that were used in both schools (coincidentally prepared and published in Ireland by the Irish Commissioners of Education). It argues that though in some respects the texts might have presented children with a rather narrow view of the world and their place in it, as the children of the working poor, in other ways they had a liberating influence on children's patterns of learning and on their views of the world. I will therefore discuss in some detail the significance of this reading series to Irish children's view of themselves as readers and as young people entering the world of childhood, so the discussion is important for the general questions raised by this study.

The study concludes by arguing that the central research question has been demonstrated. The final chapter draws together evidence confirming that nineteenth-century working-class childhood patterns were extended to Irish labouring children in Derby, and showing beyond doubt that childhood was a social phenomenon experienced by Irish labouring children in a variety of forms.

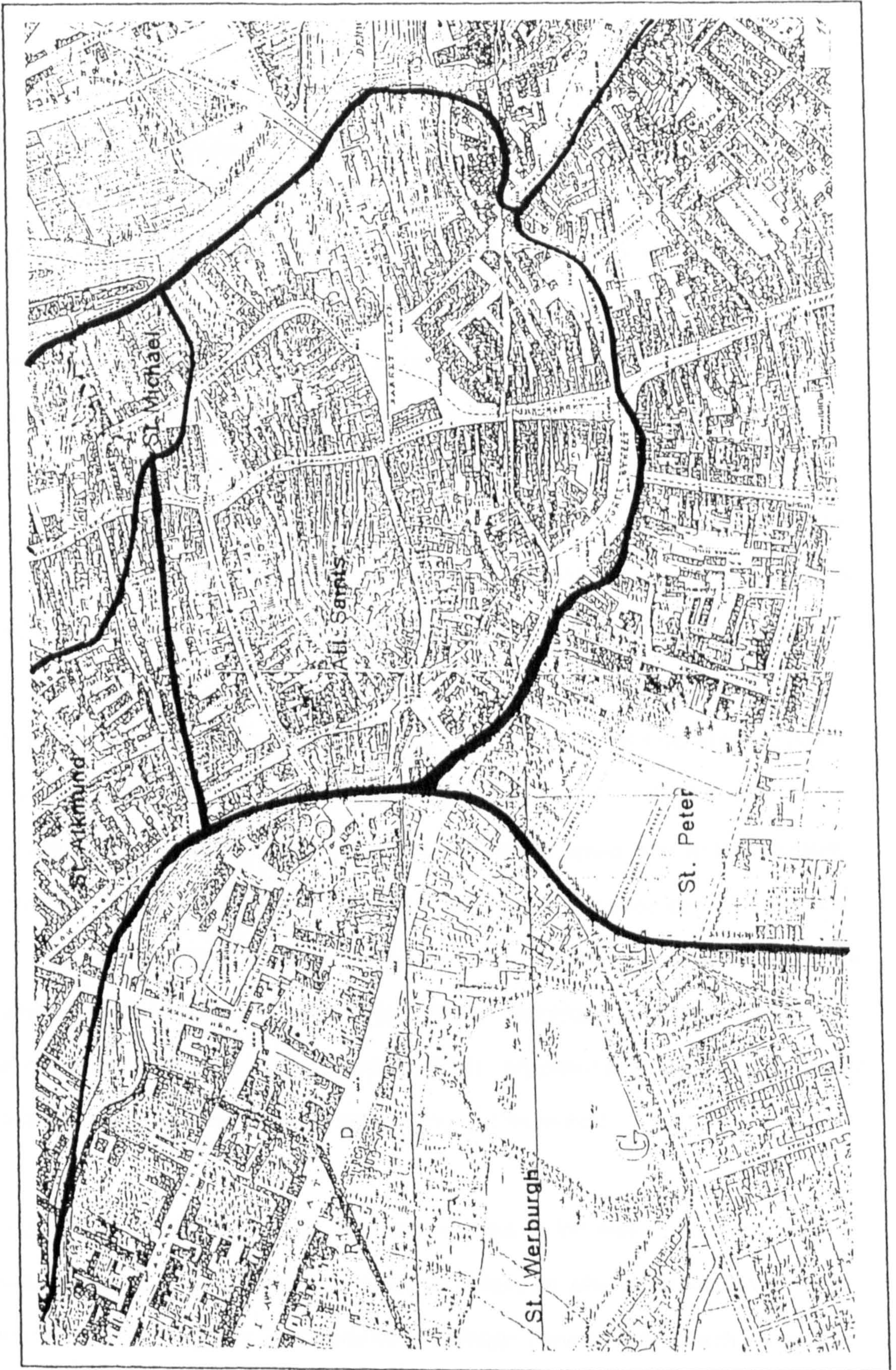
I have been excited by this project because although historians are now turning their attention to the task of uncovering Irish history in Britain, no study has previously been undertaken of the lives of Irish children in Derby in the nineteenth century, and I knew I would uncover the new and unexpected. Indeed I believe that only one book, The Lost Children (Robins, 1980) has focused exclusively on the experiences of Irish children, and its specific theme was the treatment of charity children in Ireland in the eighteenth and nineteenth

centuries. This study is therefore a contribution to our knowledge of the lives of immigrant Irish children in the nineteenth century. I hope that historians of childhood and local historians will find it of use, even though my primary interest has been in exploring the nature of childhood in a specific social context, rather than in specifically researching a particular period of mid-nineteenth century social history.

SOURCES AND METHODS FOR A HISTORY OF IRISH CHILDHOOD IN DERBY

The central argument in this study is that Irish children in Derby entered a state of childhood in the mid-nineteenth century. In order to show how that occurred I have uncovered and explored the life experience of Irish children who lived in the five parishes of All Saints, St. Alkmund's, St. Michael's, St. Peter's and St. Werburgh's in the centre of Derby between 1830 and 1870 (See map showing the parishes, p.37). I have chosen to concentrate on this small geographical area, and therefore to tell a small story, only because it is embedded within a longer narrative. It is a tale worth telling because it yields the kind of evidence that illuminates broader issues of emigration and childhood experience in a specific period of time.

I have shared Lloyd de Mause's frustration that 'childhood history is not the easiest of historical fields in which to specialise' because of the painstaking operation of 'sifting through dozens of difficult manuscripts in order to discover a single golden nugget about childhood' (de Mause, 1974: Preface). For similar reasons my evidence too is sometimes fragmentary and incomplete. At times it has been necessary to move from the general to the particular, and back again, in search of the truth. Raymond Williams emphasises that 'the most difficult thing to get hold of, in studying any past period, is (the) felt sense of the quality of life at a



The centre of Derby in 1852, with its parish boundaries indicated.
(Source: Board of Ordnance Survey, 1852)

particular place and time' and the problems encountered in gaining a 'sense of the ways in which particular activities (combine) into a way of thinking and living' (1973:63). With this in mind, I began to collect original material that would uncover an Irish population in Derby. The evidence came firstly from four nineteenth-century manuscript sources. These primary sources were the census returns for the five parishes in the borough of Derby for 1841, 1851 and 1861, the Poor Law records from the Derby Union Workhouse, from 1837 to 1870, the Annals of the Convent of Mercy, from 1848 to 1870, and the parish registers of St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church in Derby, from 1854 onwards (though fragmentary baptismal records also exist from 1814). Together, these sources provided evidence of the names, addresses, ages, occupations and family relationships of many of the Irish children and adults who lived in Derby, or who passed through the town, in the mid-nineteenth century. Sometimes I was able to combine information from different sources to build up detailed profiles of families or individual children.

The census returns for 1841, 1851 and 1861 were the obvious starting point for the entire research, and they revealed an Irish population in Derby. The shortcomings of reliance on census evidence will be discussed later in this chapter, but it will be obvious that Irish people who lived in Derby between census dates went unrecorded, unless they appeared in other records. However, the census data are sensitive to large movements, such as the famine migrations, and they reflect the fall in the birthrate of Irish-born children in 1861, together with the dramatic rise in the number of British-born Irish children in that same period.

Using evidence from the census returns I was able to list every person in the five parishes whose country of birth was given as Ireland or who were second-generation children born to Irish parents. Although I knew from church records

that there were a few Irish families living in the villages around Derby, I decided to confine my study to the population of the town itself, because that was where most families lived and worked. I noted all those who were living in Derby at each census date with, wherever possible, their names, ages, addresses, position in their family, occupations, the composition of their households and the Irish county where they were born. ¹ The information was entered into a computer database.

I then read the parish registers for St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church in Derby and the earlier Old Catholic Chapel, and the Poor Law records. All three sources held valuable information. The parish registers record baptisms, marriages and deaths for the local Catholic population over this period. They also contain information about family relationships, sometimes giving the names of significant family members alongside the names of children who were baptised or who had died. Occasionally a family address is given too, and in some instances I was able to make links between individuals and families recorded in the parish registers and on the census returns. Inaccuracies will undoubtedly have arisen since I had to select what I believed to be *Irish* names from the total Catholic population listed in the parish registers. Some names had 'Hibernia' written alongside them, showing that they were born in Ireland, but where there was no country of birth stated yet the person appeared to have an Irish name, I listed them. I recognised some of the more usual Irish names from my own general knowledge, and I knew others from my knowledge of Irish names on the census returns. There was one problem - St. Mary's was the parish church of the Irish population who lived in villages outside Derby, and unless family addresses were written down by the priest, I had no way of separating these people out from those who lived in the parishes I was particularly interested in researching; hence my reluctance to include unlocated people within

my survey, and my particular interest in those families whose addresses were recorded.

The Poor Law records for Derby provided evidence of an Irish population *between* the census years, and showed that a significant number of Irish children were in need of assistance throughout this period. The Poor Law records comprise Minute Books, dating from 1837 onwards, and the Relieving Officer's Weekly Return books, dating from 1842 to 1848 - those from 1848 onwards are not available and have probably been destroyed. (There is also an unexplained gap in the Relieving Officer's records between April 1844 and February 1845). Both the Minute Books and the Relieving Officer's Weekly Returns yield rich information about Irish children, some of whose names are recorded over and over again, sometimes with their families, sometimes alone. The names of the applicant, spouse and children, their ages, addresses, occupations and reasons for seeking relief are recorded weekly, together with the nature of any illnesses and, in some cases, information about earnings and the names of employers. The Minute Books are an important record of the education Irish boys and girls received in the workhouse schools. They include several Education Committee Reports and a copy of one Inspectorial Report on the children's progress. They also record decisions about the nature of discipline, the structure of the school day, the content of the curriculum, the duties of the schoolmaster and schoolmistress, obligatory children's dress, and notes about the occasional entertainment that was provided for the children. These features will be discussed in Chapter 5.

The Poor Law records illuminate aspects of the lives of ordinary Irish children and their parents that would otherwise have remained undiscovered - both the Minute Books and the Relieving Officer's Weekly Returns contain information which cannot

be found in any other official government documentation, because it is particular to the running of the Derby institution, and I shall discuss it in greater detail in Chapters 5, 7 and 8. The records have enabled me to track certain families across several years, revealing their patterns of travel and employment, as well as their poverty and hardship.

The Sisters of Mercy who arrived in Derby from Ireland in 1848 kept archives, which they called Annals, written by a Sister who was appointed as the Convent Annalist. These Annals provide important information about the welfare of the Irish poor in Derby and the education of Irish Roman Catholic children. The Sisters cared for the Irish poor in Derby and set up schools to educate their children. Their records give a clear description of their activities with the Irish in Derby during the mid-Victorian years.

While uncovering this primary source information I became aware that three groups of Irish children were emerging, each with their own sets of experiences. Some belonged to migrant Irish families who made Derby their home; others were immigrant children 'on tramp' with their families, moving from town to town, perhaps to and from Derby, or to and from Ireland, and possibly on their way to America. John Herson points out that during the mid-Victorian years there was always likely to be a 'two-sector' Irish population in all towns, made up of the settled and the mobile, though the travelling Irish gradually settled over time. He is critical of research which does not take the differing needs and lifestyles of these two groups into consideration when discussing factors that affected their lives (Herson, 1989:93). It is not always clear from the data which group - the travellers or the settled - the Irish children in my study belong to, because of insufficient information

about their movements, but wherever possible I have stated whether or not they were likely to have been resident in Derby over a period of time.

A third group of Irish children, already identified in Chapter 1, were the second-generation children who were born in Derby, or elsewhere in Britain or overseas, and who lived in Derby with their Irish-born parents. It is impossible to know to what extent these second-generation children were influenced by Irish culture; indeed, some might have held on to their ethnic identity more firmly than those who were born on Irish soil (Fitzpatrick, 1989:73). I have needed to be aware of this throughout. Equally, I have had to reflect on the point at which *Irish-born* children in Derby, consciously or otherwise, ceased to think of themselves as migrants, and began instead to consider themselves 'native' - or at least 'British'.

The primary manuscript sources I used were not of course designed to show whether Irish birth is associated with Irish culture, nor the extent to which second- or third-generation Irish communities existed in Derby. These sources are therefore always going to be poor indicators of the transmission of cultural identity, both from Ireland to England and across generations (Pooley, 1989:61). In addition, their accuracy is uncertain. Tamara Hareven urges caution when interpreting information from census data because returns can only provide a 'snapshot' of each person at one particular moment in time (1982:155). Changes in family structure, and of the movement of families and individuals *between* census dates - to different addresses in Derby, to Ireland, to other towns in Britain, or to America or Australia or elsewhere - have been impossible to discover using census data, even though evidence that families did move on exists from other sources. Indeed, census returns were not designed to give narrative descriptions of the movements of populations. John Jackson, in his study of Irish immigrants in Britain, bemoaned the

lack of adequate data about the rate of movement and settlement between census dates (1963:22) and now I understand this difficulty.

Terrick Fitzhugh cautions that people did not always give their correct ages to enumerators and others in authority (1988:61). I have met wide discrepancies in age, and I have little confidence in age analysis because there is so much variation - a child listed as eight years of age in the 1841 census might only be ten years old in 1851. It seems that this problem could arise particularly when researching the Irish, perhaps because their accent was difficult for officials to understand or because they had no official documentation. A factory owner in Glasgow, in his evidence to the Children's Employment Commission in 1840, said that it was 'tolerably easy in Glasgow' to ascertain a child's age because 'their names (were) very often entered in a Bible and those who (were) born in Glasgow were generally registered' but he added that 'with the Irish it (was) very difficult.' (B.P.P. 1840 [504] X.687:3) Indeed, even though the 1841 census was intended to produce five-year age groupings for those over fifteen, my own observations show that in some cases the enumerator seems to have recorded the *actual* ages of some adults and children, instead of complying with the regulations to place ages at five-yearly intervals. The result is that some ages do not fall in five-year patterns - and children with actual recorded ages of sixteen and seventeen appear in this study from the census data.

Information provided by individuals was always subject to the enumerator's own interpretations, perceptions and bias. There are possible confusions over the way occupations were described - the words 'hawker' and 'pedlar' presumably define what appear to be the same occupations. Many Irish people who worked in the Derby silk mills were able to give their own particular job, such as 'silk throwster' - a

discrete occupation that was carefully noted by the enumerator; yet alongside this, the general descriptions of 'silk mill' or 'silk mill hand' are entered, and I can only speculate that this latter group of people might not have been able to define their particular job, or that they did a variety of jobs in the mill; or perhaps the enumerator could not understand what they told him, or what they wrote down. Spellings of names vary too. 'Nowlan' and 'Nolan' both appear in the returns, as does 'Treacey' and 'Tracey', while 'Hoshey' is almost certainly 'O'Shea'; these alternative spellings suggest that the effects of accent are also evident. A further frustration lay in the difficulty - and sometimes the sheer impossibility - of deciphering copies of faded or partly-torn pages.

It was helpful to have the Irish *county* of birth recorded for at least some Irish people on census returns for 1851 and 1861, even though this information was not specifically requested. I was able to use this additional data to make links between certain families and individuals. Other Irish people gave the name of the town or village where they were born, and where possible I have traced these people back to their Irish county of birth, though there is some ambiguity over two place names which I cannot place with any certainty (See p.75 for a list of Irish counties of origin). Sometimes people gave too little information to be of much value - in the 1851 census two people stated simply that they came from the province of Munster, but this of course only means that they came from one of the southern counties (see map of Ireland showing provinces and counties, p73). For all these reasons manuscript sources tell a fragmented story. Nevertheless, they have given me a means of recording and placing two generations of Irish people in Derby and of using this information as the basis for building a picture of their lives. It is perhaps also worth making the obvious point that the census material crosses two generations of children. Those who were small children in 1841 were grown and

probably married by 1861, and might or might not have been living in Derby. But while the biological condition of childhood is temporary for us all, the idea of childhood overarches all the children in this study.

With this primary data in front of me, I compiled records for each Irish child, cross-referencing where I could, in order to build up a profile of individual children. Their family life, work experiences and the schooling they received will be discussed in later chapters. The next step was to interpret this information in order to understand how the process of migration might have affected the Irish-born child's sense of belonging to a particular culture, and how life in Derby changed the nature of childhood experience.

Information from printed sources

I needed at this point to read nineteenth- and twentieth-century printed sources to encounter ideas from a range of material, and to interpret the information about Irish children's experiences at work, at school, and in their families. I met these ideas within the various disciplines of social history, ethnography, educational studies and sociology, and read and analysed literary works of autobiography, biography and literature, ballads, song and poems, in order to interpret the information in as wide a context as possible. Hugh Cunningham wrote that 'the study of childhood is by its nature interdisciplinary' (1991: Preface) and I was aware that this child-centred enquiry would only be clearly understandable if it was framed in the context of various disciplines and drew on different forms of writing.

I am not trained as a historian, but I have read nineteenth-century historical material for what it revealed about the child in history and the nature of childhood

in society at that time. This material included Acts of Parliament, historical accounts, and official Government Reports, many of which contain references to the Irish in Britain (Jackson, 1963:1652). Government papers and Commissions of Enquiry carry reports from observers, employers and commissioners who described living and working conditions for the children of the poor. The Report on the State of the Irish Poor in Great Britain, 1836 (abbreviated as the 'Poor Inquiry' in this study) has been a particularly rich source of information about Irish children, and is the only nineteenth-century account other than John Denvir's The Irish in Britain (1892) that attempts to document the lives of the immigrant Irish. However, James Handley cautions that the title of the Report is misleading, since it did not set out to be a study of the Irish poor themselves; instead, its focus was to a large extent on the effects of Irish immigration on the resident English and Scottish populations the Irish settled amongst (1943:147). This may be so, but nevertheless the evidence from the Poor Inquiry about the lives of the poor Irish in Britain has been invaluable in providing a context for investigating the lives of Irish children.

I have used material from the oral tradition at points throughout the study, interweaving nineteenth-century Irish folk-songs, lullabies and ballads within the text. This folk tradition reflects the social and cultural life and the shared traditions of Irish people, and gives insights into their attitudes, prejudices and thoughts, connecting the young to the old, and the country to the city.

Locally, the weekly newspaper, the Derby Mercury, sometimes contains information that touches upon Irish lives or that displays the newspaper's anti-Roman Catholic bias, and I have included extracts from reports to illuminate events that touched upon Irish lives. Where applicable I have included photographs and illustrations of Irish children and adults. Mid-nineteenth century photographs of

Derby show aspects of the urban environment that Irish children moved into from rural Ireland - the industrial landscape, housing, the Catholic church and local shops. Some photographs and illustrations show a variety of public print that, I shall argue in Chapter 8, might have formed part of Irish children's literacy experience.

In researching into children's lives in Ireland I set out to learn about rural life in the west of Ireland, since most Irish-born children in Derby originated from the western counties. William Wilde's Irish Popular Superstitions, originally published in 1852, contains valuable insights into culture and language, and Isaac Weld's Statistical Survey of the County of Roscommon, published in 1832, is a surprisingly fascinating account of the lives of Irish people in every town and village in the county. From these nineteenth-century sources I have been able to learn more about family life in general in rural Ireland, and particularly in Co. Roscommon - the county where my great-grandmother and other Irish-born people in Derby came from - and to relate this to the movement from a largely rural existence to life in an urban environment. ²

Where appropriate I have used extracts from nineteenth-century novels to illuminate points in my own narrative. Perhaps surprisingly, Irish characters do not appear in the pages of Charles Dickens, George Eliot or the Bronte sisters, but I have used material from Charlotte Yonge and L.T. Meade because some of their novels contain Irish characters or themes which throw light on the lives of the Irish in the mid-nineteenth century. ³

I have also included testimony from several nineteenth-century autobiographical writers, both English and Irish, though I am aware of Neil Smelser's caution that working-class autobiographies are written by the more literate, and so while they

are written out of direct experience, their authors' testimony might not reflect the lifestyles of the majority of the working poor (1991:6). However, these works do contain personal memories of childhood experiences, and though the events recalled might have been incompletely remembered, they have allowed me to reflect on some experiences of childhood in the mid-Victorian years (Burnett,1892:11).

I have been helped towards a construction and interpretation of nineteenth-century material by reading twentieth-century works on the history of childhood, written by researchers working within different disciplines. Though none of these modern sources makes any mention of Irish childhood in Britain (nor in Ireland for that matter) they nevertheless make key statements about the condition of childhood. I have drawn on these at various points throughout this study to illuminate the childhood experience of Irish children. The established nature of many of their arguments and ideas, in particular their analyses of nineteenth-century notions of the child as 'innocent' or the child as 'natural sinner,' brutalised by economic and social circumstances, formed a starting point for reconstructing the pattern of Irish childhood in mid-Victorian Derby, and will be discussed in Chapter 3.

Throughout this study I have tried to portray the texture of Irish family life as it was experienced by Irish children in Derby, and to examine the significance of their parents' decision to leave a homeland in Ireland during a period of unrest and change which included the wave of Great Famine migrations in the 1840s and early 1850s. I am conscious that the children I have written about will perhaps be more the products of my imagination than real children, because my own interests and knowledge have inevitably coloured the way I have defined and written about them. A.J.P. Taylor has reminded us that 'history is at bottom simply a form of story-telling' (1977:9) and perhaps whatever historians do, and no matter which sources

they use, the people they write about will in the end be constructs of their own imagination - how could it be otherwise when we *know* what people did, but can only *guess* why they did it, and how they felt about it?

Defining the period of childhood

One task I initially overlooked was the necessity of deciding on a period of childhood in order to know who to include in this study. I discovered that other researchers taking childhood as their theme had also been faced with the difficulty of finding a cut-off point in terms of age that was appropriate for their own work - never an easy decision, since biological age does not necessarily correlate with life experience and expectations. Steve Humphries straightforwardly argues that the period when childhood ends can be defined as the age when a child can legally begin work and take on adult responsibilities (1990:9). However, this criterion appeared too general for this study, because some young Irish people in Derby had wide and differing work experiences in their early years. Indeed, the boundary between schooling and work was in general much less clear-cut in the nineteenth century than it is today, and many factory children went to day-school or night-school on a part-time basis. For this reason it was common for Irish children in Derby to be listed as 'scholars' on the census returns of 1851 and 1861 when other Irish children *of the same age and younger* were working in the mills.

This kind of problem led James Walvin to conclude that in the nineteenth century the provision of education was a poor indicator of the division between childhood and adult life. In his own study, he chose to take the age of fourteen as the upper limit of childhood because this was the age when many children left school (though most of them left much earlier than this until the end of the nineteenth century).

Fourteen was also the age that marked the limit of childhood criminality (1982:12-13). However, Henry Mayhew, writing in the 1850s, considered 'all to be children who (were) under fifteen years of age.' (1985:162), and in Hard Times Charles Dickens described Louisa Gradgrind as 'a child now, of fifteen or sixteen; but at no distant day would seem to become a woman all at once' (1969:57), clearly using physical signs of maturity as an indicator of impending adulthood.

Hugh Cunningham, writing over one hundred years after Mayhew, took the age of fourteen as the upper age for his own study, The Children of the Poor, noting that the Factory Act of 1833 formally defined childhood as ending at fourteen (1991:95). However, if I were to adopt fourteen as the upper age limit, this study would have to exclude seven Irish girls, aged between fifteen and seventeen, who were educated at the Convent of Mercy and who were all listed as 'scholars' on the census return for 1861. Since one important focus of this study has been the education of Irish children, and since these girls were specifically referred to as 'scholars', in training to be teachers, I finally decided to include these girls within the category of childhood, together with all other Irish seventeen-year-olds in Derby. The period of childhood in this study, therefore, spans the ages from birth to seventeen.

Oral evidence

I drew on evidence from three twentieth-century oral accounts, two given by a woman over the age of eighty, and one by an eighty-five year old Derby man with fifty years' experience of working in a foundry. In one account, Sister Imelda Hogan, a Sister of Mercy in Derby, recalls memories of her own childhood in Limerick in the early part of this century; in her second account she reflects on sixty years

of working with the Irish poor in Derby. My other oral evidence is from John Holmes, who uses his own experiences of foundry work in Derby to shed light on the work of fettlers and labourers in the iron industry in the nineteenth century. I shall use extracts from these oral histories at various points within the text to glimpse into the living worlds of migration, settlement and work. I am aware that oral histories are indeed 'a record of perceptions' (Hareven,1982:377) and are only one version of history. Nevertheless, they contain first-hand accounts which illuminate the social and cultural life of the period under consideration. I feel justified in making use of them because of their rich and unique detail and because, as in a novel, it is possible to make universal truths from the particularities of individual human experience.

The methodology and sources described in this chapter provided me with a system and a basic set of source materials from which to begin my investigation into the lives of Irish children in Derby and their insertion into childhood. By using these sources I have been able to describe Irish children's experiences in a variety of settings, and to make a narrative of individual lives using evidence gathered from different sources. The next chapter discusses the ideas of childhood drawn from the reading outlined in this chapter.

Footnotes to Chapter 2

1. The 1841 census, the first to give the names of individual people, was taken on the night of Sunday of 6/7 June, 1841. Forms were distributed to householders and collected and checked by the enumerators - schoolmasters, clergymen, businessmen and 'other persons of some education' who volunteered for the work. The Returns were then copied, in pencil, into the Enumeration Schedules, which were printed books of blank forms.

The information requested from individuals in 1841 was surname and first forename, age and occupation. It has been particularly important in terms of this study to note that children up to the age of fourteen had their exact ages recorded (see discussion on p.43); those aged 15 and above had their ages recorded in five-year groups, shown by the youngest year in that group. Individuals were asked to state if their county of birth was the one in which they were living on the night of the census, and they were also asked to state if they were born in Scotland, Ireland or Foreign Parts.

The Census for 1851 was taken on the night of 30/31 March, 1851. In addition to the information requested in 1841, individuals were asked to state their relationship to the head of the family and whether they were married, unmarried or widowed. Children receiving education were listed as 'scholars'. Individuals born in England or Wales were asked to state their parish and county of birth; those born in Scotland or Ireland were required only to name their *country* of birth. The census for 1861 was taken for the night of 7/8 April and asked for the same information as that requested in 1851 (Fitzhugh, 1988: 61).

2. Galway provided the greatest number of Irish migrants to Derby - fifty-eight in 1851. The second largest number of migrants - forty-two - were from County Roscommon - see information on page 75 (Census for Derby, 1851).
3. L.T. Meade was born in Cork in 1854 and wrote some 250 books. She came to London as a young woman and worked in the British Museum. Her interest in the human condition led her to study life in the East End. Several of her books contain sympathetically drawn Irish characters, with distinctive Irish features and mannerisms (Sutherland, 1988: 427).

Charlotte Yonge was born in 1823, and though she held distinctly conservative views, she was interested in the condition of women. She included a succession of Irish characters in her work, and discussed themes in her novels which affected the migrant Irish in Britain (Young, 1977: 320).

VISIONS OF CHILDHOOD; A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The purpose of this chapter is to indicate the world of nineteenth-century childhood that Irish children entered, and to explore the twentieth-century constructions of that world that have been shaped by modern historians. This survey will enable me to place the labouring Irish child into an established framework of ideas. The work of others who have an interest in this area - sociologists, social anthropologists, and literary historians will also form a point of reference.

What is under debate among modern historians is what the concept of childhood meant in the past in different societies. In the 1960s Philippe Ariès argued that there was no concept of childhood before the Middle Ages and that the concept emerged slowly in Europe, somewhere between the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries, as the idea of the family changed; until then children were viewed almost as small adults (Ariès, 1962:369). This has become a much contested thesis and there are many critiques of it, most of which share concerns about Ariès's methodology (see, for example, Adrian Wilson, 1980).

Children as a group are extremely difficult to locate within the pages of history books. They have always existed on the margins of written history; like other powerless groups, their influence on political events has been minimal, and perhaps

because of this they form an invisible group within historical inquiry (Walvin, 1982:11). But in recent years the history of childhood has been receiving more attention, and this chapter draws on the work of modern scholars who have fashioned a cultural history of childhood from contemporary accounts. But the history of childhood is under-researched and incomplete; for this reason Carolyn Steedman cautions against the temptation to tell ourselves the old familiar story that childhood has got better for children, largely due to the reforming zeal of nineteenth-century radicals and poets, whose energies helped to move labouring children from a life of ignorance and drudgery towards what she calls 'an enlightened present' (1990:63-64).

The story, or rather the sets of stories about childhood - many of which still need to be told - are subtle and complex, and I am conscious of the difficulty of attempting to locate real children's lives within existing notions of childhood. In Strange Dislocations Steedman confronts the 'cognitive dislocation' between the *ideas* of childhood and the children who *actually lived*. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries ideas of 'the child' were embodied in the literary child-figure, which became the 'central vehicle for expressing ideas about the self and its history'. The exploration of childhood focused inwards at the self rather than outwards towards children; the child-image reflected not the child, but the observer's own preoccupations. From the eighteenth century onwards the focus gradually shifted away from the symbolic child-figure towards an interest in actual children, though adults still constantly project themselves on to the idea of the child through what Steedman calls an 'interiorised self', using the image of the child to call forth the 'child within' that never really leaves us, however old we grow (1995:1-6).

So a central problem in surveying the literature of childhood lies in having to take account of the slippage between images and ideas of childhood, and the reality of childhood as it was lived by real children. I am conscious that it is all too easy to fall into the trap of moving from a discussion of the history of ideas and cultural history into a social history of the child, without signalling or explaining the shift. For example, Harry Hendrick outlines a chronology of 'the making of childhood' in which he identifies seven stages of development: the *romantic* child, the *evangelical* child, the *factory* child, the *delinquent* child, the *schooled* child, the *psycho-medical* child and, into the first years of the twentieth century, the *welfare* child (1990:35-36).

Hendrick's chronology of childhood - one that is commonly used by historians - gathers together sets of similar ideas into broad categories. The sequence he suggests, is helpful in laying down broad brush strokes for defining the move towards different conceptualisations of childhood in the nineteenth century, but at the same time it illustrates the difficulty of dealing with ideas about children and 'childhood.' The factory child and the schooled child were *real* children (though they did not necessarily occur in this order); the romantic child and the evangelical child were constructs of the imagination. But the development of ideas is always more subtle and complex than any categorisation can suggest, because large generalisations cannot account for the complexities of thought and the intertwining strands of prejudice and argument that accompany change. Even so, the categorisations are helpful in showing a gradual push towards the recognition of a 'childhood' for labouring children, and this is what I want to explore, because it is within this development that I will be able to locate the children of the Irish poor in subsequent chapters. I shall look particularly for evidence of children moving beyond the adult world into their own childhood space.

Margaret Ezell discusses the history of ideas concerning perceptions of the child which existed in the seventeenth century and eighteenth centuries. It is useful to examine these here because they help to explain nineteenth-century ideas, including the sweeping humanitarian reforms put into place from the 1830s onwards. Ezell presents three formulations that were laid upon the new-born baby and I shall use them at points throughout this chapter to explore the nineteenth-century move towards the recognition of a childhood state for the poor. Firstly, she portrays the child who is born into Original Sin, in need of redemption. Secondly, she introduces the notion of the intrinsically 'good' child, who is born into innocence. Finally, she discusses the child who is neither sinful nor innocent, but neutral, a 'blank slate' - this was the Lockean view, and it was taken up by educationalists 'who saw extreme malleability as the prime characteristic of childhood' (1983-4:140). All three views held sway at various points within the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and underpinned development and change.

The Child as Sinner

Ezell's description of the child born into a state of sin, symbolised by the Fall from the Garden of Eden, is a basic tenet of Christian theology. It is an Augustinian view that became an established mode of thought about childhood, and of the understanding that sin could only be expiated through baptism. It was this same body of thought that was eventually extended to and became linked with, forms of prejudice which placed the sinful labouring child at an anthropological point somewhere between the higher apes and the lower members of the human race (Cunningham,1991:6) Parallels began to be drawn between the savage and the child, who were both considered inferior, childlike and in need of discipline - and of

course in need of schooling, in order to regulate behaviour and extend and control the kinds of knowledge suitable for a child.

Theories of Recapitulation

These theories abounded in the mid-Victorian years, and were founded on the belief that the development of the individual child, with its raw and brutalised nature, paralleled the development of the entire race. These early theories of child development described the young child as an elemental being with a racial memory, or as a primitive adult ancestor (Gould,1981:115). The theory took two forms: the biologically-based theory held that human embryos 'repeated the evolution of the genus', while the sociological form of the theory tried to show there was a parallel between the child and the primitive (Boas,1966:61). An extension to this idea presented so-called 'savage' races as 'the ethnographic record of children', (Cunningham,1991:123).

Knowledge of 'primitive' peoples was stimulated by tales brought back by travellers in the early part of the century, and in 1843 the Ethnological Society was formed for the purpose of collecting information together to guide the studies of future travellers. Theories of race and racial stereotypes placed the Anglo-Saxon at the head, maintaining that this race had inborn superior characteristics which justified domination over other countries (Street,1975:3,7). The imperialist argument was clear: in order to contribute to the domination of other races, street children were to be educated out of their idleness and indiscipline. At the same time, the inferior races in countries which had been colonised needed to be disciplined by the British and shown how to live civilised and decent lives. In parallel fashion, street children needed to be 'colonised' too, tamed and brought to

submission - or how else would they be able to play their part in advancing imperialist policy? Anthropological theories were strengthened to support imperialist policies, and there were moves to 'rescue' both the savage and the street child from their child-like primitive condition, bringing both to a state of civilisation. The child-like nature of the 'primitive savage' provided further justification for energetic colonisation and missionary work which aimed both to educate the savage and to claim the land he was incapable of governing.

Thomas Carlyle was perhaps reflecting these views in 1842 when he commented on the 'squalid apethood' of the Irish in Britain, maintaining that the Irishman was 'the sorest evil this country ha(d) to strive with' (Carlyle, 1842:28). Though Carlyle was no historian, his moralistic and didactic writings were widely read and provide evidence today of the influence of racial theories on the mid-Victorian mind (Marwick, 1970:45). Carlyle was not alone: Charles Kingsley described the Irish as 'white chimpanzees' in a letter to his wife from Ireland in 1860 (cited in Curtis, 1984:60), and a Punch satirist, writing on the subject of Irish immigration in 1862, commented that 'a creature manifestly between the Gorilla and the Negro is to be met with in some of the lowest districts of London and Liverpool by adventurous explorers' (cited in Curtis, 1984:61). It would be possible to extend this discussion on anti-Irish prejudice and to include many more illustrations of nineteenth-century intolerance towards the Irish, but these examples are sufficient to show the extent of prejudice in the society Irish children were entering.

The Child as Innocent

At the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth century the child as innocent was above all a symbolic and literary child-figure. Its presence

was shaped by the Romantics, particularly by William Blake and William Wordsworth. Towards the end of the eighteenth century Jonas Hanway's campaigns in support of chimney sweeps were already part of reforming agitation (though it was to take almost another century before legislation eventually prohibited this practice). His A Sentimental History of Chimney Sweeps (1785) describes a boy chimney sweep thus: 'and though he cannot move on the surface of the earth without the assistance of crutches, and has aid from the parish, he climbs and sweeps a chimney....Still it might be said, so long as childhood keeps them from being polluted by sin, of such is the kingdom of heaven' (cited in Glen,1983:98). Hanway is making a literary move here, using the child-figure to create a metaphor of exploitation; in doing so he disassociates his boy chimney sweep from any sense of sin.

The writings of Blake and Wordsworth consolidated the literary framework through which the Romantic child was perceived. As they did so, they moulded ideas about the nature of childhood innocence (Sommerville,1982:166). Indeed, Humphrey Carpenter describes Blake's Songs of Innocence (published in 1789) as 'an ardent affirmation that children have access to a kind of visionary simplicity that is denied to adults'(Carpenter, 1985:7). Blake's radical agitation was carried through literature and poetry and like Hanway, he used the symbol of the chimney sweep in his writing to explore exploitation and underprivilege, forcing people to take notice of the treatment of working children. Romanticism intersected growing agitation for reform from radicals and government alike, and the reforming zeal of the nineteenth century was testimony to the power of literature to inform and influence public opinion. Heather Glen's observation that Blake's young chimney sweep presented himself like a boy who might be giving an account of his life later in the century to a Government Commission of Inquiry, is significant. The boy uses the

matter-of-fact voice of a child who is asked to tell his story to his superiors (1983:96):

When my mother died I was very young,
And my father sold me while yet my tongue
Could scarcely cry'weep! weep! weep! weep!
So your chimneys I sweep, & in soot I sleep.

This is the voice of acceptance, but not of self-pity. It has, in Glen's terms, a 'sharper edge' than that, intended not to invite sentiment, but rather to challenge the existing order (1983:98). Steedman has called Blake's chimney sweep the 'most enduring symbol of the social problem presented by the labouring child' because this child, as well as appearing innocent and in need of sympathy, also presented a threat to society (1990:64). He was after all uneducated, poor and dirty. Some sixty years later Charles Kingsley's Tom was still a constant reminder to the wealthier classes that the working child could be dangerous, impure and dirty (Glen,1983:99-100). 'What did such a little ape want in that sweet young lady's room?' asked Tom's narrator in The Water Babies (1863) as he fell down the chimney into Ellie's bedroom (Kingsley,1973:24). What indeed.

Wordsworth's 'Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood', published in 1807, nearly twenty years after Blake's Songs of Innocence, carried the vision of childhood innocence forward into the new century. Wordsworth's child-figure is born into innocence because it has as yet no experience of life, but at the same time it is all-knowing, existing in what Carpenter calls 'a higher state of spiritual perception than adults' (Carpenter,1985:8). In his poem, Wordsworth presents childhood as a *pre-existent stage*:

There was a time when meadow, grove, and stream,
The earth, and every common sight,
 To me did seem
 Apparelled in celestial light,
The glory and the freshness of a dream.
It is not now as it hath been of yore; -
 Turn wheresoe'er I may,
 By night or day,
The things which I have seen I now can see no more.

Wordsworth's child-figure is associated with loss, a lost innocence, a lost paradise; at birth, it is pulled from an earlier state of perfection. Wordsworth draws on an English version of the Platonic myth describing humankind's exile from a world of light and perfect forms, where the soul journeys from light into the dark cave of the senses - when the child is born. As the 'shades of the prison-house' close in, (stanza v) the child meets a world of experience, a world of education; new learning overshadows earlier memories. Yet the world of childhood is always within, and we can travel back there 'in a moment' in our imagination: we are fashioned by it. So here is the Romantic child: the child of our self, who is also the child born in Grace, challenging the notion of the child born into Original Sin. Wordsworth's child, the 'best Philosopher' (stanza viii) is wise, or will be when he grows up; he is receptive to ideas and educable.

It was through this Romanticism that an idealised world of childhood was created. In literary terms, childhood was often represented as a garden - the garden of Eden - where children, innocent and untainted, dwelt close to nature, and thrived on a nurturing, tender love. It is essential to keep the Romantic child in mind, if only because this particular vision of childhood pervades modern accounts. For example, Lloyd de Mause's The History of Childhood (1979) presents a profoundly Romantic view of the treatment of children, telling 'a long mournful story of the abuse of

children from the earliest times even to the present day' but arguing that since the eighteenth century a more humanitarian attitude has emerged (1974: i) - a view that can surely be challenged.

The child as 'tabula rasa'

This child, in John Locke's terminology, is a blank slate, capable of being written on - a child whose mind is 'white paper, void of all characters, without any ideas' (cited in Coveney, 1967:39). This vision of childhood holds that the child is neither good nor evil, but is a neutral agent, coming into the world with nothing, ready to be moulded by parents or educators - an optimistic and radical view which countered beliefs in Original Sin. John Locke's key text of child theory, Some Thoughts Concerning Education (1693) was highly influential in changing attitudes towards the perceived sinfulness of children. Locke argued that it was experience, not nature, which determined a child's character and morality, and that education was about 'the cultivation of the intellect rather than the accumulation of facts.' He was concerned with the *process* of educating a child; in other words, he was interested in the child as an individual learner rather than the teacher as controller. His work became 'one of the most important influences in changing attitudes towards children and child-rearing' (Ezell, 1983:149-155).

The Humanitarian Movement

Influential ideas like those of John Locke helped to change nineteenth-century opinion, and there was a gradual acknowledgement among reformers that children's experiences of life helped to shape the adult the child would become, irrespective of economic background (Cunningham, 1991:3). The opposing views of angelic innocence and demonic evil were held together by the notion that children,

particularly those who were poor and vulnerable, were in need of protection from poverty and ignorance and from an exploitative economic system that denied them both freedom and happiness. The visibility of large numbers of street children, helped to shift the focus from the child-figure to the *real* child; moreover, to the *real labouring* child, not simply the child of the genteel middle classes. If the educated classes read Flora Tristan's accounts of the Irish living in the St. Giles district of London in the 1840s, they were perhaps distressed by her descriptions of the suffering of 'barefoot men, women and children picking their way through the foul morass; some huddled against the wall for want of anywhere to sit, others squatting on the ground, children wallowing in the mud like pigs...such is the "comfort" of the Irish quarter!' (1842:156).

At the same time as Mayhew and Tristan were writing their accounts, successive Royal Commissions and Commissions of Inquiry into Children's Employment revealed the desperate conditions that many children worked under when they hewed coal, swept chimneys, threaded spinning and weaving machinery, or worked in agriculture and domestic service. These children were dirty, of course, though not with the metaphorical dirt of sin and corruption. Their dirt was real. It was the soot from chimneys, the coal dust from mines, the oil from boilers and spinning machinery, and the sweepings-up of filed-down castings on the floor of the fettling shops in the iron foundries. It was also the dirt and smells that were inevitably present when children lived in houses with little or no running water, and poor facilities for public bathing.

Public outrage led to a denunciation of the processes of exploitation for all oppressed groups, and its focus for a time was directed towards the British slave trade in the West Indies. In 1807 it was made illegal to import slaves, and existing slaves were freed if they lived on English soil, though the slave trade itself, like the

employment of children, continued after the passing of the 1807 Act, and large profits were still made from it. The West Indian colonies were heavily dependent on slave labour and it was not until 1833 that three-quarters of a million slaves were freed in the West Indies (Colley,1992:352).

It was unlikely that the rights of children could be seriously addressed when public outcry was focused so many miles away. But when the Anti-Slavery Act of 1807 was passed, it did not miss the attention of reformers that children in England were working long hours in factories and mines and 'the same broad humanitarianism inspired both the anti-slavery movement and the factory-reform movement, the latter borrowing much from the former' (Gallagher,1985:11). However, Linda Colley points out that 'slaves, unlike the Irish, or the Roman Catholics, or the working class, existed overwhelmingly outside Britain's own geographical and mental boundaries' (Colley,1992:355) and it was perhaps understandably easier for a society heavily dependent on the labour of children, to turn its social conscience towards the liberation of a group of people who were far removed from view. In spite of this, there were the slow beginnings of a recognition that children had a right to be protected from the indignities and physical rigours of the factory, where they worked long hours for little pay, in dangerous and unhealthy conditions which are graphically described by James Walvin in A Child's World (1982:64-65).

Reformers began to try to remove children from these environments, and there were complex arguments both for and against factory reform (Thomis,1974:121). By the 1830s most middle and upper-class sentiment was already in favour of reducing the hours children worked and legislating for their education, at least until children were nine or ten years old (Best,1971:110). Evangelicals were appalled by

the possibilities of moral and sexual corruption in factories, and Roman Catholics who feared the proselytising of Protestant agencies in the workplace sought to withdraw Catholic children from their influence and to educate them in Catholic schools. Some twenty or so years later an Inspectorial report by S. N. Stokes, a Catholic school inspector, showed that this was still a matter of profound concern for Roman Catholics. He praised a Catholic day school in Nottingham where girls manufactured lace 'under the eye of the teachers' and were 'thus preserved from the dangerous associations of a large manufactory' (T.C.S., Vol.3, No.2, October, 1854).

The early factory acts of 1802 and 1819 had had little effect on changing employment conditions, but two decades after it was made illegal to import slaves, the campaigns of reformers like William Wilberforce and Robert Owen enabled the plight of labouring children to receive more recognition. In 1833 there were two key events: the emancipation of the slaves, already discussed above, and the passing of the Factory Act which was designed to limit the work of children under thirteen years of age to eight hours a day (Cunningham, 1991:79). In the three decades spanning the 1830s to the 1860s, a series of Acts was subsequently passed which resulted in the gradual improvement of children's working conditions in a range of industries. They will be discussed further in Chapter 7 in connection with the introduction of half-time schooling.

This reform partly came about because children - real working children - were becoming visible and were being listened to. The Royal Commissions and Commissions of Inquiry into Children's Employment in the 1830s and 1840s enabled children's own voices to be heard for the first time, since their answers to questions were faithfully recorded. They were allowed to give their own evidence, which was

transcribed and presented to witnesses (Cunningham,1991:92). Though Jean Heywood suggests that children's evidence was often in the form of 'uncomprehending comments, timid, abrupt, and not always spontaneous' (Heywood, 1969:15), nonetheless, the political shift which gave children a voice had been made, and their words were now available to a wide audience (Steedman, 1982:118-127).

At the same time there were the beginnings of what Steedman calls a 'journalistic enquiry' into the lives of the poor (1990:65). Henry Mayhew (whose words form the title of this study) observed and interviewed adults and children (including Irish children) in the 1840s. He recorded their stories, making them visible and giving them a voice, in a style that Gertrude Himmelfarb calls 'a melange of facts, figures, images and impressions, jostling each other in bewildering confusion, with the author's voice alternately that of the dispassionate enquirer and the passionate partisan (1984:318). Mayhew's observations of the London poor formed a detailed account initially undertaken for a series of articles in the Morning Chronicle, published between 1849 and 1850. They were based on his inquiries into the lives of labouring people, their work, and their way of life. His curiosity about the people he met, and his respect for their humanity, is evident throughout his writing. This needs to be borne in mind when reading Mayhew's work.

There is a richness about his commentaries that grew out of his enthusiasm and passion to share his knowledge, and since he made narratives of people's lives his accounts are attractive and readable. He often encouraged people to speak for themselves and reported their words, using what Steedman describes as 'the same new set of conventions for the depiction of working-class speech as novelists of the

1840s started to employ; the representation of dialect through a modified orthography'(1990:65). Though it is tempting to imagine that he could not have stereotyped his subjects because he was dealing with individuals, he did at times combine the accounts of two or three people in order to present them as a composite person (Steedman,1995:174).

Nevertheless, liberals and reformers who heard children's remarks or read them in published form, were moved by their statements, and sought to rescue children from oppressive work practices. They wanted to incorporate children within the polity of the political and legal system, and help them to lead civilised lives, free from corruption and exploitation (Steedman,1995:133).

The Provision of Education for the Children of the Poor

In the nineteenth century, as each decade progressed, the idea of childhood was slowly extended to encompass the children of the poor. The humanitarian moves away from child labour were encouraged by an energetic drive from the Government, the churches, liberal reformers and educationalists, all wishing to place labouring children into an education system fitted to the labouring classes, and at the same time to rid the streets of threatening mobs of unemployed youngsters. Irish children were caught up in this fervour, and over the years of this study they walked through the school gates into a world of childhood.

Entry into the education system entailed a move away from the values of the labouring family, and also from the factories and mills. This was a daunting prospect for both parent and child, and one that did not sit easily alongside the grinding

necessity of relying on a child's wage to keep the family intact. In any case, the cost of sending a child to school - even at 1d. a week - could prove excessive.

The 'lowest class of children' were largely educated in three kinds of schools - workhouse schools, ragged schools and industrial schools (Lawson and Silver, 1973:283). There were at the same time other notable strands in the education movement, particularly the nonconformist British and Foreign Schools Society, and the National Society for the Promotion of the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church. Schools were also set up by Catholic authorities in various towns and cities in Britain and though Smelser writes that 'the Catholic issue did not play a central role in English educational history in the nineteenth century (1991:218), they did successfully establish many schools, and took the number of certificated Catholic teachers from nineteen in 1849 to 414 in 1862 (C.P.S.C: Fifteenth Annual Report, 1862:21).

Most schools for the poor organised their teaching along the lines of a monitorial system. This system was widely used in the first half of the nineteenth century (Silver, 1983:19) and was introduced by the reformers Joseph Lancaster and Andrew Bell, as a cost-effective way of supporting the learning needs of the poor in large classes with few teachers. By the 1840s the system was heavily criticised, largely because one teacher could not be expected to teach huge numbers of children in large impersonal rooms, and because many of the monitors were untrained (Smelser, 1991:297). In 1846 the new position of pupil-teacher was established, and with it came a shift towards teacher-taught classes in smaller partitioned classrooms, with the assistance of pupil-teachers whose role will be discussed in Chapter 7. Much of this teaching employed a catechetical method which will be explored in Chapter 8.

Irish children and the movement towards a working-class childhood

The children of the labouring poor were the focus of a particular kind of attention in the nineteenth century - from legislators, liberals, church groups and Government, and it is into this set of nineteenth-century beliefs, opinions and factual information, that I must insert the Irish children who are at the centre of this study. The information in this chapter shows how working children were viewed by a society that was energetically arguing about their condition and yet intent on disciplining and controlling a juvenile workforce.

I have not discovered Irish children within the twentieth-century debate of nineteenth-century childhood and perhaps I did not expect to find them there. But by virtue of their being poor, and because they were children, they were caught up in the debate about childhood and made visible by people like Henry Mayhew and Flora Tristan, and by members of Government Inquiries. If Alison James and Alan Prout are correct in stating that modern children are 'actively involved in the construction of their own lives, the lives of those around them and of the societies in which they live' (1990:4) it is surely no less true that Irish children were similarly involved in constructing their own lives over 150 years ago and emerging from the debate as 'children'. This is the issue to be explored.

PART II

A time of transition: from Ireland to Derby

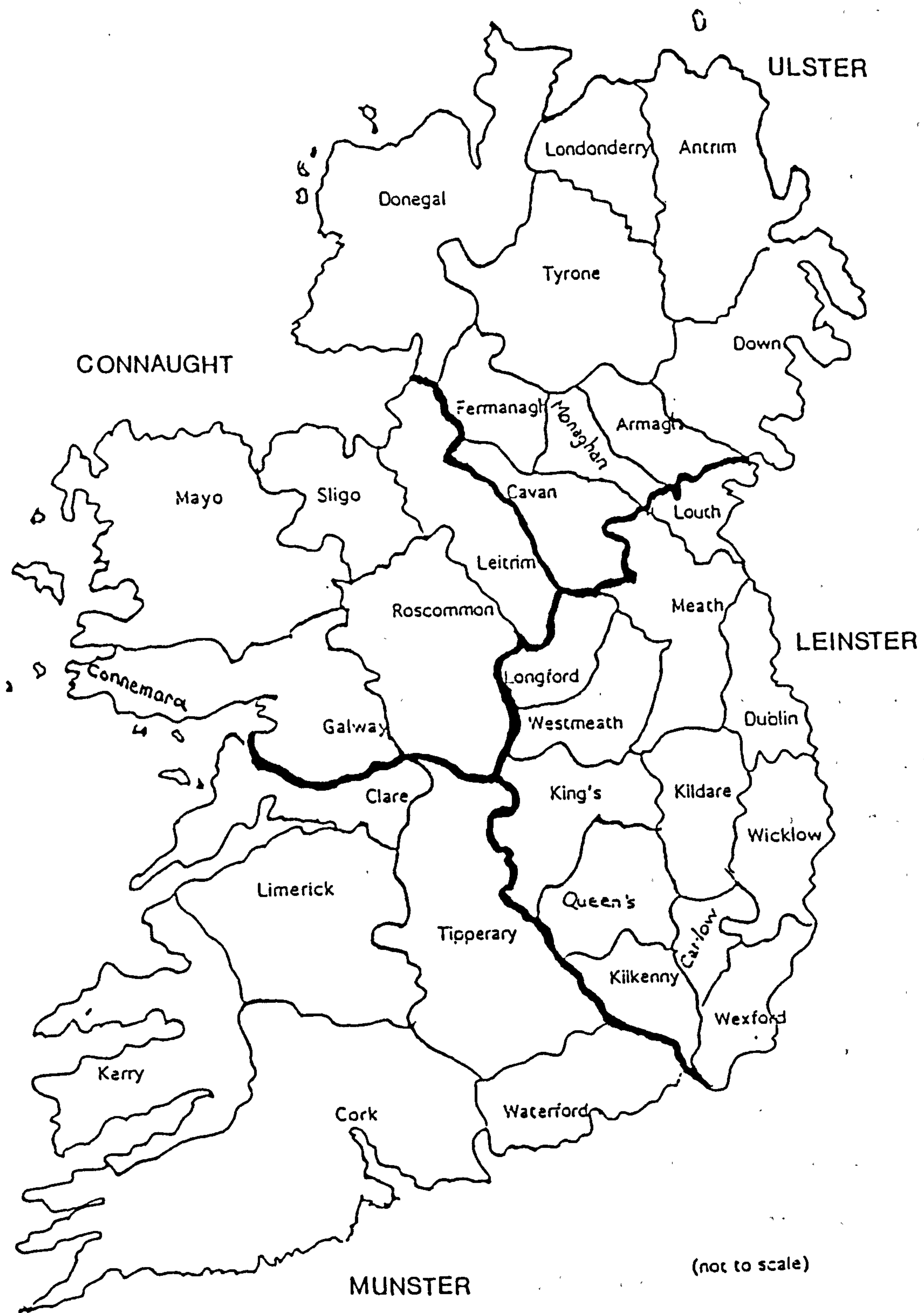
LIVING IN IRELAND: ARRIVING IN DERBY

This chapter covers the period of time when Irish children lived and worked in Ireland and then left their country of birth to begin a new life in England. It argues that there was little provision for a 'childhood' for labouring children in Ireland and shows that when Irish children arrived in Derby they had to accommodate to immediate changes in their lives.

Irish-born children who lived, worked or went to school in Derby spent the first part of their lives in a very different geographical and cultural setting, mostly in the western counties of Ireland. In order to consider how ideas of childhood entered their culture when they moved into a world of urbanisation and industrialisation, it is necessary to examine what life was like for them in Ireland in the first part of the nineteenth century. No special provision was made for rural children by way of giving them a 'childhood' - except perhaps in two cases. Some, particularly the children of labouring families, *might* have had some experience of schooling for at least part of the year, if there was no work for them on the land. Others, who lived temporarily in Irish workhouses, were defined by the Poor Law Commissioners as 'children', and given their own particular agenda. In all other respects rural children, though biologically immature and therefore in need of the physical care normally given by parents to their young, lived as one with adults, inhabiting a

shared space, working together on the land, and at domestic tasks. The first part of this chapter discusses those aspects of rural life, exploring children's work, their education, the use of the Irish language, the place of the Catholic church and finally, emigration and the reasons for leaving Ireland, though it is unlikely that migrant Irish children were given any say in the decision to leave their country of birth and settle in the English Midlands, or else to travel on to other destinations. Like children everywhere, their movements were controlled by their parents' wishes. The second part of this chapter takes the children from Ireland to Derby and builds a picture of their first encounters with major change. What separated these children out from the indigenous poor children in Derby was their cultural background, which was different from anything a Derbyshire child could ever have experienced.

The population of Ireland rose slightly during the first half of the nineteenth century, but then fell again dramatically after the famine years. In 1800 there were approximately five million people living in Ireland; by 1845 this number had risen to eight and a half million, but then fell again, so that in 1851 the population stood at 6,552,392 (Cousens,1960:119). Between 1825 and 1844 as many as 672,000 people emigrated from Ireland (Kennedy,1973:27). The Irish who came to Derby were mainly from the midland and western counties (see map on page 73). The census returns for Derby for 1841, 1851 and 1861 show that the Irish who were living in Derby at these dates came chiefly from the counties of Galway, Roscommon, Mayo and Sligo (see Fig.3, p.75 for a complete list of Irish counties of origin for the Irish population in Derby in these census years). Over 20% of the population emigrated from the counties of Mayo, Roscommon and Sligo between 1841 and 1851 (Davis,1991:36). The more limited data from the Poor Law records in Derby between 1837 and 1847 reflect a similar pattern for those who



The counties and provinces of Ireland in the mid-nineteenth century

gave their county of origin: Dublin - 26; Sligo -14; Roscommon - 8; Mayo - 6; Galway - 4; Leitrim - 4; Tyrone - 2; Cork - 2 (P.L.R.: Minute Book/Relieving Officer's Weekly Returns, 1837-1847). This data suggests that Derby drew families largely from the province of Connaught and other midland Irish counties, especially Dublin, though it must be remembered that information about county of birth was not recorded for the majority of Irish people either in the census data or the Poor Law records.

Irish 'peasantry': a way of living

The Irish poor in nineteenth-century Ireland are often referred to as a 'peasantry', though S.J. Connolly (1985:84) points out that this generic term can be misleading; other historians too have underlined the fact that rural labouring classes did not form a single homogeneous group (Davis,1991:3). What is often termed a 'peasantry' was part of a more complex social structure made up of of *tenant farmers*, who held larger or smaller holdings (but often grew more than they could eat, and sold or traded food); *smallholders*, with perhaps less than five acres of land, often too small to support a family, so that these people were often also weavers, shoemakers, or odd-jobbers. Then there were *cottiers* who rented enough land from tenant farmers to grow potatoes for their family, and worked on a farmer's land for about eighty days a year in return for a cabin and a small plot of their own (Danaher,1985:19). Poorest of all were the *landless labourers* and their families, who worked for farmers but owned or rented no land of their own, and travelled round the countryside for work (Connolly,1982:20). There was often little work for them to do from the beginning of November until the end of February, when the potatoes had been planted, though there were still potatoes to eat and they did not go hungry. Their chief problem came during the 'hungry

Irish county of origin	1851 in Derby	1861 in Derby
Antrim	5	6
Armagh	6	2
Cavan	1	1
Cork	4	3
Down	4	1
Dublin	22	25
Fermanagh	1	0
Galway	58	50
Kerry	0	1
Kildare	1	0
Kilkenny	0	1
Leitrim	14	3
Limerick	9	3
Londonderry	1	0
Longford	1	1
Louth	2	1
Mayo	22	8
Monaghan	7	0
Roscommon	42	15
Sligo	35	44
Tipperary	3	1
Waterford	1	0
Westmeath	2	0
Wexford	1	1

Note:

From the 1851 census:

'Barndon' could be Bandon in Cork

'Clommell' could be Clonmell in Tipperary or Waterford

'Munster' refers to one of the southern counties

From the 1861 census:

'Balineuch' could be Ballinamuck in Longford

'Dungarran' could be Dungarvan in Waterford

'Cartinford' could be Carlingford in Louth.

(These place names have not been included in the above figures).

**Fig.3:County of origin of Irish-born population in Derby in 1851 and 1861
(Census for Derby 1851 and 1861).**

months' from May to August when the potato crop had been eaten and the new crop was not yet ready for harvesting. Their strategy for dealing with this crisis was to close down their cabins and go off begging, often relying on those who were in a more fortunate position to give them food or money (Cousens, 1960:125). Many became 'seasonal harvesters' and worked on farms in England and Scotland during the summer months. But it should not be supposed that the population of Ireland as a whole was suffering during the early and mid-nineteenth century. Many towns in Co. Roscommon which are described by Isaac Weld, had their aristocratic families, their businesses and tradespeople, their thriving markets and shops. ¹

The potato had been the main food of the rural Irish for over one hundred years before the famines of the 1840s. 'Day after day, three times a day', salted and boiled potatoes were cooked and eaten on their own, or perhaps with an onion, or lard, boiled seaweed and some salted fish. Families had established a pattern of self-sufficiency passed down through generations, and while ever the potato cropped well, they could survive (Connell,1962:57,60). It was customary for families to keep a pig, and perhaps because there were no outbuildings attached to the cabins, the pig lived inside, and Weld noticed that it was often 'as well housed as the family, of which indeed (it) form(s) a part' (1832:335).

Many labouring families lived in one-roomed mud cabins with a roped-down thatch and an earthen floor, often without a chimney or windows, as the illustration of Achill Island shows (p.78). The census of Ireland for 1841 revealed that half the number of all dwelling places in the west of the country consisted of one-roomed mud cabins (Cousens, 1960:126) and so it is likely that some Irish children in Derby spent their early years living in them. Sometimes walls were of stone, but often

they were made of clay or sod, cut into blocks and bound together with matted plant roots. Families sat on wooden stools inside their cabin, either round a table or a 'basket' laid on top of a large iron pot, filled with hot water. There was often no other furniture and steam from the water kept their food warm. Beds were planks on the floor, or else made up of a criss-cross of ropes twisted from bog deal under a straw mattress (Danaher, 1985:32, 40, 45). Families made and used rushlights, or had bowls of animal or vegetable oil with wicks for light. Potatoes were often roasted in the turf fire, so there was little need for cooking utensils. Children and adults lived and slept in one room (it was probably warmer like that) so children were likely to have had explicit sexual knowledge. They also had a good understanding of household tasks: cooking, stuffing mattresses with straw, making rushlights. Their childhood was shaped by real family needs and their parents depended on their children to take their share of work.

One significant feature that emerges is that these children were always part of the family group, never segregated. For example, John Burn was taken to a wake as a small boy in about 1820, and remembered the entertainment it provided, when whisky 'brought the Irish character....into bold relief' (1855:73-74). This child was not excluded from the revelries. The event linked the generations as one. Indeed, children were *expected* to be at each family occasion. There was no sense in which 'amusements' were specifically designed for the young, yet this feature of childhood life would become part of children's experience in Derby as they entered a new childhood experience.

Meanwhile, these children had few, if any, demands made on them to enter a world of 'childhood'. Indeed, there is evidence that the rural labouring poor married young, between the ages of eighteen and twenty, and sometimes as early as



A village on Achill Island, showing traditional cabins with roped-down thatches, and without windows or chimneys.

fourteen. Connolly points out that early marriage was acceptable because economic conditions were not improved by waiting until they were older. Also, it was advantageous for young women to marry, since their new status allowed them more independence and privileges (1985:78,100). Young married couples built their own cabin on a patch of land, or lived with one set of parents until their first child was born, when they set up their own family unit to relieve overcrowding (O'Neill,1984:144).

The Irish child and work practices

In addition to growing potatoes and working on the land, some labouring families cultivated small plots of flax which was collected and spun into coarse linen by women and girls. Some earned extra income by selling or bartering goods they had woven or knitted (see illustration on page 81), though in the 1830s the market for linen and yarn had already been significantly reduced by the sale of cheap cotton (Weld,1832:327).² The illustration on page 82 shows two barefooted Connemara women and a girl who are trying to sell stockings at a market. Weld describes a similar scene of market-selling in Co. Roscommon. The women he observed were trying to sell a single piece of bleached linen. They sheltered 'from the showers of rain under their scarlet cloaks,' but after standing 'in the market from nine in the morning, to nearly six in the evening,' they trudged 'homewards with their linen unsold' (1832:403).

Women and girls tried to sell other things too. The illustration on page 90 shows a barefooted Connemara woman and her child on their way to market. This woman has a woven basket balanced on her head, perhaps made from willows grown on her own patch of land. Her child, who carries herself like her mother, has a bundle of

sticks to sell. They are poor, of course, and the girl lives with the harsh reality of her family's poverty. Her mother could not manage without her, and she knows that. Like the girls in The Tidy House, (Steedman,1982) she perhaps sees the inevitability of what her own life will be like when she is a woman, resenting it yet continuing to walk alongside her mother, because after all there is really no other choice, though she might know there was a possibility of emigration to a new life one day.

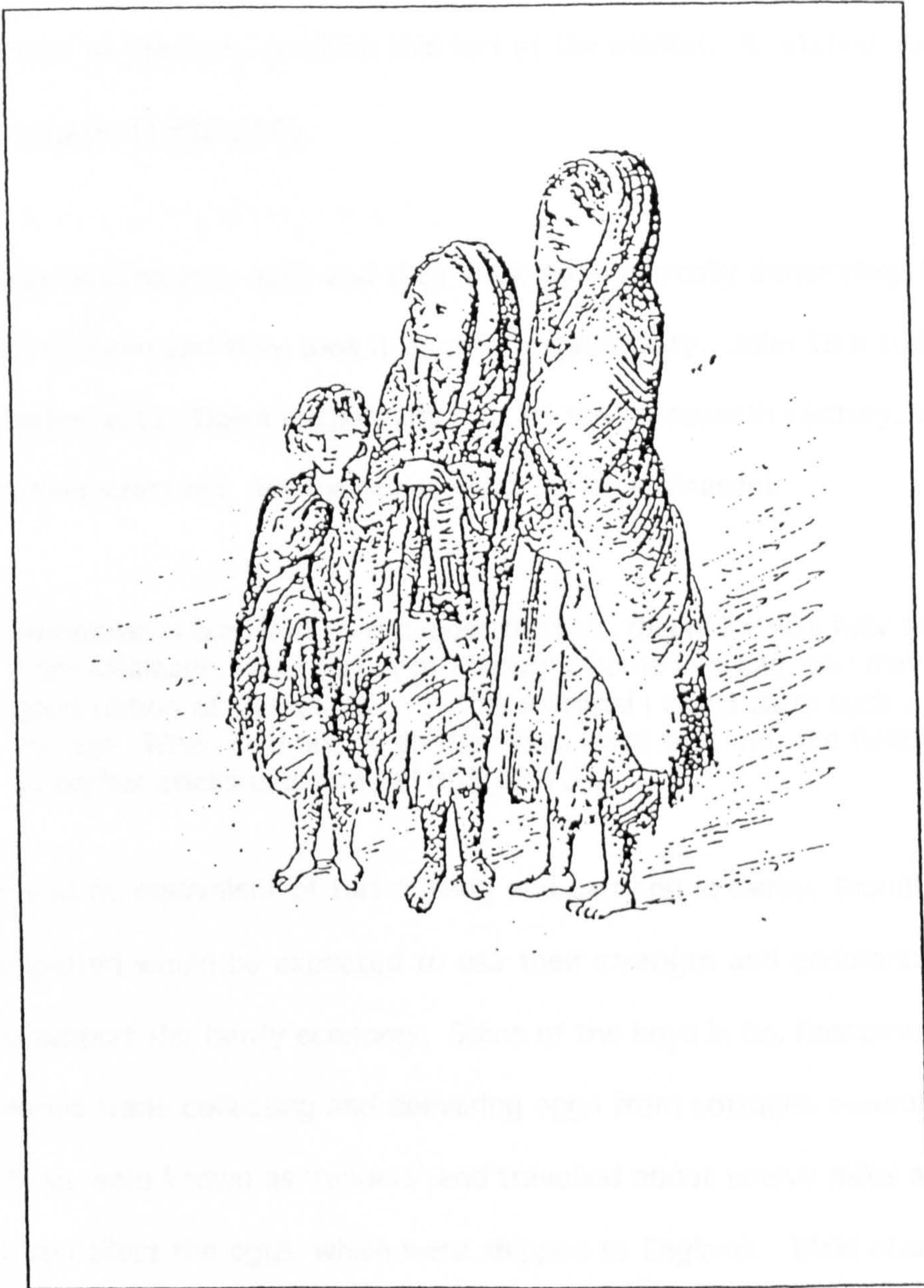
Children of landless labourers and cottiers helped to support the family economy by cutting and carrying turf, an essential job that provided fuel for heating and cooking. In Co. Roscommon, Weld observed children and adults alike carrying cleaves of turf on their backs from the bog, a distance of two miles or more. 'All were barefooted; men, women and children were busy at work, differently laden according to their strengths.' They might have cut and stacked the turf to the rhythm of this song:

Cuttin' the turf, cutting' the turf, with our feet on the shinin'
slan'!
Cuttin' the turf, cutting' the turf, till the cows come home to
the bawn!
Footin' the turf, footin' the turf, footin' and turnin' our best,
Footin' the turf, turnin' the turf, till the rook flies home to
her nest!
Settin' the turf, settin' the turf, hither and over the land,
Settin' the turf, settin' the turf, till the say-turn sinks on the
strand!
Drawin' the turf, drawin' the turf, with our ponies and asses
away,
Drawin' the turf, drawin' the turf, till the boats are out in
the bay!
Rickin' the turf, rickin' the turf, safe in the haggard at last,
To keep and to comfort us all from the rage of the wind and
the blast (Graves, 1880:98).



The inscription beneath this sketch reads: *"Johnny Rogan the pedlar bartering with the Connemara women (to stiff their petticoats) for their knitted stockings and socks. The married women always wear their heads covered. The unmarried remain without any covering."*

Sketches in Connemara, 1845: unsigned collection, Irish Church Missions, Dublin.



Connemara women with a child, selling stockings.

Sketches in Connemara, 1845: unsigned collection, Irish Church Missions, Dublin.

A cleave of turf weighed about three stones, and Weld saw girls 'amongst whom were some really pretty and delicate, and of an age and frame of body seemingly but ill suited to the task,' hawking this turf at the market. It fetched about 3 1/2d for two cleaves (1832:256).

Children worked *very hard*, and their work was physically demanding, but it was expected of them and they took it on as a responsibility. John Burn collected fuel for his father in Co. Down in the early part of the nineteenth century, when he was about twelve years old. His memories were far from pleasant:

Sometimes I was sent to the moss for turf, this place was fully three miles from Killaleagh, what turf I got I brought home in a bag, you may form a very good notion of the quantity of this material I could carry such a distance at my age. When I did not go to the moss, I was sent into the fields and woods to gather sticks and furze (1855:72-73).

There was no equivalent of turf-cutting and carrying in Derby, though children who emigrated would be expected to use their strength and endurance in other ways to support the family economy. Some of the boys in Co. Roscommon followed a precarious trade collecting and delivering eggs from cottages several miles apart. These boys were known as 'runners' and travelled about twelve miles a day, bare-footed, to collect the eggs, which were shipped to England. Weld observed that each boy had 'a regular beat, which he (went) over daily, bearing back the produce of his toil, carefully stowed in a small hand basket' (1832:141). These young boys did a responsible job; they were already used to earning a living, travelling over a wide area with their fragile produce. If they emigrated to Derby, they would not be able to follow this particular trade, but their knowledge of the market, and their tenacity and self-discipline in the collection and sale of the eggs, assured them of an understanding of trade and commerce which they could use to their advantage.

There was another occupation open to women and girls. In Roscommon Town Weld saw prostitutes who worked in the town's brothels. They stood at the doors at noon, waiting for the coach to draw in, to 'entice passengers with gestures too plain to be misunderstood' (1832:405). The military barracks at Athlone was close by, and no doubt provided custom. It is possible that some of these women were seventeen or even younger, which brings them firmly within my category of 'childhood', though their way of life was rooted in the adult world of sexuality and responsibility for earning a living.³

What I have described so far in this chapter is a group of Irish children whose lives were largely taken up with contributing to the family income, and gaining a livelihood from the land by helping to provide shelter, food, warmth, clothing and light. These children were educated into a continuum of self-sufficiency, learning traditional cultural skills of peat-cutting, spinning, weaving, knitting, potato and flax cultivation, cooking, pig-rearing, hawking and begging. Children knew about, and perhaps helped with, the construction of cabins, and the making of peat fires, rushlights and straw mattresses. These were shared responsibilities, and the family worked at them together.

Dress and Appearance

Dress tells its own story, and one significant feature of the entrance into 'childhood' is the wearing of clothes which sets the child apart from the adult. It is therefore of note that the girls in the two illustrations on pages 82 and 90 are dressed like the women. There has been no attempt to insert them into the category of 'the child' by clothing them in a way that set them apart, though dress was still a gendered experience; boys wore trousers and girls wore skirts and a

shawl. These were working children, poor children, wearing serviceable, hard-wearing clothing, perhaps woven at home, and probably passed down through the family. Many poorer families could not afford warm clothing for the winter months, and children usually went without shoes (O'Neill, 1984:117).

It is difficult to see the details of the woman's dress in the illustration on page 90, but it seems remarkably short, suggesting that she led an active working life, kirtling her skirt because she needed to have her legs free for movement, rather as women labourers in southern India today hitch their saris up between their legs. (The woman in the illustration of Achill Island on page 78, holding the child's hand, also wears a short skirt).

Isaac Weld took a great interest in female dress and observed that the older women at Strokestown market, Co. Roscommon, wore scarlet cloaks or mantles 'reaching nearly to the heels,' though younger women had introduced a 'modification of the shawl, also of cloth and of vivid scarlet.' This shawl, he observed, was 'drawn half way over the back part of the head,' setting off 'to uncommon advantage the glossy deep black hair.' The women in Crace's photograph on p.25 wear their shawls drawn back in a similar manner and might have been from this part of Ireland.

Weld seems to have been rather taken by this race of distinctive Celtic women and girls, with their black hair and brightly coloured garments. The scarlet of their dresses and shawls, the black of their hair and the white of their frills were in startling contrast to the subdued rural colours of other locally woven and dyed garments, and Weld commented on the striking juxtaposition of 'deep browns and greens and the vivid reds' (1832:326).

He noticed too that girls wore their 'black glossy hair' in a distinctive 'stiff and formal manner.' It was 'combed perfectly smooth both before and behind, being slightly parted on the forehead; but (was) suffered to hang down quite straight over the ears and behind the head.' The hair was 'evenly cut around the bottom, in a line parallel to the shoulders.' He did not find this at all becoming (Weld, 1832:327). Perhaps the Co. Roscommon women and girls who emigrated to Derby wore their hair like this. And perhaps their characteristic black hair and their scarlet gowns and shawls set them apart from the indigenous population.

The two bare-footed farmers' wives in the illustration on page 89, are wearing dresses which also appear to be similar to those described by Weld. They too are barefooted, but as farmers' wives might be expected to earn a little extra because they farmed more land and had produce to sell. Their cabin even has a window, and there is a song bird in a cage, both as ornament and entertainment for the family.

Irish children and the workhouse

When family self-sufficiency broke down, some children experienced life in Irish workhouses. Dympna McLoughlin described how Irish women made use of the relief system by putting themselves and their children into the workhouse; not because they were destitute, but because their family had hit a time of acute crisis, perhaps in May before the potato crop was ready to harvest, or during the winter when it was difficult to travel around the country (McLoughlin,1990:121).

Sometimes women left their husbands and children in Irish workhouses while they travelled on alone to Dublin for work, or even emigrated. Others 'abandoned' their

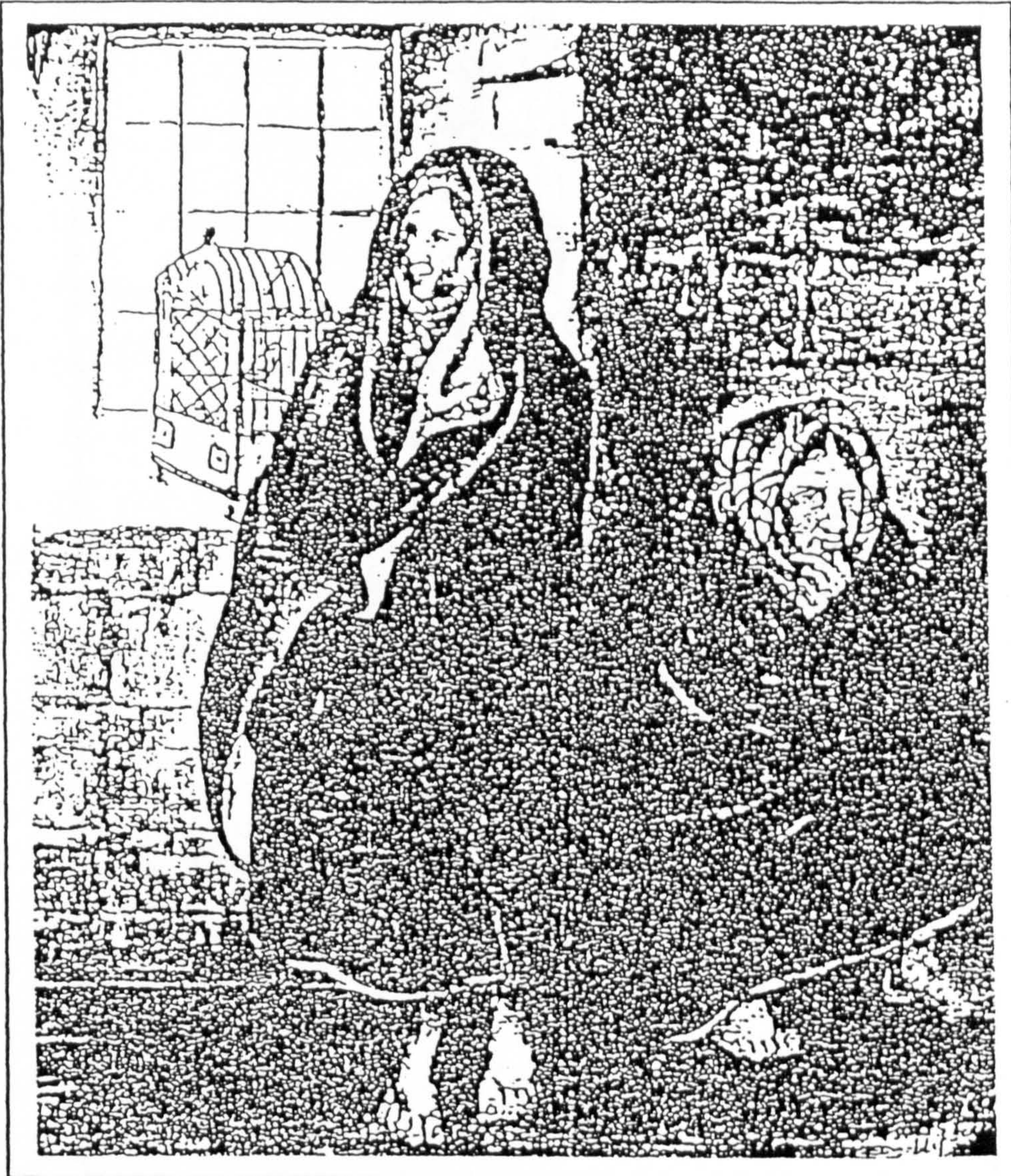
children in workhouses, or left them with family or friends, so they could travel independently to find work, retrieving their children when they could afford to do so. McLoughlin describes this as 'a planned emigration strategy' (McLoughlin, 1988:136). I raise this issue here because Irish children in Derby might have lived temporarily in Irish workhouses, separated from their parents, and inserted into an institutional idea of childhood that was imposed on them by the Irish Poor Law system.⁴ They wore workhouse clothes; for boys, a jacket and fustian trousers, a shirt and cap; for girls, a cotton dress and petticoat, and a cap. The ringing of a bell signalled all the daily routines (thus introducing children to the notion of regimented clock-time), and children received three hours of schooling each day, as well as industrial training (Robins,1980:177).

McLoughlin makes the point forcibly that many children seemingly 'abandoned' in the workhouse were there only on a temporary basis. They were reclaimed by parents as soon as they had the means to support them and the children were old enough to be able to work, either in Ireland, Britain or America (1990:134). These children had a new kind of childhood placed upon them in the workhouse. Their needs were seen to be different from those of adults; they were separated from their parents, given their own dress, and compulsorily educated. I can only speculate on their reactions to this regime. Possibly they felt de-skilled and de-valued, since they could no longer contribute to their family's struggle for survival; the responsibility had been taken from them. But perhaps once they settled they enjoyed the schooling, and wearing different clothes. Possibly too, if they were old enough to understand the position, they knew their parents would return for them so that they could begin a new life. This pattern of temporary living in the workhouse is one that was to be repeated in Derby many times, and will be the focus of Chapter 6.

Irish children and schooling

One aspect of Irish childhood that was available for *some* rural children was schooling.⁵ Children of landless labourers were more likely to attend school regularly than the children of tenant farmers, who were often kept at home to work on their more extensive lands (O'Neill, 1984:148). In Co. Roscommon, and probably in other counties too, schools were better attended in summer than in other seasons. 'In spring and autumn,' Weld noted, 'parents keep (children) at home to assist in the labour; very few attend in winter' (Weld,1832:490). Perhaps attendance in winter was low because children had no shoes to wear in the cold and wet, and inadequate clothing, yet there was a tradition of learning in Ireland (see Dowling,1971) and some parents were keen for their children to become literate and numerate.

Weld found that 'in a great many schools there was an absolute want of really useful and instructive books, adapted to the capacities of those of tender years' (1832:700). In spite of this, there did seem to be widespread literacy in Co. Roscommon during the 1830s, confirming David Fitzpatrick's view that in Ireland generally basic literacy had spread after 1830, though I suspect this was mainly a literacy of the middle-classes. After all, landless labourers could not afford to buy books and newspapers, even though they were available. However, the decreasing demand for child labour meant more labourers' children could attend schools, and since girls were no longer required to support a declining textile industry, their rate of literacy increased more than that of boys (Fitzpatrick,1984:164).



The inscription beneath this sketch reads: *'Two Connemara farmers' wives as they were dressed in the Summer of 1845 before the potatoe disease had broken out and impoverished the country. Their dress consists of home made flannel, dyed red and quilted with white or yellow flannel.'*

Sketches in Connemara, 1845: unsigned collection, Irish Church Missions, Dublin.



Connemara woman and a child.

Sketches in Connemara, 1845: unsigned collection, Irish Church Missions, Dublin.

In spite of this, it is not safe to assume that all children were taught to read and write. In 1861, nearly thirty years after Weld completed his survey, about 35% of Roman Catholic children aged five years and over could both read and write, while 19% could only read but not write (Connolly,1982:77). When Irish children entered schools in Derby, it can be assumed that most were at the very beginnings of their literacy learning. Many of their parents had only rudimentary literacy knowledge, though I am reluctant to label them as 'illiterate' as some historians have done (Ó Tuathaigh, 1985:19) because there was a significant amount of public print in Irish towns and some of it contained information that was useful for them - the cost of steamers to Britain or America, for example. Even the Irish who were not experienced readers knew how to get this kind of information off the page. I shall explore this point further in Chapter 8 with reference to education in Derby. (Chapter 8 discusses the Convent of Mercy school in Dublin, since the work of the Sisters of Mercy relates crucially to Irish children's education in Derby.)

There is one more kind of learning I want to explore briefly before leaving this section. The words of many Irish folk-songs suggest an intimate knowledge of the countryside - changes in the weather, the names of trees and flowers, birds and their calls. I would like to suggest that rural Irish children could 'read' their environment, and that this was a form of learning that set these children apart from urban children, and one that was particularly their own.

The use of the Irish language

S.J. Connolly suggests that from about 1815 onwards there were very few areas of Ireland where English was not understood, though many people were perhaps still more comfortable speaking Irish (Connolly,1982:79). Various statistics collected

for this period suggest that there was a significant reduction in the use of Irish in the early and mid-nineteenth century, though the Irish language was commonly spoken in some districts in the rural west, while English was the language of the north and east, and only increasingly of the west. Ruth Dudley Edwards suggests that the majority of the population in the provinces of Munster and Connaught still spoke Irish in 1851 (1973:230). In Co. Galway and Co. Mayo three-fifths of the population spoke Irish in 1851 (Davis,1991:131), whereas in Leinster and Ulster the proportion of Irish speakers was lower than 25%. It is difficult to judge the amount of Irish spoken with accuracy, though even today my own experience suggests that Irish is still the preferred language of bilingual speakers who live on the small islands west of Galway, when they are speaking amongst themselves. Isaac Weld reported that English was the language generally spoken in Co. Roscommon in 1832. He quoted from a parochial survey: 'they all understand Irish, but it is not so much used among them as formerly' (cited in Weld,1832:490) and Wilde lamented that 'the people are forgetting how to talk Irish, and have taken to reading Bibles and learning English, and thus losing the poetic fictions of other times' (Wilde,1852:126).

Teaching in schools was given in English, a factor which contributed to the growing adoption of the English language in Ireland. Since English was the language of commerce and trade, and also the language of the emigrant, many parents insisted on children speaking English rather than Irish. Bilingual rural children who were caught between learning and using their first language, Irish, and achieving fluency in English, found themselves learning to live in two languages. Some wore tally sticks round their neck; each time they spoke in Irish, a notch was made on the stick, and they were duly punished. Wilde described this incident from a village in Connemara:

....a little boy about eight years of age, addressed a short sentence in Irish to his sister, but meeting the father's eye, he immediately cowered back, having, to all appearance, committed some heinous fault. The man called the child to him, said nothing, but drawing forth from its dress a little stick, commonly called a scoreen or tally, which was suspended by a string round the neck, put an additional notch in it with his penknife. (It was) to prevent the child speaking Irish; for every time he attempted to do so a new nick was put in his tally, and when these amounted to a certain number, summary punishment was inflicted upon him by the schoolmaster (1852:27).

The child's father justified his actions by saying, 'the child must have larnin', and, as they tache no Irish in the National School, we must have recourse to this to instigate them to talk English' (1852:27). For this little boy, and others like him, this self-conscious use of English might have led to a dislocation between home life and school life, and in his relationships with other family members, particularly if he was not fluent in English.

James Healy, commenting on the work of nineteenth-century Irish balladmakers, remarked that they began to write in 'a language new to them, about current events - even as they used to do in their old tongue.' He noted that 'because of their incomplete knowledge of a language adopted, these efforts of the change-over period often (seemed) illiterate' (1965:9). Declan Kiberd described people in this period of transition as 'shedding Irish and adopting English at a pace which left them fully articulate in neither.' This might be explained by the process of learning the grammatical structures of a new language: there is evidence that Irish speakers were thinking in Irish syntax and imagery while using English words (1989:307). R.E. Kennedy's assertion that 'access to Great Britain was culturally easier for the English-speaking Irish than for rural migrants from other European countries' (1973:66) is perhaps over-simplified, since it takes no account of bilingual Irish/English speakers with varying competencies in English.

The Roman Catholic Church in Ireland

Irish children and their families who emigrated to England before the middle of the nineteenth century were familiar with a loosely organised Roman Catholic church in Ireland. It is likely that they had no regular contact with a parish priest, since in 1800 there were only 1,850 priests for a *Catholic* population of 3,900,000, and even by 1850 there were only 2,500 priests for a Catholic population of around 5,000,000, giving a ratio of about one priest for every 2,100 people. Contact with nuns was minimal, since in 1800 there were only 122 nuns in Ireland; by 1850 this number had risen to over 1,500, giving a ratio of one nun for every 3,400 people (Larkin, 1972:626). These figures are important within this study, since I shall be arguing that the Roman Catholic church in Derby presented Irish children with a new experience of Catholicism, and the generous provision of personnel - two priests, with eight nuns in 1851 rising to fourteen nuns in 1861 - made an enormous impact on the lives of Irish children in Derby. The nuns in particular were dedicated, visible and persuasive as teachers, nurses and organisers, and became a major force in changing childhood for Irish immigrant children in Derby from 1846 onwards.

But in Ireland, religion was not institutionalised in the same way. Where there were churches, they were often too small to hold a congregation, and so baptisms and marriages were mostly held in the home with the priest and clerk in attendance (Connolly, 1985:111). Churches were often plain and undecorated - perhaps not surprising since some doubled up as school-houses and even threshing floors. Priests were said to lack dignity, and compromised their authority by choosing not to wear vestments. They were often uneducated men, belonging to the lower

classes of society (Connolly, 1982:35,97) and were regularly accused by their parishoners of drunkenness, avarice and of consorting with women (Larkin, 1972:632). But what is important for the purposes of this study is that there was no attempt by the Catholic church to impose a pattern of childhood experience on rural children - the infrastructure was not there to allow this to happen, even if the church authorities had wished it. Chapter 6 will show that Irish Catholic children in Derby came into an orthodox Roman Catholic church whose organisation was an effective transmitter of childhood, and where visible symbols of Roman Catholicism - an elegant new church, statuary, elaborate vestments, crucifixes - were there for children to observe.

There were a great many superstitions in Ireland at this time, many surviving from pre-Christian Celtic beliefs, including ritualised celebrations at holy wells and bonfires and festivals on local patron saints' days (Miller, 1975:89). There were also numerous daily rituals which had a basis in superstitious belief. In 1825 Archbishop Murray was told that 'people in several counties of Ireland firmly believed that the priests had power to change them into goats or hares (cited in Purcell, 1981:75). In an attempt to stamp out superstitious belief, one priest in Co. Roscommon prohibited attendance at the holy well (Weld, 1832:515-516).⁶

Some superstitions were intended to keep children from harm. Once in Britain these children came up against the received wisdom of the medical practitioners, who blamed their mothers for treating them with folk-medicines (p.162). The words of lullabies sometimes acted like charms to keep away supernatural beings like the banshee (*bean sidhe*) or woman-fairy, who wailed as she combed her long red hair and foretold death or disaster for a member of the family. The final verse of 'Hush Song' below was a mother's plea for her child to sleep safely:

May no cruel fairy charm thee!
May no dread banshee alarm thee!
Flood, nor fire, nor sickness harm thee!
Winter, spring, and summer, -
Summer, autumn, winter, -
Shoheen sho lo,
Shoheen hoo lo!

(Graves, 1880:12)

The final verse of the lullaby 'Castle of Dromore' below shows how the strength and potency of rural Irish folk-magic is carried in song. The banshee and Holy Mary both appear as feared and revered personages of enormous power, and the mother appeals to them both to intervene to protect her child. Their joint presence illustrates how Irish Catholicism was still in many ways a folk-religion, where superstition and Catholicism sat comfortably together:

Bring no ill wind to hinder us, my helpless babe and me -
Dread spirit of Blackwater banks, Clan Eoin's wild banshee,
And Holy Mary pitying, in Heaven for grace doth sue,
Sing hushaby, lul, lul, lo, lo, lan.
Sing hushaby, lul, lul, loo. (O'Keefe, 1965:22)

The oral tradition in Ireland is still strong today, interwoven with the memorisation of written texts taken from oral accounts. Imelda Hogan recalls her childhood visits to a neighbour in the 1920s. He had learnt the defence speeches of famous Irishmen on trial by heart and recited them aloud. 'They meant nothing to me,' she said, 'but the music of the language, the emphasis he put into the defence like, it made an awful impression on me. I was fascinated to hear it.' She listened over and over again to ghost stories - 'frightening in a way but they never frightened us really - the black dog, over and over again, and the 'Children of Lir,' where the cruel step-mother turned the children into swans and they were condemned to live so

many years on one lake and so many years on the next, and through all the awful winters when they were frozen to the rocks. I can never look at a swan without that impression. Never. Even to this day' (Hogan: November,1992)

The same elements recur through Irish folk stories: fire, light, water. There were special places that belonged to the supernatural world - hills, stones, seats, trees, wells and they were woven into tales of fairies, witches, giants, heroes, and legends of St. Patrick (Rees,1961:236,266). Irish children were not going to find these stories in their school books in Derby, but they might have carried them in their heads, as Imelda Hogan has done for over fifty years, and perhaps told them to their children in Derby, thus transmitting a cultural heritage from Ireland to Britain through its literature.

A rural time-world

I indicated in Chapter 1 that children's perception of time reflected their view of themselves as members of a group - as workers, as scholars, as *children*. In rural Ireland work was hard, sustained and disciplined, but also patient and slow, because it had to wait for the growth of plants and the time to reap the harvests. Time was organised around the seasons, ages were marked by the cycle of growth - 'She's only seventeen last grass' say the words of the song (Ó Lochlainn, 1978: 133). There was no clock-time and the passing of time was marked instead by the changing seasons, the calls of day or night birds, moon rise, the appearance of blossom. In 'Derreen day' a mother sings to her child about the passing of time :

Derreen day, derreen day,
The nightjar calls upon the heath,
Derreen day, derreen day,
The bittern booms the reeds beneath.

Derreen day, derreen day,
Cows will go west at dawn of day,
Derreen day, derreen day,
My darling will watch them lest they stray.
(O'Sullivan,1981:15)

Consciousness of time in rural Ireland was in many ways imprecise and unquantifiable, and children learnt to regulate the passing of time by rhythms of the working day, as the lullaby suggests. Outdoor jobs had to be completed before dark, except at full moon - with no street lighting to invade the night sky, the moon lit fields almost as brightly as the sun. E.P. Thompson, considering the differences between rural and industrial time, argued that in rural economies only tasks which *had* to be done were actually undertaken, so that time could be given over to other human needs. Rural labour was therefore 'more humanely comprehensive than timed labour' and one characteristic of time-orientation in 'peasant societies' was the blurring of the distinction between 'work' and 'life', so that 'there (was) no great sense of conflict between labour and 'passing the time of day' (1967:60).

Thompson pointed out that though this cycle of work and leisure might have sustained rural life, it was considered inappropriate by people who lived their lives by regulated clock-time (1967:60). Rural Irish children who came to work in Derby factories needed to make drastic adjustments to their structuring of time, because they were expected to be at work, at school or at mass at set times. The annual cycle of the agricultural year in rural Ireland was tied in with celebratory festivals, and these were important time markers for the rural Irish. Easter and Christmas were celebrated, together with pre-Christian festivals associated with agricultural rhythms. St. Brigid's Day (February 1) marked the beginning of agricultural work; on St. Patrick's Day (March 17) the crops were sown; (Miller,1975:91). There

were also daily rituals that served as time markers for the passing of the day; for example, in Galway, Connemara and the Aran Islands, fishermen who heard the names of a fox, rabbit or hare, or who saw these animals before they went fishing in the morning, would not take their boats out (O'Donovan, cited in Connolly, 1982:91), a practice which Derby manufacturers would no doubt consider indolent, but which was rooted in the mind-set of a people whose superstitious beliefs guided and justified their actions.

The pull of the city

David Fitzpatrick has argued that for many Irish people emigration was 'an expected stage in the cycle of life' (Fitzpatrick,1984:29) and certainly migration did not suddenly begin in the famine years of the 1840s. In the early eighteenth century three or four hundred people were already emigrating each year from Ireland to America or the West Indies (Jackson,1963:2). From about 1816 vessels specialised in carrying emigrants from Ireland, enticing people with cheap fares.⁷ The annual journeys of seasonal harvesters had already paved the way for permanent emigration, by establishing routes and contacts in Britain (Fitzpatrick, 1984:26). William Wilde, writing in 1849, described the peasant who turned 'with a longing eye to his far-distant destination in the west' (1852:22) following a tradition of emigration that had already been fostered by seasonal harvesters. Historians are united in their claims about the huge numbers of harvesters who crossed to Britain each year. Rose maintains there were 'thousands' of seasonal workers in England every year (1988:6), while Jackson estimates that in 1841 49,911 males and 7,740 females crossed over to Britain for work on the harvest (Jackson,1963:193). On their return, the harvesters brought a new consciousness of the world beyond their village, and of a life lived in the English language.

Poverty and distress

What has not been apparent so far in this discussion is the extent of the distress affecting many labouring families and those with small tenancies during the years before the famines of the 1840s and during famine years themselves. The reality of poverty, hunger, disease, eviction and early death was part of the life experience of rural Irish children. I will briefly outline the main causes of this distress; they have a direct bearing on this study because they show why children suffered and the reasons for emigration, and were therefore part of Irish children's memory and childhood experience, both in Ireland and Britain.

Even before the more extensive famines of the later 1840s, the potato crop had partly failed in 1829-30, 1832-34, 1836, 1839 and 1841-2. In 1845 there was another partial failure and in 1848 the crop failed completely (McLoughlin: 1988:9). Between 1845 and 1848 it is generally believed that perhaps one million people starved to death, or died of fever, and a further one million people emigrated (Miller, 1975:91).

One of the chief reasons for this hardship was the result of the sub-division of land. Lynn Lees explains that when families changed from a grain to a potato diet during the eighteenth century they only needed only about one-fifth of the land they formerly used for grain production to support themselves, freeing the remaining land for sub-division among their children, who would not then necessarily have to leave their family home (Lees, 1979:24). To compound the problem, between 1780 and 1840 the population of Ireland almost doubled, and the practice of sub-dividing land put an additional strain on large families, who were

forced to find other ways of supporting themselves. To make matters worse, high rents were demanded from absentee landlords for land which had already been subdivided, reducing living standards further (Jackson: 1963:xi). Gradually the rural Irish gradually lost their rights to land and landlords evicted tenants who could not pay rents, or seized their grain in lieu of payment (Cousens,1960:131). A tragic pattern emerges of a complex system of land-holding and land inheritance, the failure of the potato crop in successive years, evictions, and the decline of the textile industry. All these factors contributed to economic and social distress of Ireland in the first half of the nineteenth century, and were a dismal part of children's experience and memory.

The Cultural Inheritance of the Rural Irish Child

What I have described so far in this chapter is the structure of the society for rural Irish children. Their way of life demanded a high degree of integration and self-sufficiency, learnt in relationship to the land and to a particular sequence of production. Some of these children had a good geographical knowledge, many knew about dislocation within their family, and all understood the need for thrift. This knowledge was deep inside them when they came to Britain. Theirs was not a childhood that had shielded them from distress; instead, it was one that expected them to play their part in supporting the family and sharing its burdens, in a social context where adult-sized problems were problems for all the family, part of their day-to-day lives. Irish children might have been anxious about leaving their homes, but perhaps there was a sense of exhilaration too, and an ability to carry their young lives lightly enough to look ahead to what was coming in an unknown country.

The Experience of Travel

One unique set of experiences that separated labouring Irish children in Derby from the town's indigenous children (and from their own British-born brothers and sisters) was their experience of travel across different geographical locations in both countryside and town. This experience enlarged their sense of place, and gave them a 'mental map' of their journey across Ireland and England. They came to Derby at a time when there was enormous interest in the adventure and romance of travel, the excitement of scientific and geographical discoveries, and the acquisitiveness of colonisation. In 1853, Derby's educated middle classes, with a taste for learning and travel, could watch a moving diorama of 'Colonel Fremont's Overland Route Across the Rocky Mountains to the Cities and Gold Fields of California' (Derby Mercury, January 26, 1853) or hear a lecture on the 'Progress of the Emigrant from the Old World to the New' (Derby Mercury, October 26, 1853).

The audiences for these entertainments were possibly unaware that there were Irish children in the town who had had considerable experience of overland and sea travel themselves. The journey from Dublin by steamer took twelve hours or more, and there are enough harrowing reports of the conditions on board ship to suggest that the crossing was at best unpleasant and at worst dangerous. John Burn's sea crossing from Dublin to Liverpool in 1828 includes a description of an Irish family who were on board with him, in conditions that must have been replicated many times for people such as these, travelling cheaply:

Among the deck passengers there was a man and his wife with seven children; the whole of this family were like living mummies enveloped in rags...when the rolling wave reached the quarter-deck it rebounded with violence, and engulfed the poor hapless family in its boiling yeast.' At the time the whole of the family were prostrated in sea-sickness (1978:131-132).

Some families were prepared to travel even more cheaply - for 2s 6d or less - by offering themselves as 'living ballast' in empty coal ships returning to England from Ireland (Mayhew,1985:377). How many families, I wonder, arrived in Liverpool or Holyhead with sick, hungry and storm-tossed children, their clothing stiff with salt spray?

Irish migrants normally had set routes across Ireland, depending on where they lived, and where they wanted to go to. The Irish from the north-western counties, which included many who later settled in Derby, normally took the 'midland route' across Ireland to Dublin, then crossed to Liverpool or Holyhead, and travelled on to the north of England or the English Midlands. Those from Ulster or North Connaught took the northern route to Scotland, and those from the southern provinces of Munster and South Leinster headed for London by way of Bristol (Ó Tuathaigh,1895:15). The map on page 104 shows some of the main routes.

Evidence from Poor Law records suggests that some of the Irish came to Derby after living in or passing through other English towns, including Liverpool, Nottingham, Macclesfield (where there were also silk mills), Lichfield and, more locally, through the small towns and villages of Shipley, Belper, Langley, Burton, Radbourne, Kegworth, Ashbourne, Swarkestone, Ashby, Sawley and Darley (See pages 106 and 108 for maps showing roads linking Derby to other main towns and map of local towns and villages).



Map showing the main sailing routes from Ireland to Britain

Some travelled on foot, and others by stage, train or canal if they could afford the fare. Those who could not afford any kind of transport walked great distances between towns. Evidence from the Poor Law records suggests that some Irish people were exhausted when they arrived in Derby, perhaps not surprisingly; possibly they had walked many miles. Catherine Walsh, aged fourteen, described as 'sick', travelled to Derby with a 54-year-old male relative, perhaps her father. The pair 'came into the town yesterday' (P.L.R., R.O.W.R. May, 1847). There is no evidence to show where Catherine and her father came from, nor where they were going. Possibly they had relations in Derby and had journeyed to the Midlands before the cold autumn weather made travelling even more hazardous. For children like Catherine, journeying like this was always accompanied by a sense of anticipation, of not knowing what the next day held, nor where they were going to lay their heads.

Providing children recovered from journeys like this, and most did, this sense of travel surely gave them a sophisticated and highly specialised knowledge of particular regions, both rural and urban, and of strategies for crossing land and sea both cheaply and efficiently. The travelling was accompanied by all the excitement of the new, the sadness of leave-taking, and possibly the experience of encountering sickness or death on the road. Their personal stories of migration and travel remained with them throughout their lives, confirming their identity as *Irish* children.

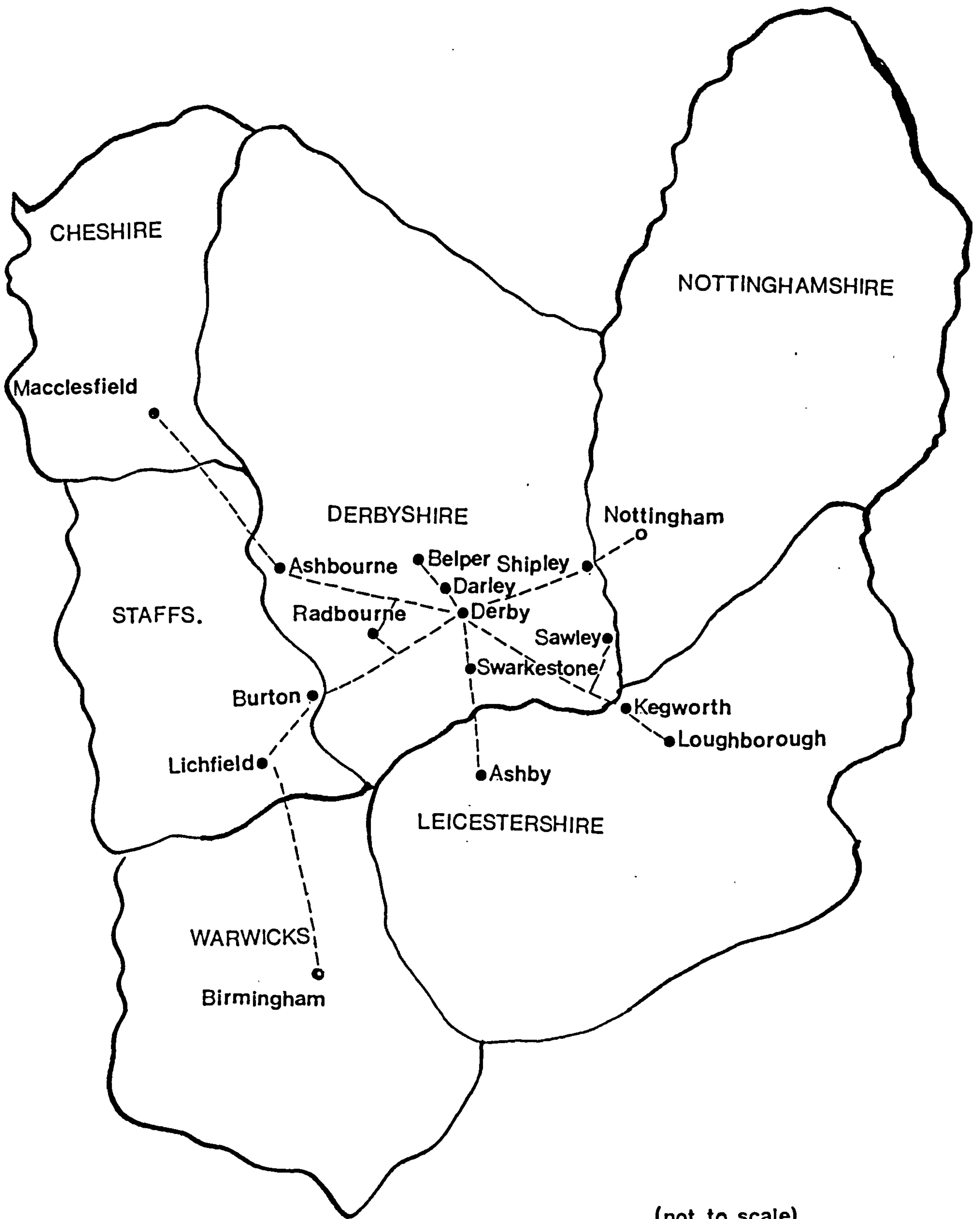
The Annals of the Convent of Mercy in Derby for 1859 indicate that many Irish families travelled on from Derby to America, and there is no doubt that some migrants initially saw England only as a stepping-stone on the way to a more



Map showing Derby's links with other towns and cities in the 1840s
(not to scale)

adventurous and rewarding life. But some who wanted to travel further were disappointed. The grandmother of an eleven-year-old Irish boy, Joseph McKee, who was an inmate of the workhouse, applied to the Board of Guardians for £12 to send him to America with his relations, but the Guardians refused, and Joseph had to stay in the workhouse, perhaps hoping for a new life in America when he was working and had saved enough for the fare (P.L.R., Minute Book, March, 1839). Some Irish children and their families left Ireland or mainland Britain only to return again. In 1865 St. Mary's parish records list the burial in Derby of a one-year-old boy who was born in Cincinnati (sic) to Irish parents, but who died in Derby, and of a thirteen-year-old boy, born in Co. Kerry, but living in Derby with his family. He had a sixteen-year-old sister who was born on Malta - possibly her father was an Irish soldier who was garrisoned there (Census for Derby, 1861).

When Irish children arrived in Derby, they came upon a panorama of mills and smoking chimneys. This presented them with a very different landscape from the one they had left behind in rural Ireland, and on a much bigger scale than they were used to. Derby's population was 33,956 in 1841, and was still growing (Drake, 1862:5). The atmosphere in the town was dirty and smoky, and a cause of medical concern. Dr. William Baker, in his report on the Sanitary Conditions of Derby (1849), criticised 'the corruption of the air caused by the torrents of black smoke that issue(d) from the manufactory chimneys' (1849:297). The lithograph of Derby by Henry Burn (1846) on page 113 shows this encroaching industrial landscape of chimneys, mills and factories, dominated by the Protestant Cathedral. The whole scene stands in sharp contrast to the illustration of Achill Island (p.78) with its traditional cabins, small village community, mountains, sea and meadowland.



Map showing road links used by the Irish who were travelling between Derby and other small towns in Derbyshire and adjacent counties.

Irish children walking through the market square in Derby encountered a life of middle-class respectability and gentility; a world of top hats, crinolines, dress coats and bonnets, and smart little girls dressed in 'a mass of frills and feathers borrowed from the fashion of their elders' (Laver, 1964:52). Records indicate that only five middle-class Irish children lived in Derby at the three census dates (others will have been missed, but Appendix 4, p.326, shows their details).

These middle-class children were unlikely to have inhabited the same social world as the Irish children in this study, except perhaps at Mass, where both sets of children might have gazed at each other across St. Mary's Church. The labouring Irish children might have identified more with poor local children who lived around them in the streets and courts which would be their new home. Perhaps they looked out for other Irish people as they took their first walk from the railway station. They were not difficult to recognise, as evidence in Chapter 1 has shown (p.22).

Finding Lodgings

The problem of finding somewhere to live is always difficult for new immigrant groups, particularly when they have no money. One solution, a survival strategy practised by many, is to seek out others in the town who are already settled. The first Sikhs to emigrate in the 1960s were mostly young men; when they arrived in Britain they sought out those they knew, sometimes people from their own village, and they stayed with them while they looked for work, paying a small rent for their lodging (James, 1974:10). Irish settlers in British towns and cities in the nineteenth century helped others in a similar way. 'Though they have little to give, they give what they have,' said Mr. Turner, a mill-owner from Manchester. 'They will take in a family of fresh immigrants, though they have only one room, and lie on straw

themselves' (Poor Inquiry, 1836:453). The Irish in Britain were 'driven to the meanest houses', according to John Jackson (1963:44). Like all the immigrant poor before and after them, they were prepared to live in the cheapest and most basic accommodation. The Poor Law records and census data show that they lived mostly in seven streets in the centre of Derby. They were never ghettoised and lived among local households, just as the Irish did in London. Lynn Lees describes their houses 'criss-cross(ing) working-class communities' (1979:87), but on a much larger scale than in Derby. One Derby street in particular, Walker Lane, was heavily populated by Irish families, though local people also lived in houses and courts in the street. 8

Irish children in Derby were used to hard living, but it is difficult to imagine that even the most basic cabin in Ireland can have been more unpleasant to live in than these houses. In 1849 Edward Cresy, Sanitary Inspector of Public Health in Derby, singled out Court 4, Walker Lane (which housed nineteen Irish people in 1851, nine of them children) as one of the more squalid establishments in Derby, even though someone had thoughtfully tried to make improvements by placing 'stepping stones absolutely laid to the door,' so that the occupants did not have to pass 'through the offensive and polluted stream that runs from the cess pool' (Report to the General Board of Health, 1849:13). Most houses were built back-to-back, with one room on the ground floor and one or two rooms above; the average rent was 1/9d or 2/- a week.

The living conditions of an unnamed Irish family living in a court near Willow Row were described by Dr. William Baker, a member of the Derby Sanitary Committee, and are probably typical of many family homes. The family 'consisted of eight persons - viz. a man, his wife and six children.' The home they lived in was 'in a

confined situation, had not any door, window, or other opening at the back, and contained only one sitting and one bedroom; the size of each (was) 10 feet by 7 feet 8 inches and 7 feet high' (Derby and Chesterfield Reporter, December 31, 1848). Living in close proximity to others was a cultural feature of life in rural Ireland, where a family shared a one or two-roomed cabin and cooked, ate, and slept in the same room. So to speak of overcrowded or 'confined situations' as Dr. Baker does, is to lay a cultural value judgement on a way of living that might have been alien to Dr. Baker but 'normal' for Irish families.

Irish children and their parents had left small cabins, some without windows or a central chimney, and the increased space offered by a two or three-roomed dwelling surely involved the family in making new decisions about the use of space. Perhaps a two or three-roomed house seemed too large for their needs, particularly since they had little or no furniture. Inviting newcomers to share it with them might not only have been an act of generosity, but a comfortable cultural practice which went some way to solving the problem of having too much space.

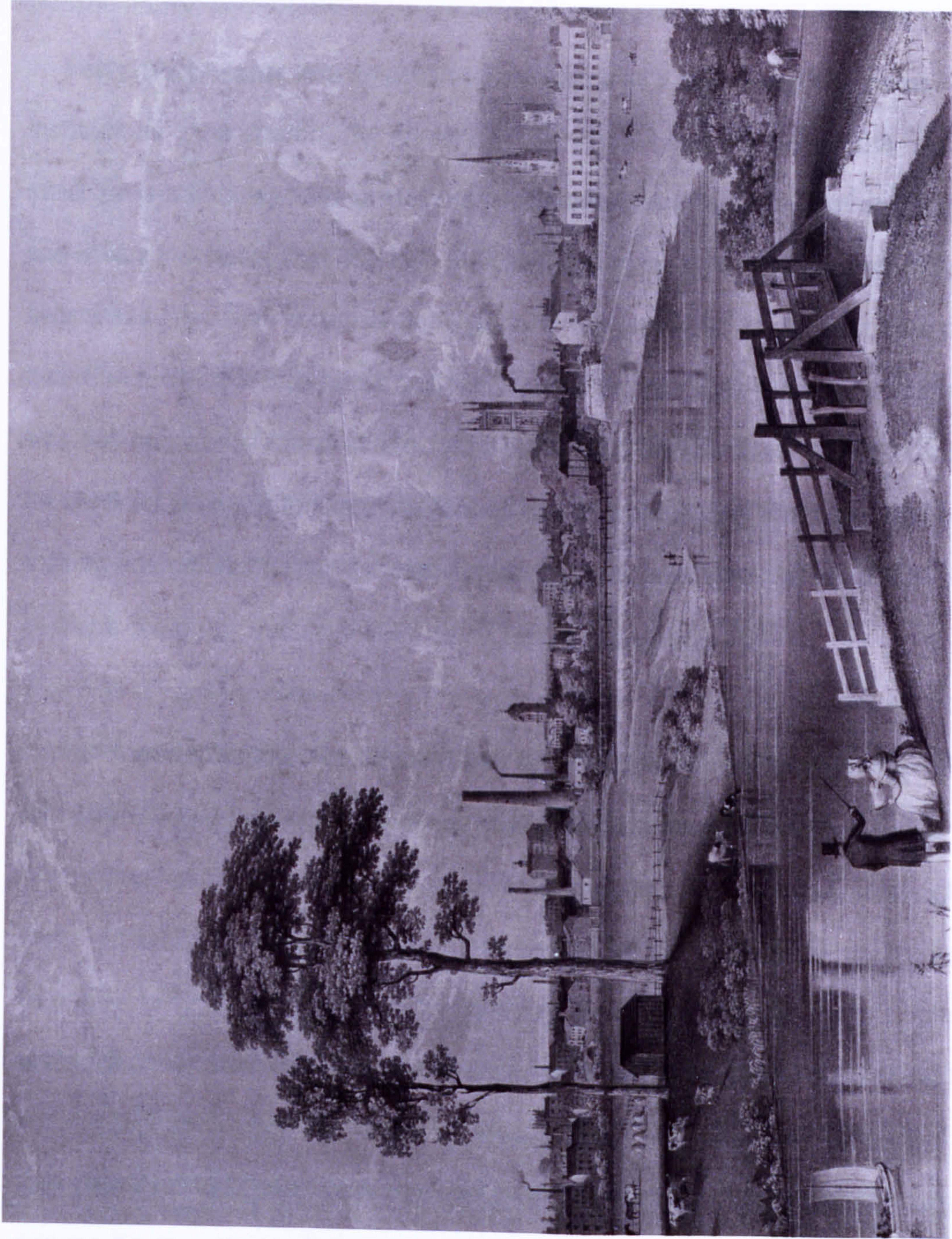
I suspect children were often cold. There was no free turf to dig up for fuel as there had been in Ireland; this freed children from the labour of collecting it, but if their family could not afford to buy wood or coal in Derby, they went without heating - though, like the families Engels observed in Manchester, they might have been so cold that they burnt 'everything combustible...chairs, doorposts, mouldings, flooring' (Engels,1993:103).

Tom Barclay, a second-generation Irish boy, lived in a Leicester court with his Irish-born parents in the 1850s in 'two little rooms, one up and one down.' The door to his court 'was seldom open in summer and hardly ever in winter: it would never do to let the cold in,' he wrote(1934:11). Perhaps this was a rule in the household. Possibly too, his parents understood that the smells from the midden and cess-pit were a health risk, since their door and window were 'not six feet from the muck hole and the unflushed privies' (1934:3). In Derby at this time there was no system of night-soil removal and cess pools were emptied only once a year (Hanbury,1913:23) so it is likely that Irish children lived in identical conditions.

Tom Barclay never had 'a complete bath' as a child (1934:9) and this must have been so for many children in Derby. Fresh water was a scarce resource and there was a shortage of public baths in the town, even if the Irish had been able to afford to use them (Grattidge and Heath,1991:186). Though these conditions shocked and surprised the English middle-classes, Irish children were accustomed to having very little in the way of furniture, and in some ways their living conditions were not dissimilar to those they had experienced in Ireland; indeed, the brick floors in their houses, and coal-burning stoves might have been something of a luxury.

Moving to Different Rhythms: Adult Employment and the Structuring of Industrial Time

Lynn Less, in her study of the Irish in London in the nineteenth century, showed that the world of urban and industrial living changed the structuring of time for the Irish who came to Britain (1979:16). No group of migrants who move from a rural to an industrial setting can be freed of the need to adjust its perception of the



View of Derby from the meadows, by Henry Burn, 1846. According to Dr. William Baker, the 'corruption of the air' was 'caused by the torrents of black smoke that issue(d) from the manufactory chimneys.' (see page).

passing and marking of time, and the rural Irish had no option but to adapt 'the seasonal rhythms of the countryside, with its festivals and religious holidays, to the needs of industrial production' (Thompson, 1967:92).

Irish children came into an urban environment at a time when the major institutions - the church, the factories, the schools and the workhouse, ran to strict time schedules. Many routines and events were regulated by rigid clock-time, and it was inevitable that the Irish in Derby should have developed a growing awareness that their external dealings with the industrial world were now precisely quantified, divisible into hours and fractions of hours. This adherence to clock-time was not only to be found at the factory; St. Mary's Church, for example, advertised its services at 'half-past ten, vespers at three, and evening service at half-past six', making no concessions to the Irish Roman Catholic poor who had no clocks, and perhaps could not even tell the time (Catholic Directory, 1847).

But it was probably not the insertion into precise clock-time that first caught the attention of Irish children; rather, the excellent street lighting in Derby immediately changed their impression of the shift from day to night, from light to dark. In 1836 there were 210 gas lamps and 110 oil lamps in the town's streets (Hanbury, 1913:22). 'The very day-light has found a rival in gas', wrote John Burn when he considered the illumination of the streets in the 1850s (1978:185).

In Derby Irish children were required to be at work, at school and at church punctually, though whether in fact they ever got there on time is another matter. It is difficult to imagine that they understood the concept of punctuality or 'lateness,' unless they had been to school in Ireland or spent some time in the

workhouse. Most lived within sight and sound of the town's clocks and heard the chimes that marked the hours, half-hours and quarter-hours. Since they were unlikely to have owned clocks or watches themselves (Thompson, 1967:67), these clocks were important because they enabled families to frame their daily tasks in chunks of quantifiable time. The photograph on p.260 shows a prominent clock in St. Peter's Street, on the shop frontage of Johnson's the Goldsmith and Jeweller, whose shop window also displays a range of timepieces, reminding children they were situated firmly within the world of regulated time, time that was even sold in the shops.

The pace of manufacture ushered in a new consciousness of the relation of time to production of goods, for both adult and child workers. Rigid production schedules were laid down in factory and mill, and piecework rates had to be understood. An old Irish woman who was still living in Derby in the 1930s recalled how her mother, a silk factory worker in the 1850s or 1860s, fetched work home from the mill and pinned her children to her apron in order to free herself to finish 'the gloves and the socks and whatever they made at the mill.' There was pressure to complete the garments because she was paid in piecework, and the children helped her to sew - 'at seven or eight years of age doing that kind of thing was quite usual' (Hogan: May,1993).

Families who worked the land timed their work to coincide with the annual cycle of the agricultural year, and this pattern made it possible to blur the distinction between work and life needs. It is probable that the Irish in Britain were at first inclined to overlay industrial patterns of work with their traditional practices, and this might be why they were often criticised for their lack of methodical application. 'The Irish do less work in the course of the week than the English' stated Mr.

Turner, a mill owner from Manchester (Poor Inquiry, 1836:440). Perhaps they did, but what appeared to be slowness or even laziness was perhaps more to do with adaptation to the requirement to work without pause, in response to production schedules.

Similarly, the Board of Guardians in Derby took evidence from employers when they suspected that Irish families who applied for relief were actually capable of supporting themselves. George Purfield, an Irish weaver who lived in Derby with his wife and eight children, had his case for relief dismissed when the Guardians heard from his employer that 'the family might earn 20/- a week but they did not attend their work' (P.L.R., Minute Book, February, 1841).

The work patterns of Irish adults in Derby

Appendices 5 - 10, pp.327-336, show the variety of jobs that Irish men and women did at each census date, 1841, 1851 and 1861. Though some of these jobs were carried out in the home or around the streets, and therefore invited a more flexible use of time, most entailed rapid adjustment to clock-time, because they were done inside factories or mills. Children too young to go to work or school themselves now had, for the first time in their lives, the experience of watching older family members rise early, dress, and make their way to work. The children might have been sent outside to read the time on one of the nearby clocks, or to listen out for the chimes.

Patrick Joyce argues that there was no 'ethic of material advancement' in the culture of the labouring Irish (Joyce, 1990:142) and that both men and women willingly accepted low-paid, low-skilled work. Figures from Derby *partly* support this

claim, and show that of the adult Irish male population, a large proportion were employed as unskilled labourers: 1841 - 94 from a total of 242; 1851 - 157 from a total of 302; 1861 - 175 from a total of 456. Jeffrey Williamson, who studied the impact of the Irish on British labour markets, noted that the majority were in unskilled employment in 1851 (1989:139). A glance down the list of male occupations shows that some Irish men worked in professional occupations - on the Board of Ordnance Survey, as a chemist, the manager of a brewery, the manager of a silk mill, and a master of the Grammar School. Irish boys whose fathers were labourers perhaps knew that some Irish men had entered professional or managerial life, and might have recognised possibilities for themselves.

Jackson argued that labouring jobs in England were better paid than similar jobs in Ireland (1963:82) and for this reason alone Irish men in Derby were perhaps not displeased to be in this type of work because it provided a steady income for their families. Irish children in Derby perhaps unconsciously understood that there was little prospect of advancement, that whatever their father or mother did was low-paid and demanded little skill, and that their future lay in the will to persist with a variety of odd-jobs for little monetary reward. Even so, Chapter 7 will show that when children began work, there was some small movement into semi-skilled or skilled occupations.

An analysis of male adult occupations over the three census dates shows that in addition to the large number of general labourers, some men were employed in what Joyce calls 'the lower branches of retailing' (1990:164), as hawkers or travellers, trading their wares from barrows, and occasionally as shopkeepers. Others found work in the silk industry, and there were some skilled ribbon weavers from Dublin in the town. ¹⁰ Some men were employed in Derby's iron foundries, and a small number

were in skilled or semi-skilled work - as a chimney sweep, hatter, brushmaker, tailor, stereotyper, cabinet maker and gilder.

The switch to industrial production meant that family members did not necessarily work alongside each other, and it introduced a new kind of alienation between the workplace and the home (in some cases child workers from the same family worked in different silk mills, as Chapter 7 will show). Tom Barclay's father, who was not able to do heavy labouring work outside the home, did a variety of dismal jobs which his son described as 'stick selling, mat-making, rag and bone dealing and farm labouring; no possibility of learning a handicraft, and no hope of ever returning to (his) own country (1934:11). But at least Barclay was able to *observe* his father working, a privilege that was denied to boys whose fathers disappeared into factories for several hours a day. This point will be explored further in Chapter 7.

Women had a far more limited choice of occupations open to them than men and, like child employees, they were often a source of cheap labour. Some, like the silk finisher described earlier, took work into their own homes so they could look after their children while they worked, as did manglers and washerwomen. Analysis of the figures shows that at each census date there were fewer occupations open to women than to men. In 1841 the textile mills employed twenty-five women, and two women were employed as a matron and a nurse; others worked in trades as a cap-maker, a dressmaker and a staymaker. By 1851 175 women were employed altogether - significantly more than in the previous decade, and there was a growing variety of work for women. The textile mills employed 85 women, and women continued to work in trades, as a dressmaker, embroiderer, milliner and

seamstress. A more professional area of work was opening up to women in this decade; one worked as a governess, another was an importer of German yarn, and one described herself as a wardrobe purchaser.

Perhaps one of the most demanding jobs of all was that of Mother Superior of the Convent of Mercy. From 1848 onwards she held a professional role (as Mother Connelly had done before her - see Chapter 6), handling finance, negotiating with the Church authorities, and taking responsibility for the running of the Convent and the Convent school, supervising the nuns, and ensuring that the orphans and the young women out of employment in their care received adequate shelter and training. The nuns combined the roles of nursing and teaching and offered training to Catholic servant-girls (see Chapter 6). Perhaps these women became models for Irish children who observed their efficiency and commitment. Those Irish children who became pupil-teachers took up the church's offer of further training (see Chapter 7) and these children surely modelled their own futures on the teachers they came into contact with in the Catholic schools.

Irish women who found employment as servants often took 'the least sought-after posts from which they were not excluded by religious prejudice and their lack of social graces' (Joyce, 1990:164). Only one Irish woman was named as a servant in Derby in 1841, and she worked at the House of Correction, probably in a lowly role. Sixteen women gave their occupations as servants in 1851 (with another nine 'out of situation in the care of the religious') and nineteen women worked as servants in 1861.

In general, Irish women and girls had great difficulty in entering domestic service;

it was an occupation largely taken by women born and raised in England (Fitzpatrick,1989:10). There was prejudice against employing Irish female servants, partly because very few of them had any training before they came to England (Jackson,1963:88). Their cleaning practices were possibly suspect - after all, how could women who had lived in cabins in Ireland with mud floors and no windows (and who now probably lived in squalid courts in Derby) know how to clean wooden floors, windows or carpets? 'What chance to be clean was there in a house on whose only floor bags of dusty rags and putrescent bones were spilled out to be sorted?' asked Tom Barclay (1934:7) and perhaps English middle-class women wondered this too, and decided against employing Irish women who lived in these conditions. They might also have asked how these Irish women, with no training, whose lifestyle was significantly different from their own, could possibly wait at table, greet visitors, and deal with tradespeople who called, especially if they spoke English with an accent that was difficult to understand.

Discovering a childhood

A picture is developing of Irish families in Derby who were suddenly thrust into the routines of industrial work of different kinds, mostly labouring work for men and mill work for women. So far nothing in Irish children's experience in Derby seems to have pushed them forward into a world of childhood. They lived with their families and they worked, as their parents did. This chapter has argued that their lifestyle in rural Ireland and their self-sufficiency gave them certain skills which equipped them for rural living but certainly did not insert them into a child's world. But these same children were now poised to enter a world of childhood in Derby. The next chapter indicates features of their day-to-day living which show how they settled into urban living arrangements, maintaining some features of cultural lifestyle, and at the same time gradually moving out into the wider community of the town.

Footnotes to Chapter 4

1. Since many Irish families in Derby came from County Roscommon, and since my primary source material from that county is especially rich, I have included evidence from Isaac Weld's Statistical Survey of the County of Roscommon (1832) in this chapter.

William Wilde, whose accounts of Irish culture make up part of this chapter, enthused over the kind of Statistical Survey that Isaac Weld carried out in Co. Roscommon. He describes the writers of these surveys as 'eminent scholars, well acquainted with the language and habits of the people (who) traversed the county in all directions, talked with, and lived among the people (and collected) a great amount of traditional antiquarian and topographical information' (Wilde, 1852:18).

Wilde himself went on a similar journey through Ireland in the spring of 1849, and his reflections are an important source of information on the lives and traditions of the Irish people, and extracts appear in this chapter.

2. The loss of this important source of income in Ireland was another factor in the decision to emigrate. The protective duty on Irish linen had been removed in 1827, and this cottage industry received a severe blow as English competitors undersold Irish linen, wool, silk and cotton (Cousens:1960:125). Free-market competition from England destroyed the market for Irish cloth and many linen weavers came over to England from Ireland and transferred their skills to silk weaving (Jackson, 1963:82). An advertisement in The Roscommon Journal and Western Reporter on September 27, 1828 indicates the extent of the competition faced by the Irish textile industry:

EXTENSIVE SALE

Arrival of Woollen Cloths and Fancy Goods Etc Etc

To Those who Want the Finest Cloths ever imported into Ireland, and the finest Silk Goods with an Extensive Assortment of SILK HANDKERCHIEFS, ROCK SPUN SHAWLS, also several other articles too numerous for insertion, are now exhibited for sale, within two doors of Mulrenan's Hotel, for a few days only.

3. Weld's reference to prostitution is somewhat unusual because most of the evidence for Irish prostitution comes not from observers but from the records of the female religious who rescued prostitutes (Luddy,1992:341). In 1819 the Protestant rector in Athlone had complained about 'the multitudes of common prostitutes who, in the face of the sun, infest the streets as well as the hedges and ditches about the town' (cited in Connolly,1982:187)
4. Ireland had no Parish Poor Law system of its own until 1838. Before this, destitute Irish people obtained relief through church charities or by begging (Rose,1988:6).
5. Some children attended hedge schools, which had originally been set up illegally in quiet places in the countryside, and later in farmhouses or rough buildings by the roadside (Dowling,1971:86). Hedge schools were not uncommon in the south and west of Ireland in the first decades of the nineteenth century (Davis,1991:135) and some schoolmasters travelled around Ireland to teach school.

There was a considerable interest in the promotion of education in Ireland in the first part of the nineteenth century, and the Kildare Place Society was founded in 1811. It was originally known as the Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor in Ireland. Its aim was to support the education of the poor irrespective of religious persuasion, and although the Bible was to be read to children, there was to be no comment on the readings, and no other religious instruction was allowed.

With the aid of government grants, 1,490 Kildare Place schools had been established across Ireland by 1825, with about 100,000 pupils. However, following increased pressure from the Roman Catholic hierarchy, the Government instituted an inquiry into the education of the poor, and in 1831 formal control of the education system was passed to a new Board of Commissioners of National Education, established as an undenominational system under the control of the government (Goldstrom,1972:61-90).

The seven Commissioners were chosen with care by the Government, so that Protestants and Catholics were represented. Three of the leading Commissioners were Archbishop Murray, the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin, Richard Whately, Archbishop of the Church of Ireland, and the Reverend James Carlile, an ex-moderator of the Presbyterian Synod of Ulster (Goldstrom, 1972:65). The Commissioners were responsible for paying teachers' salaries; they also controlled texts books and lesson materials (Akenson, 1967 :3)

6. From about 1850 Archbishop Cullen introduced a 'devotional revolution', bringing greater formality and ritual and 'devotional exercises' to the service, such as the rosary, perpetual adoration, vespers and devotion to the Sacred Heart. Priests were required to wear scapulars, and missals containing the complete service for mass throughout the year were used in churches, as were holy pictures (Miller,1982:82).

7. Steamer companies offered fares ranging between 6d and 5s 0d, depending on the competition (Poor Inquiry, 1836:469)
8. In the 1840s and 1850s there were 352 courts in Derby. None had drainage, privies or laid-on water. Twelve or thirteen houses were built around each court, which was sometimes reached by way of a covered alley (Richardson, 1949:200).
9. Irish men in Derby worked as silk ribbon weavers at each census date. The Royal Commission on Hand Loom Weavers reported that one-tenth of Derbyshire's weavers were Irish (B.P.P. 1840 (XXIV), 377).

DAILY LIFE: A DIFFERENCE OF HABITS?

A witness to the Poor Inquiry described the labouring Irish as 'a distinct community in the midst of the English' because of their 'difference of habits,' of 'religious persuasion' and 'of country' (1836:440). There is no reason to suppose this was not the case; Chapter 4 has already indicated that the rural Irish in Derby had to adjust to new housing, living and working conditions and to build a new time structure into their lives.

This chapter discusses key features in the day-to-day lives of Irish children and argues that urban living introduced them to the kinds of social and cultural change that encouraged a psychological move away from the world of their parents and grandparents. The chapter focuses on five main areas: the composition of Irish families in Derby; the care and upbringing of children; the workhouse system; language use in and out of the home and, finally, children's own aspirations.

Three central strands underpin the content of this chapter and reappear throughout the discussion. The first is *cultural carry-over* - the social and cultural traditions of Irish village life which were successfully transferred to Derby and which set Irish children apart as members of a distinct group, in spite of the new and unfamiliar context. The second is *new learning* in different institutional settings; the kinds of learning that took children out beyond the family unit, and

helped them to make important decisions about their futures, including possibilities that had not been mirrored in the rural lives of their parents. The third is *the social move into the world of childhood* that was in the process of being created for the children of the labouring poor. This was the age when reformers tried to 'make children unlearn what they knew and to substitute a new conception of childhood, derived from middle class family life' (Coveney, 1967:43). Irish children's participation in experiences which singled them out as a group with their own needs, will be a focus of this and subsequent chapters.

The Composition of Families

Information from the census returns and Poor Law records shows something of the composition of Irish families in Derby. There were nearly five hundred two-generation families, consisting typically of parents and children, both children born in Ireland and those born in Derby or elsewhere. Most of the Irish children lived with their families, but a small minority were in lodgings with non-family members; a few who were orphaned were given a home in the Convent, brought up by the Sisters of Mercy; a third small group, made up of pauper children, lived in the workhouse. ¹

Over one quarter of the Irish children in this study (approximately two hundred and sixty children) lived either temporarily or permanently with one parent, usually their mother - thus dispelling any notion that parental separation and breakdown of the family unit is a modern social phenomenon. This is clear evidence of cultural carry-over, the continuation of a practice of family dislocation which occurred in rural Ireland. Twenty-seven families had no mother present - in most cases she had died - and 116 families, over four times as many, had no father present. His death, or desertion, or imprisonment, or his temporary absence during the summer months

to go harvesting, were major reasons why many children were brought up by their mothers alone, either temporarily or permanently. In his evidence to the Poor Inquiry Mr Whitty, Superintendent of the Watch in Liverpool, complained that Irish men were 'neglectful of their persons, wives and families' (1836:442) and while some no doubt spent a considerable time in taverns, for others the term 'neglectful' might have meant they left their families temporarily to search for work elsewhere across the country, in continuance of a cultural tradition. Their children probably understood the necessity of their father's absence in order to earn money to pay the rent, and understood too that they had to live uncomplainingly with change and upheaval. The experiences of travel, of moving on, of bedding-down with strangers in lodging houses, or of temporary stays in the workhouse, were already part of their lives before they came to Derby. Their desire to remain somewhere when they were about to leave, never to return, might be acknowledged but could not be fulfilled. In her novel The Daisy Chain (1888) Charlotte M. Yonge describes the sudden disappearance from the town of an Irish family, whose daughter, Una, was attending school and doing particularly well. Her father 'had come home suddenly from the search for work, and, having made his arrangements, removed them at once, early the next morning' (1888:334). Una's schoolteachers were shocked by this sudden decision:

'....oh dear, Richard, the McCarthy's are gone!'

'Gone, where?'

'Oh, to Wales. I knew nothing of it till they were off. Una and Fergus were missing, and Jane Taylor told me they were all gone. Oh, it is so horrid! Una had really come to be so good and so much in earnest. She behaved so well at school and church, that even Mrs. Ledwich liked her, and she used to read her Testament half the day, and bring her Sunday-school lessons to ask me about! Oh, I was so fond of her, and it really seemed to have done some good with her. And now it is all lost! Oh! I wish I knew what would become of my poor child!' (Yonge, 1888:230)

Charlotte Yonge was highlighting the shock of leaving, and the temporary forging

and severing of relationships which must have been part of the experience of many Irish children at this time. Integrated into a new setting, and knowing success as the fictional Una did, they were suddenly spirited away at the whim of their parents, in this case Una's father, who was seeking work elsewhere. This experience was repeated many times in real life, and was part of the pattern of upheaval when parents needed to move to new jobs, or new lodgings, to improve their circumstances. Their only stability was the unchanging and integrated family unit, and their value system was grounded in the absolute certainty of the family being there for them, even though there was temporary disintegration.

Young Irish men and women in England could expect to marry young, just as they had done in Ireland (Joyce, 1990:163). The Roman Catholic Church was very much in favour of early marriage, and in his evidence to the Poor Inquiry a Catholic priest from Birmingham commented that he was 'disposed to recommend early marriages on the principle of virtue,' adding that marriages between young Irish people were 'very fruitful and they rear(ed) many children. On an average....four or five'. Another Birmingham priest told the Poor Inquiry that the Irish married 'very young, the women at seventeen or eighteen, the men at twenty or twenty-one.' He added: 'and we do not object to it. It is the custom among the Irish. In general there are five or six children, but rarely more than that. Sometimes as few as two or three' (Poor Inquiry, 1836:475). It has not been possible to discover the actual age of marriage of many young Irish people in Derby, though many of those in their twenties were married and had small children. This is another example of a cultural practice that was carried over to life in Derby; after all, if both the man and woman had jobs in the factory or mill, and were bringing in a steady wage, there was no reason for them to remain single, as long as they could find a room in a lodging-house to rent.

Families with six or more children were rare in Derby, and only a very small number of families had more than five or six children. Only one family of ten children is recorded, while there are eight families of eight children, seven families of seven children, and sixteen families with six children. All other families were of five children or less. These figures are only accurate for the particular census years, or at points in a family's circumstances when they applied for relief, but nevertheless they give some indication that Irish families in Derby were usually no larger than six children, and mostly they were less. But in general the large or fairly large family unit reflected Irish cultural tradition, where the familial society provided internal support for family members. This network of provision and support was transferred to family life in Derby.

The Care and Upbringing of Children

The Irish 'are very fond of their children,' the Reverend McDonald stated in his evidence to the Poor Inquiry but, he added, 'from poverty (they) neglect them' (1836:475). Other witnesses to this Inquiry were critical of the way the Irish brought up their children. The Reverend Fisher from Liverpool went further, claiming that Irish mothers were a 'powerful influence in retarding the improvement of the Irish settlers' because they were 'wasteful and averse to labour' and 'ignorant of the arts of domestic economy, as sewing and cooking.' They were also 'unable to make the best of plain food....or to keep their own and husband's clothes in order, even when they only require(d) mending' (1836:439). The Superintendent of Police in Glasgow, in his evidence to the Inquiry, held even more extreme views, stating that the 'majority of juvenile delinquents (were) descended from Irish parents.' He said this was owing 'to the improvident and intemperate life that the parents lead and their want of attention to their families and children'

(1836:448).

These condemnatory views of Irish child-rearing practices, and in particular of Irish women's inability to manage a household, take no account of the difficulties Irish women might have encountered when transferring household practices learnt in rural Ireland to an English back-to-back home. A dry mud floor could be swept, but how was a brick floor to be kept clean, particularly when water overflowed from the cess pool up to the door, and children came in with mud on their feet? In Ireland peat was dried and stacked outside the cabin, but where could coal be kept? And how could the baby be washed when she had smeared mud over her face? There must have been problems too with cooking. The art of cooking potatoes and sometimes meat over a slow peat fire could no longer be practised, and Irish women had to learn about cooking a range of food on stoves heated with coal or wood.

There are few *actual* records of working Irish women's lives in England. Tom Barclay recalled his Co. Mayo-born mother's life of drudgery, and praised the inner strength that helped her face a life of hardship and poverty with what amounted to a series of coping strategies, self-sufficiency and toughness. 'Mother was the grey mare of our family,' said Barclay, 'untiring energy, unfailing health and hope and faith, and never a new dress, never a holiday, never any leisure or amusement, never I fear even a generous meal of victuals' (1934:9). And so it must have been for many Irish women bringing up children in Derby courts, welded to the practicalities of life in rural, now urban, poverty, and raising their families on what money they had from the wages their husbands and older children brought in, if they were not working themselves. Sometimes they brought work home from the mill, but census records indicate that that they did not usually work outside the home when their children were small.

The quality of housing in Derby described in Chapter 4 is an indication that everyday living was hard and there were certain characteristics to this pattern of living that were understood and accepted by both adults and children. Nothing was wasted; clothes were mended and passed down through the family; money was eked out and saved for rent and other necessities. Patrick Joyce is surely correct to highlight the skill with which these people handled money: 'Thrift must have been second nature to people of peasant stock, some of whom had been accustomed to accumulating an annual rent', he writes (Joyce,1990:163).

Women had to consider what food to buy and prepare, particularly since they became purchasers rather than growers of food, and had little money to spend. 'My diet consisted, on weekdays, mainly of bread and treacle', wrote Tom Barclay (1934:7,15). The Poor Inquiry contains references to the 'meagre diet' of the Irish (1836:446), of their reliance on potatoes and stirabout, bread and treacle, oatmeal, milk and only occasionally bacon and salt pork (1836:438). Those Irish families who sought outdoor relief from the Guardians were usually given bread, meal, tea (or occasionally coffee) sugar, mutton, or beef and also rice - though they perhaps had to learn how to cook rice. The Guardians never supplied potatoes or for that matter any other vegetables or fruit, perhaps because they were perishable, or cheap enough to buy. In the 1930s Irish men in Derby trapped rabbits, and it is reasonable to suppose that they did this a century before (Hogan, May,1993).

Irish families living in Derby knew that death and disease could visit them at any time and Roman Catholic children were brought up to understand that death was 'the appointed gateway to the next life, through which all must pass at some moment not of their own choosing' (Beck,1950:596). The death rate among young

Irish children in England was higher than in rural areas of Ireland (Kennedy, 1973:45-46). They were more prone to certain diseases because of lack of resistance to infection in the unhealthy atmosphere of the courts and lodging-houses where they lived. There is a matter-of-factness in the way Tom Barclay wrote: 'We all had smallpox, and one of us died' (1934:12).

The Poor Law records for Derby between 1837 and 1847 indicate that thirty-five Irish-born children died between these years, the majority under two years of age, though it is likely that child mortality among Irish children was much higher than this. Catholic burial records for Derby are only available from 1855 onwards, but between then and 1870 the deaths of 194 Irish children were recorded, from a total Irish population which stood at just over one thousand in 1861, though some of these deaths occurred outside the five parishes in this study. Outbreaks of typhoid fever, cholera, dysentery, pneumonia, influenza, smallpox, measles and consumption were common, though vaccination against smallpox was customary for inmates of the workhouse. This kind of information shows that many children suffered illness and some died in the town's cholera epidemics. It is not the purpose of this study to elaborate on this aspect of children's lives, and it is perhaps sufficient to show that illness and death were common. (For more information about disease and epidemics, see Treble, 1971 and Evans, 1988).

The Workhouse System

The new Poor Law of 1834 was formulated in an attempt to solve the problem of pauperism (Crowther, 1981:29). Irish families in Derby without any work, and no money to pay for food or lodging, had little alternative but to apply to the Board of Guardians for relief. The Poor Law records in Derby show that 213 Irish families

or individuals - often the same people over and over again - were relieved between 1837 and 1847 (subsequent records are missing). Those relieved include nearly one hundred women who seem to have had sole responsibility for their children's upbringing, either because they were widowed or had left violent husbands, and twenty-three women alone with their child or children, but expecting their husbands to return at some future date. Since 1833 workhouse officials had had the power to remove Irish paupers 'to the place of their birth' (Nicholls, 1904:207-208) but the Derby Guardians seem to have largely decided against this policy - after all, it could prove to be very expensive. Between 1843 and 1870 the records show that only six Irish paupers were removed to Ireland. Though others were ordered to go, they eventually returned to Derby.

Most were given minimal outdoor relief, which usually consisted of some bread or rice, tea, perhaps meat, and 2s 6d. in cash, though from 1834 onwards there was a policy of refusing outdoor relief to unsupported women who were taken into the house - nationally women in this position became the second largest group living in the workhouse, after the old and infirm (Longmote, 1974:156). Between 1837 and 1847, fifty-seven Irish boys and forty-one Irish girls were taken into the workhouse, mostly on a temporary basis with their parent or parents. Of these, eight girls and nine boys, orphaned or found wandering alone, were admitted to the workhouse and most were likely to have stayed there for some time, attending school or, when they were old enough, placed in suitable employment by the Guardians.

One case history will serve as an example of the kind of situation that must have been familiar to the Relieving Officer. In 1846 Catherine and James Cooley (sometimes spelt Cooney) came to Derby from Macclesfield (where they had

perhaps worked in the silk mills) in 1846 with their two Irish-born sons, nine-year-old George and seven-year-old Richard. They found lodgings in Court 2, Walker Lane, and supported themselves on a wage of about 13s or 14s a week from the father's labouring work. In July 1846 the father left his family to go harvesting. Within weeks, Catherine, heavily pregnant and unable to work, applied for a place in the workhouse for herself and her children, presumably because she had no money left to pay her rent and feed herself and her children. I suspect this application for relief was a deliberate strategy on the part of the parents, just as women in Ireland used the relief system to their advantage (see Chapter 4, p.86 and McLoughlin, 1988, 1990).

Thomas Alcock, giving evidence to the Poor Inquiry, was critical of the Irish and Scottish trampers who spent their time 'wandering about the country'. He described how he frequently relieved their wives and children by taking them into the workhouse when their husbands separated from them, only to find that the husband had agreed 'on some place to meet them at' (1836:478). Such circumstances might have been part of the experience of the Cooley family. Catherine gave birth to a boy, possibly in the workhouse, and she and the children seem to have remained there for a week or so. (P.L.R,R.O.W.R.,July,1846). In August 1846, Catherine was once again living in Court 2, Walker Lane and was given 2s relief to help her through the next two weeks. The family is next heard of the following May, 1847, now living in Court 4, Walker Lane when Catherine applied once again for relief, because her baby was sick and her husband was away searching for work. She was given medical help for the baby and she and the children were offered a place in the workhouse (PLR,ROWR,May,1847). She moved back to Court 4, Walker Lane and was relieved again in August 1847 because George was ill (PLR,ROWR, August 1847).

This family did not appear on the 1851 Census, so presumably they left Derby to try their luck elsewhere (though a George Cooney is reported living with his mother Catherine in Derby nearly twenty years later).² Their story illustrates how George and Richard experienced dislocation in their family, particularly during the summer months, and discontinuity of routines, moving from one town to another, one lodging-house to another, and passing in and out of the workhouse system. They probably experienced the disciplined life of the workhouse less rigorously than pauper children who were permanent residents, because their mother was also an inmate, and the Guardians had greater control over children without parents or close relatives in the workhouse (Crowther,1981:207).

In the Derby workhouse George and Richard Cooley, like all paupers, were subjected to the usual rules and routines, and these institutionalised practices became part of their childhood experience. On their arrival they gave their name and age and were asked to state their religion. They were told they were not allowed to leave the workhouse and that if they did they would be brought back. They surrendered their clothes, they were searched, washed, their hair was cropped and they were put into workhouse dress, stiffened with size probably made from animal glue, smelly and uncomfortable. Though each workhouse had its own style of dress, and the Guardians were told that 'the clothing worn by the paupers need not be uniform either in colour or materials' as long as inmates' own clothes were removed, in practice workhouse dress was uncomfortable and cheap (Longmote,1974:138). An Inspector told the Poor Law Commissioners in 1842 that he had observed children wearing 'singularly ugly and disfiguring' uniforms, which 'brought real misery to (their) wearers, besides being hated as a badge of pauperism' (cited in Longmote,1974:93).

In 1842 the workhouse inspector observed that girls' frocks were 'clumsily cut and ill-sewed....and the long skirts in which the little girls (were) apt to be attired, to allow for growth, impede(d) their movements, add(ed) to their awkward gait, made worse by hobnailed boots with iron tips,' so that 'these unlucky children (had) a heavy walk peculiarly their own (cited in Longmote,1974:93). Over twenty years later, in 1865, a new regulation in the Derby workhouse stipulated that the outer clothing of the men and boys should in future be made of morderous cotton cord 'free from size which is injurious to health' and that clogs should be provided for wet weather (P.L.R.,M.inute Book,March,1865).³ In the following year the Guardians ordered worsted and cotton stockings for adults and children (P.L.R.,Minute Book,May 1866).

These humanitarian moves made clothing more comfortable for paupers, but George and Richard Cooley, earlier residents of the workhouse, would not have received the benefit of this ruling. Once washed and dressed in workhouse attire, they were merely two more paupers who were expected to conform to the rules and regulations of the workhouse. They got up at six o'clock in the morning in the summer, and at seven o'clock in the winter months, washed, dressed, answered their names at role call, ate breakfast, all in an orderly manner, superintended by the schoolmaster. On Sundays they put on clean clothes, and made sure their dirty clothes were put out for washing on Monday (PLR,Minute Book, May,1840). Since they were boys, and under fourteen, the schoolmaster and governor were permitted to beat them if they misbehaved, though corporal punishment was banned altogether in the case of girls and older boys from 1847 onwards (Longmote,1974:170).

It is difficult to know what conditions in the Derby workhouse were really like, but though life there was hard, as indeed it was meant to be, children like George and Richard Cooley at least had clean clothes once a week, fresh water to drink and bathe in, an adequate if monotonous diet, access to free education, and training in the rudiments of industrial work, so they could support themselves at some future date. It was perhaps not surprising that Irish women agreed to a temporary stay in the workhouse, even though their children were separated from them, because it was after all a better option than starving on the streets, or travelling on to another town in the hope of finding work and lodgings.

One important influence the workhouse had on its child paupers was to encourage them to construct an identity for themselves based on their experiences as *children*, by giving them their own specific agenda, in an environment that separated them from adults. They were *obliged* to attend the workhouse school for six hours a day, and were provided with a curriculum that singled them out as young learners (Chapter 8 will discuss this further). The Guardians also recognised and supported moves to amuse and entertain the children. In 1845, for example, children were allowed to attend Hughes' Circus, 'a ticket for free admission having been presented' (P.L.R., Minute Book, October, 1845). The children saw 'Tight Rope Dancers', 'The Strongest Man in the World', the 'Best Clowns in Europe', 'Four Performing Camels' and much more (Derby Mercury, Dec. 16, 1845). Later, in 1864, a Mr. Banks was given permission by the Guardians 'to exhibit his entertainment to the children' (P.L.R., Minute Book, October, 1864) while in 1869 the proprietor of the menagerie in the Market Place 'allowed the children to visit the exhibition free of charge' (P.L.R., Minute Book, May: 1869). Perhaps they were allowed to see the Menagerie's Grand Procession of 'Fifteen Caravans, drawn by Fifty Horses' with 'Huge Indian Elephants', 'Forest-bred Lions' and 'Double-Striped

Bengal Tigers' (Derby Mercury, May 5, 1869). (A poster advertising a similar entertainment can be seen on page 265). Later in the same year the Guardians paid £2.00 a year rental 'for allowing the school children to use the airing ground on a part of Osmaston Park on two days a week for cricket or other amusement' (P.L.R., Minute Book, June 1869). These moves were significant for two reasons: firstly, these children were *paupers* - not even poor day scholars at a ragged school - and words like 'entertainment' and 'amusement' were being used in the Poor Law records to describe events which were not only approved of but positively encouraged, both within the school day and as extra 'treats'. Secondly, they are evidence that the workhouse was one of the most important institutions to begin to create the notion of a 'childhood' for pauper Irish children who came under the jurisdiction of the Poor Law. The notion of adults in authority arranging amusements for working-class children was new; it was an act that would be repeated by the nuns from 1846 onwards. The visit to Hughes' Circus in 1845 (before the nuns arrived in Derby) was the first recorded occasion of this kind; so while it was a highlight in the life of pauper children, its importance to this study is critical. It represented a first move into childhood.

Language In and Out of the Home

I have not come across any historical survey of children's language use in nineteenth-century England, so the discussion I offer is tentative, and my hypotheses are based on twentieth-century accounts of linguistic development. But I would like to suggest that Irish-born children in this study, whether they were Irish or English-speaking, were introduced to new forms of language when they arrived in England, and that as they became familiar with linguistic features of the language they experimented with it themselves, and took these features into their

home. In this way their language use helped them to form a new identity.

Lynn Lees believes that many of the Irish in London spoke only Irish or a hesitant English (Lees, 1979:16) and although I have no direct evidence that the Irish language was spoken in Derby, nineteenth-century evidence shows it was used in Liverpool, London, Manchester and in parts of Staffordshire. Since many of the Irish-born children in Derby came from the west of Ireland they were likely to have known Irish as well as English and for some, Irish was probably their first language. Engels wrote that he 'occasionally heard the Irish-Celtic language spoken in the most thickly populated parts of Manchester' (1993:102) while in many towns Irish priests were in demand to hear confessions in Irish (Jackson, 1963:139). John Denvir recalled that in the Liverpool street where he lived as a boy in the 1840s, 'nearly all....were from the west of Ireland' and 'amongst them, there was scarcely anything but Irish spoken' (1910:15). A.M. Sullivan, in his travels around Staffordshire in the 1850s, found that most of the Irish labourers 'still talked Irish constantly', and in Wednesbury he observed that 'in very many of the houses not one of the women could speak English, and I doubt that in a single house Irish was not the prevalent language' (cited in Gwynn, 1950:267). These Irish speakers shared a common experience: the Irish they spoke was ignored outside the home by the host community - even the Roman Catholic church had no interest in preserving the native tongue of its Irish adherents, and the Roman Catholic schools attended by Irish children taught exclusively in English. There was little inducement therefore for Irish children to continue to speak Irish, except perhaps in their own homes.

The Connaught-born Irish in Derby had to use English outside the home for functional purposes, and English was the language of school, work, workhouse and church. Indeed, all communication with the outside world was through English. But

if the family was Irish-speaking, adults and children would undoubtedly have maintained their use of Irish in the home if they were first-generation migrants to Derby. The period of transition from Irish to a full use of English could have taken many years. One of the features of the language might have been the insertion of English 'loanwords' into Irish. Bilingual Punjabi-English speakers recall how the Punjabi they used in their homes when they first came to England contained English 'loanwords', because speakers needed to use the names of objects and institutions peculiar to British society, for which there was no Punjabi equivalent (James, 1974:74). It is possible to imagine that words like 'clock', 'gas light', 'silk throwster', and names like 'Walker Lane' were incorporated into the Irish language in their English form.

The opposite situation would apply too, when bilingual Irish children in Derby went through a process of incorporating Irish words that were not directly translatable into spoken English, for example: the *breedogue* for image of St. Bridget; *brosnach*, meaning sticks used for lighting a fire; *slip*, a young pig; *poreens*, meaning small potatoes. Irish words such as these, used with precision, also had the function of holding the family unit intact, reminding people of the way they lived their lives in Ireland and of their membership of a wider group or community which was 'Irish' rather than English.

Irish children possibly heard their parents speaking Irish on particular occasions, in much the same way as Harold Rosen's older family members used Yiddish in London's East End:

English was the language spoken in my house. All the adults could speak Yiddish fluently but they only used it when they didn't want the children to understand or when people came to the house who were only at home in Yiddish - which was most of them. The English spoken was peppered with Yiddish words, exclamations, curses, threats, proverbs. Their English had

occasional touches of Yiddish grammar and was usually spoken with a distinctive Yiddish lilt (1993:59).

Modern English and Punjabi bilingual families deliberately use Punjabi to speak of ordinary everyday events inside their family and community (James, 1974:69-70). The use of this language supports their cultural and religious traditions, and bonds the family together in a shared intimacy, just as it does for a Moroccan girl interviewed by Jane Miller. This girl speaks English fluently but 'feels much better' when she uses Arabic in conversational exchanges which express her deepest religious needs and her past experiences in Morocco (Miller, 1983:22).

For Irish children, increasing familiarity with the English language represented a move towards a new world which set them apart from older family members, particularly those who knew no English, and helped them to take on a new identity as speakers of English, and perhaps also as 'children', since the major institutions which supported their move into childhood - the Roman Catholic church, the school and the workhouse - all used English. These children might have translated and interpreted new experiences for the benefit of non-English speaking grandparents or parents, just as Punjabi children do today (James:1974:70-71) thus giving them a new supportive role in the family. At a certain point in their bilingual development Irish children were probably still thinking in Irish syntax and imagery even when they were speaking in English. It was this linguistic device that gave their spoken English its familiar intonation patterns. Sentences constructed in this Hiberno-English, or Anglo-Irish form, such as: 'maybe it's sick she is' or 'she is not here, it's now she is sick' or 'it took a start out of me', are based directly on Irish syntactic equivalents, and became part of the pattern of English speech for bilingual Irish (Kiberd, 1989:307)

The Irish child's experience of being part of a migrant family who possibly spoke Irish or if not, spoke English with an Irish accent and used a dialect that was noticeably different from that of Derby-born children (including perhaps younger brothers and sisters), adds a particular dimension to their lives. Tom Barclay - a second-generation boy - spoke with an Irish accent, possibly because he had not been allowed to mix with English children. He became ashamed of the way he spoke when his pronunciation was mocked by local children:

My pronunciation was jeered at, - mimicked, corrected. I pronounced TEA 'tay'. Outside the house everything was English: my catechism, lessons, prayers, songs, tales, games....I began to feel ashamed of the jeers and mocking and criticism, and tried to pronounce like the English (1934:23-24).

Tom Barclay became aware of his speech patterns and pronunciation, and made a conscious decision to modify the way he spoke. It is worth speculating on one further point. The Catholic church used Latin when conducting formal ceremonies, and Irish children had some knowledge of this third language - they heard and responded to church Latin in their religious services and they saw their names Latinised when written in the parish records; for example, James was written as Iacobus, and Margaret as Margarita. In the 1980s children I taught who were bilingual Urdu and English speakers spent each evening at the mosque where they were taught to read the Qur'an in Arabic, a language which they used for a specific religious purpose. Though they did not speak Arabic as an everyday language, and found it difficult to translate Arabic into either Urdu or English, they nevertheless felt the religious power of the language through their rhythmic chanting of the holy book. I have no way of knowing if nineteenth-century Irish children were similarly

drawn to Latin when they heard the Mass in St. Mary's church, nor if this knowledge of three languages gave them a conscious and highly specific interest in the derivation of words, but I believe this might have been so.

Modern linguists suggest that bilingualism places the child at a positive cognitive advantage, and there is no reason to suggest that this was not the case for nineteenth-century speakers of Irish who were learning English. 'What may significantly be conferred by bilingualism is a language-learning capacity, which is consciously used', states Jane Miller (1983:136). Important learning takes place when those who are mastering a second language switch between codes, dialects and languages in different social and linguistic contexts, and it might be supposed that Irish children who moved into new social situations in Derby, at work and in formal education, were at a cognitive advantage when learning to speak English.

Speech Play

There was another form of language use which Irish Catholic children were introduced to in Derby. The Reverend McDonald from Birmingham was critical of the way that Irish parents allowed their children to play outside their houses; interestingly, his comments are the only firm evidence I have uncovered of Irish children *playing*. 'They let (them) run about the streets a good deal and have their fling' he said (Poor Inquiry, 1836:475) and it was perhaps in the streets and courts that children sang or played games, just as children do everywhere, though O'Sullivan suggests that there were 'comparatively few' nursery-rhymes in Irish-speaking districts of Ireland, and possibly no singing-games 'with an origin in genuine native tradition,' though he believes a few children's songs belonged to particular

local areas within the Gaelic area. (1981:24) He does not speculate why there seem to have been no songs across the whole area, but possibly there were two reasons. Firstly, the evidence suggests that children had little time to play and were part of the adult world at an early age, singing the same songs as adults. Secondly, if there were local children's songs, they belonged to the oral tradition and were contained within a small geographical area where children lived, so the songs did not travel. Perhaps they were introduced to a form of speech play that they might not have met in Ireland, since children's speech play and games vary between cultures (Sanchez and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1976:70). Irish children might have learnt new songs and games from local Derby children, making the territory their own, and taking it over in a way their parents could not do, forging new relationships, and setting themselves against adults with their shouting, throwing and running. Indeed, there were many complaints in the nineteenth century about children taking up the whole of the pavement when they played their games, causing damage and generally annoying adults (Opie,1969:11).

Taunts and teases

I do not know if Irish children in Derby played out on the streets with English children, though Tom Barclay fought with English boys who jeered, 'Hurroo Mich!' , 'Ye Awrich Paddywack' or 'Arrah, bad luck to the ships that brought ye over!' (1934:5). Barclay, writing as an adult, looked back on times of name-calling and insults with a wry smile, but in effect racial hostility was part of his life, as it must have been for many Irish children in England in the nineteenth century. Sikh children in England recall making the discovery at about the age of ten or eleven that they were 'different'. This growing realisation that they were held in contempt by indigenous children brought pressure and tension to their lives and

gave them a desire to want to go and live in India, even if they were born in England (James,1974:100). 'A couple of years back I just didn't like being an Indian,' a Hindu boy explained, 'because we used to get picked on' (Jackson and Nisbett,1993:32-33). These modern examples of children's attitudes to racial taunts perhaps mirror the sense of fear felt by some Irish children over a century ago.

Iona and Peter Opie collected a rhyme from New South Wales in which Protestant children ridiculed the observance of not eating meat on Fridays. Sanchez and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett stress that the 'ready-made' form of taunts help to 'insulate or protect the child from the full responsibility for what he says' (Sanchez and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett,1976:73). Both Irish and English children could hide behind these insults:

The Catholic brats, they don't like cats,
They don't eat meat on Friday

To which Roman Catholic children replied:

Protestant dogs jump like frogs
Do eat meat on Fridays (Opie,1959:345)

It is possible that sectarian rhymes like this, perhaps even the same ones, were heard on the streets of Derby in the mid-Victorian years, particularly since the Opies noted that cries of:

Catholic, Catholic, ring the bell,
When you die you'll go to hell

and its rejoinder:

Protestant, Protestant, quack, quack, quack,
Go to the devil and never come back (Opie,1959:344)

were familiar rhymes in Victorian England. The Opies also collected a rhyme from

Australia, in which children from Melbourne and Sydney shouted to the Catholic convent children on the anniversary of the Battle of the Boyne:

The Irishmen ran down the hill,
The Englishmen ran afther,
And mony a Pat got a bullet in his back
At the Battle of the Boy'an Wather.

Up to me knees in shandygaff,
Up to me knees in slauther,
Up to me knees in Irish blood,
At the Battle of the Boy'an Wather.

(Opie,1959:343).

Perhaps the Catholic children in Derby were ridiculed by Protestant children as they processed through the streets, or when they came out of their school at the end of the school day, especially when anti-Catholic feeling was running high (see Chapter 6). These rhymes certainly belonged to the world of the child and Irish children who listened to them and joined in were introduced to a form of traditional oral verse, and to its particular rhyme, rhythm and repetition, which gave them an opportunity of rehearsing and using different structures in the English language.

Children's Aspirations

As Irish-born children settled in England and mixed with groups of locally-born people, they began to grow conscious of how they presented themselves in public. So although Mr. Whitty's evidence to the Poor Inquiry suggested that the dress and personal appearance of the Liverpool Irish was not improved 'in this country' (1836:442), another witness disagreed, stating that it was the *public* nature of their experience which influenced how they dressed. 'The reason,' he said, 'why the Irish improve their mode of dress more than their food or dwelling is, that in the

former they are liable to comparison with the natives, while in the two latter they are not' (1836:438).

There were public and social expectations about dress which raised the consciousness of the Irish children and their parents. In particular they did not attend Mass if they felt they were not dressed respectably. Even in the 1930s the owner of the Wheatsheaf pub in Derby 'used to come home from Mass, then one person would come and borrow her skirt, another her coat, another her shoes, before they could go to Mass. The poverty was like that' (Hogan, Interview 2: May, 1993). As Irish families' understanding of their new social world changed and grew, so too did their use of dress to express their identity with a new urban culture. The Reverend McDonald, Roman Catholic priest in Birmingham, explained that 'their excuse for not sending their children to school, or not attending chapel, is want of clothes or shoes, which they would not have to think of in Ireland (Poor Inquiry, 1836: 475).

A Jamaican girl in Coventry, newly-arrived in England some years ago, once told me of her embarrassment when her mother carried goods on her head in England, and she asked her to stop doing it. There must have been instances when nineteenth-century Irish children felt ashamed of their parents' rural lifestyle in Derby and put pressure on them to change their behaviour. The Jamaican girl's story is a clear example of the way in which children are in the forefront of social change, perhaps even more so when they are part of a migrant group and sensitive to their reception in a host country.

There are many accounts of the growing visibility of labouring children on the streets of Britain throughout the nineteenth century (see, for example,

Cunningham, 1991:101-122); the visibility of middle-class children was not, of course, a problem. But they were around, and they were noticed by labouring children. Charles Shaw recalled his childhood envy of middle-class children 'who could go to school every day, who never wanted food, who never wore shoes with the toes out, nor jackets with elbows out' (1903:61). He was conscious that they had access to something else he desired - an education. 'I saw a youth, walking among the garden paths reading a book,' he wrote, adding that 'the sight of this youth reading at his own free will, forced upon my mind a sense of painful contrast between his position and mine' (1903:21). Labouring children like Charles Shaw were exposed to a social order, where middle-class children were not expected to be workers or wage-earners, but could instead be *children* - full-time scholars, perhaps, with leisure time to play a musical instrument. Irish servant girls gained an insight into the world of the middle classes when they cleaned in the large townhouses, and saw rooms with substantial furnishings, carpets, pictures on the wall, and bathrooms with running water, and saw their mistresses' daughters behaving as genteel girls should, reading, playing with toys, and certainly not working. I have raised this issue in order to show that labouring Irish children in Derby might have felt that same need to become part of the successful urban world, and to better themselves, despite an affinity with some forms of Irish tradition.

Emigrating from the Parents' World

The central argument of this study is that rural Irish children in Derby were encouraged to enter a world of childhood. This chapter has shown that in many of their family circumstances they retained the cultural traditions of Irish life. But as soon as children moved beyond their family - into the workhouse or into the streets,

there were attempts to forge a childhood identity, through language, or through the implementation of particular practices desired for children alone. In Leicester, Tom Barclay enjoyed listening to his mother recite the old legends of Oisín, Cúchullán, and the Gobáin Sair, and a 'goodly number of old Irish songs and poems.' But though he enjoyed listening to them he began to ask himself as he grew older, 'What had I to do with all that?' He explained: 'I was becoming English! I did not hate things Irish, but I began to feel that they must be put away; they were inferior to things English' (1934:23). Perhaps it was so for the Irish children in this study, as they joined in with the songs, but listened also to calls to become apprentices or pupil-teachers, or even full-time scholars. 'Children habitually and disturbingly emigrate from the world of their parents' (Berger et al, 1973:64); having emigrated once, were they now ready to emigrate again into a world of childhood? If so, the Catholic church would play its part. The next chapter discusses the place of the church in the lives of Irish children in Derby, and sets the scene for the following chapters on children's work and children's schooling.

Footnotes

1. After 1862 the Board of Guardians were entitled to send certain pauper inmates to charitable institutions and pay for their upbringing there (Crowther, 1981:70). It is not known if paupers from the Derby workhouse were taken into the Convent orphanage.
2. The Census for 1861 has an entry for a Catherine Cooney, aged 50 and her unmarried son, George, aged 24. She is a charwoman and he is a goods porter. They live at Court 9, Sadler Gate. There is no mention of other family members.
3. 'Mordorous' is perhaps a variation of 'mordant', meaning a substance for fixing dyes. Presumably size had been used for this purpose.

PART III

**Changing childhood: Roman Catholicism, work
and schooling**

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH IN DERBY

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce aspects of the Roman Catholic church in Derby and to discuss its influence on the children of the Irish poor. In particular, I want to argue that the orders of nuns made a significant difference to the daily lives of Irish children in Derby by supporting a move into childhood practices similar to those that had only previously been available to Irish paupers through the organisation of schooling and entertainments in the workhouse. The church provided Irish Roman Catholic children with a base for their religious and social life, and opportunities to meet together in religious services, at Sunday School, at day and night school, and to take part in religious processions. These activities fostered the development of both a religious consciousness and a sense of being *children* rather than young workers. Their learning at Sunday School and day and night school will be the subject of Chapter 8. But of central importance here is the investment the church made in the young, pulling them back from the world of work, and from everyday contact with both adults and Protestants.

This chapter shows how the Roman Catholic Church bridged the transition between the child as labourer and the child as scholar, and how it also formed another bridge - between a belief in the old traditions of the Church in Ireland, and

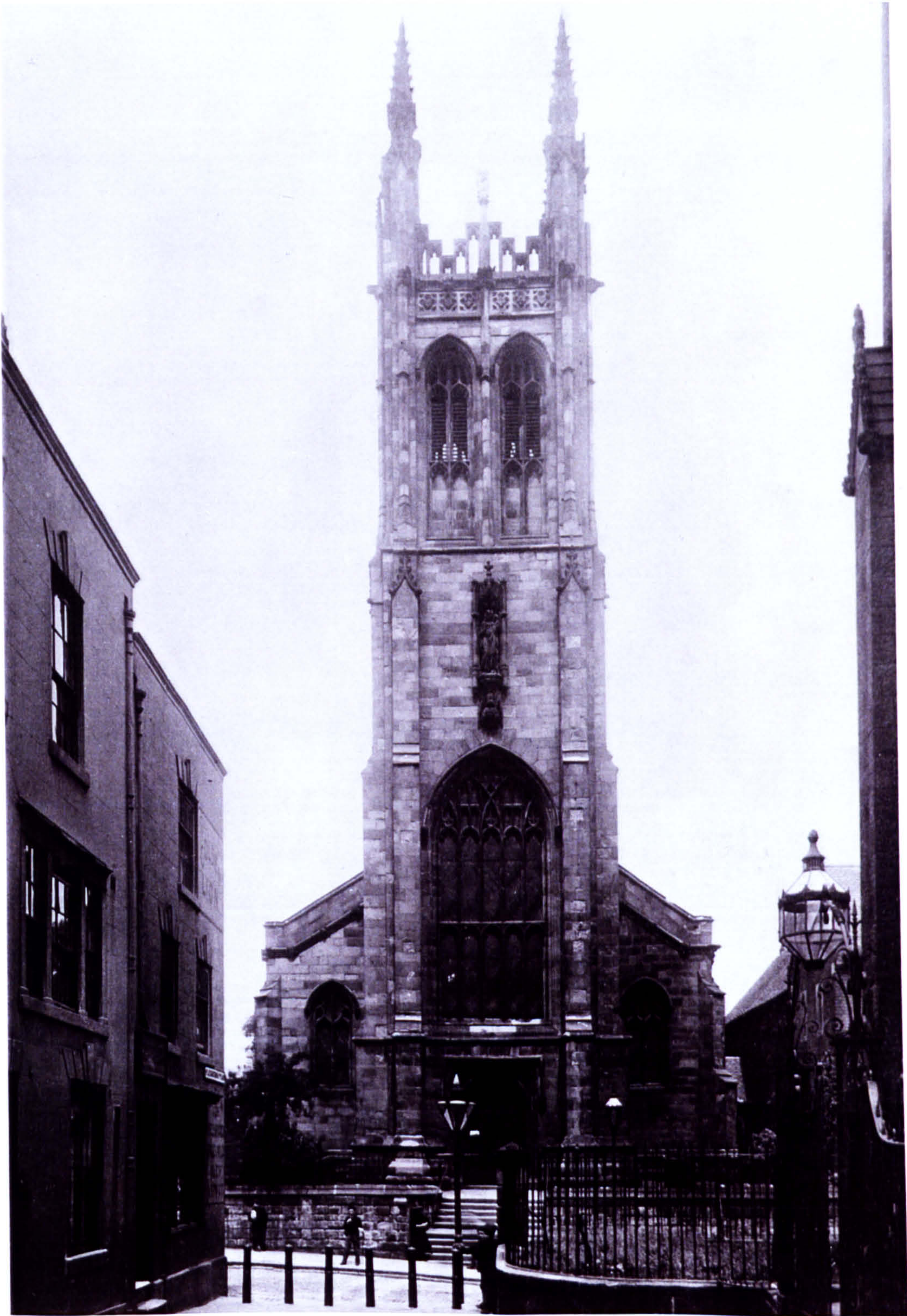
the new orthodoxy of the English Roman Catholic church, enabling Irish children to maintain a link with their past and also to look forward to the future. This surge of activity took place at a time when there was considerable hostility towards Roman Catholics, both nationally and in Derby. Anti-Catholic broadsheets appeared throughout Derby when the Roman Catholic Emancipation Bill was being debated in Parliament in 1829.¹ Each time there was a visible show of Roman Catholicism - the opening of St. Mary's Church in 1839, or the arrival of the nuns in 1846 - there was a flurry of petitions, and anti-Roman Catholic letters to the editor of the Derby Mercury. The children's rhymes illustrated in Chapter 5 (pp.143-144) were part of this anti-Catholic prejudice that Irish children encountered, and which spilt over into anti-*Irish* prejudice.

The Sisters of Mercy were viewed with suspicion and even stoned in the street, despite their heroism in the Crimean War, and in the end they made a decision not to wear their crucifixes because they attracted hostility (Hogan: May,1993). 'The convent system is one with which I have no sympathy', stated a Mr. Martin, echoing the sentiments of many Derby Protestants. His statement was reported in the Derby Mercury after a special meeting of the Burial Board to investigate the interment of two nuns in the Catholic burial ground between the Convent and the street - a breach of the law which was 'of great importance to the health of the town,' though the bodies were apparently buried six feet deep. 'When the next sister dies do you suppose they will put her into the backyard instead of the cemetery?' asked another member of the Board (Derby Mercury, October1,1856). This story was given great prominence, and it is an example of the kinds of hostility shown towards the Sisters of Mercy, who were visible around the streets, helping the Irish poor, in their small but growing community, with eight sisters in 1851, and fourteen in 1861. Hostility of this kind always separated Roman Catholic

poor children from Protestant children. Their insertion into working-class childhood was an entry into *Roman Catholic* childhood; they were separated from Protestant children by religion, by prejudice and by practice.

Chapter 4 showed that in Ireland there were very few priests and nuns, at least in the first half of the nineteenth century, and their influence on communities of Catholic children was very slight. When Irish Catholics arrived in England the church authorities found that many of them were 'Catholic in name only' (Supple, 1985: 229), ignorant of orthodox teaching and the doctrines of the faith. In addition, they had little experience of the rituals of formal religious observance and the prayers and ceremonies of the Catholic church. Chapter 4 showed that belief in fairies, ghosts, witchcraft, and the magical properties of plants and trees was widespread in rural Ireland and that people made pilgrimages to holy wells, and celebrated the festivals of patron saints. These events, part of a ritual of worship and celebration, embedded in pre-Christian Celtic beliefs, were not automatically discarded when Irish people emigrated to England, even though immigrants came under the influence of the English Catholic community which officially discouraged these beliefs (Lees, 1979: 165-167).

In Derby Irish Catholic children came face to face with formal orthodox Catholic teaching, and they were expected to attend Masses, communions, baptisms, marriages and funeral services in church. Many churches in Ireland were plain and bare, but Roman Catholic children who arrived in Derby from 1839 onwards worshipped in the elegant church of St. Mary's, designed by Pugin. It stood close to the Protestant Cathedral and commanded a view over the streets where many of the Irish lived (though this view was obscured in the 1860s by a new Protestant church). The photograph on page 153 shows the church, built of 'excellent bright



St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church in Derby was opened in 1839. Churches in rural Ireland were often plain and undecorated (See Chapter 4.) In contrast, this church was built of 'excellent bright stone' and had 'an excellent organ' (Glover, 1858).

stone', with large windows, a richly ornamented tower, and with an 'excellent organ' (Glover,1858:xiii). Derby and its surrounding area was served by two regular priests and a junior priest, Father Gogarty, who was Irish. There were very few Irish priests in England for much of the nineteenth century, since the bishops disapproved of them and considered them to be inadequate to minister to English Catholics. Nevertheless, there was a need for their presence; they maintained a link with Irish communities in Britain and since many were Irish-speaking, they could hear confessions in that language (Jackson,1963:139).

Underlying the church's work with Irish immigrants, was the concerted attempt to preserve the unity of the faith. The Irish were drawn into the English Roman Catholic community and the poor were supported, both economically and spiritually, so that their children did not have to attend Protestant schools, which were seen as a threat (Jackson,1963:140). 'The one great obstacle to the conversion of our beloved country is neglect of the poor children' the Catholic Poor School Society wrote in its first report, urging Catholic communities to set up more schools and train more teachers in their local areas (First Annual Report:1848).

The Roman Catholic community in Derby, and in England generally, was largely 'dominated by gentry families in the countryside and English middle-classes in the towns'(Supple,1985:212). In Derbyshire Lord and Lady Scarsdale of Kedleston Hall, Mr. and Mrs. Beaumont of Barrow Hall, and John Talbot, who was later to become 16th Earl of Shrewsbury at Alton Towers, were some of the area's most prominent Catholics and benefactors of the church. The arrival of so many Irish immigrants transformed this existing community. Three needs were paramount; first to provide a practical system of welfare that could be contained within the Catholic church (the workhouse was after all a Protestant organisation). 2 A

second problem, solved when St. Mary's Church was opened in 1839, was to have a place of worship large enough to house the growing Irish congregation. John Denvir's experience in Liverpool shows how crucial this was. He remembered churches packed with the Irish: 'I have seen them crowded out into chapel yards and into the open streets,' he wrote, 'satisfied if they could get even a glimpse of the inside of the sacred building through an open window' (1910:6). The third need of the Catholic authorities in Derby was to organise a system of schooling for the Irish immigrants, and this will be discussed in Chapter 8.

'The Irish poor....were a problem for bishop and priest,' writes Jennifer Supple. Their cultural differences, their manner, their superstitions, their overwhelming poverty, surprised and bewildered many traditional English Roman Catholics, some of whom were antagonistic towards the Irish. In The Recollections of a Northumbrian Lady Barbara Charlton, whose family had contributed towards setting up a school for Catholic children in the area in the mid-nineteenth century, wrote that 'the place was full of dirty ill-conditioned Irish labourers whose children sadly needed education, and to be taught better ways than their parents' (cited in Gwynn,1950:269-270).³ The patrons from the middle-classes recognised the need to shape and control the behaviour of these people. 'English Catholics are responsible beings who are taught right from wrong,' explained Barbara Charlton, 'whereas Irish Catholics, belonging to a yet savage nation, know no better and are perhaps excusable on that account' (cited in Gwynn,1950:270). Barbara Charlton was unknowingly echoing mid-Victorian views on recapitulation, discussed in Chapter 3, by expounding what was to her an entirely rational view of the Irish character - as embodying savagery and primitivism. Her mission to educate Irish children would be achieved by teaching them 'better ways than their parents' and educating them out of their savagery. This entailed a form of control, of course, and of laying down

an agenda for the children of the Irish poor, to 'civilise' them and lead them out of their ignorance into a world of childhood innocence and learning.

Not surprisingly, many priests were 'preoccupied with finance' (Supple, 1985:222) despite wealthy benefactors like Barbara Charlton and the Earl of Shrewsbury, and overwhelmed with the responsibility of coping with more and more Irish immigrants, most of whom were needy. It must have been a great relief to the Reverends Sing and Daniel in Derby to have the support of the religious orders, firstly the Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus led by Mother Cornelia Connelly from 1846-1848 and afterwards, the Sisters of Mercy, founded by Catherine McAuley. They arrived in Derby in 1848 and are still there today. Though most of the important educational work of these two orders will be discussed in Chapter 8, I want to introduce some of their activities in this chapter, to show how they offered the children of the Irish poor a vision of childhood. Both orders were headed by strong-minded, clever women, with deeply-held humanitarian convictions. I shall briefly introduce both here to show how they helped to shape the future of Irish childhood in Derby.

Cornelia Connelly was a wealthy American woman born in 1809. In 1831 she married Pierce Connelly, the rector of a church in Mississippi. They became Roman Catholic converts and in 1835 they went to Rome with their children to be received into the Church. On their return to America, Pierce Connelly taught English at a Jesuit college and Cornelia Connelly gave music lessons at a convent. Later, her husband decided to enter the priesthood and laid his case before the authorities in Rome. Cornelia Connelly, by now the mother of four children (though one had died) retired to a convent in Italy. In 1844 the Pope, convinced that both husband and wife had a vocation, agreed to a deed of separation. Cornelia Connelly entered the

Sacred Heart Convent in Italy as a quasi-postulant, but an enclosed order did not seem appropriate for her energies, and she wished to work with the poor. She and her companions seemed ideally suited to manage the schools in Derby. 4

Cornelia Connelly was the youngest of six children and had been brought up in a 'big cheerful house' in Pennsylvania, writes Marie Bisgood. Her childhood was 'spent in an atmosphere of freedom, creativity and unconventionality, which differed very much from the upbringing of little ladies and gentlemen on the English side of the Atlantic.' She gave her own children much of her creative time and devotion (Bisgood,1963:3,27). One of her aims in Derby was to bring the children of the poor into the province of the English Roman Catholic church, to teach them their catechism and to lead them to Mass on Sundays. The success of the Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus was reflected in the views of Abbé Duval, who visited the Convent in Derby on Ascension Day in 1847 to see the work of the nuns for himself, a year after they began their mission in Derby. His diary entry reflects a sense of satisfaction in what he saw:

...the little girls are not there a month before they are quite changed. That very day there had been a First Communion and as I came in I saw all the little girls coming out and they had innocence and happiness depicted on their faces. 5

His comments echo the Romantic view of childhood discussed in Chapter 3. In his eyes the little girls have become innocent, and have left the world of corruption behind. The Abbé's remarks underpin the central argument of this chapter, that the Catholic church in Derby was a major force in promoting the idea of 'childhood'. There has clearly been a change in the manner and appearance of these little girls, and it is there for all to see. They have become innocent and happy. But perhaps

the Abbé is gazing not only at the little girls in white, as he believes himself to be, but at the image of the lost child within him (Steedman,1995:5). The girls are perhaps a medium through which he can return to his own idealised self. If this is so, then his diary entry represents the clearest statement in the whole of this study of an adult inventing a childhood world for personal satisfaction.

The Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus, under Cornelia Connelly, left Derby in 1848. Their place was taken by the Sisters of Mercy, whose founder, Catherine McAuley, was born 'into a very happy home' in Dublin in 1778 where she lived until the death of her father, when the family home was sold. She was reared by her mother in an atmosphere of middle-class gentility, and educated well (Nathy,1979:1). As a young woman she used money from a legacy to build a house for the poor in Baggot Street, Dublin and with a group of helpers, mainly young women from wealthy families, she opened a school in Dublin for over two hundred poor Catholic children, set up an orphanage, and organised visitations to the sick. Under pressure from the Roman Catholic authorities, Catherine McAuley and her companions were persuaded to take Holy Orders, and her House became a Convent, coming under the authority of the Roman Catholic Church. She founded several Convents in Ireland. Her first English foundation was at Bermondsey in 1839. Foundations were also established in North America, Newfoundland and Australia. The Sisters became well-known for their nursing work, both with the poor and in the Crimean War, 1854-56. ⁶

The aims of the Sisters of Mercy were threefold in all the communities where they established themselves: the visitation of the sick, the protection of poor girls of good character, and the instruction and education of children. It was probably the Sisters of Mercy, more than any other group in Derby, who were responsible

for helping Irish children to shift their identity towards a new regard for themselves as young people - children - with their own needs and interests. Their careful structuring of education and their organisation of events and religious processions, gave impetus to children's crucial move from being minor agricultural labourers in Ireland towards a new conception of themselves as young people with their own needs. In addition to the schooling which they offered, they organised tea parties and celebratory processions for the children of the Catholic poor. This kind of event marked a stage in the definition and construction of the concept of 'childhood' as a separate state; young people were presented with entertainments specifically directed at them as *children*. Those who took part in the procession described by the Annalist of the Convent of Mercy might have felt rather special, wearing wreaths and dressed in white muslin by the Sisters, the boys with ribbons and medals:

There was a grand procession of all the young women and children from the school to the market place and round the principal streets. Afterwards they returned to the school where they were regaled with a substantial tea given in honour of the marriage of the Prince of Wales (Convent of Mercy Annals, Derby:1863).

Some sense of the excitement the children might have felt can be gauged from Charles Shaw's account of the 'Charity Sunday' procession he took part in as a boy: 'On that day,' he wrote, 'the poorest parents were proud as their children passed their door in the procession of scholars' (1903:210). John Denvir's experience as a boy in Liverpool echoes this same thrill. He looked forward 'with delight' to the St. Patrick's Day processions and recalled that they 'were splendid displays' (1910:24). Children were specially dressed-up for these occasions, though this was a cause both of anxiety and excitement for parents, since 'new

clothes had to be found for the children, and this out of scant resources' (Shaw,1903:209). Shaw's recollections are evidence that children and their parents were paying the new kind of attention to dress that the Reverend McDonald noticed (p.146). Parents wanted their children to look smart, to be dressed for the world to see, even though some parents 'had only just wiped off obligations incurred by clothes for the last Charity Sunday' (1903:209).

It was precisely this kind of event that signalled a move towards childhood. Adults organised the events on behalf of children, and the agreed separation of parents from their children, placed parents in the role of spectator. They were not directly involved themselves in an event which, after all, was not for them; their role was to reflect their children's enjoyment. This separation of child and adult stands in sharp contrast to the family participation in traditional Irish entertainment, where people of all ages took part. In Derby the children's Christmas tea parties, the Whit Sunday and Corpus Christie processions, all marked a step away from the direct influence of the family. An outside agency now provided the entertainment, and provided it for children alone. Events such as these marked a stage in the definition and construction of childhood because young people were presented with events that specifically defined them as children.

It might be expected that Irish children and their families came to Derby with their belief in the elements of miracle and magic intact, even though the orthodox doctrine of the Roman Catholic church forbade 'trusting to charms, omens, dreams and such-like fooleries' (Doctrine,1985:31). Both John Denvir and Tom Barclay had wry memories of their mothers' superstitious beliefs and their allegiance to a traditional Irish form of Christianity. It is perhaps significant that both men, looking back as adults, did not seem to share their mothers' beliefs. This would appear to

indicate a weakening of the links with folklore and tradition in second-generation children. John Denvir describes his mother's strength of purpose:

She was a woman with the strong Irish faith in the supernatural, and in the power of God and his Church, that can 'move mountains.' A younger brother of mine had a running in his foot which the doctors could not cure. She determined to take Bernard to Father Mathew and get him to lay his hands on her boy....with her children kneeling round her, she asked the good Father to touch her son. He, no doubt, thinking it would be presumptuous on his part to claim any supernatural gift, passed on without complying with her request (1910:13).

A priest in Ireland would no doubt have seen nothing wrong in doing as she asked. Tom Barclay describes a similar incident that occurred when when his mother looked for a cure for whooping-cough, though the priest she approached was rather more sympathetic to her request than Mrs. Denvir's priest had been to her:

What is 'chin-cough' and how should it be cured? I suspect chin-cough was whooping-cough; mother's cure for it was to drink out of the chalice. I and my brother were taken to the chapel, and kneeling before the altar-rails, the kind priest gave us a drink out of the sacramental chalice: I don't know was the liquor wine or water, or whether it cured us (1934:88).

The Irish Sisters of Mercy in Derby were no less susceptible to a belief in miracles, in spite of the church's doctrinal statements, as this extract from the annals shows:

One of the children in the orphanage had been suffering for a long time with sore eyes which the doctors could not cure. The child prayed to St. Winifred and used the water from the well and her eyes were perfectly cured. Shortly after Sister Mary Baptista became paralysed and was unable to walk by herself. The Sisters made a novena to St. Winifred and the invalid drank the water from the well. Towards the end of nine days the Sister walked steadily from the cell alone with the great joy of the community, who were astonished when they saw the miraculous cure (Convent of Mercy Annals, Derby:1858).

Irish children had their own faith in the supernatural reinforced by events such as this, suggesting that this aspect of cultural carry-over did not diminish among Irish children in Derby in the mid-Victorian years, particularly when it was sanctioned by the nuns. No doubt St. Winifred's name was invoked many times after these extraordinary events, and while children were taken forward into a world of childhood, this validation of the belief in magic and miracle surely gave them a foothold back in the old world.

A Birmingham surgeon was critical of the superstitious nature of the Irish, because in his opinion their folk-beliefs affected the quality of care and the treatment of disease. He said that Irish women would 'walk any distance or make any exertion to get medicine' but then would 'not follow the instructions of the medical man' because they expected the medicine 'to act as a charm' (Poor Inquiry, 1836:480). The symbolic act of fetching the medicine was perhaps rather like undertaking a pilgrimage, with strength gained from the journey and its conclusion, especially if the journey involved a great deal of effort. The surgeon explained that the mothers had no confidence in the medicine they procured and thought 'spirits and wine the specific, particularly in diseases of children' (1836:480). These, coupled with holy water from a well, a prayer to Saint Winifred, and some traditional loving care, perhaps saved more children than the doctors might have imagined. 7

But this kind of behaviour was far removed from the world of a good English Roman Catholic, and in an attempt to encourage the Irish to take part in orthodox religious services many priests in England introduced special English prayers before and after Mass and a special children's Mass. Catholic communities were persuaded to attend church on Sunday afternoon or evening for other services, and 'new

types of services, processions, and devotion to particular saints, or to Christ and his Mother' were introduced from the 1840s onwards (Supple, 1985:230). The church also tried to influence Catholic parents on matters concerning children's religious upbringing, and insisted that children should be taught their prayers, sent to catechism classes and to Mass on Sundays and holy days and, if the child's wages were not necessary to support the family, to school.

The maintenance of religious practices in the home helped to strengthen belief and probably gave an additional sense of unity and purpose to religious life. Tom Barclay's memoirs reveal that his family prayed together in their home: 'before going to bed we all knelt down....on the bare uneven brick floor and recited the rosary, father leading off: one our Father to ten Hail Marys' (1934:7). He was describing a particular set of religious practices within his family, and praying together like this was a way of maintaining his family's religious identity. Jackson and Nesbitt describe how Hindu children growing up in Britain today are similarly united by the experience of being brought up in homes where at a particular time each day, and in a certain designated place in the house, the family meets together for shared worship (1993:95). Irish Catholic children too felt a sense of unity with other families, sharing a set of beliefs and acting out similar rituals in their own homes.

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In this chapter I have argued that the Catholic Church made it possible for Irish children to make the crucial move from worker to child, a move which enabled each child to construct a world of childhood out of what was available. Crucially, it was the Sisters of Mercy who were the shaping force in the cultural transition from child-labourer to child, and made it possible for them to tell themselves a new story

of how their lives should be. Many children were still employed in the factories and mills when the nuns began their work in Derby, but from 1846 onwards the organisation of the day, night and Sunday Schools, and the observance of religious occasions, gave Irish children a sense of community, a social and cultural focus; above all, a place where they could be *children*.

Footnotes

1. Linda Colley estimates that nationally there were about three thousand anti-Catholic petitions in 1828-29 against the Roman Catholic Emancipation Bill 'from places that had never petitioned Parliament before and would hardly ever petition Parliament again', such was the strength of feeling against Roman Catholics gaining a foothold in the country (Colley,1992:330). However, the bill was passed and from 1829 onwards all Welsh, Scottish and Irish Roman Catholic males had the right to vote on the same terms as Englishmen. They could also be elected to Parliament and take civil office, though they were still not allowed to take the throne, nor to enter universities, nor to take high legal office (Colley,1992:334).
2. In 1849 the Catholic Poor School Committee was assured by the Poor Law Board that Catholic children in the workhouse were not 'compelled to attend any religious service which may be celebrated in a mode contrary to those religious principles.' The Board went on to explain that any Catholic inmate had 'the privilege of receiving religious instruction from a licensed minister of his own persuasion' (First Annual Report,1848:154-155)
3. Charlton,B. (1949). L.E.O. Charlton (ed.) The Recollections of a Northumbrian Lady, 1815-1866: being the memoirs of Barbara Charlton nee Tasburgh. London, Jonothan Cape.
4. Bishop Wiseman and the Earl of Shrewsbury invited Cornelia Connelly to undertake the spiritual and secular education of the Catholic poor in Derby. She drew up her own rules for the Society of the Holy Child Jesus and she and several companions remained in Derby for two years, organising education in the poor schools and establishing a boarding school for middle-class girls. But after a dispute with the Catholic authorities, she removed her schools to St. Leonard's-on-Sea in Sussex, where she remained until her death in 1879. (For more information see Marmion, 1984).

5. I have been unable to trace the source of this diary entry. The extract appears in a typed manuscript entitled 'A Resumé of the Sisters of Mercy: The Formative Years' (undated and unacknowledged, Convent of Mercy, Derby.)
6. For more information about the life of Catherine McAuley see Mercy Unto Thousands by Sister Mary Bertrand Degnan.
7. James Treble notes that in cholera cases the Irish were reluctant to be taken to hospital in the initial stages of the disease (1971:187). This fear of hospitals, probably well-founded, is one of the themes running through L.T. Meade's Jill A Flower Girl (1910). This is a story of an Irish flower-seller and her mother who live in London in the second half of the nineteenth century. In the story a young Irish girl becomes ill, but her mother says, 'I'll have no doctor to see her, no that I won't, for he'd be after ordhering her off to the hospital, and that'ud kill her entirely' (Meade,1910:41).

THE IRISH CHILD AT WORK

There is little doubt that the majority of labouring Irish children who came to Derby in the mid-nineteenth century, did so with the expectation of generating income for their families. The census data reveals a total of 290 Irish-born children who worked in Derby in 1841, 1851 and 1861 though, as usual with census data, these figures are only accurate for those particular years. Appendices 11 - 15, pp.337-341, give details of the children's range of occupations.

This chapter explores the impact of working life on immigrant Irish children in Derby, and considers what this experience taught them about the world of work and industry, in terms of the range of occupations they held, the gendered nature of their work, and the widening opportunities offered by the new industrial environment. It extends the discussion to show how these children learnt to structure time within an industrial setting, and argues that the discipline of industrial time, and the pressure to meet deadlines, were major contributors in creating a new consciousness of clock-time.

There was of course nothing new in the idea of children working and contributing to the family economy (Coveney, 1967:40). Children of the labouring poor were expected to work as part of a collective family enterprise to support the family as a whole; in this respect Irish children were no different from the mass of working children in Britain. When the Factory Acts of 1833 and 1844 legislated for half-time schooling that there was a shift towards a compulsory childhood, and this will be investigated later in the chapter.

In this chapter I have concentrated my research on Irish-born children rather than on second-generation children, because the experience of living and working in Ireland set this first group apart from both the English factory children who worked alongside them and inevitably, from their younger brothers and sisters who were born in England. Irish-born children already knew that their labour was important for the maintenance of the family, so there was nothing unfamiliar about their commitment to hard physical work. Their experience in Ireland of digging and planting potatoes, collecting and carrying turf, spinning and weaving in the home, or hawking and begging around the markets (see Chapter 4), had already established a work discipline, and an understanding that their labour was crucial to the family economy.

Irish-born children at work in Derby during the period of this study were increasingly, like all labouring children, the collective concern of liberal thinkers who wished to improve their conditions by modifying work practices, reducing hours of work, and introducing part-time schooling into their working lives. Others, more radically, wished to remove labouring children from the factory altogether. So did others, who wished to see children controlled by the discipline of education and considered the growing band of street children to be a threat. A policy of sending

these children to school on a full-time basis would be a certain way of 'removing the idle child from the streets' (Cunningham,1990:150). Some urban children had learnt to make a living on the streets throughout the early decades of the nineteenth century, and their visibility became a problem in the 1850s and 1860s (Smelser,1991:133).

But although from the 1830s onwards middle- and upper-class liberals were in favour of children going to school rather than to work, at least until they were nine or ten years of age, many labouring parents did not agree with their views (Best,1971:110). Working parents were generally complicit in supporting child labour, and there was certainly an expectation in Derby that Irish children should work. For example, the Reverend Collingbridge, a Birmingham priest, noticed in his parish in the 1830s that the Irish 'work(ed) their children very young, from seven to ten years of age' (Poor Inquiry,1836:476).

The facts and figures of employment

Hugh Cunningham's analysis of the 1851 census data for England and Wales shows that from a total of 4,005,716 children between the ages of five and fourteen, 577,998 - about one-seventh of the whole - were employed in some capacity (1990:142). Numbers are uneven; working boys outnumber girls and older working children (in the ten to fourteen age range) greatly outnumber younger workers (of five to nine years). This analysis also reveals a wide discrepancy between areas of the country that offered work to children. Cunningham's findings confirm that there was no national pattern of work availability; indeed, some counties offered hardly any work (1990:141-142). In the whole of England and Wales, Derbyshire was the eighth highest employing county for girls between five and nine years in the

entire country. For boys aged ten to fourteen, Derbyshire was placed fifteenth in rank order with 41.7% employment for boys; for girls of the same age Derbyshire was ranked fifth, offering employment to 33.8% of girls (1990 :144-145). These figures suggest that Irish parents chose to come to Derby because it was an area rich in industry of various kinds and offered job opportunities for both adults and children. In particular, the silk mills and iron foundries provided regular employment for children who brought in a steady wage for the family.

Fig. 4 below shows that relatively few *Irish-born* children were employed in 1841, with only forty children working. This number increased to 157 when Irish immigration rose in the early 1850s, reflecting the large number of Irish-born children who arrived in Derby with their families in the famine and post-famine years, all looking for work and ready to take whatever was offered to them by local manufacturers. Numbers dropped again by 1861, probably reflecting the increasing proportion of children in full-time education (see Chapter 8).

	Irish girls working	Irish boys working	Total Irish children working	Total Irish-born children in Derby
1841	14	26	40	145
1851	77	80	157	228
1861	50	43	93	98

Fig. 4: Showing number and percentages of Irish-born boys and girls working at each census date (Source: Census for Derby, 1841, 1851, 1861).

Many of these children worked in the silk mills in Derby (Cunningham's analysis suggests that in 1851 textiles and domestic service provided most employment for girls nationally (1990:143). Other children took jobs as labourers, apprentices, workers in small industries, or as hawkers and travellers. One boy became a pupil-teacher, and the records of the Catholic Poor School Committee (see Chapter 8 for discussion of this body) reveal another Irish child - a girl - who also became a pupil-teacher, and there might be other records yet to be analysed.

Fig. 5 on p.172 is a breakdown of the numbers of Irish-born children employed at each census year, showing their occupations. It reveals several important factors. First, there was a much wider choice of occupations open to boys than to girls, many of them in factory work. This gendered pattern is reflected in the statistics for adult male and female Irish employment in Derby (see Chapter 4). Though some of boys' work was particularly dirty and dangerous, they were given training opportunities in specialised engineering trades, and a small number of boy apprentices were named at each census date. Boys were also perhaps encouraged to seek wider employment when they saw Irish men working in a growing number of occupations, some with their own businesses, and some in professions, as Chapter 4 has shown. Knowledge of this kind was helpful to boys when they considered their own employment prospects, and even though the Reverend Peach commented in 1836 that Irish boys 'merely seek to get their living as their fathers (had) done, by labour,' there are indications that this was not always the case by the mid-nineteenth century (Poor Inquiry, 1836:475). Opportunities for girls widened a *little* in 1851 but narrowed again by 1861, possibly because there were fewer jobs in the silk mills after the fall-off in demand for silk in the 1850s, or because silk mill owners might have refused to employ children who did not bring a certificate to work with them proving that they had attended school.

Despite these problems, silk manufactories were still the largest employers of Irish children, particularly of girls during the 1850s, and to a lesser extent in the 1860s when the silk industry was in decline. Conversely, several jobs were done by only one Irish girl or boy listed in the returns; for example, whipmaker, cordwainer, boilermaker, bricklayer, tailoress, bookfolder - probably more Irish children were employed in these trades and the census data has missed them, but even so, the employment of individual Irish children is perhaps indicative of the existence of minor industries with a small workforce. Individual Irish children probably worked alongside English children in some jobs, and had an introduction to an English way of life. The employment of individual Irish children as workers shows that they were segregated in the workforce, not only from other Irish children, but also from their families. The concept of joint family agricultural work on the land had gone forever, and family members had to understand that children were now 'workers outside the family group who were protected by the law rather than by their father' (Thomis, 1974:120-121)

A few girls took work as servants, though the numbers are perhaps lower than might be expected, particularly since Cunningham shows that service work provided many openings for girls across the country (Cunningham,1990:143). There are possibly three reasons why numbers in Derby were low. Firstly, chapter 4 showed that the English middle-classes were to a large extent prejudiced against employing Irish Roman Catholic servants, and this narrowed openings for Irish children in Derby. Secondly, Pamela Horn points out that there were few groups of people in the employing classes living in manufacturing districts, so the number who might have employed servants was relatively low; thirdly, children from textile towns could earn higher wages and have more regular free time if they chose to work in the

1841

<u>Girls' occupations</u>	<u>Number employed</u>	<u>Boys' occupations</u>	<u>Number employed</u>
Lace	1	Apprentice	2
Servant	3	Cordwainer	1
Silk industry	10	Hawker	3
		Labourer	10
		Silk industry	10

1851

Bookfolder	1	Apprentice	1
Hawker	1	Beggar	2
Household work	1	Cotton industry	5
Servant	8	Errand boy	2
Silk industry	64	Foundry	1
Traveller	2	Frame maker	1
		Hawker	1
		Household work	1
		Labourer	14
		Silk industry	49
		Traveller	4
		Whipmaker	1

1861

Servant	3	Apprentice	1
Silk industry	46	Boiler maker	1
Tailoress	1	Bow-driver	1
		Bricklayer	1
		Errand boy	3
		Foundry	1
		Glazier	1
		Hawker	2
		Iron fetler (sic)	1
		Labourer	14
		Lagger	1
		Pupil teacher	1
		Rag and bone	1
		Silk industry	12
		Tag hand (boot lace)	1
		Traveller	1

Fig.5: Summary of occupations for Irish-born girls and boys in Derby in 1841, 1851 and 1861 (for full list of jobs see Apps.11-15). Source: Census for Derby, 1841, 1851, 1861.

mills, rather than go into service, particularly if their mistress was exacting (Horn,1975:27). Perhaps this last reason is why there are no records of Irish boys working as servants. They generally had greater flexibility and choice of occupations in the mills and factories.

The labour of a general maid-of-all-work was 'hard and drudging' (Horn,1975:18) and the two girls who worked as servants in the House of Correction in 1841 did menial work there, perhaps employed as maids-of-all-work to the prison governor, cleaning, washing, scrubbing, and preparing meals. It is possible that Irish girls not listed in the census data were employed away from home in the villages around Derby; it was common practice to engage girls from outside the immediate area to make it more difficult for them to go home, and so they would not be followed by troublesome admirers (Horn,1975:32).

The Sisters of Mercy in Derby were aware that Catholic servant girls were at particular moral risk in Protestant houses. In some households servants were required to attend prayers every morning and employers were known to challenge servants' religious beliefs (Horn,1975:43). Advertisements for servants often stipulated the religion of the servant and insisted that they attended family prayers (Horn,1975:114). The Derby Mercury carried one such advertisement for a Nursery Maid who, as well as being 'strong and healthy, fond of children and good tempered' also had to be a 'Churchwoman' (May 5,1869). This was a common problem for Roman Catholic girls in search of work. Henry Mayhew wrote about the 'orphan children of poor Irish parents' who (were) put out as servants after they (had) been in the workhouse. Their work was hard, their wages miserable, and 'their treatment severe' especially when leaving the house to attend Mass, so that in time they left the employment to take up a life of street-selling (1985:144).

The Sisters of Mercy in Derby had nine 'servants out of situation' in their care - two of these were below the age of eighteen, and therefore come into the area of this study. The Convent Annals for 1850 stated that 'women of good character were received and trained as servants and afterwards provided with situations. Girls were trained out of their 'slovenliness, faulty manners and crude speech' (Degnan,1958:79) and were taught general domestic duties, and shown how to wash and make up linen in the convent laundry before they were recommended to prospective employers. Usually the only training girls received before they became servants was from their own mothers (Horn,1975: 37). The Sisters of Mercy therefore provided a kind of apprenticeship for these girls, probably the only training (other than that available to pupil-teachers) given to Catholic girls in Derby, apart from the rudimentary domestic experience some of them received in the workhouse. The girl who worked as a farm servant in 1841 was likely to have had to learn to skim milk, clean and scald milk pans, and other farm implements, to scrub the dairy, make butter, get meals for the family, clean and prepare the fire, collect eggs and wrap them for market (Horn,1975:52). This was fairly specialised work, some of it no doubt reminiscent of Irish farm life which the girl might have been acquainted with if she was the daughter of a former tenant-farmer.

But even children who did not become servants were nevertheless expected to take their share of domestic duties in the home, and the brother and sister who are listed in the 1851 census returns as doing 'household work,' Ann and Martin Timons from Co. Roscommon, probably worked in their own home alongside their mother and older sister. Ann was eleven at the time and Martin was thirteen. Their fifty-eight-year-old father and twenty-four-year-old brother Patrick were labourers, and their mother did not appear to have had paid employment. An older sister,

Bridget, aged twenty-four, was also described as doing 'household work'. It is not clear if Ann and Martin worked outside the home, doing chores for other people for a small payment; probably the father and brother were earning sufficient money to support the family.

Ann and her older sister learnt other things too, principally about their own gendered work roles, and their place as young women in working-class society. The girls' mother could argue with some justification that she was training her girls to be good housewives and homemakers. It is less clear what role Martin played in household duties, but it would be in keeping with the gendered work expectation that he should fetch and carry, sweep up, or perhaps look after the livestock and the vegetables - the family lived in a house in Green Street and might have had their own small backyard, with chickens or a pig. Tom Barclay, as the oldest child, recalled taking on the responsibility of his home in Leicester when he was a small boy and deeply resenting it, though he understood that it freed his parents to do paid work:

What sort of an existence was it where a mother giving suck had to be hours away from home trying to earn something....I as eldest was nurse, and often (had) I put my tongue into baby's mouth to be sucked in lieu of 'titty' to stop her cries (1934:8-9).

The description of a girl's typical household tasks in the Newcastle Commission (1861) gives some indication that Ann Timons might have been expected to 'bear her part of the family housekeeping, the family cooking, the family washing, and the family clothes-making and clothes mending' (1861:104):

Children who gave their occupations as travellers or hawkers worked alone or with their brothers, sisters and parents, selling on the streets. Perhaps they already had experience of selling goods in village markets in Ireland, and in Derby they now sold a range of food, hardware and bric-a-brac. The three boy 'silk cadgers' in 1851 hawked silk articles around the streets - gloves or stockings, for example. 'The Irish (children) in London', Mayhew wrote, '*must* sell on the streets, that they may eat in any place' (1985:161). He observed that they were 'required, as soon as their strength enable(d) them, to assist their parents in their work, or sell trifles, single-handed, for the behoof of their parents' (1985:165). Like children who sell in the markets around the world today, Irish children were adept at urging prospective customers to buy. They could handle money, make their wares look attractive, in basket or barrow, and give change. Their numeracy skills were learnt on the streets, along with skills of self-sufficiency and self-promotion. The Derby Mercury reported an incident concerning an Irish basket boy, and I relate it here because it is evidence of an Irish child selling oranges from a basket, and perhaps it is also evidence of anti-Irish or anti-Roman Catholic feeling in the town, and of the visibility of Irish children:

Two or three well known youths....met a poor Irish lad the other day in Stanley Lane, selling oranges for a livelihood, and one of them stole out of his basket one or more of his oranges, and because he offered no resistance, the culprit ill-treated him (March 5,1851).

Perhaps this Irish boy was afraid to offer any resistance, or possibly he was taken by surprise. When Edwin Muir arrived in Glasgow at the age of fourteen he was struck by the expression of greed on the faces of boys of his own age - 'the creed of success which was quite new to me.' In his small farming community in the Orkneys 'it was considered contemptible to steal'; everyone helped each other out.

But in Glasgow he soon learnt that 'one's neighbour was one's worst enemy' (1935:112). Perhaps the young Irish orange seller had learnt a similar lesson.

The two boys recorded as beggars in 1851 were brothers aged five and nine, living with their widowed mother, also a beggar, and three older children who worked in the silk mills. In his evidence to the Poor Inquiry the Superintendent of the Manchester Watch spoke of Irish families who lived 'in entire idleness on the money collected by their children' and added that children 'were severely beaten' if they were not able to collect an agreed sum - usually 2s. or 3s. a day (1836:448). The combined wages of the three older children in this Derby family perhaps amounted to about 12s., so the proceeds of begging augmented their income, perhaps to about £1 a week.

Poor Law records exist for two more brothers who were described as beggars, seven-year-old James Bagg and his sixteen-year-old brother, who was 'sent to prison this morning for begging,' an offence against the 1824 Vagrancy Act (James was taken into the workhouse). The boys' father lived in Anvill Street, Little Ireland, Manchester and the boys were lodging in Court 4, Walker Lane in Derby. No details about their mother were recorded, so perhaps the children were alone, and had found their way from Manchester to Derby on one of the routes described in Chapter 4. Since they were able to name the street in Manchester where their father lived, it is possible they lived also there with him from time to time (P.L.R., Minute Book, August:1847). These brothers appeared to be 'on tramp', probably doing some harvesting. This small Irish tramping population of boys was sometimes viewed with suspicion by the authorities, but many earned their living by finding odd jobs up and down the country, using a considerable amount of ingenuity. In 1847 five boys appeared in the Poor Law records:

Thomas Noon, aged 15: 'he came from Ashbourne yesterday' (May 1847)

John O'Brien, aged 16, Labourer: 'Vagrant office from Ashbourne' (July 1847)

Patrick Corley, aged 14: 'slept in a barn at Darley last night' (August 1847)

John Phipps, aged 13: 'vagrant from Shardlow this morning' (August 1847)

James Fox, aged 16, Labourer: 'five days in the town' (October 1847)

These Irish boys were 'on tramp,' making a living by travelling from one part of the country to another in search of work. Lionel Rose suggests that vagrants were sometimes the local homeless, who tramped around their own neighbourhood. Others were what he called 'long-distance rovers', the seasonal migrants who went hop-picking or pea-picking. 'For them,' he writes, 'it was a life of dossing in fields and streets, common lodging-houses or brothels' (Rose,1988:91). These boys had probably followed the routes established by Irish harvesters and emigrating families (see Chapter 4) and had been harvesting in the Midlands villages. A farmer outside Birmingham, in his evidence to the Poor Inquiry, described the working conditions for his Irish harvesters, who were given '12s. a week, a quart of beer and lodged at night in a barn.' They were given dinner on Sunday and sometimes on Thursday, but since so many arrived they were willing to work for about 8s. a week, lower than the English wage (Poor Inquiry,1836:481).

The Irish boys who had arrived in Derby were by no means aimlessly wandering about; theirs was a tried and tested strategy for earning a living, at least for a few months of the year. But it could be a miserable existence. Thomas Wright, who wrote under the name of 'A Journeyman Engineer' described some of the discomforts of his tramping life. He was often 'very footsore'; and he attributed this to 'walking about the streets of a busy town, and waiting about workshop

gates all day - a kind of thing which takes more out of a man on tramp than a day's straightforward walking.' To make matters worse, he 'had no one to speak to' and 'each mile seemed as long as two had previously done' though things got better as he became more experienced, and learnt to wash his feet regularly and to care for his boots (1868:273, 265).

The young trampers who arrived exhausted at the Vagrant Office in Derby did not have the benefit of Wright's age and experience, and were clearly suffering. In addition, they were constantly at risk from apprehension under the vagrancy laws which Carolyn Steedman notes 'conferred a statutory and universal power on all policemen in the surveillance of poor people mobile on the roads.' Major General Sir William Cartwright, who became a government inspector of constabulary for the Midland district in 1856, was a believer in 'vagrant crime', and 'sought to separate the 'criminal tramper' from the respectable working man, tramping in search of work' (Steedman, 1984:57) The Derby Board of Guardians signalled their anxiety about the large number of tramping Irish by debating whether to make the stone-breaking shed into a 'Room for Travelling Irish,' but an objection was raised and the committee suggested the use of 'a more permanent building by altering the back of the porter's lodge and straw room' (P.L.R., Minute Book, May, 1847).¹

A substantial number of Irish boys took work as labourers in the various manufacturing industries, just as their fathers had done. Those who worked in 'colour' or at the 'plaster mills' were employed by the Chemical Works and Colour Manufacturers, and were involved in the manufacture of Roman cement, plaster, colours and paint. In the 1850s about twenty-five boys worked there alongside seventy-five men, most of them English, and the boys earned 7s to 8s a week (Glover, 1858:xxxviii). The labouring boys at the factory mixed lime, water and

sand, and shovelled and carried loads from one part of the factory to another, ready to be transferred by cart to the railway or distributed locally. This work was completely different to any kind of work that Irish boys had done in Ireland, except that the lifting and carrying of heavy sacks might have reminded them of the physical effort involved in cutting and shifting turf. In Ireland, their families worked alongside them; in Derby, they were outnumbered by local workers and had to learn to fetch and carry to a different rhythm. In Ireland too, the air was clean; in Derby, they probably inhaled lead dust from the chemicals in the paints.

Other boys found employment in Derby in the foundries that manufactured cast iron. The boy who described himself as an iron fetler (sic) in 1861 worked in the fettling shop in one of the town's foundries. His work was part of the process of the production of cast iron and he was taught on the job, supervised by a foreman. When the moulders or grinders had taken off the large surplus handles on the casting that had been taken from the mould, the fettler's job was to remove the surplus metal that remained, using a hammer, a chisel or a file, and wearing a long leather apron for protection. The fettler had to work quickly because he was on piece-work. Even in the early years of the twentieth century this was still a hot, dirty and exhausting job, carried out with bad ventilation very near to the furnaces, and there was no doubt that fettlers inhaled metal dust. When the fettlers had done their work the labourers - perhaps the boys who gave 'foundry' as their work in 1851 and 1861 - brushed up the 'chippings' then riddled them to extract the metal, gathering it at intervals to be re-used. The work was filthy (Holmes: November, 1994).

This young Irish fettler was learning to become part of a large manufacturing industry which made, among other things, bridges, railway station roofs, manhole

covers, lamp standards, letter boxes and steam engines. Perhaps he felt a pride when he saw his firm's name stamped on local metalwork. He had the opportunity of being taught a trade that was impossible for him to follow in rural Ireland, and his skill brought new learning into his home, setting him apart from his family. He might also have had the opportunity of promotion, becoming a foreman himself in time. The work brought with it a new vocabulary - specialised words like 'fetler' (which is how the enumerator spelled it), 'chippings', 'riddling' became part of his everyday language at work, and gave him control over a new area of knowledge in a linguistic and social context far removed from anything in other areas of his life, and ensuring a unique position within his family. If he was Irish-speaking, the specialised vocabulary added to his knowledge of English in a way that gave him a control over one particular field of work.

Other Irish boys worked as general labourers in unspecified industries, probably in the foundries. The bricklayer's labourer in 1851 was employed to mix mortar from sand, cement and lime and to carry it to the bricklayer in a hod. He also moved bricks about, mixed aggregate from gravel or small stones, and perhaps smashed up brick-ends for this purpose. The work was hard, the hours long - particularly in the summer months, but the boy was able to watch the bricklayers at work and learnt from them. One boy in 1861 gave his trade as 'bricklayer', so he had obviously had some kind of training.

It is perhaps more surprising to discover that three boys specifically named themselves as apprentices, even though the standard seven-year apprenticeship had lapsed, because unskilled tasks within industrial mass-production needed little training, and division of labour did not require an artisan to see a job through to completion (Smelser, 1991:257). This situation allowed employers to hire children

without helping them towards learning any skill and ensured that they did repetitive, low-skilled work for little pay (Sommerville,1982:182). In 1841 Henry Williams, aged fifteen, was apprenticed to his own father, a coachmaker. In 1851 a fourteen-year-old boy became a carpenter's apprentice and in 1861 a seventeen-year-old boy was apprenticed to a coachsmith. These boys learnt specific skills during their apprenticeship from the men who employed them. Henry Williams was part of that traditional father-son, master-apprentice relationship which was rapidly disappearing as fathers increasingly worked in factories. This point will be discussed later in the chapter in connection with the work of a weaver and his son.

To summarise the findings so far, some Irish children worked with their families as street traders, while others took on individual jobs, perhaps moving away from the family, as the girl who was the farm servant had to do. Many boys took advantage of the significant amount of industry in Derby to take labouring jobs, just as their fathers had done, though some trained to be semi-skilled or skilled workers in their trades. It would be encouraging to think that the girl who was listed as a tailoress in 1861 was learning specific skills, but I suspect that she was part of a sweated trade, probably working in a shop or at home, perhaps after a rudimentary training in the workhouse or from her mother.

An entrance into the professions

Opportunities for entry into professional work were slight for labouring boys and girls, but one that was available for some was that of pupil-teacher. After 1846 the Catholic Poor School Society encouraged its schools to apprentice 'a certain number of the more intelligent of its scholars' as pupil-teachers for a period of five years. One pupil-teacher was allowed for every twenty-five scholars attending a

school, and an annual allowance of £5 and upwards, according to the number of pupil-teachers apprenticed, was made to the master or mistress for the extra instruction they gave. An additional £10 to £20, depending on the year of apprenticeship, was given to the pupil-teacher for maintenance. After the apprenticeship ended, the pupil-teacher was invited to take an exhibition scholarship and to enter a teacher-training college to become a certificated elementary teacher (Smelser,1991:275).

The census for 1861 indicates that one Irish-born boy, Luke Padan, aged fifteen, had become a pupil-teacher. He was the son (or the grandson?) of a fifty-six-year-old skin merchant and his wife Ann, aged forty-five. He had five brothers and sisters, all born in Co.Sligo, and a three-year-old sister born in Derby. Luke belonged to exactly the kind of family the school inspectors hoped would take an interest in apprenticeships of this kind - 'from the upper reaches of the working-classes, and especially from that ambiguous band separating the working-class from the lower middle-class' (Smelser,1991:301). Luke's father was probably self-employed, and clearly earning enough for Luke and his younger brother to be full-time scholars. (Luke's three older sisters were all silk winders and their wages, plus their father's, probably gave the family enough to live on). Children from this kind of background were given encouragement to become pupil-teachers because they were felt to be an inspiration to other working-class children they taught; it was also hoped that they would be prepared to teach poor children - a task taken on unwillingly by some middle-class teachers (Smelser,1991:298).

Luke must have shown some promise at school to be selected at the age of thirteen by the master for his examination before the inspector, and to be given a certificate of good conduct from the priest. The Newcastle Commission (1861)

stated that while children were apprenticed, they were required to stay at school for five years, during which time they taught younger pupils, and were themselves taught by the master for one and half hours a day, five days a week. They were expected to teach reading, writing, arithmetic, grammar, geography, English history and the scriptures to younger pupils and to examine these subjects. At the end of their five-year course they were expected to read with expression, have a good knowledge of English grammar, compose an essay on an aspect of pedagogy, be well acquainted with mathematics, including the first two books of Euclid and simple equations in algebra. Since Luke was a boy rather than a girl (girls were given some remission in their studies so they could do household work), he was expected to understand arithmetic up to decimal fractions and simple interest (1861:101-104). The Catholic authorities encouraged pupils to succeed in passing the examinations and told school managers that 'there is nothing here that an intelligent lad of thirteen ought not to do with perfect ease' (T.C.S., No.12, 1849:180)

The opportunity to become a pupil-teacher, and subsequently to be a schoolmaster in his own right, meant that Luke was likely to have been the first person in his family to enter a profession. He was experiencing something new and different from other members of his family, receiving an education from the schoolmaster, studying to a high level, and having the responsibility of teaching younger children. Luke's family came from Co. Sligo, and this opportunity might never have presented itself if they had continued to live in Ireland. ²

By 1850 the Catholic Poor School Society reported that almost two hundred pupil-teachers were apprenticed in Roman Catholic schools in Great Britain. These were children like Luke who excelled 'in moral and religious qualifications, no less

than literary attainment' (Third Annual Report,1850:14). By 1851 the number of pupil-teachers had risen to 258 and 'in most cases they (had) given satisfaction and proved of great benefit to the schools which enjoyed their services' (Fifth Annual Report,1852:12). By 1852 the Catholic schools in Derby had five pupil-teachers, three in the girls' schools and two in the boys' schools, and in his annual report for 1854, T.W.M. Marshall, Inspector for Catholic schools, praised the Derby schools for their 'extraordinary and complete success' in the 'social and religious training of a certain number of our pupil-teachers' (T.S.C.Vol.3, No.4,June 20,1855).

It has only been possible to trace two *girls* at the convent who were in training, though there were undoubtedly more. One is Bessie Keily (sometimes spelt Keeley) who appeared on the Census for 1851 as a sixteen-year-old 'scholar' living at the Convent. She was named in the Catholic Poor School Committee's reports as an assistant teacher (not a pupil-teacher) and probably worked in some monitorial capacity in the girls' school. The report stated that 'upon a further report from Mr. Marshall (she) was entitled to a payment of 3s.' (Third Annual Report, 1850:9). The following year T.W.M. Marshall nominated her for a gratuity of £3 (Fourth Annual Report,1851:7). It is possible that Bessie (and perhaps some of the other Irish girls who were listed as Convent scholars in the census returns - six in 1851, and eleven in 1861), hoped to train as teachers or pupil-teachers. They appeared to receive a good training in Derby, since T.W.M. Marshall praised the 'excellent religious of Birmingham, Northampton and Derby' who 'continue(d) to admit into their respective houses a certain number of young women to be prepared for school teachers' (Fifth Annual Report,1852:9).

A girl called Susan Riley, whose surname is presumably Irish, was named as a pupil-teacher at the girls' school in Derby in the Catholic records between census dates. In 1856 she had won a First Class Queen's Scholarship of £17 and a personal allowance of £3 (Ninth Annual Report, 1856:70) and took a place at St. Leonard's-on-Sea training-school as a first-year student (Tenth Annual Report, Appendix G:ixiii). By Christmas, 1858, she was a certificated teacher and was sent to St. Wilfred's school in Preston, to teach poor children in the town (Eleventh Annual Report, Appendix F).

Smelser holds the view that there were just two exceptions to the rule that 'working-class education had little connection with higher job aspirations and social mobility for the working classes.' These were school teaching and what he called 'industrial service jobs in industry' (Smelser, 1991:277-278). For an Irish Catholic girl or boy in Derby it appears that the former might have guaranteed the best chance of ensuring entry into a professional career, though the boys who were listed as 'errand boys' might have worked in offices, working their way up to being clerks, using literacy skills learnt at day or night school.

The textile industry

The textile industry in Derby, in particular the manufacture of silk, and to a much lesser extent cotton, provided most employment for Irish-born children, and for girls in particular, as this table shows:

Year	Total girls employed	Girls in textiles	%	Total boys employed	Boys in textiles	%
1841	14	11	78%	26	10	38%
1851	77	64	83%	80	54	68%
1861	50	46	92%	43	12	28%

Fig. 6: showing number of Irish-born girls and boys working in all trades in 1841, 1851 and 1861 and the numbers of those employed in textiles at each census year, with percentages (Source: Census for Derby, 1841, 1851, 1861)

The textile mills always employed over three-quarters of the total population of Irish girls in Derby; for boys in 1851, the silk industry was also the major employer, giving work to 68% of them. I have found no evidence that silk mill owners in Derby sent over to Ireland for families to provide labour for their mills, as James Taylor of Manchester did when he needed more female hands for his silk mill. ³ However, it is possible that requests for hands were sent out to Ireland from Derby, and certainly likely that Irish families knew when workers were needed in the Derby mills, and arrived in the town to find work. The Annals of the Convent of Mercy for the year 1859 confirm that 'great numbers of families crossed from Ireland in search of work, and as the silk mills were flourishing here many obtained employment in the mills'.

When Irish children first encountered the silk factories they were probably astounded by their size. The original silk mill in Derby was a solidly built five storey building, 'occupying one eighth of a mile in length' (Porter, 1831:64). The lithograph on page 113 shows the mill to the right of the picture, with row upon row of windows, and the photograph on p.189 shows the mill and the road leading up to it,

where Irish children walked on their way to work. Until 1826, when there was a fire in the mill, a bell hung in the tower to summon the hands to work. Inside the mill there was noise and bustle and the strong smell of oil from the machinery, presenting Irish children with an experience they were unlikely to have met before. An eye-witness account of the winding room, written for the Penny Magazine in 1843, gives some indication of the scene that met their eye, with 'machines.... ranged one behind another in two rows' and 'thousands of little spindles and bobbins....whirling round at a very rapid rate' (1843:166).

There are no first-hand accounts of Irish children's thoughts and feelings about mill life in Derby, but I have drawn on an account written by William Hutton, a Derby-born boy who served an eight-year apprenticeship in the silk mill from 1770 to 1778, and later wrote about his experiences. Though he worked in the mill seventy years or so before Irish children in this study did, his account is useful because his memories of mill work, and of being a child in the mill, help to show how the experience might have been understood by nineteenth-century Irish children.

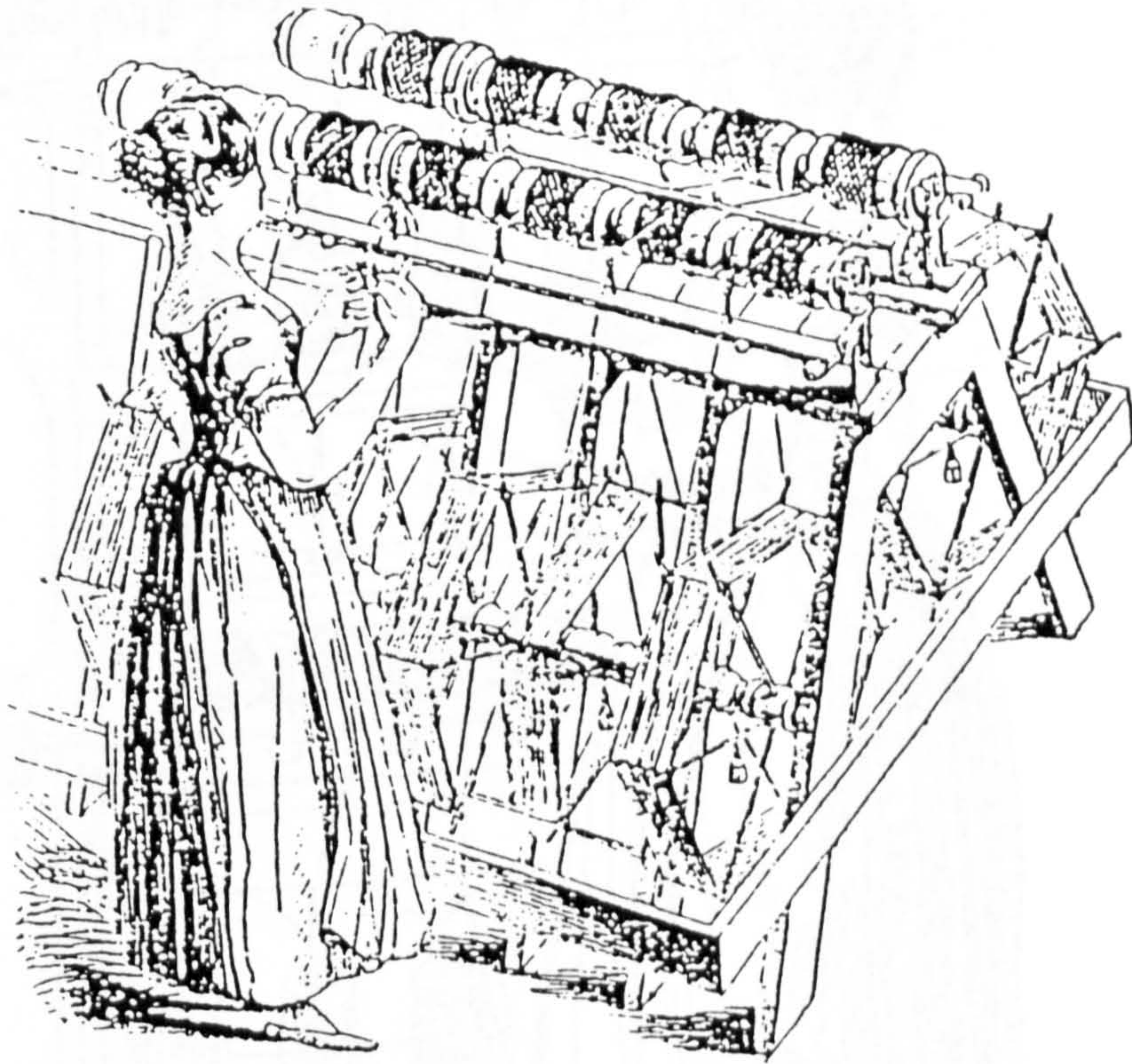
Some Irish children described their jobs in the mill on the census returns using general terms, such as 'silk worker' or 'works mill,' as if they were not sure what they did, but others were quite precise about their area of work: silk picker, silk/lace/cotton winder, silk throwster, bobbin boy, gimp maker, gimp twister, gimp hand, silk paller, silk spinner, silk drawer, silk warping, tag hand (boot lace), silk ribbon weaver, hard silk weaver, quill filler, dyer, framemaker. What is immediately obvious is the amount of specialised jobs and the names to go with them. Irish children had to learn these names when they began work at the mill. They also had to learn about the concept of division of labour in the production of silk, and their place within this process.



The entrance to the Old Silk Mill, c.1870. The tower originally contained a bell to summon the hands to work. (Derby Local Studies Library)

Irish children were involved at all stages of textile manufacture in Derby, though they did not operate the more complicated machinery. I will briefly describe the process of silk manufacture in order to give an insight into their work. Imported raw silk arrived at the mill in skeins and it was graded and sorted by the silk pickers before being wound on to bobbins by bobbin boys and silk winders (see p.191 for an illustration of a winding machine operated by a girl). After this, individual threads were thrown, spun or twisted by silk throwsters or gimpers to give the threads additional strength, either on machines or by hand (See pages 192 and 193 for illustrations of a spinning or throwing machine operated by a girl and of a young child throwing by hand). Threads were then doubled together on bobbins by silk doublers, to add strength to the silk fibres - I believe young women were engaged in this task rather than children. Then the threads were ready to be woven, and the looms were set up by silk warpers, silk drawers and quill fillers. Individual goods, such as laces, were made by tag hands (see pp.195 and 196 for illustrations of boys cutting, hollowing and fixing tags to the laces). At this point material was dyed by the dyers (and possibly 'pallers'). Some goods, such as gloves and stockings, went out into homes to be seamed or embroidered. Each task had its own particular routines, its own language. Children who, a few months previously might have been gathering turf in western Ireland, were met with an experience so novel, they were likely to have been silenced by its very difference, until they learnt to understand their part in the process.

William Hutton wrote about his experience as a silk picker, sorting the skeins of raw silk, taking out the burrs and uneven parts, and preparing the silk for winding. He had time to observe the silk cocoons and did so with the curiosity of a young naturalist. He recalled how the worms were often 'totally gone,' though he remembered on occasions taking them 'out alive'. He described the cocoons as



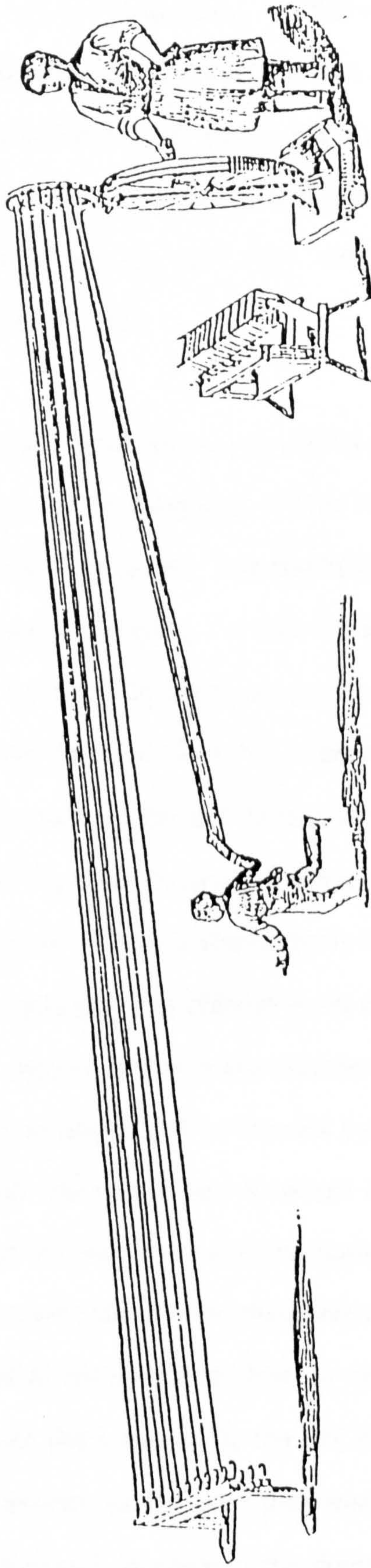
The Silk Winder

The girl adjusting this winding machine takes bobbins off when they are full and replaces them with empty bobbins. Eighteen Irish children, fourteen girls and four boys, identified themselves on the census returns as silk winders. (Illustration from the Penny Magazine, 1843:165. Derby Local Studies Library).



The Silk Throwster

The girl operating this spinning or throwing machine had to learn to watch rows of horizontal and vertical bobbins, making sure the silk thread passed smoothly from one to the other. Fifteen Irish children, five girls and ten boys, identified themselves as silk throwsters on the census returns (Illustration from the Penny Magazine, 1843:166. Derby Local Studies Library).



Throwing or spinning by hand

'In one of the long rooms or ranges of the mill a number of young active boys are seen running to and fro with untiring industry, carrying or supporting silken threads in their hands...the little boys are incessantly engaged running to and fro, attaching and detaching the remote ends of the silken threads....This running amounts to as much as thirty miles a day' (Penny Magazine, 1843:167-168. Derby Local Studies Library).

'little bags fabricated by the silkworm as a grave for itself.' It is likely that he never saw a silk moth nor understood the process of metamorphosis, because he thought that the silkworm spun the silken cocoon before it died, as a kind of shroud - 'when nature inspires the idea of leaving the world the bags are neatly closed up and hung on a thread as the last efforts towards its own funeral. They generally moulded to a darkish dust.' (Hutton,1817:170). Irish children probably had no idea of this natural process either.

Much of their work seemed to involve the nineteenth-century equivalent of 'troubleshooting'. A great deal of time was spent simply *watching* the machinery in case anything went wrong. The children, with their 'nimble' fingers, were only needed to put it to rights. Hutton wrote about 'threads (that were) continually breaking.' To 'tie them (was) principally the business of children whose fingers (were) nimble' (Hutton,1817:16). Children, whose fingers were very small, and whose joints were supple and flexible, were ideally suited to this kind of fiddly work, as well as being cheap to employ. John Johnson, a Derby cotton mill owner giving evidence to the Children's Employment Commission (1840) described this 'watching process' graphically. The children in his mill were frequently 'not required to do more than merely to watch the machines for an hour together; they (were) not required to do anything if no threads (were) broken, and nothing (went) wrong with the machine: they (had) only to watch it' (B.P.P.,1840,X:121). The intricate workings of the machinery and the speed of the twisting operation perhaps filled the children with alarm when they first began to work in the mills; perhaps they were afraid of the superintendent, or of being injured by the whirring machines, or of simply not being able to do the job, though the masters seemed to match the child's experience to the work they were expected to do, as the Penny Magazine reporter observed. 'In some of the floors, the machines employed are such as little



The Tag Hand (Boot Lace)

The boy operating this machine cuts and hollows tags to attach to the end of boot laces. He takes a strip of brass, places it in a groove, then brings the cutting edge of the machine down on to it, to cut it to the right length. He then passes the tag over to the boy on the next bench who attaches it to the boot lace (see next illustration). One Irish boy identified himself as a tag hand (boot lace) in 1861, but it is not clear what stage of the operation he worked on. (Illustration from the Penny Magazine, 1843:168. Derby Local Studies Library).



The Tag Hand (Boot Lace)

This boy operates a machine for fixing the brass tags to boot laces. He drops each tag (made by the boy on another bench (see previous illustration) into a small recess, using his right hand to do so, and with his left hand he places the lace inside the tag. He then operates the machinery which closes the tag tightly around the lace. One Irish boy identified himself as a tag hand (boot lace) in 1861, but it is not clear what stage of the operation he worked on. (Illustration from the Penny Magazine, 1843:168. Derby Local Studies Library).

girls can attend to,' he wrote (1843:164). The work was intricate but dull. The children obviously needed to know what they were doing, but once they understood how to handle the delicate threads, it was less the intricacy of the work than the sheer monotony of the task, which invites speculation. The work involved long periods of sitting or standing in certain positions, continually watching the motion of fine threads, transferring bobbins from one machine to another or tying threads if they were broken. An exception to this was the physical activity of the boys who were employed as hand-throwsters, continually running up and down with the wound threads (See p.193).

Children never had the satisfaction of seeing a completed article. In Ireland children from rural spinning and weaving families were much more likely to have been involved in the whole process of making a shawl or stockings on machines worked by hand, and in time intervals that allowed breaks for other tasks. The tag hand boot lace boys pictured on pp. 195 and 196, perhaps had even more monotonous tasks to do, sitting for long hours in one position, cutting tags and fitting them to laces. The repetitive movements of their hands and arms probably caused muscle cramps and they were likely to have had curvature of the spine in later years. Since they were on piece work, they had to work quickly, causing eye strain from concentrating on their task.

When the spinning process was completed, weavers, usually men, took over the operation, supported by children drawing, warping and quilling. Drawers passed threads of the warp through appropriate loops on the machines, and quillers wound the silk on to a hollow cane which was inserted into the shuttle (see illustration, p.200 b). Since a very small amount of silk could be wound on the quill at one time, it frequently had to be renewed by the quiller. There were looms in the Derby mills

and also in houses, and it is not possible to say where most of the Irish children who helped with the weaving process in Derby worked, though evidence seems to suggest that some worked at home. Thirteen-year-old George Devers, a quill filler, worked with his father, who was a ribbon weaver in Derby in 1841. George's younger brother William, aged eleven, was described as a 'silk winder' and it is possible that he too helped his father prepare the silk for the loom (Census for Derby, 1841).

Family separation

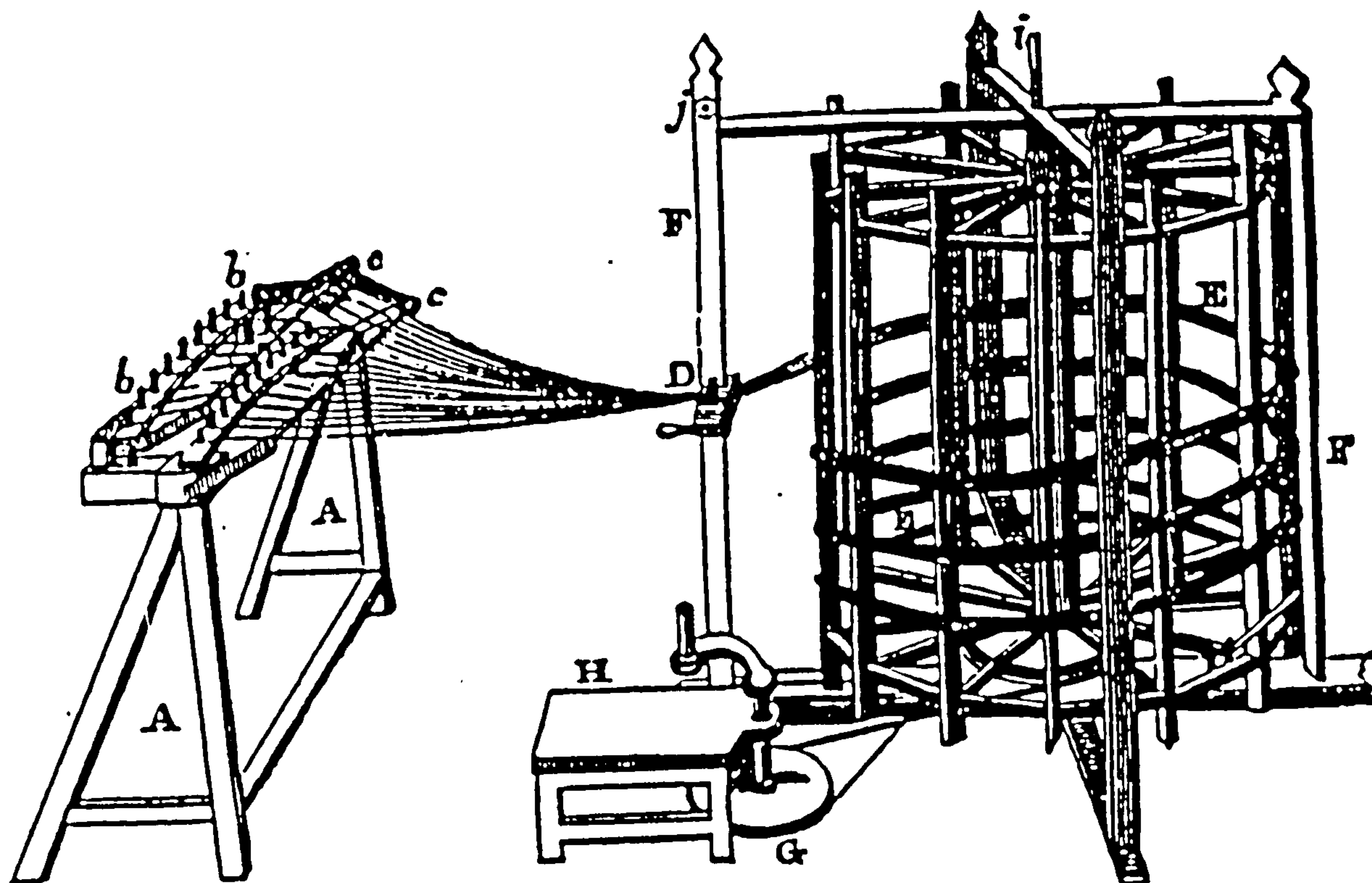
M.I. Thomis noted that when men who had previously worked in the home as hand loom weavers disappeared into factories to work on power looms 'the pattern of working-class family life was severely disturbed' (Thomis, 1974:120). If George and his brother were able to work at home with their father, their work rhythm reflected the work relations of Irish peasant economy, where families laboured together and fathers taught their sons. George and William could actually *watch* their father at work, maintaining the transfer of learning between the generations, and being initiated into a skilled trade. This was a cultural tradition that vanished when fathers worked in factories away from their boy children and resulted, as Robert Bly starkly puts it, in the 'love unit most damaged by the Industrial Revolution' (Bly, 1990:19).

A complete list of workers from Ambrose Moore's silk mill in 1840 - at one particular date (July 15) - reveals only three girls with Irish names, out of total of 112 girls, and no Irish boys from a total of 78 (B.P.P., 1840, X, Appendix 4:131-133). There were likely to have been many more Irish workers in the 1850s, but these girls - two were sisters - were to some extent isolated in this huge factory,

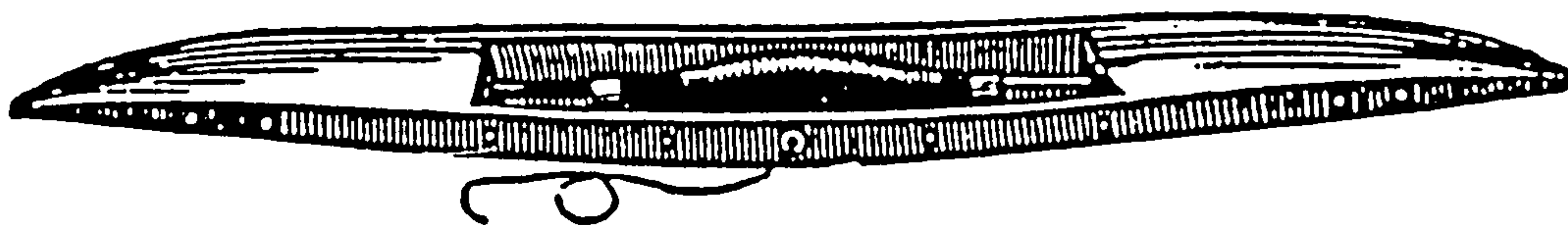
separated from English children by background and experience, and perhaps also by language. The religious orders of nuns had not yet arrived in Derby (and would not do so for another six years) to give support and to organise community events and day, night and Sunday Schools, so these Irish girls could not take advantage of their organisation of schools and religious events to be together. It is difficult to argue that these girls were inserted into any form of childhood experience, unless they had lived in the workhouse for a time, though their association with young English girls in the mills certainly extended their social boundaries. St. Mary's Roman Catholic church had been open for a year, so they could go there to worship, and it is likely that the church became the centre of their religious, social and community life. They were likely to have married young.

Making adjustments: a new kind of learning

Factory work, then as now, had its own particular skills, routines, production pressures, hierarchies of management, divisions of labour by sex and age, rigid time structures, and anonymous work relationships. In time, Irish children in the mills made themselves familiar with various procedures and practices, though the transition from rural to industrial work, shortly after moving to a new urban environment, must have been daunting. James Taylor, the manager of the Newton Heath Silk Mill in Manchester, employed both English and Irish children in his mill, and hinted at possible cultural differences in his evidence to the Poor Inquiry. He stated that Irish children were not 'quite so sound in judgement' when doing work of an intricate nature' or when doing 'anything that (required) mechanical skill.' However, he went on to observe that, compared with English children, some Irish children were the 'quicker of the two' to learn. These were perhaps children from an Irish spinning and weaving family, who had worked on their own spinning wheels or



(a) The Warping machine. A child sits on the stool marked H, turns the handle of the wheel, and draws the threads from the bobbins together. One Irish girl identified herself as a silk warper in 1851 (Illustration from Porter, 1831:219).



(b) The shuttle is three to six inches long. It has an oblong cavity in its upper side where a hollow cane fits. This cane is also known as a quill. The child quill-filler winds the silk on to the quill ready for the weaver to use. Since the quill is small and holds only a small quantity of silk, the child has to re-thread it frequently. One Irish boy identified himself as a quill filler in 1841. (Illustration from Porter, 1831:221)

looms in Ireland, and had experience of winding yarn, either spinning and weaving themselves or working alongside more experienced family members to produce cloth.

Even so, his evidence shows how difficult it must have been for some Irish children - even those who had experience of spinning and weaving in the home - to learn about operating machines powered by steam. Mr. Taylor thought Irish children's difficulty was a result of their 'want of experience' since they were 'not trained to mechanical employment.' But he went on to say that Irish children were 'quite as apt to learn the work of a silk mill as the English,' and added confidently that if he were 'to take fourteen Irish lads, (he) would undertake to make them as good mechanics as an equal number of English, in any line of business' (Poor Inquiry, 1836:458).

Factory work like this, with large work forces, and production schedules to meet, brought with it a need to impose a discipline outside the family, though Thomis notes wryly that 'the task of creating a disciplined labour force out of the unpromising material confronting the early employers was formidable' (1974:116). William Hutton remembered the harsh treatment he received from his master who 'made a wound in (his) back with his cane, which grew worse.' When he was beaten again, 'the point of his cane struck the wound which brought it into such a state that a mortification was apprehended'(1817:91). Hutton's experience was perhaps less common in the silk mills some seventy years later and John Johnson, owner of a cotton mill in Derby, in his evidence to the Select Committee in 1840, talked about the difficulty of disciplining children when they were only required to 'watch' the machinery. 'One of the greatest difficulties is, they bring books to read,' he said, noting, 'I have frequently taken the books, and have kept them, and

sent them to their parents to prevent it.' (B.P.P.,1840,X:102-103). There is no reason to suppose that this evidence was not based on an actual incident. I have no idea what the books were, but I suspect they were probably historical or adventure tales, the kind bought for a penny from street-sellers, or perhaps the latest broadside ballad. Though he makes light of it, John Johnson was making sure that he presented the Commission with evidence that his mill children *could read*, and therefore did not need to be sent to school to learn, as well as showing that the ability to read had become a source of indiscipline and a minor irritation to him.

However, it was surely impossible for supervisors to keep an eye on over one hundred bored young employees, and these children might have enjoyed themselves from time to time. The observer in the Penny Magazine reported that 'in the rooms where girls and women (were) engaged, a song (was) not an unfrequent(sic) accompaniment to the clack, and thump, and humming of the machinery' (1843:164). Though this might have been exaggerated reportage, the mills were perhaps somewhere for Irish children to get out into the wider community of the town, to meet English friends, to learn new songs and jokes, to read, to escape from domestic chores and to keep warm on cold evenings. 'The lads who thread have a great deal of idle time in the intervals of their work, during which they usually play,' R.D. Grainger stated in his evidence to the Children's Employment Commission, and there is no reason to doubt what he said (B.P.P.,1843,XIII:66). Children were probably bored when they were not required to thread the machinery and perhaps the environment of the mill was in some ways welcoming. After all, it was warm, there were separate water closets for each sex - a luxury compared with the privies in most of the houses, and when threads broke perhaps the children felt a sense of achievement when they got the machines working again.

John Johnson was questioned by the Commission about the dubious practice of requiring children to remain in the mill at night in case bobbins needed re-threading. In his evidence, he spoke of children in his mill who actually preferred to remain in the mill rather than go home. The situation, he said had 'arisen more from the children themselves, when they have had nothing else, preferring going to the warmth and comfort of the factory-room than being in the streets' (B.P.P., 1840:X:107). While this was a clear example of the kind of exploitation the members of Select Committees and Children's Employment Commissions were trying to eradicate, there was also perhaps some truth in what John Johnson said. And it was precisely this kind of opportunity to fraternise that was a source of deep consternation to the Catholic authorities. They were disturbed by Irish children's contact with so many Protestant fellow-workers because of their supposed proselytising influence. When Hutton worked in the mill he belonged to the only family of Dissenters connected with the mill. 'One of the clerks wished to make me a convert to the Establishment,' he wrote, 'and threw out the lure of a halfpenny every Sunday I went to Church. This purchased me; and my father, being a moderate man, winked at the purchase' (1817:83).

The imposition of industrial time

Chapter 4 began a discussion about how the structuring of time changed for Irish families when they came to live in an urban environment. This chapter continues that discussion and argues that the experience of work inserted children into industrial time by defining their hours of work and giving them set holidays. Lace workers in Derby had 'one or two days at Christmas, Easter, Whitsuntide, perhaps a day or two at some fair or races' (B.P.P., 1843, XIII:64) and from a manager's point of view production would have suffered badly if there had been further

closures, because mill owners had to ensure a steady rate of production to get orders out on time. Some mills had two clocks to help managers judge production rates; one clock gave normal 'clock-time' while the other gave 'mill time'. The mill clock recorded how much work had been done. If the waterwheel did not turn fast enough, the lost hours or minutes had to be made up later when there was sufficient water (Hills,1970:193). The discipline of the clock was of paramount importance.

Ambrose Moore, a silk manufacturer in Derby, explained to the Children's Employment Commission that 'in the depths of winter we begin at eight. We begin at six in the summer and a portion of the spring, and in the autumn at seven. The young people work ten hours a day with the exception of Saturday which is about eight hours' (1840:82-83) Children of 14, 15 and 16 were employed at Boden and Morley's mill in Derby from 4 o'clock in the morning until 6 o'clock in the evening, with a break of two hours for meals. Irish child workers *must* have quickly adjusted to clock-time, structuring their day into time intervals imposed by the requirements of industry. They were allowed to have a half-hour break for breakfast at 8 o'clock, an hour's break for dinner at 12 o'clock and a further half-hour break between 4 o'clock and 5 o'clock for tea. In Boden and Morley's mill 'there (were) no hands who live(d) at perhaps more than from a quarter to half a mile from the place; very few; they generally reside(d) in the streets adjoining the mill (B.P.P.,1840:120-121). Presumably they learnt to time their journey so that they were never late for work.

Children's understanding of clock-time was essential for the smooth operation of the mills. By ensuring that they were part of a process of piece-work, with its consequent rush, compromise and pressure to complete each task, mill owners also

inserted children into a new perception of working 'against the clock' though Chapter 4 showed that an understanding of this new chronology might not have come easily or immediately to families who were accustomed to a different rhythm of work. Those who were able to play inbetween their work, and to read books as long as they were not caught, were perhaps living closer again to a rural structuring of time, when work and life experiences were not divisible, making time to play, to share things together, on the kind of human scale they understood.

These children had no clocks in their home and their experiences were like those of Tom Barclay who began work at the age of eight. He dressed hurriedly in the morning and ran 'out in the street enquiring the time lest (he) should be late for six a.m.' (1934:14). The fear of being late was there too in William Hutton's experience on a winter's morning. He worked in the silk mill from five o'clock in the morning until seven o'clock at night, and had to get himself up and out of the house on dark winter mornings at the age of eight. He usually listened for the Cathedral clock chiming, but one morning he awoke to find it was already light. He immediately knew he was late for work:

Christmas holidays were attended with snow followed by a sharp frost. A thaw came on in the afternoon of the 27th, but in the night the ground was again caught by a frost, which glazed the streets. I did not awake the next morning till daylight seemed to appear. I rose in tears, for fear of punishment, and went to my father's bedside to ask what was o'clock? 'He believed six?' I darted out in agonies, and, from the bottom of Full Street to the top of Silk Mill Lane, not two hundred yards, I fell nine times! Observing no lights in the mill, I knew it was an early hour, and that the reflection of the snow had deceived me.

As he returned home the Cathedral clock struck two. He picked his way carefully along the icy pavement and 'fell but twice.' (1817:111). There was no romance of childhood for this little boy, whose self-sufficiency and self-discipline kept him at his work for eight years until his apprenticeship was served. But it is the way he was

controlled by industrial time that I want to highlight, and to suggest that working Irish children in the nineteenth century were oppressed, controlled and manoeuvred into sets of behaviour because of their fear of being 'late.'

Accident and injuries

It seems reasonable to suppose that the health of child workers in mills and factories was compromised in various ways because of the nature of their work, and production pressures which encouraged children to take risks with machinery, particularly if they were paid on piece-rates. The inhalation of fumes and noxious substances, such as lead from the Chemical and Colour works, and dust or metal fragments from the foundries, probably caused lung disease. Eye disease was common in mill children, and the hours of close work watching rows of threads along the length of the machines often caused inflammation of the conjunctiva, paralysis of the iris and short-sightedness (BPP,1843,XIII:60).⁴ Curvature of the spine and muscle problems were brought on by prolonged sitting and standing in unnatural positions (The machine illustrated on p.200 a, where the child is seated on the stool to turn the wheel, twisting to transfer the bobbins, probably caused spinal and muscular problems of this kind).

There is some evidence that Irish children suffered injuries, though there are no details of how they might have occurred. In 1840 the widowed mother of twelve-year-old William Dunn, had to apply for relief because he had had an 'accident at work and was unable to do his job.' His accident comes as no surprise since the Children's Employment Commission found that boys were expected to assist in cleaning machinery when it was in motion (B.P.P.,1843,XIII:62). Four years later legislation was introduced for the fencing off of machines and children were

prohibited from cleaning machinery. Other injuries were caused by lifting and pulling; in 1846 ten-year-old Patrick McGee had to have time off work because he was ruptured, and the Board of Guardians paid 3s for a truss for him. Accidents were generally unrecorded but must have been common, the result of a moment's oversight. William Hutton explains how dangerous the machinery was - and how afraid he was of bringing the mill to a standstill. He was ten years old:

In pouring some bobbins out of one box into another, the cogs of an engine caught the box in my hand. The works in all the five rooms began to thunder, crack and break to pieces. The universal cry of 'stop mill' ensued. All the violent powers of nature operated within me. With the strength of a madman I wrenched the blocks from the wheel, but alas the mischief was done. I darest not show my face nor retreat to dinner till every soul was gone. Pity in distress was not found within those walls (1817: 86).

It was precisely this kind of accident and its consequences which led to moves for more humanitarian treatment of children in mills and factories in the nineteenth century.

The wage system

Wages in textile work varied considerably between men and women, and between the more and less experienced, which usually correlated with age. Fig 7, p.210 shows the maximum and minimum wages for men, women, boys and girls at Ambrose Moore's silk mill in 1840. If these figures are typical of mills across Derby in the 1840s, the highest earners were males over eighteen, whose wages varied from 9s to 18s. The lowest wages were earned by nine year olds - they earned between 1s 3d and 2s. In general, the wages of boys and girls were similar, though on average girls earned a little more than boys, perhaps because in this mill at least their production rates were higher.

Appendix 16, p.342, is a compilation of information about the children from thirty-six Irish families, collected from the Poor Law records and the census returns for 1841, 1851 and 1861, showing all or some of these details: name, age, wage, occupation and name of the textile employer. There is plenty of evidence to suggest that brothers and sisters brought in a steady wage. In families 21 and 24 brothers and sisters worked together in the same mill, while in family 26 three children in the same family all worked in *different* silk mills, a good example of fragmentation in the family. Older children tended to earn more than younger children (Families 8 - 12 are examples of this), and the highest wage, 6d 9d, was earned by a seventeen-year-old girl from family 3, while the lowest, 1s 0d, was earned by an eight-year-old.

The combined incomes of brothers and sisters supplemented parental wages and often made the difference between independence and dependence on relief, particularly if the children were older and earning more. The children in Family 1 jointly earned 15s 6d. but since their father's employer had 'absconded with his wages and that of forty others' the children's weekly wage was essential (P.L.R., Minute Book, October 1839). In Family 26 the father was a weaver earning about 7s a week, though he was often unwell and not able to work. His wages varied from 4s to nothing at all when he was out of employment. In Family 6, the father was a hawker, and perhaps earned about 7s - 8s a week to supplement the children's wage. In Family 4, the father was a labourer, earning 3s 4d a week. There are no records of the mothers working in any of these families, and in each case, the children's wages were vital, particularly since there were younger children to feed.

But not all children's wages were taken home weekly. Servants were paid only every quarter or half year, and occasionally at longer intervals. Servants' wages were in any case very low - even by the end of the nineteenth century many young servants were only earning £5 a year (Horn,1975, 124:128) - about 2s a week, and probably lower than this in the mid-nineteenth century - the equivalent of an inexperienced silk worker. Families whose girls were servants could neither rely on a weekly income from them, nor an annual sum that would make much difference to the combined family income: small wonder that there were few Irish servant girls in Derby.

Industrial training in the workhouse

The concept of industrial training underpinned the philosophy of the New Poor Law, which was designed to offer a solution to pauperism by ensuring that child paupers were given a trade they could follow (Crowther,1981:56). Irish pauper children who lived in the Derby workhouse were theoretically guaranteed some kind of work training. Poor Law Commissioners believed that children should learn to support themselves (Crowther,1981:207) and they delegated the organisation and choice of work to each Board of Guardians, who supposedly knew the labour needs of their particular area (Nicholls,1904:368). Perhaps this was why arrangements for instruction were haphazard. Charles Shaw, in a Staffordshire workhouse, was given no work to do (1903:10) while in the Derby workhouse organisation for work experience seemed to vary. In 1839 there was a tightly ordered programme, for boys at least: they attended school from 9 -11, then learnt shoemaking and tailoring from 11-12, attended school again from 2 - 4, and finally did outdoor work from 4 - 5 in the garden in the front of the house (P.L.R.,Minute Book,June,1839). Crowther points out that shoemaking and tailoring were two of the most usual semi-

	Minumum Wage	Maximum wage
Men (Over 18)	9s 0d	18s 0d
Women (over 18)	5s 0d	9s 0d
Boys		
aged 9	1s 3d	2s 6d
aged 10	1s 3d	2s 6d
aged 11	1s 3d	2s 9d
aged 12	1s 6d	3s 0d
aged 13	2s 0d	4s 3d
aged 14	2s 6d	5s 0d
aged 15	3s 6d	4s 9d
aged 16	4s 6d	5s 0d
aged 17	5s 0d	5s 6d
Girls		
aged 8	1s 6d	-----
aged 9	1s 3d	2s 0d
aged 10	1s 0d	2s 6d
aged 11	2s 0d	3s 6d
aged 12	1s 0d	3s 9d
aged 13	2s 6d	5s 0d
aged 14	2s 6d	5s 0d
aged 15	4s 0d	6s 0d
aged 16	4s 0d	5s 9d
aged 17	3s 6d	6s 0d

(also two girl 'learners' receiving no pay)

Irish girls:

Mary Dunn, aged 14, earning 3s 6d

Ann Macgaragan, aged 13, earning 4s 3d

Ellen Macgaragan, aged 14, earning 4s 9d

Fig. 7: Maximum and minimum wages for men, women, boys and girls employed at Ambrose Moore's silk manufactory in Derby, on 15 July, 1840 (B.P.P., 1840, X, App. 4: 127-129)

skilled trades taught to pauper inmates, because they needed little investment and were easily taught. Girls were often channelled into work as full-time seamstresses or laundresses (Crowther,1981:203).

But in the Derby workhouse this system seems to have broken down, and there are no records of industrial training for a thirty-year period. Joseph McKee, the Irish boy who was refused a passage to America in March 1839 when he was eleven years old (see p.107), was reported for 'bad conduct' in 1841, and was threatened with removal from the school 'into the stoneyard to break stones' (P.L.R.,Minute Book, May,1841). In1869, an Inspector complained that 'the absence of any systematic industrial training (had) long been a serious defect in the Boys in the Work House' (P.L.R.,Minute Book,June,1869). It is revealing that Joseph was threatened with the possibility of being taken firmly out of the world of childhood - out of school - and thrust into a world of a punitive adult occupation. The underlying message was that childhood was a privilege, not a right. If Joseph wanted this privilege, he had to earn it by good behaviour.

By the late 1860s the Derby workhouse had instituted a new mode of industrial training and arrangements were made for children to be taught the 'rudiments of Tailoring and Shoemaking for a certain time during each week' (P.L.R., Minute Book, October,1869). By the following January a new timetable was in place, laying down that 'the Boys and Girls who (were) inmates of the Work House (should) for three of the working hours at least every day be instructed in Reading, Writing and Arithmetic, and the principles of the Christian Religion, and such other instruction (should) be imparted to them (to) fit them for service, and train them to habits of usefulness, industry and virtue (P.L.R.,Minute Book,January,1869). An industrial trainer was appointed to oversee the training of the girls (under the supervision of

the schoolmistress and the matron) in the proper cleaning and keeping of their beds and bedrooms, in needlework and knitting. Older girls were instructed in washing and laundry work (P.L.R., Minute Book, March, 1870).

This industrial instruction was intended to run alongside, and not to replace, the children's schooling in the main subjects, and this pattern of integrated work and schooling was followed by many labouring children the mid-Victorian years. Their time was characterised by a to-ing and fro-ing between school and work; there was no automatic progression from one to the other, and certainly no concept of the move from school to an adult world of work. Charles Shaw understood this: 'From education to work. This is the proper order of life' he wrote many years later, reflecting on his fractured schooling (1903:10). Shaw first went to a dame school when he was about three years old, then started work at seven. Three years later he went into the workhouse where he became a full-time scholar but 'had no work to do' (1903:116). So the distinction was blurred: a few children were full-time scholars, others worked in factories but were required to attend school for three hours a day; for example in 1867 the Convent of Mercy Annals recorded that 'the night school continued to be fairly attended three times a week' and that 'it was for the benefit of those who were at work during the day.'

The Factory Acts: from worker to scholar

Throughout the first half of the nineteenth century there was a *gradual* move from factory into school, as the economic role was withdrawn from the children of the poor and a new era of education was ushered in. This move had considerable importance for the Irish children in this study, because removing them from the workplace entailed a re-evaluation of their role within the family, and of their own

perceptions of their usefulness. As half-time scholars they would earn less money; as full-time scholars they would earn nothing.

The Factories Act of 1833 stipulated that children between the ages of eight and thirteen could not work more than 48 hours a week in cotton, woollen, worsted, hemp, flax, tow or linen factories, though silk was excluded. This was also the first Act to make part-time schooling *obligatory* for children between the ages of nine and thirteen in these main textile industries - though again not in silk. Children could either attend voluntary schools, or go to a factory school set up by their employer; they needed a schoolmaster's certificate to show that they had attended school for a minimum period of two hours each day. (Frow, 1970:11)

There was inevitable pressure from manufacturers who were anxious about the reduction in children's working hours and their production rates. As silk manufacturers saw the possibility of legislation being extended to the silk industry, they began to agitate for their child employees to remain excluded from the laws concerning half-time schooling and the imposition of an eight-hour working day. In written evidence to the Children's Employment Commission of 1840 Mr. Edwards, a silk mill manufacturer from Manchester, wrote in frustration about the proposed reduction in children's working hours and the proposal for the introduction of half-time education to the silk industry. He railed against the 'humanity advocates' and appealed to the common sense of those hearing evidence with what he called a 'bread first, books after' argument: 'Is it humanity to diminish a child's food and clothing?' he asked. 'Has there been one petition for an Eight-Hours Silk Mill Bill from these children or their parents? Where is the call for it?' He argued that he and his fellow employers were providing a service by employing so many of the poor, who would otherwise be considerably worse off (B.P.P., 1840, X:126-127).

This debate was carried to a public meeting in Derby in 1843, such was the anger and frustration among local silk mill employers. The Derby Mercury reported that a meeting had been convened to 'take into consideration the propriety of petitioning parliament not to suffer the Bill now before the House of Commons, for the Education of Children in the Factory Districts, to be passed into a Law'. Thomas Wright, the owner of a silk mill which employed Irish as well as English workers, reported that his hands were 'decidedly against the measure' and he felt that the bill would inflict great hardships on some manufacturers.' He had, he told the meeting, 'been at the trouble to ascertain how many could read and write, and how many could not read at all, and the result of his inquiry proved that the call for legislative interference belonged to a bygone age, and that now it was not necessary at all.' A survey in his factory showed that 'out of 101 persons employed by him 97 could read; 58 could read and write very well; some of them as well as he could.' He reported that 48 hands wrote imperfectly and that 'only 4 could not read and write at all.' He added finally that 'there was only one, under 13, who could not read, and inferred from this that 'the children of recent date were better taught than those that were older.'

Thomas Wright's criticism also reflected his opposition to Roman Catholicism in Derby. This is worth noting as evidence of anti-Catholic feeling, as well as being an indication that the Catholic schools were considered fit to give certificates to children to prove they had attended school the previous week. Wright complained that only a select number of people - including the managers of the Catholic schools - were allowed to issue certificates:

Now, there are only 5 parties who can give a certificate; the masters of those

District schools, of schools provided by the owner or occupier of a factory, of National Schools, of British schools, and of Roman Catholic schools. A private schoolmaster of the best character and the highest qualifications...cannot give a certificate...a Dissenting Minister...a Methodist Minister...may establish a school; but no certificate can be given from such schools. But from Mr. Sing's (Catholic) school a certificate shall be valid; the children in his school may work in factories. Why this partiality and preference for Popish schools? 5

At the end of the meeting a decision was made to petition Parliament about the Bill's infringements 'on the rights and liberties of Englishmen' which were 'oppressive alike to Manufacturers and the working classes' (Derby Mercury, April 26, 1843). But Thomas Wright and his colleagues were to be disappointed. The Act of 1844 legislated for an extension of part-time schooling to silk mills, and employers had to decide whether to send children to local schools or to provide their own (Silver, 1983:38) thus placing more unwanted responsibility on them.

Although the Act of 1844 lowered the age at which children could begin work from nine years to eight years, their working hours were reduced to six and a half hours a day, with three hours of daily schooling to be provided for children up to the age of thirteen. Silk manufactories were brought firmly within this legislation, though children working in silk had only to be educated up to the age of eleven (Silver, 1983:36). Harold Silver signals this crucial move into a form of working class 'childhood': 'what began as a strategy for combating excessive child labour' he wrote, 'became, in the 1850s and 1860s, an educational theory' (Silver, 1983:35).

The Act also required the statutory working day to be performed in one continuous session with a defined three-hour period of schooling (Rose, 1991:107). Employers could, if they wished, provide five hours' education on alternate days (Silver, 1983:36). For Irish children working in the Derby silk mills, their attendance

at the Catholic schools on a part-time basis was now required, though there was certain to be a series of problems associated with organising and implementing such a complex piece of legislation. Catholic teachers complained bitterly about the difficulty of teaching children who lived disrupted lives between work and school. Some twenty years after the Act was passed N.S. Stokes, Roman Catholic Inspector of schools, was still reflecting on the problems of making the half-time system work. While he agreed that Catholic children should be able to attend schools 'of their own religious persuasion' he was anxious about the areas of social need, academic performance and difficulties of organisation. It takes only a little imagination to picture the teachers queueing up to issue their complaints to him, which he dutifully reported: 'Half-timers bring into school rude manners and foul clothes,' he wrote. 'They are less amenable to discipline than others, as in fact they pay for themselves; they are generally more backward, and, coming upon legal compulsion, less willing to learn.' He continued:

they are often so wearied by labour, especially in the afternoon, as to be incapable of following the lessons; they are bound to attend school in the morning and, except in mid-winter, in the afternoon for longer hours than schools are commonly kept open; they derange the school time-table, as, where they attend, lessons in religion, reading, writing and arithmetic, have to be given twice every day, in the morning and afternoon....to the manifest loss of ordinary scholars; their factory time-books necessitate a double registration, which is very burdensome.

There were further problems related to the culture of work and half-time children's expectations of themselves as earners:

whenever the mill is stopped or they are out of work they attend no school at all. They constantly look forward to the day when they may work full time, and at or before the legal age they accomplish their desire by leaving school altogether, without having derived great advantage from attendance as half-timers (Twenty-First Annual Report, Appendix f, pp.95-96).

'One should not think that schooling was necessarily welcomed by the children as a relief from labour,' writes Lionel Rose wisely (1991:10). There were hard lessons to be learnt from Stokes's report, and clearly many children in half-time schooling felt themselves to be more gainfully occupied when they were contributing to the family income than when they were copy-writing on to slates, or chanting aloud. The move into childhood was resisted by some working children, who were busy learning about themselves as *workers*. But there were major shifts ahead and perhaps school would after all offer children a way into childhood that for some at least was an enriching experience. In Derby there were opportunities for Irish children to go to school in the Catholic schools established by the nuns, and the workhouse school if they were paupers. Chapter 8 discusses the curriculum of these schools.

Footnotes

1. This debate might have been in response to the policy of Major General Sir William Cartwright, who tried to persuade all magistrates in the Midlands area to build rooms for the receipt of vagrants in police stations, so that the police had surveillance of the vagrant travelling poor, rather than the Guardians. In this way he tried to separate the category of 'criminal tramper' from the respectable tramper, in search of work (Steedman,1984:57).
2. Luke's older sister Mary died in 1862, aged 21, and his older sister Margaret died in 1864, aged 26 (St. Mary's Church records).
3. When Mr. Taylor, the proprietor of a silk mill near Manchester, needed hands he sent to Connaught 'for ten, fifteen or twenty families as the case may be.' He liked to employ 'children, chiefly girls of farmers and cottiers' but often 'the whole family came.' He gave them no money for their passage and supposed they (sold) up what they (had), walk(ed) to Dublin, (paid) their own passage to Liverpool, and (came) to Manchester by the railway or walk(ed) it (Poor Inquiry,1836:454).
4. In May 1865 the Board of Guardians ordered one dozen cottage hoods for the children suffering from eye disease and materials for shades obtained was to be made up by the nurses (P.L.R.,Minute Book,May,1865). I have not been able to discover the actual purpose or design of cottage hoods or shades, but I presume they had deep rims or perhaps side-pieces, so that there would be less discomfort for children whose eyes were sensitive to the light.

5. The 1843 bill for the Education of Children in the Factory Districts was debated in Hansard: 1843, Vol.67, pp.422, 1083, 1411 (re Catholic education 1426); Hansard 1843, Vol.68, pp.39, 744, 829, 1103; Hansard 1843, Vol.69, pp.688, 1567; Hansard 1843, Vol.70, pp.94, 1299,

THE IRISH CHILD AT SCHOOL

Life as a full-time scholar in the mid-nineteenth century was still not an option for most Irish-born children in Derby because as Chapter 8 showed, their wages were needed to help support their families. But although most Irish-born children in this study, particularly those who were of school age in the 1830s and early 1840s, probably did not go to school at any point in their lives, there were nevertheless increasing opportunities for them to be educated, particularly after 1846 when the teaching orders of nuns came to Derby.

Opinions differed about Irish parents' interest in the value of educating their children. Luke Padan's parents clearly supported his move to become a pupil-teacher (see Chapter 7) and for them schooling was a route to self-improvement. But it must have been difficult for many parents to acknowledge that their children had learning needs which could only be met in a school; for many, this idea entailed an enormous shift in perception, particularly when their children had always worked as soon as they were physically able to.

This chapter argues that the shift towards becoming a full-time scholar was a crucial move towards the institutionalisation of childhood for Irish children, because it set them apart from the adult world, defined them as 'learners from books', and showed them *what* to learn. Adults no longer worked alongside them; schooling was an experience for children alone. No school attendance registers exist for the period of this study, but the census data for 1851 lists forty-eight Irish-born children who were 'scholars', while the 1861 data records thirty-six Irish-born children, though Irish children in the workhouse school are not included in these figures. There were likely to have been more Irish children in education, of course, and the previous chapter has shown that numbers probably fluctuated as half-time children crossed between school and work.

The first and second sections of this chapter describe the organisation of the Catholic schools, and the workhouse school, and discuss the teaching methods they employed. The third section is devoted to an analysis of the nature of reading teaching. It was through the printed word that children were exposed to new learning, and encouraged to develop the capacity for conceptual thought - thus putting them at one more remove from their family, and into a childhood world of ideas. I have singled out for attention one particular set of readers: the Lesson Books produced by the Commissioners of Education in Ireland. These texts were widely used in workhouse schools and Roman Catholic schools in England between 1834 and 1860, and even later, and formed the basis of much of children's reading and their wider learning experiences in geography, history, religious education, natural history and natural philosophy (science). The nature of the public print which was available for children and their parents to read, whether they went to school or not, offered a set of quite different literacy experiences for children and their families, and I shall argue that this print could have been used as reading

material by Irish children. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the uses of writing by children in schools.

While some Catholic children *might* have attended one of the Protestant schools in Derby, for the age-old parental reason that these schools were close to where they lived, the Newcastle Commission found that in reality Catholic parents 'nearly as generally avoid(ed) Protestant schools of all denominations' (1861:33) because they needed to ensure that the liturgies and doctrines of the Catholic church were taught to their children (Smelser,1991:19).¹

The Schools of the Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus

In 1846 the Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus, led by Mother Cornelia Connelly, were invited to Derby to organise schools at the Convent - a daunting task for four enthusiastic women, one an American, all without experience of working with the Irish poor in Derby. 'Now we are all novices we shall learn perfection together' Cornelia Connelly advised her companions straightforwardly (cited in Marmion, 1984:114). There is no doubt that she was deeply interested in the learning process. Over the years (including the two years she worked in Derby) Cornelia Connelly refined her teaching philosophy, centred around 'the education of the Victorian young lady' (Marmion,1984:vii), and this was an education very definitely not about learning to sit submissively in drawing-rooms, embroidering and awaiting proposals of marriage.

In 1847 she opened a boarding school in Derby for 'the daughters of the gentry' - a term she used to describe the daughters of the middle-classes, that 'large and interesting class of girls' who would become the Catholic mothers of the next

generation (Catholic Directory, 1847:145).² Day-scholars also went to this school, and it is possible that one or two of the wealthier Irish girls in this study attended, though the poor Irish children most certainly did not. The broad curriculum offered by the Sisters at the boarding school is itself of interest, since it provided middle-class girls with a basic all-round education in a variety of subjects, including English, French, Arithmetic, Geography, History, Grammar, Embroidery, Drawing and Music. This was at a time when most schools were satisfied to teach only the basics of literacy, numeracy and religious instruction (Smelser, 1991:273). The significance of this broad curriculum becomes even more pronounced when it is compared with recommendations for extensions to the Revised Code for 1879-80 - almost *thirty years* later; then, and only then, were children above Standard 1 (around the age of seven) encouraged to study one or two 'subjects of instruction' such as geography, natural history, physical geography, natural philosophy, social economy (Hurt, 1979:107).

The work of Cornelia Connelly and her fellow Sisters in Derby with the children of the Catholic poor between 1846 and 1848 is of considerable interest, but I will discuss it only briefly, since the Sisters remained in Derby for just two years, and therefore had less influence on Irish children's education than either the Sisters of Mercy who took their place, or the workhouse school system.

There was already a small Roman Catholic school in Derby when the Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus arrived in the town, and little is known about it. Sister Aloysia Walker, one of the nuns, wrote in her diary that they found 'the parish school was waiting for us to go into and was being taken care of by an old-fashioned person who seemed to be always carrying a cane in her hand' (cited in Bisgood, 1961:81).³ In addition to establishing the school for middle-class girls, the sisters took over the

running of this school for poor children and in addition they opened a night school for factory girls, and a Sunday School. By 1848 140 children attended the day school, and more than one hundred girls went to the night school for two and a half hours every evening. On two evenings each week these girls were taught by the chaplain, and were given individual instruction in the Sacraments. It is not clear if boys were taught in this day school by a schoolmaster. If they were, their presence is never specifically mentioned.

In a kindly and disciplined environment, Irish Catholic girls learned the catechism and the Doctrine of the Catholic Church, as well as sewing, cutting-out work, reading, writing and the rudiments of arithmetic (Bisgood,1961:81). An extract from Cornelia Connelly's Book of the Order of Studies, written later in 1863, is significant in its emphasis on kind and secure relationships between teachers and pupils:

Let not the mistresses be too hasty in punishing nor too eager in seeking faults, but let them dissimulate when they can do so without injury to anyone, and not only must they never use corporal punishment, but they must abstain from any abusive word or action. Neither may they ever call a pupil by any other name than her Christian or full name, nor by her surname only (cited in Bastow, 1970:167)

Cornelia Connelly's schools offered a new experience to Irish children in Derby. They learnt together as a group and lessons were often based around games, stories, drawing and acting (Marmion,1984,116-120). There were new opportunities too for friendships and the focus was both on secular and religious study. It is evidence like this that must cause us to reject any suggestion that nineteenth-century education for the poor was a universal experience of learning misery. In 1846 in a letter to Earl of Shrewsbury Cornelia Connelly described the

work she and her companions were doing with the poor children of Derby and she used her success to argue for more financial support. The contents of her letter give an indication of her commitment to the work, and of the work itself:

...Sunday is a very busy day with two hundred girls to lead to Church for the High Mass after an hour's labour in teaching them, and from two o'clock until four in the afternoon teaching them to read, etc. etc. Much as we deplore the state of things which renders this necessary, we cannot but acknowledge it is the only way to get hold of the working class - the factory girls. With respect to our poor day-schools, they are going on very well, but we shall never get on without some pecuniary assistance (cited in Bisgood,1961:82).

Cornelia Connelly's educational philosophy generated warmth and a sense of belonging to a community of people who cared about each other. In this way it reflects the influence of educators like Samuel Wilderspin, who undertook experimental work in infant education and stressed, among other things, the importance of the contact between teacher and child (May,1995:8). I shall refer to Cornelia Connelly's advice to reading teachers later in this chapter.

The Schools of the Sisters of Mercy

In 1848, after the Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus took their decision to leave Derby, the poor schools were taken over by the Sisters of Mercy, who came from Ireland to minister to the needs of the Catholic poor in Derby, and to teach their children. Their Convent Annals record that Sister Mary Francis Bridgeman, Mother Superior of the Sisters of Mercy in Kinsale, County Cork, arrived in Derby 'to take charge of the schools of the town (Convent Annals,1848). She and the other sisters wasted no time and 'day and night schools were opened immediately and great numbers of young women attended the latter, as they were employed in working in the factories during the daytime, and were eager to receive instructions from the

Sisters.' The annalist added that 'much good was effected in the night schools and many converts were instructed and received into the church' (Convent Annals, Derby, 1849). The nuns saw the training of future teachers as an important part of their work, and set up a teacher training establishment alongside their other educational concerns (Third Annual Report, 1850:12).

The Sisters of Mercy already had a reputation in Ireland as 'most efficient teachers' (T.C.S. Feb, 1850:234) and not long after they arrived, these organised and disciplined women were educating eighty children every weekday and 140 children on Sundays (First Annual Report, 1848:59). By 1849 they had opened their schools to three hundred poor children in Derby, all receiving 'gratuitous education', eighty-five boys and seventy girls, taught separately. ⁴ (Second Annual Report, 1849:54).

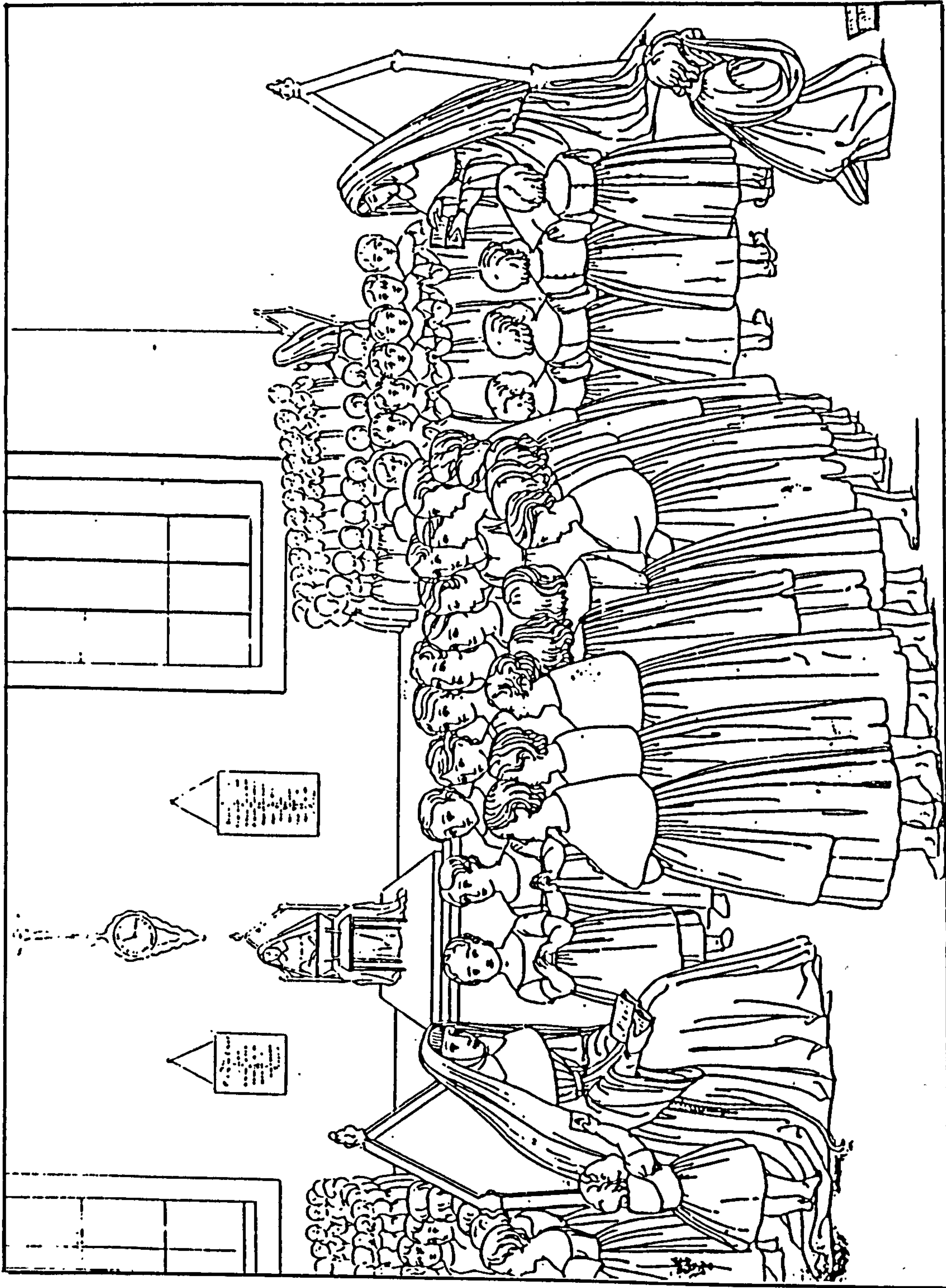
By 1852 four schools were operating, three girls' schools, taught by the nuns with five pupil-teachers, and a school for boys, taught by a master, James Murphy, from the Model School in Dublin. The boys' school was newly built - a 'fine new schoolroom' - though William Marshall's report for 1852 rather tactfully states that 'discipline' was 'not yet fully established' because the school had only been 'in operation four months,' though he added that 'the instruction was patient and intelligent, and the teacher seem(ed)...to have laid the foundation of future success and (was) certainly capable of creating an efficient school' (T.C.S. Vol.2, August, 1850-Feb. 1853:51). Marshall commented that the classes were organised in semi-circles, which suggests a monitorial system was in operation, where groups were called out to receive their lesson in turn, taking their positions around their 'draft stations' (May, 1995:6). By 1855 Marshall reported that the boys' school had improved, possibly because there was a new and more capable

master. 'I observed much progress since last year,' he wrote, adding that 'the present master is evidently applying his whole energies to his work (T.C.S. ,Vol.3, Sept.1856).⁵ The new school building was noted for its 'extensive library of ancient and modern authors' (Glover,1858,xiiiiv) showing that a good deal of money had been spent on stocking the shelves - and this at a time when Catholic school libraries were 'still struggling slowly into existence' (Twelfth Annual Report, 1859,Appendix 1:lxvii).

The children who were taught in the Roman Catholic Schools in Derby were probably instructed in much the same way as those in the original Mother House in Baggot Street, Dublin. A classroom scene illustrated by Sister Mary Clare Agnew in 1840, shown on page 227, gives an indication of the organisation of the classroom in Baggot Street. The overall plan suggests that a form of the Lancasterian system was in operation, with teaching duties delegated to younger sisters rather than to pupil-teachers.

The superintending sister is sitting on a raised platform, which gives her a view of the entire room. Each sister is teaching her own group of about twenty girls of differing ages, gathered round her, standing on their own semi-circle or 'draft-station.' Most are barefooted and the older girls wear shawls. Their hair is short, perhaps to keep it clear of lice, and their hands are folded together as if in prayer. All are looking at their teachers, except for two girls in the centre of the picture, who appear to be talking to each other and are being admonished. Other groups are out of sight to the left of the picture. One girl is crying and has been sent to kneel in the corner of the room with her book, probably as a punishment.

It is a quarter past eleven and a reading lesson seems to be in progress. One small girl holds up a letter A, showing that her group is learning the alphabet. Each



A classroom scene, Convent of Mercy, Baggot Street, Dublin. Illustrated in 1840 by Sister Mary Clare Agnew. Convent of Mercy, Dublin.

sister holds a book in her hand, though the children do not have books of their own and cannot see what the teachers are reading. They are, however, able to watch how the sisters hold the books and turn the pages - a reading lesson in itself. Perhaps the children are required to listen and to answer questions about the text. There is no evidence of slates: perhaps writing was not taught in this lesson. There is a clock on the wall, so children were probably required to learn to tell the time, and two charts, one each side of the clock, with Roman numerals I - VI on the left and I - X on the right; though the writing is indecipherable, they are perhaps Biblical texts. In these schools girls were taught to read, write and make up accounts, so that they could rise above the poverty of their environment. Catherine McAuley, the founder of the Sisters of Mercy, was particularly interested in the education of girls and young women because 'by the careful instruction of women, whatever be the station in life they are destined to fill, their example and advice will always possess influence, and wherever a religious woman presides, peace and good order are generally to be found'(Constitution of the Sisters of Mercy, p.441, cited in Bastow,1970:167).

William Marshall was effusive in his reports about the girls' schools in Derby, and in his General Report for 1852 he stated: Desks and furniture - good and abundant. Books and apparatus - good and abundant. Organisation - thoroughly complete and effective. Instruction and discipline - excellent. Methods - system of the Sisters of Mercy applied in every subject with consummate skill. Teachers - singularly able and skilful and possessing in the largest measure the art of influencing and instructing children. Special - this remarkable and very interesting school continues to be conducted with rare skill and judgement, and I have only to repeat the admiration which I have expressed on former occasions when speaking of the results obtained in it. The instruction is of the highest order, all the methods singularly effective. I

can see that it is not possible to carry an elementary school to a higher degree of perfection (TCS,Vol.2,No.12,1853:41).

Irish Catholic children in Derby who attended a Roman Catholic school based on the principles laid down by Cornelia Connelly or the Sisters of Mercy, were likely to receive a basic secular education in reading, writing, numeracy, geography, history, natural history and natural philosophy (science). They also received the rudiments of industrial training, and some religious instruction. They were taught in an atmosphere of kindness and patience. It is difficult to know how widespread the use of corporal punishment was in nineteenth-century schools. None was used in the girls' Roman Catholic schools though I have no information about its use in the Catholic boys' schools in Derby. Silver tells us that historians 'have assumed that physical punishment was the rule in the Victorian elementary school - because it was the rule in the grammar and public school' (Silver,1983:26). This stereotypical view is challenged here by two women, both Catholic educators, from different countries, different cultures, who underpinned their teaching philosophy with a sensitive understanding of the need for kindness, trust and security in their relationships with the girls. 'Children,' wrote Catherine McAuley, 'must be made to feel their teachers are their best friends - if we draw the strings too tight, they will snap'(cited in Bolster,1982:23). Possibly these views grew out of her religious beliefs, but she held firm to them, and girls in her schools, and in the schools of the Sisters of Mercy, were privileged to have an elementary education based on respect and a desire for learning.

The Workhouse School

While some Irish children were receiving their education in the Catholic schools in

Derby, others lived temporarily or permanently in the Derby Union workhouse, and attended its school.⁶ The teachers at this school *did* beat boys for misbehaviour; and there are several examples from the Derby records of corporal punishment being administered, though it was banned in the case of girls and for boys over the age of fourteen (Longmote,1974:170). Pauper children were taught reading, writing and arithmetic, and the principles of Christian religion, and in the Derby workhouse school they also had lessons in geography, history and natural history, in addition to the intermittent industrial training discussed in the previous chapter. The overall aim was to produce an obedient workforce who knew their place, were able to make their own way in the world, and could read, write and calculate as necessary for their work. The workhouse was of course a Protestant institution but the Roman Catholic authorities were assured by the Poor Law Commissioners that Catholic inmates had a right to receive religious instruction from their own priest (see footnote 2, p.164).

The balance of industrial training with basic school work was an attempt to give pauper children the skills for living and working in an industrial and increasingly literate world. Reports from the Education Committee of the Board of Guardians in Derby give insights into the content of the basic and somewhat gendered curriculum. There were regular inspections by the Education Committee of the Board of Guardians. In 1839 the boys in the first class were examined for reading, spelling, grammar, writing and accounts (P.L.R.,Minute Book, Derby:August,1839) while the girls were examined for reading, knitting and sewing (P.L.R.,Minute Book,Derby:May 1841). In the same year the boys were examined in reading and scripture questions 'in which they appear to have improved' although they were seen to be 'deficient in their multiplication tables' (P.L.R.,Minute Book,Derby:May 1841).

Girls and boys in the Derby workhouse were taught separately by a master and mistress. The books and maps ordered in 1855, perhaps reflect some aspects of the curriculum offered to them: geography, history and natural history were now taught alongside the subjects which were inspected in 1839 and 1841. Perhaps the Guardians relied on the enthusiasm of a particular teacher to recommend certain books, as Silver discovered when he found one workhouse teacher in Glasgow who 'made it a condition of acceptance that the Guardians should purchase various series of reading books, maps, slates, coloured pictures of animals, battledores and shuttlecocks and gymnastic poles' (Silver,1983:20). In 1855 the schoolmaster in Derby ordered:

10 dozen Copy Books

1 copy Longman's last edition of Watts' Scripture History

Map of Africa

Map of North America

Map of South America

Map of Palestine

Half dozen Bibles

Half Dozen Testaments

A few Prayer and Hymn Books

1 copy of Goldsmith's Natural History with a number of Card Boards

Two copies of Manual of Method

(P.L.R.,Minute Book, Derby:November 1855)

There are no details of which particular Manual of Method was selected as

guidance for the schoolmaster and schoolmistress. I can trace two versions in print at the time, though there were probably more, and both dealt with classroom management and curricular issues. The first, by W. Ross, Inspector of Schools for the Manchester Church Education Society, was published in 1848. This Manual stressed the importance of understanding the process of learning, by telling teachers not to 'attempt to teach any thing that your pupil is incapable of understanding' and to 'take care that your pupils perfectly retain what they learn (Ross,1848:26-27). In spite of the evident good practice embedded in this manual, it seems more likely that the Education Committee of the Board of Guardians selected a Manual of Method for teachers of elementary schools written by W.F. Richards, Head Master of the National Society's Central School in Westminster, since the workhouse school had received a visit from the organising Master of the National School Society (P.L.R.,Minute Book,August,1845). The Manual was already into its second edition when it was revised in 1856, and it was particularly written 'for the use of those masters and mistresses whose opportunities of improvement have been scanty.' It covered 'all those topics upon which information (was) likely to be required by the less experienced Teacher' (Richards,1856:Preface). Material from this manual will be discussed in the next section with reference to the teaching of reading.

Children were also taught sight-singing using Wilhelm's method, and the master and mistress were instructed in teaching this method 'at the expense of the union,' showing the value the Guardians placed on this addition to the curriculum (P.L.R.,Minute Book,November,1841). This extension to their curriculum is of interest because the teaching of musical notation gave the children access to a new form of literacy (there is evidence that sight-singing was promoted in Roman Catholic schools too - see Third Annual Report,1850:32). It cannot have escaped

the attention of the Guardians or the Catholic authorities that one purpose of sight-singing was to impose another kind of discipline and control over children - singing in time, responding to musical marks, singing patriotic songs. Dobbs explains:

When the workers sang together they would forget their grim living conditions, and by the moral precepts embodied in their songs they would be inspired to give their services more liberally to their employers and live more happily with their families in their homes. When they were making music together they would be kept away from less desirable pursuits, and in their classes they would learn how to contribute to the public worship in the churches and chapels (Dobbs,1964:1).

Perhaps this was true, but at the same time sight-singing represented the learning of a new form of literacy, and though children might not have emerged from the workhouse situation able to read notation, they were nevertheless instructed in the rudiments of musical theory. Percy A. Scholes comments that elementary schools in the nineteenth century 'gave music more systematic attention than did the Public Schools, and hence the poor had a privilege denied to the richer' (Scholes,1991:317).

The workhouse children were taught their various subjects using the catechetical method, which Richards describes:

Questions may be asked for the purpose of ascertaining whether the pupil has understood and remembered the subject-matter of previous lessons...when this method is applied to teaching, the lesson itself is first communicated through the medium of question and answer...skill in questioning is a qualification of the highest importance (1856:41).

Isaac Watts' Scripture History, ordered by the Guardians in 1855, was first published in 1732. It illustrates this method of teaching and learning well. These

two questions from the text show how the format of the book can dictate the pedagogical practice used to teach its contents:

11. Q. Who were the first man and woman that God made?
A. Adam and Eve, Gen. v.1.2; 1 Cor. xv.45: Gen.iii.20
12. Q. In what manner did God make Adam?
A. He framed his body out of the dust of the ground, and then put a living soul within him. Gen.ii.7 (Watts,1856:4)

Watts' hymns and tracts were likely to have been well-known to the Board of Guardians and school teachers, since they would have probably been taught from his texts when they were children, especially perhaps from his Divine Songs for Children, one of the longest-lived classics for children and still in print at the end of the nineteenth century (Watts,1715). Only a single copy of his Scripture History appears to have been purchased in 1855, but it was standard practice to purchase only one copy of some books. Richards refers to 'two classes of book, those for the special and exclusive use of the teacher' and 'those which are to be used by the children' (1856:4). With only a single book, the teacher read aloud from selected passages, and encouraged children to learn the answers by heart. In 1844 the boys in the workhouse school seem to have succeeded with this task particularly well, because the Visiting Committee 'reported that they 'had examined the Boys (who) answer the Questions for Scripture very well' (P.L.R.,Minute Book, October,1844).

Children were also expected to be able to tell the time. This understanding cannot have come easily to Irish children who had no clocks in their homes and were not used to living by clock-time. In 1859 the Education Visiting Committee at the Workhouse School reported to the Board of Guardians that 'only five of the boys (were) able to tell how many hours there (were) in a day by the long finger, and

how many days there (were) in the month of February.' Their concern reflects the importance they placed on learning to tell the time by the clock, and knowing about precise, quantifiable time measurements in a world of increasing technological production and complexity. If these boys were to become factory workers, their practical knowledge of clock-time was essential (P.L.R., Minute Book, February, 1859). This episode shows again how Irish children's experience of seasonal time was supplanted by a schooled knowledge of clock-time, indispensable to their needs.

The teaching and learning of reading

I devote much of the remainder of this chapter to a discussion of the teaching of reading, because this was at the heart of education and received as much attention then as it does today. Educationalists were writing about reading teaching two centuries ago, and I have used some of their documented evidence to discuss the reading process as it was viewed in the workhouse school and the Roman Catholic schools. The production of special texts for the teaching of reading, specifically written for child learners, is another precise indicator of the entrance into a world of childhood. Meanings were embedded within the texts that were intended to influence the child that the adult writer hoped the child reader would become.

There is evidence that middle-class mothers in the nineteenth-century taught their own children to read successfully. Sara Coleridge, the poet's daughter, educated her children at home in the 1830s and early 1840s, and published some of the verse cards, stories and vocabulary cards she used in Pretty Lessons in Verse for Good Children.⁷ She did, intuitively, what good reading teachers have always done; she used a range of strategies and materials to support her children's

reading development, with her children at her knee. A century or so later, methods similar to those she used would be classified, named and described in meticulous detail by reading teachers and by the writers of teaching manuals.

Early educationalists concentrated on describing two basic approaches to the teaching of reading, using either *synthesis* (starting with a single letter and building up to a whole sentence) or *analysis* (focusing on the whole sentence, then breaking this down into words and finally into letters). Andrew Bell's spelling or alphabetical method of teaching reading, published in An Experiment in Education in 1797, is an example of the former. It advocated a rigid programme of recognising and memorising letter shapes, then letter names, followed by learning each syllable, in precisely-graded material, from words of two syllables to words of seven syllables (cited in Morris, 1965:30-34). Throughout, there was a strong emphasis on the visual impact of each letter or word. Maria and Richard Edgeworth refined these methods, and in Practical Education (1798) advocated the teaching of the *sound* of each letter, rather than its *name*, which they said confused children (cited in Morris, 1965:40).

Richards' Manual of Method describes his interpretation of these two main methods of synthesis and analysis. He advised teachers to use *both* methods to suit the needs of children and to keep their interest. 'When children can read words of one syllable, they should be allowed easy reading books and read aloud from them,' he wrote encouragingly (Richards, 1856:67). Richards discusses how to make the alphabetic method of letter recognition amusing:

The plan adopted is to distribute a number of loose letters upon a board, placed horizontally on the floor, in the presence of a class of children who are seated in a gallery. A printed alphabet, with letters of corresponding appearance, is mounted upon an easel in front of the class, and the teacher commences by

pointing to one of the letters on the mounted alphabet, and asking, 'Who can find me a letter (from among the detached letters on the floor) like this?' (1856:66)

Richards asks teachers to use their judgement about which method to use, and cautions that the 'exclusive use of either method will rarely be attended with success,' adding: 'nothing except a correct judgement, joined with experience, can serve.... as an efficient guide' (1856:39-40). Finally, Richards stresses the importance of reading aloud expressively, and the value of the teacher reading slowly so that children can repeat each word, thus learning to recognise words by constant repetition of their sounds.

In Cornelia Connelly's schools the girls were taught to read by a method described in her Book of Studies. For young children the reading experience was introduced by looking at individual words, 'without spelling, alphabet or preparatory.' Then they 'read from the tablets' before progressing to reading books in six months (cited in Bastow,1972:169). At this stage she advocated the use of alphabets, letters and reading cards 'with which the teacher makes familiar words and easy sentences, sketching objects on the board, telling stories about them and not wasting time, etc.' (cited in Bastow,1972:170). At this point the teacher introduced new words before each lesson. 'All exercises,' she said, 'should consist of sentences, not mere strings of words. The teacher should point to and read each word, then the children repeat it simultaneously, followed by a simple explanation with questions from the mistress,' - and - with an intuitive knowledge of the role of the supportive teacher - 'should accept the answers of the children, however simple' (cited in Bastow,1972:171). Cornelia Connelly showed insights into the learning process that are perhaps surprising to modern educators and historians (possibly, like Sara Coleridge, they were learnt when she taught her own

children). Cornelia Connelly set the learning in a context, developed shared meanings, and showed an interest in the child as a learner. This method of teaching reading placed the child at the centre of the learning process, and gave a high priority to understanding the meaning of words and sentences, in a way that made sense to the young child. Irish children who were given similar reading lessons by the Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus were being educated by women who had thought carefully about the learning process. In this way they were privileged.

Clues about the reading methods favoured by the Sisters of Mercy lie partly in the illustration on page p.227. The little girl is holding a capital 'A' up to her teacher, so clearly a method of letter recognition is being used. The teacher reads from a book, so the children are listening to her words, and perhaps memorising the text, and certainly learning about the rhythms and cadences of written English. Other insights into the use of lesson books and the teaching of reading at the schools of the Sisters of Mercy can be gleaned from some of William Marshall's reports. In 1851 he wrote that:

The lesson books are employed as texts, out of which a complete and systematic course of instruction is constructed by the intelligence and skill of the teachers. The minute analysis of the reading-lesson is the prominent feature of the instruction; and it may be said that bees do not more thoroughly extract from the flower its hidden treasure than these teachers each particle of knowledge which the lesson contains or suggests (TCS, Vol.2, No.7, Sept. 1851:193).

It seems likely that the sisters were using a catechetical method of reading and responding to the text, questioning the children with care. In the light of discussion which will follow on the content of certain texts used in these schools, I want to draw attention to Marshall's comments on the children's grasp of natural history because they are particularly revealing. He said the children had:

a considerable acquaintance with natural history, and could also explain with precision natural phenomena, such as the rainbow, the tides, etc. and readily give their information in another form when required to do so (General Report, 1851: cited in Convent of Mercy documentation, Derby).

Marshall was commenting on work achieved with the use of the Irish Commissioners' Lesson Books. I am going to devote some time to an analysis of these texts, since they were used in the workhouse schools too, and were therefore likely to have been read by most Irish children in Derby who went to school.

The Irish Lesson Books

The Irish Commissioners agreed to supply English workhouse schools and poor schools with their Lesson Books (Akerson, 1967:317) (see footnote 2, p.122).

Roman Catholic authorities in England urged their schools to purchase the Irish Commissioners' reading books since they had no series of their own, and 'this must necessarily be the work of time' (T.C.S., No.1 August, 1848:27). Their own series of books was not published until 1860 (Goldstrom, 1972:119).

The Lesson Books sold massively. ⁸ In 1851 over 100,000 had been sold in England (Akerson, 1967:317). They were broadly welcomed by all denominations, because the subject matter took a neutral stance towards religion and aimed for a secular tone which added to children's knowledge of the world in different subject areas, notably in geography, history, poetry, natural history, natural philosophy, and political economy. But there was a financial reason for their success too - they were sold in England far more cheaply than books published by larger publishers like Longman and Murray, who complained to the government that the books were 'sold in England at prices below those for which such books (could) be sold by booksellers in this country' (Correspondence of Messrs. Longman and Co. and John Murray with

the Right. Hon. John Russell M.P., 1851). Inevitably, as demand for the books grew, printing costs fell, and larger publishers like Longman and Murray found they could no longer compete (Goldstrom, 1972:86).

The Irish Commissioners defended their stance and in their statement of reply, they explained that they had undertaken to prepare and publish 'a collection of books combining the essential requisites of cheapness and merit and especially adapted to the system of education established for the National Schools.' The books, they said, were bought and used by schools for the poor in England, Scotland, Wales and the colonies, sold to workhouse, factory and gaol schools in Great Britain, and selected by churchmen, Dissenters and Roman Catholics for their schools because they 'supplied a want long since felt, namely, - good books at a moderate price' (1851: 5).

There were originally five main Lesson Books in the series. Their reading philosophy was based on the synthesising approach, and consisted of graduated texts of one-syllable and two-syllable words, extending to more difficult texts, then texts for the fluent reader using specialised language, and reflecting some difficult subject matter. The contents of the Fifth Book of Lessons, for example, contains passages on geography, geology, history, vegetable and animal physiology, astronomy, hydrostatics, pneumatics, electricity, chemistry, poetry and optics. It is difficult to imagine that teachers had the expertise to instruct and catechise children in each of these areas. Each book had supplementary texts published alongside it so that, just as in modern reading classrooms, children could read more books using language at a comparable level of complexity (See Appendix 17, p.346, for a list of books in the series, with dates and names of authors/editors).

The First Book of Lessons contains sentences with one syllable: 'Snap bit a rat; its leg bled; it is in a trap; do not let it snap' (p.11) and 'The beef is quite raw; will you roast it? A flail is used to part the grain from the straw' (p.28). There were early moral lessons too for young readers: 'A good boy will not tell a lie' (cited in Akerson,1967:324). The text gives an indication of the way in which reading was taught; the synthesising method uses words of one syllable for the first few lessons and influences the format of the book and the nature of the writing. Above the passage are fifteen 'keywords' which appear in the narrative, for children to learn by heart before they read further.

The first part of the Second Book of Lessons also uses words of only one syllable, but then two- and three-syllable words are introduced. This book, and its sequel, Sequel No.II to the Second Book of Lessons, contain a greater variety of genres, including moral tales, poems, fables, natural history, Old Testament stories, needlework lessons and grammar lessons. There is no magic in these books, no fairies, witches, wolves or wizards. The stories are set in the real world, and are mostly about everyday incidents for the teacher and the reader to make moral judgements upon. Doubtless this pleased one teaching nun, writing anonymously in The Catholic School about her own 'plan of education', though it seems the variety of material in the Lesson Books was not altogether to her taste: 'Shall we be content to see (reading books) filled with pagan stories, ridiculous fables and scraps and odds and ends of every kind of knowledge?' she asked. A Catholic reading book should, she felt, contain 'certain chosen facts taken both from holy scripture and from the history of the church....following the plan of the catechism' (T.C.S.,Vol.2, No.5,March,1851:125). Notwithstanding her anxiety, the Lesson Books continued to be popular for over thirty years. In the first passage of the Second Book of Lessons, children are addressed by an anonymous narrator, in words of one

syllable. They are reminded first of all of the importance of cleanliness, a difficult proposition perhaps for children living in Court 4, Walker Lane, but an important aspect of the Catholic religion nevertheless:

Lesson 1

Boys and girls

boy stand hair
girl wrong noise
comb school learnt
hand home good
know wash class

Boys and girls must not play all day. So comb your hair, and wash your hands, and come to school. Stand up in your class; you can read words now. So you will know things which you did not know when you could not read.

The voices of the Irish Commissioners run through this text, and they impart a moral code to their child readers, showing them a way of behaving and preparing them for adulthood. The next sentence is a celebration of the ability to read, and underlying the message is a strong didactic voice. It is clear that the working-class child was expected to believe that reading was a worthwhile thing to do:

You will be glad when you grow old that you were taught to read. But some boys and girls do not love to read, for they say it is so hard, and they do not try.

It then becomes clear through a cautionary tale what might happen to the child who does not try to learn to read. The writer has chosen a familiar everyday incident on which to make a moral judgement:

Tom Byrne took no pains to learn; he did not look at his book; so when his turn came to read out, he said the wrong words, and lost his place in the class. When school was done he was dull, for he had not been good. The girls and boys went out to play, and the sun shone, and the soft air blew, and the birds sang; but he was not so gay as they were, though he made more noise, for he had not been good. And when he went home, he had not learnt one new word, or one new thing at all. (Second Book of Lessons, pp.5-6)

The strong ideological message of this text is made quite clear to the child reader - 'you will be glad when you grow old that you were taught to read.' They are not told precisely *why* they will be glad (though they will be told later on), but nevertheless there is an underlying message of self-improvement: the ability to read enables the child to be morally good - which Tom Byrne to his eternal shame and consequent dullness, will never be. There is also a reverence for the written word which I suspect was part of ancient Irish bardic tradition that still found its place in educational practice in the nineteenth century; books were valued and book-learning was a valued activity.

Learning to read is equated with teacher approval and its benefits go hand in hand with conformity. The entrance into this particular form of childhood behaviour is through the written word. Being able to read is a deterrent to bad behaviour, and at times it is as though the teacher is being addressed alongside the learner. The ability to read is overlaid with the moral imperative of discipline in the face of hard work; compliance and obedience are equated with reading success. There is a kind of conspiracy by the narrator to set the child reader against the non-reader, Tom Byrne, who is to be pitied for his idleness and dullness. This text was produced by Commissioners who had a clear understanding of what learning to read meant in their terms. They conveyed their own system of values and beliefs to child readers, who were taught what to believe about reading, about themselves as readers, about how to behave and, perhaps above all, how to be good.

Much of the text of Sequel No. II to the Second Book of Lessons was also underpinned by this moral justification for learning to read, in the unquestioned authority of the narrator's voice. The book was compiled by Richard Whately,

Archbishop of the Church of Ireland, who repeated the message of the previous book:

The next things you learn are for your own use and advantage. You learn to read. I wish I could make you perceive what an advantage you gain by knowing how to read.

But there is a shift here, and what is revealing is that some of Whately's advice to the reader is sound pedagogical practice, because it helps children to become conscious of the *processes* involved in making sense of text. Though modern books show illustrations of children reading in a variety of situations, I know of no child's reading book in use today where the author focuses explicitly on helping child readers to see that *understanding* is the key to successful reading and that having, as it were, a dialogue with the author, is part of this process:

Mind, I do not, by *reading*, mean merely repeating aloud the words and sentences in your book, but understanding the meaning of them, as you understand the conversation of any one who speaks to you.

Whately emphasises the importance of learning to read *silently*, and describes what the process is like for the benefit of the inexperienced child reader:

When you read (words and sentences) to yourselves, they are to you a silent language, which your mind takes in from your eye instead of your ear.

This process is rather neatly described in visual imagery as the mind 'taking from the eye', and is evidence of the author's own learned cultural 'way of taking' from books. The cultural norm of some other social groups, including perhaps those of nineteenth-century Irish labourers and their families, where only one person in the family might have been able to read, was - and still is - for reading to be public and shared (Brice Heath, 1984:191). Whately assumes his child readers will develop into

silent readers. He then cautions his readers that only certain books are good ones to read:

Of course, you may make a bad use of reading, for there are bad books in the world, as well as good ones, which you may read; but so you may make a bad use of any of God's gifts - of speaking especially, as I fear many people do.

This message is particularly important for Catholic children who are warned that the sixth Commandment forbids 'immodest songs, books and pictures' (Doctrine 1985:36), and perhaps Whately is afraid too of children's exposure to radical political material (Cook-Gumperz, 1986:25). Whately, in the role of wise parent, then justifies the effort involved in learning to read by reflecting on the knowledge the child readers have available to them with their new-found skill:

Before you learned to read, you knew very little about things and places, and people beyond the place where your own friends lived, and not much even about that. The face of nature was a blank to you; for you had never learned to think about what you saw. You knew nothing about the sun, the moon, and stars; very little of the things that grow out of the earth, or of the creatures which live upon it; very little about the clothes you wear, or the commonest things in your house; and, perhaps, nothing about other people and other countries, or any of those things which you have since learned from your books.

he continues:

But now you know something about this world on which we live; its mountains, its rivers, its trees, and its plants; and what animals live upon its surface. You have also learned many amusing and useful things about your fellow-creatures, both those of our own nation, and those belonging to other countries.

Most significantly, the children who can read have access to the Holy Scriptures:

This is much, but this is not all, not the best part of what you have been taught. You have read such portions of the word of God as were thought most profitable for you.... above all, the history of our Lord Jesus Christ - of his life,

his conversations, his miracles, his death on the cross for us, his resurrection from the dead, his ascension into heaven, of the gift of his Holy Spirit, and of the miracles performed by his apostles and followers. (Sequel No.II to the Second Book of Lessons, pp. 8 - 10).

These are serious lessons indeed. What is in fact telling his child readers that part of learning to read is learning to *choose* what to read. Modern writers of reading texts for children never address their child readers explicitly about the reading process, nor invite them to contemplate what their skill might offer them.

An untaught reading lesson in the Lesson Books is the exposure to a range of type-faces: capital letters, lower-case letters, italicised words and letters, used for different purposes, and the experience of reading a variety of genres within the same book - stories, poems, factual prose, as well as contents lists, lists of words, titles, sub-titles, and the specialised vocabulary of technical subjects and the variety of punctuation marks which guide the ability to read aloud with expression. Another untaught skill offered by the books was the 'reading' of illustrations and diagrams for different purposes. The illustration of the woman and the eagle on page 248 shows a dramatic episode from a story, designed to excite but also to teach about the habits of birds of prey. Below are drawings of the beak and talons of a bird of prey. The words of the text show the child *how* to look at the beak and talons, drawing attention to 'hooked', 'sharp' and 'strong'.

The reading lessons I have outlined here would not have been found within the pages of a nineteenth-century reading manual, because knowledge of the reading process was still developing. Good teachers (like Sara Coleridge and Cornelia Connelly) knew intuitively that these things were important, even though the specialised vocabulary of reading teachers was not there to support their

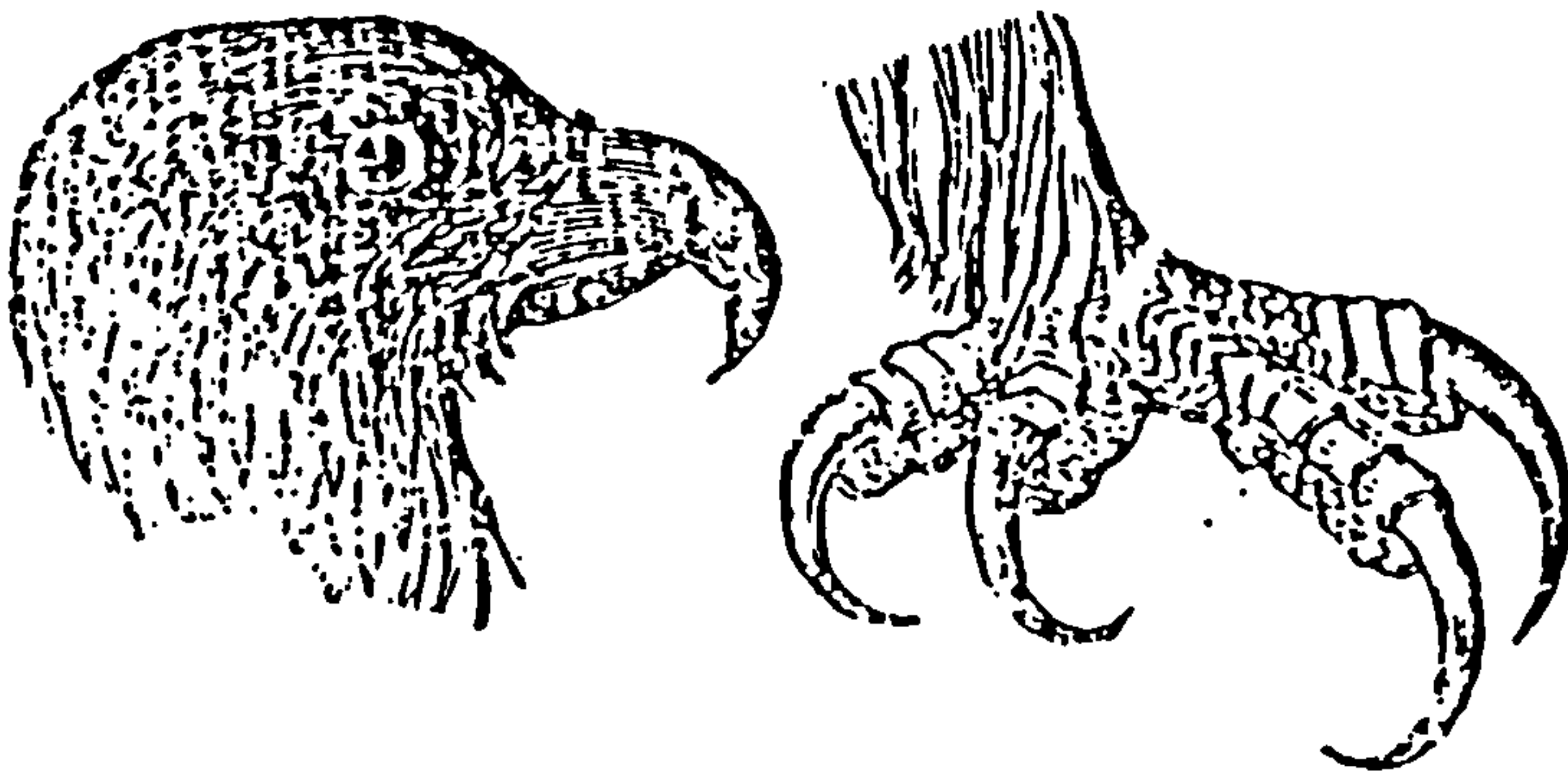
intuitions. The Lesson Books could also be handled easily by small children - they measured about seven inches across and five inches down, yet were thick enough to offer the satisfaction of holding a 'real' book. There is a great deal of evidence then to show that the Lesson Books offered a variety of reading experiences to working-class children which gave them some control of written information in an increasingly literate society, and an introduction to approved forms of childhood behaviour, which included a knowledge of how to behave as a reader.

Some critiques of these books argue that there was nothing in them which set out to change the hierarchical nature of society (see, for example, Goldstrom, 1972:71-76). Embedded in many of the stories and tracts is the belief in an ordered society, intent on increasing literacy among the poorer classes, but in a way which instructed its poor children into ways of behaving. The stories and didactic passages teach children how to live by the rules, because they are founded on a particular system of values and beliefs. This made them ideally suited for instructing the workhouse child, or the child attending the poor school, because through these texts the child not only achieved literacy but at the same time, learnt how to behave in order to win the approbation of the ruling classes and, most importantly, of God. The tale of Martha Dunne, from the Second Book of Lessons, shows child readers how the social world is organised, and gives them not only a model of childhood but a preparation for adulthood of a quite particular kind, of selflessness and service to others, suited to their station in life. Here is the beginning of the story:

When Martha Dunne lost her parents she was put under the care of an old woman named Molly Flint, who, though not unkind, was rather cross to children. When Martha first came to live with her, she had a great deal to bear, for Molly did not like being plagued with the care of so young a child, but Martha was a



'The savage bird swooped down over the party of villagers for a moment in its flight, and then soared away with something in its mouth. One piercing shriek from a woman's voice was heard, and then the cries of the villagers, exclaiming - "Hannah Lamond's child, Hannah Lamond's child. The eagle has carried it off!"' Sequel No. II to the Second Book of Lessons, pp.140-141. (This book was in print between 1844-1865).



The birds of prey

'These birds are known by having long, hooked, sharp claws - and a beak strong and hooked for tearing flesh.' Sequel No. II to the Second Book of Lessons, pp. 137-138).

very good, obedient little girl and tried to help old Molly in every way, till at last the old woman became very fond of her.

The nature and organisation of the teaching of reading in schools in the nineteenth century was - and of course still is - controlled by the social groups who have influence in this area of learning - politicians, clergy, employers, publishers, editors, writers, school teachers: people that Harold Rosen today calls the 'writing police' (Rosen,1993:117). In the case of the Lesson Books it was the Irish Commissioners and their team of editors and writers who decided what texts should be read in poor schools - and *how* they should be read. In these texts there are no stories containing conversations between children as companions; this face-to-face interaction might have been seen as a form of collaboration against the adult world. Conversations are between adults and children, or animals masquerading as sensible adults. They represent the adult world of reasonableness and order in this retelling of Aesop's fable:

The Boys and the Frogs

Lesson IX

pond	hurt	full
play	stones	true
frog	death	head

Some boys went one day to play by a pond, and they threw stones in it for fun. Now this pond was full of frogs, and when the boys threw in a stone, it hit them. Then one of the frogs put up its head out of the pond, and said, 'Pray, do not pelt us so.' 'We are but at play,' said one of the boys. 'True,' said the frog, 'but the stones you throw hurt us all the same. What is play to you is death to us.'

We should take care when we play that our fun hurts no one. (Second Book of Lessons, pp.35-36)

This short moral tale tells its readers - and perhaps especially *boy* readers - how

they should behave. This kind of story supports children who are learning to 'reconstruct, remake, extend and understand their experience of living in a social context with each other' according to Margaret Meek. She is commenting on a modern children's tale, but her message is equally valid when applied to this nineteenth-century text, as is her next comment: 'When we want to make new meanings we need metaphor' (Meek,1988:16). In other words, this fable offers its child readers an important reading lesson which takes them beyond the literal, into the construction of 'possible worlds', giving them opportunities to enter the world of cognitive ideas, and thus increasing their powers of intelligence and symbolic thought (Bruner,1986:49).

The Irish commissioners were innovators in their decision to include a great deal of geographical information in books which were intended for the children of the poor, and workhouse and convent teachers might have drawn children's attention to the geography lessons embedded in some of the texts. If children graduated to the Fourth Book of Lessons (1834) they found eighty pages dedicated to geographical issues (Goldstrom,1972:78), as well as lessons in natural history, political economy, poetry and moral and religious lessons. The Newcastle Commission (1861) disapproved of many of the texts offered to children in schools, and singled out the Irish commissioners' Lesson Books for particular criticism:

The Irish reading-books are the most popular of all, and their cheapness and completeness as a series have rendered their introduction into the schools of this country almost an era in popular education. Yet schoolmasters have reason to complain that the books of this series abound with words, needlessly introduced, which are quite incomprehensible to a child; that the poetry is taken from inferior sources; that dry outlines of grammar and geography (subjects which should be taught in a separate form) are unsuitably introduced; that the history is epitome, destitute of picturesqueness, and incapable of striking the imagination and awakening the sentiments of a child. The fifth book is greatly taken up with science in

a form too technical for the purpose. If science is to be taught by means of reading books, care must be taken to translate it into familiar language, and to enlist the child's curiosity by illustrations drawn from daily life (1861:351)

The report criticised the dry technical scientific writing, empty verbosity, poor poetry, bad history writing and lack of illustration. Yet it needs to be remembered that this series was the first to present largely secular-based texts; perhaps it is not surprising if it partly failed in its purpose, particularly in its more advanced texts. The arguments about poor grammar teaching are endorsed today by Paddy Lyons, who has argued that:

within the two-tier system of mid-nineteenth century schooling in Britain, grammar was taught in both proletarian elementary schools (which took up the Irish readers) and in middle-class grammar schools (which centred the teaching of literacy co-linguistically, on translations from and into the classical languages). In the schooling that was classical and co-linguistic, grammar facilitated management, manipulation and possession of language. What was learned from the Irish readers was, relatively speaking, a dispossession. In the elementary schools grammar was introduced as a set of rules that were their own justification, to be learned and unquestioningly obeyed. The effect was to regulate, not to facilitate...To learn literacy in the elementary school was to learn obedience to rules which denied any glimpse of a possible rationale (Lyons,1991:5).

The first part of this typical grammar lesson from the Second Book of Lessons illustrates the teaching of nouns:

Lesson 8 of Nouns

Some words are called nouns. A noun is the name of anything that is: the names of animals, places and things, are nouns; the name 'girl' is a noun, and 'boy' is a noun. 'Man' and 'woman', 'sheep' and 'cows' and 'birds' and 'fish' and 'insects' are all nouns. For girls and boys, men and women, sheep and cows, birds, fish and insects, are all names of animals, and the names of animals are nouns.

But the names of places, too, are nouns. Countries, cities, villages, and gardens are nouns (166 - 167).

The idea that some of the child readers of this text were *Irish* children who could have been bilingual in Irish and English does not seem to have occurred to Lyons. I have already argued that some bilingual speakers are particularly interested in the language structures of their second language, and are attracted by texts which increase their knowledge of the workings of this language. L.S. Vygotsky noted that learning to communicate one's thoughts in two languages enables a child to 'see his language as one particular system among many, to view its phenomena under more general categories.' This, he said, leads 'to awareness of his linguistic operations' (1962:105). One boy I knew, bilingual in Punjabi and English, was fascinated by English dictionaries: 'I'm used to finding all the letters, the capitals, and all that,' he said. 'In Punjabi, there are new words that I learn when I translate them into English. I've never heard of them before, and I find the meanings and I learn new words as well' (Minns, 1993:66). Other researchers have commented on bilinguals' conscious awareness of language as a system. Jacqueline Thomas makes the point that 'even an elementary level of foreign language learning' enhances metalinguistic awareness (Thomas, 1988:236). In addition to this, Irish children had some kind of access to a classical language - Latin, in church services, thus making them to some extent trilingual. These points make it more likely that Irish children reading the Lesson Books were not necessarily dispossessed of the ability to investigate grammar co-linguistically, and could have been very interested in the linguistic classification of words.

The Newcastle Commission (1861) also criticised the Irish texts for making learning more difficult for children since familiar everyday language was not used to explain scientific lessons, nor were observations drawn from everyday life to help

children understand more difficult ideas. This might be true of the contents of the Fourth and Fifth Book of Lessons, but it is not the case for the Second Book of Lessons, where much of the factual information is presented in an exciting and positive way. It is written in familiar language, and authors do their best to enlist their child readers' curiosity by drawing on observations from everyday life. This extract from Lesson 9 from the Second Book of Lessons illustrates this well:

Lesson IX

The Ant

When you are at play on the common, or in the fields, I dare say you have often seen small heaps of earth, thrown up on all sides, and swarming with busy little insects, running to and fro. These little insects are called ants, and it is quite worthwhile to stop and watch how they build their houses.

Though perhaps there is a sense of the 'worthiness' of this task, I hear a teacher's voice running through this text. The first part of this passage puts the children at the centre of their own learning and experience. There is very much more going on here than the requirement to memorise factual information. 'When you are at play on the common, or in the fields' is a direct invitation to child readers to enter a familiar situation, showing how to look afresh at an insect they might already be familiar with, building on what they know as a way of teaching them something new, and inviting them to enter the world of their imagination:

You will see them come laden with leaves, bits of wood, sand, earth, and the gum of trees; with these they form their ant hills. When their houses are built, these busy ants go out and seek their food, which they lodge in their little stone houses till the time of need.

The narrator then sets out to tell a story which invites the child reader to imagine one of nature's battles. There are no illustrations here, but the prose is

vivid, and the text takes readers on a journey to a distant country and helps them to make their own construction of the events through the use of language and imagination. The narrative element is embedded in a text which makes huge cognitive demands on its readers:

In one distant and very hot country, where there are numbers of these ants, the houses swarm with all kinds of nasty vermin also, such as rats, mice and clocks. From time to time, immense bodies of ants may be seen marching up to a house, and soon the walls, ceilings, and floors are alive with them, and they get into all the drawers and chests. Now begins a fierce battle, between the ants and the rats, and other vermin; it goes on for some hours; after which, you may see the ants dragging off their prey, quite dead, and feasting on their bodies outside the house. Then the people, who have been waiting out of doors, gladly return to their houses, which they find quite cleared from all vermin. (Second Book of Lessons, p. 37) ⁹

This, I believe, is what Harold Rosen would call a liberating text (Rosen,1993:121).

There is a clear bond with the author who takes the children on as learners, sharing the excitement of the narrative in a direct voice. In From Primer to Pleasure M. F. Thwaite shows how ‘the growing emphasis on imagination, entertainment, and new avenues of fiction for the delight of boys and girls, were affecting books of a factual nature’ (1963:218-219). I am persuaded that the writers of this text knew that ‘delight’ was part of the learning process. Here, in another lesson about birds, is that same direct voice, introducing readers to scientific language, inviting them into the text, almost having a conversation with them, in expectation of an imaginative response:

Zoology, or the Knowledge of Animals

We will begin with birds. The knowledge of birds is called Ornithology, from two words meaning birds and knowledge.

The narrator takes children on as apprentice learners, showing them how to observe birds, and dealing with ideas about learning as they are invited to become young scientists:

This knowledge requires observation, that is, looking about you, and taking notice, rather than learning.

The narrator is clearly aware that the child readers could live in the country or the town, and he writes for them both:

The appearance and habits of birds are most easily studied by those who live in the country. Yet there are several kinds of birds which have no objection to a town life, and which may be tamed so as to be quite familiar with the family they belong to.

He then addresses his readers directly, in a first-person narrative voice, telling them a story of a particular bird that made an impression on him:

I knew a duck which lived in the house, and was so attached to the children of the family, that it would follow them about, and walk up stairs into the room where they slept.

Writers use this familiar and direct style of writing when they are caught up in the interest of their subject and want to share it with readers. The writer continues:

Magpies, starlings, ravens, rooks, and pigeons, are easily tamed. I remember a pigeon which made friends with a cat, and they always fed at the same dish, and slept side by side in the kitchen.

(Sequel No. II to the Second Book of Lessons, pp. 131-132)

M.F. Thwaite writes that 'the whole field (information books) for children needs much further exploration' (1963:221). Books about nature in particular were rare

in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, but significant exploration, and in particular the opening of the Zoological Gardens in London in 1828, encouraged the production of more. Thwaite tells us: 'As exciting new knowledge was amassed, science and natural history inevitably became more specialised, but in the nineteenth century much was still to be done by the devoted amateur' (Thwaite, 1963:217) and it is indeed the voice of the 'devoted amateur' that children heard when they read these texts. It is certainly likely that visits of travelling menageries (see poster on page 265) also increased children's interest in the area of natural history, and made them want to read about exotic animals and birds. When William Marshall, the Catholic inspector, wrote in his report that the girls in the Convent school in Derby 'had considerable acquaintance with natural history,' their knowledge and understanding might have been as a result of reading texts such as these (see page 239).

Although the tone of much of the content of the Lesson Books is undeniably moralistic and didactic, and the books higher up the series contain unyielding scientific matter, editors like James Carlile and Richard Whately perhaps unwittingly allowed into this set of readers a different kind of discourse, which gave a certain freedom to the child reader. There is little moralising in these natural history accounts; the stories are there to help the narrator tell the facts as they are, so the writing has a specific and quite different purpose. The writer takes children on as apprentice learners at a time when it was almost impossible for them to take up apprenticeships in trades any more; a subtle conversion was therefore made between the vanishing learning world of work and the new learning world of books, where authors became teachers at a distance. So although Irish children in Derby in many ways had limited educational experience - there was no French in the curriculum, no Latin grammar, no chance to learn a musical instrument - this

kind of discourse within the Irish Lesson Books helped them towards a new awareness of themselves as readers and as learners.

Another important book listed in 1855 in the workhouse school was Oliver Goldsmith's History of the Earth and Animated Nature, first published in 1774. This eight-volume work had already gone through many editions when it was purchased by the Board of Guardians. It is not possible to know which edition they bought, though perhaps the 1848 edition, published by Fullarton and illustrated by J. Stewart, was chosen, because the publication date meant that it was still likely have been in print in 1855. If this edition was used, the workhouse children were able to see exquisite plates of birds, animals and insect life, as well as diagrams and sketches, alongside a fascinating text written by Goldsmith, who clearly knew how to hold the attention of his reader by using elegant prose and a personal and humorous voice. He included amazing stories to hold his readers' attention and add to their knowledge of the exotic and colourful. The Card Boards which the school master ordered were large placards showing illustrations or diagrams from the book. They were purchased in addition to the book, and displayed in the classroom. The Publishers' Advertisement quotes Dr. Johnson as saying, 'Oliver Goldsmith is now writing a Natural History, and he will make it as entertaining as a Persian tale' (Goldsmith, Vol. 1, 1848: Publishers' Advertisement). One example from the book will suffice. In the chapter entitled 'Of the appearance of new islands and tracts; and of the disappearing of others,' Goldsmith writes about a volcanic island and tells his readers about its emergence from the sea with an element of suspense and to excite the curiosity of the reader:

On the twenty-fourth of May, in the year 1707, a slight earthquake was perceived at Santorin; and the day following, at sun-rising, an object was seen by the inhabitants of that island, at two or three miles' distance at

sea, which appeared like a floating rock. Some persons, desirous either of gain, or incited by curiosity, went there, and found, even while they stood upon this rock, that it seemed to rise beneath their feet (Goldsmith, Vol. 1, 1848:103).

Goldsmith's *Natural History* was already a well-known text when Irish children met its prose for the first time in the workhouse. When they listened to the teacher reading it, they were being introduced to a work far richer than many natural history textbooks used in schools in the 1990s. I have no evidence that this book was used in Roman Catholic schools in Derby (though it was in Cornelia Connelly's library at St. Leonard's-on-Sea - Marmion, 1984:250) which probably means that only Irish children in the workhouse school from 1855 onwards were privileged to see it, and to listen to a form of literary language probably quite unlike anything they had heard before.

The world of public print

It is perhaps worth speculating on the reading experiences of children and their parents in the world outside school, particularly since many did not go to school at all. I am inclined to treat with caution the remarks of historians who state categorically that many of the immigrant Irish could not read and write and that their illiteracy rate was twice as high as that of the native labouring classes in the 1860s (see for example O'Tuathaigh, 1985:19). I am sceptical because by the 1860s, and probably before, there was already a significant amount of public print available for people to read, both in Ireland and Britain. The photograph of St. Peter's Street (page 260) shows that in the 1860s children could read shop signs, a clock face, and the name of a silk merchant on a building as they walked along. The photograph of the Cornmarket on page 261 shows a street sign, shop signs

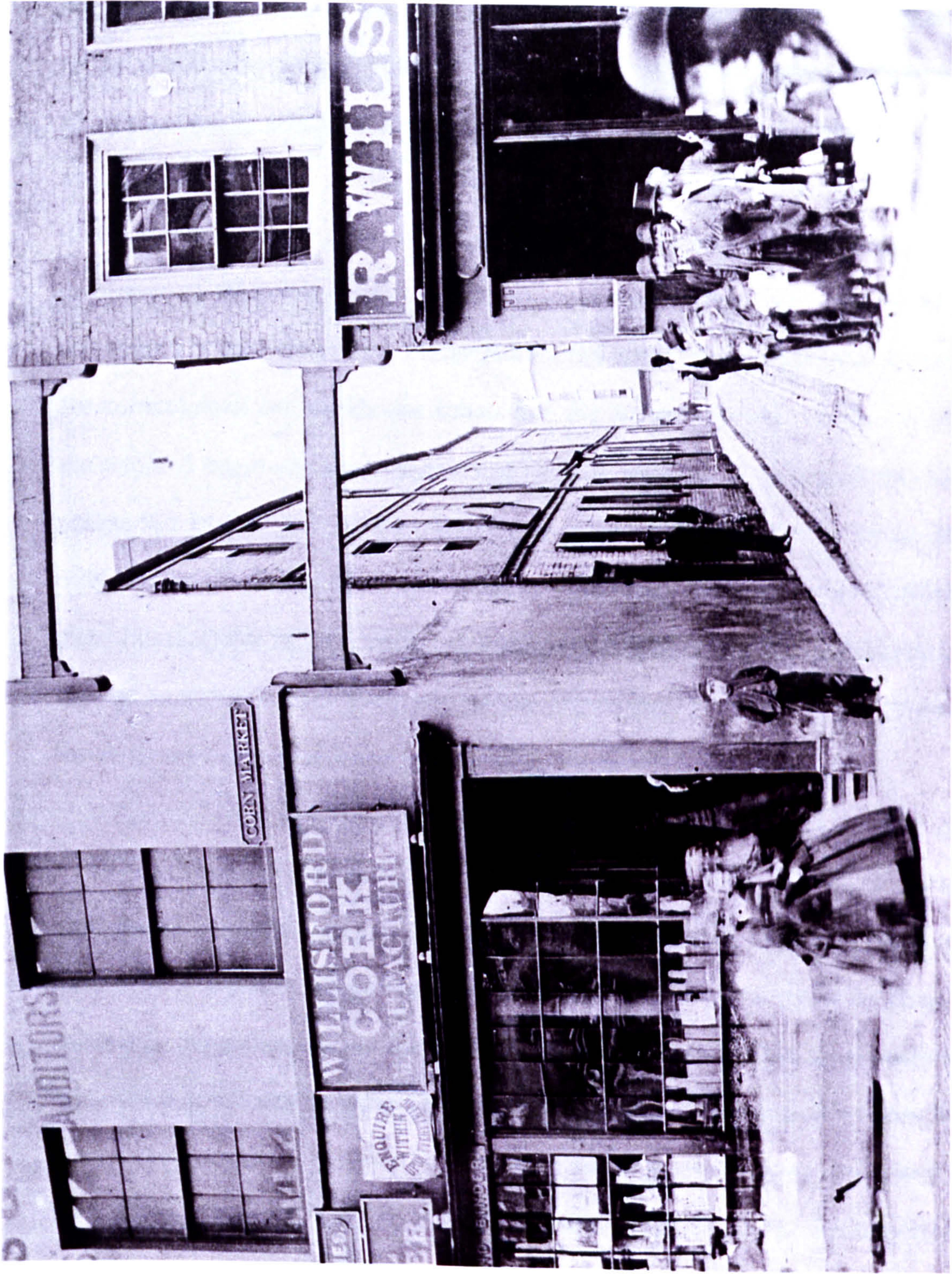
and other writing using unfamiliar language - 'Enquire Within Upon Everything'.

Irongate (page 262) has bills and advertisements posted up, as well as shop signs, extending children's reading knowledge and their understanding of words used in particular contexts. We can speculate too that on their way to England from Ireland the children and their parents read some of the following: milestones, signposts, the name of the boat that brought them over to England, railway timetables, rail tickets and names on inns.

Modern children are confronted with a world of print, and they use it to give themselves reading lessons; one thing they learn is that information is presented in many different forms. 'Most children promote their learning in this way,' writes Margaret Meek. 'They guess the meaning of what they see; the surrounding context provides the feedback of whether they are right or wrong, and gradually, as they did in play, they look at individual words and letters' (1982:40-41). Although I have no direct evidence, there is every reason to suppose that the nineteenth-century Irish children in this study gave themselves reading lessons in exactly the same way. Furthermore, this was a kind of literacy experience they could share with parents. Though formal schooling segregated children and parents, and took children into a world of books written specially for the young, once outside school they could use their literacy in a whole-family context, discussing information in the environment in ways that might have been reminiscent of their lives in rural Irish villages. They might also have read the poster advertising the menagerie together (page 264), finding out what was on offer there, and the dates of the event. They might also have noticed interesting ways of using exclamation marks, different-sized letters for emphasis, and the use of exaggerated language for effect.



St. Peter's Street, Derby, c.1860, showing the large clock outside Johnson's, and the shop window full of time pieces. Note also the different kinds of public print which formed part of Irish children's reading material (Derby Local Studies Library).



The Corn Market, Derby, c. 1859. A variety of street signs might offer reading lessons to Irish children. (Derby Local Studies Library).

Learning to write

There is very little information available on this aspect of literacy learning. I have not been able to discover any existing copy-books from the Roman Catholic schools or the workhouse school - if indeed they ever existed. The children might have always written on slates. It is possible, though, to speculate on children's acquisition and uses of writing to some extent. When Irish children went to work in Derby probably only the pupil-teachers (and perhaps also the errand boys, if they graduated to becoming clerks) needed to know how to write, and were expected to use writing in their daily work. Nevertheless, the teaching of writing was included in the curriculum of the workhouse school and the Roman Catholic schools. In 1836, the Bedford Board of Guardians tried to ban the teaching of writing because local people felt that pauper children were being given an advantage over labourers' children who did not go to school. However, the Poor Law Commissioners would not allow the proposal to be considered, because 'workhouse children should not be treated so as to fix upon them any permanent stigma, in that all other children who learnt to read should also learn to write' (Longmote, 1974:167).

What is interesting is the form children's writing took. Unless it was written in copy books it probably did not exist beyond the end of each school day, since it was rubbed off the slates children used to write on. For those who wrote on slates, there was no conception of their writing being permanent; what they wrote was lost, wiped away with a cloth. There was no opportunity to value what they had done. This temporary nature of their writing must have influenced their views of themselves as writers, showing them to be learners with nothing very important to say. They were *practising* writing, rather than writing. Indeed, what they wrote was copied from someone else's writing. The Manual For The Use of Teachers

stipulated that 'the ordinary method of teaching to write (was) by *imitation*,' and children were required to produce a 'fac-simile of the whole by a purely mechanical process.' The Mulhauser method advocated that children should copy individual letters and words 'to determine with ease, the height, breadth, and inclination of every letter.' The layout of the writing on the page - the distance between each letter, the formation of letters, the spaces between words and sentences, (should be) carefully taught' (cited in Richards, 1856: 84-86). It was these mechanical aspects of the writing process that were considered important.

Children in these schools can never have learnt that their own writing could be used as a form of communication, to recapture experience, or to entertain other people. The major schooled writing event was reproducing other people's writing; learning how to write each letter of the alphabet neatly, writing lists of words, sentences, their own name, learning how to hold a pen or pencil in the correct position, and how to write without blotting the page; all this in silence. A regime of copying, of course, made writing 'safe'. There are no records of the kinds of writing these children might have attempted if they had been encouraged to write creatively. However, possibly the schools were the main institutions where children saw writing 'modelled' for them by teachers and had some opportunity at least of learning to write their own names and to hold a piece of chalk or a pen correctly.

Children saw models of writing around them, both in school and out - stories, poems, hymns, rules and regulations, advertisements, street signs - though it is not known if these uses of writing entered their own writing world. It is possible that they wrote - or made meaningful signs - when playing some of their games. Hopscotch, for instance, was certainly known in 1834, and Irish children might have learnt to mark out squares and written in the numbers (Opie:1969:12).

I leave this brief account of the teaching of writing here with a certain frustration, but the central point is that children were taught only the *mechanics* of writing, and to write their own name; they were not taught to be inventive with their writing. The entrance to the world of working-class childhood was not as an inventive writer. It is of particular note that Irish boys like Tom Barclay educated themselves at night school and went on to write their autobiographies.

Literacy and Childhood

Entering a world of schooled literacy meant entering a world of childhood where the child has few rights. Kenneth Levine argues that few children ask to learn to read and write; 'their parents and teachers impose literacy as a non-negotiable requirement' (1986:115-116). But many did learn and perhaps went on to use their literacy in some way when they left school. The public library in Derby opened in 1871 so there was an opportunity for children to *choose* and borrow reading material for themselves. Young Irish people in schools were constructing themselves as children, bringing their own experiences into the classroom - of Ireland, of language use, of travel, each with their own personal and unique set of stories, influenced by their family, their cultural heritage, and influencing others who taught them, wrote for them, listened to them. The young Irish worker had finally become a child, and in the process of becoming a child, the adults too had changed. Some had become teachers of these young Irish people, some wrote teaching manuals or reading texts for them; others set up publishing companies to provide schools with their needs. Readers and writers change language and literacy. It was the ability of children to use their own language creatively that empowered them as literacy users.

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including the Black Maned 43 Spots & 44 Spots of Coburg; the TAWNEY LIONS OF THE SOUTH; the ARABIAN LIONS; the BARBARY LIONS and the finest performing Lion of Scotland; (Royal Lion), captured at Perth, on the 2nd of May 1864, having a grand group of TWENTY LIONS and FIFTY TIGERS in his possession.

FOUR ROYAL MONSTER BENGAL TIGERS.

The Tiger has the appearance of being intended to be the same colour as the Lion, he is however with the title of being usually, his bearing strength and capacity, by which he excels them and distinguishes among the inhabitants of the forest. The Tiger, though somewhat less than the Lion, is equally bold in strength; while in the appearance of his dentition, and in the general beauty of his form and appearance he is greatly superior. There is no other quadruped, perhaps, that is so greatly admired as the Tiger; but what excites and kindles the admiration is his roaring, that is so peculiarly uttered in the forest. The beauty of the Tiger's form and coloring is not to be compared to the beauty of the Lion. The hair of the Tiger is of a bright golden ground, with numerous spots of various shades of black, which are so curiously arranged and placed, while the disposition of his hair, with the beauty of his coloring, are deeply admired to excite the admiration of the beholder. If all wild men as he is to all within, the Tiger would be the most beautiful quadruped in the world. His death, as he rarely dies thus, the most savage disposition in the world, his hunters are persecuted to such a degree in the mountains which he is deemed to inhabit, chased and hunted by all; but especially by man, who does not fear the disposition to attack and appreciate the beauty of the Tiger's form and color.

HUGE PERFORMING ELEPHANTS!

On either side of these Egyptian Elephants are mounted
THE MALE AND FEMALE ELKS.

These Elephants and Female Elephants are a most curious and wonderful formation, contrary to the ordinary of all other animals.

In exhibiting the most interesting, instructive, and amusing spectacles of the World of Nature, the MANDERS' menagerie, that no expense has been spared to render the Programme as complete as it is possible for the most extensive office to accomplish. No expense has been spared in exhibiting all objects of interest, and the most interesting, instructive, and amusing spectacles of the World of Nature, and the most interesting, instructive, and amusing spectacles of the World of Nature, and the most interesting, instructive, and amusing spectacles of the World of Nature.

LIONS & TIGERS

Ever witnessed in Her Majesty's Dominions,
With upwards of Two Hundred other rare and costly specimens of Birds, Beasts, Reptiles, &c.

MANDERS' will show the War Elephant and numerous other animals, including the most interesting, instructive, and amusing spectacles of the World of Nature, and the most interesting, instructive, and amusing spectacles of the World of Nature, and the most interesting, instructive, and amusing spectacles of the World of Nature.

The beautiful **SPOTTED TIGER & TIGRESS!**
With beautiful form and wonderful coloring. The opportunity of their form and coloring is so curiously arranged and placed, while the disposition of his hair, with the beauty of his coloring, are deeply admired to excite the admiration of the beholder.

THE PANTHER & JAGUAR
From the Mountains of Hindoostan.

ROYAL GIANTS, or Horned Horses of India,
The opportunity of their form and coloring is so curiously arranged and placed, while the disposition of his hair, with the beauty of his coloring, are deeply admired to excite the admiration of the beholder.

THE AVIARY OF BIRDS
The opportunity of their form and coloring is so curiously arranged and placed, while the disposition of his hair, with the beauty of his coloring, are deeply admired to excite the admiration of the beholder.

THE ADJUTANT
The opportunity of their form and coloring is so curiously arranged and placed, while the disposition of his hair, with the beauty of his coloring, are deeply admired to excite the admiration of the beholder.

THE MILK-WHITE PELICANS
The opportunity of their form and coloring is so curiously arranged and placed, while the disposition of his hair, with the beauty of his coloring, are deeply admired to excite the admiration of the beholder.

Part of a poster advertising a travelling menagerie in May, 1869. This kind of event extended Irish children's knowledge of natural history and their interest in the animal world. The poster also provided important reading lessons in both text and illustration (Derby Local Studies Library).

Footnotes

1. By 1850 The Roman Catholic authorities in England had established 236 day schools and 60 Sunday Schools for its children, catering for 38,207 children in total (Beales,1950:367). The Catholic Poor School Committee was established in 1847 to negotiate with the Committee of Council on Education over grants to its schools. The committee oversaw the education of the Catholic poor, with the intention of putting Catholic education on an official footing, and enabling Catholic schools to share in the parliamentary education grant. The Committee of Council of Education awarded grants to Roman Catholic authorities for training schools, the building of schools, teachers' and pupil-teachers' salaries, and for the purchase of books and maps, on condition that schools were regularly inspected (see Fourth Annual Report,1851:12).
2. The following is an extract from the Prospectus for the Boarding School, Convent of the Holy Child Jesus, Derby, 1848:

The objects which are contemplated in this Convent are to give, upon the sound basis of the practice of all their religious duties, such an education to a large and interesting class of Girls as will best enable them to fill their office in Society, while, at the same time, they will be thoroughly instructed in the details of domestic life, and in all such arts as are most practically useful in the service of our Holy Mother the Church.

Twenty-Five pounds per annum, to be paid half-yearly in advance. Entrance, two pounds. The children are taught English and French, Writing, Arithmetic, Geography, History, Grammar, Singing and the principles of Church music. Drawing, Plain Needlework and every kind of Embroidery, Tracing, Point-lace, Stitch, etc., that can be useful in the service of the Church, together with the cutting out and making up of vestments, etc.

Any parents who wish their children to learn the piano are requested to give notice of it, as it is an extra.

(Catholic Directory, 1847:145)

For those who wish to investigate Cornelia Connelly's teaching more fully, John Marmion's study (1884) is detailed and systematic. The Book of the Order of Studies (1863) is available at The Society of the Holy Child Jesus Convent, The Old Palace, Mayfield, Sussex.

3. John Marmion thinks that this early school might have been a dame school run on Lancasterian lines. (Marmion,1984:115).
4. Catholic schools charged 1d. a week for those who could afford the fee, but often waived fees altogether (TCS,Vol.2,No.11,Oct.1852:312). This was

important for very poor families, for whom even a small fee could make a 'significant difference' to their weekly economy, particularly if the children needed more clothes in order to be able to attend school (Smelser,1991:263).

5. It was often the case that school managers were 'fatigued and dispirited by a series of incompetent masters' wrote William Marshall, reporting on the varying quality of teachers of boys (TCS,Vol.2,Aug.1853). Fitzpatrick notes this lack of competent male teachers. They were trained at the Model School in Dublin for a period of four to six months only (Fitzpatrick,1985:91). In 1852 a men's training college was opened in Hammersmith.
6. Schooling in the workhouse was compulsory for all of its children; indeed, Crowther indicates that children in the workhouse often had a longer period of education than the children of labourers, for whom school might not be an everyday occurrence (Crowther,1981:207). Moreover, this education was free; the workhouse system provided the first free elementary education system for the poor in the country.

There was increasing unrest among the Roman Catholic authorities at the number of Catholic children living and receiving schooling in the Protestant workhouse system. In 1861 the Poor Law Board was given the power to order the transfer of children who did not belong to the Church of England to schools of their own denomination. However, Catholic children continued to be educated in workhouse schools as members of the Established Church until 1868 when they began to be removed to Catholic schools. After this, Catholic priests, nuns and brothers worked in greater co-operation with Poor Law authorities (Fehenev,1983:pp141-153)

7. The diary that discusses Sara Coleridge's teaching (among other topics) is deposited in the Humanities Research Centre, University of Texas.
8. The compilers of the Irish Lesson Books were aware that the content of each had to be acceptable to Protestants and Catholics; indeed, the seven Irish Commissioners had been chosen with care by the government, so that Protestants and Catholics in Ireland were represented. Archbishop Murray, the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin, and Richard Whately, Archbishop of the Church of Ireland, and the Reverend James Carlile, an ex-moderator of the Presbyterian Synod of Ulster, were three of the Commissioners (Goldstrom,1972:63).

James Carlile was given the responsibility of producing a set of school books, and in 1833 he began working on the graded readers, corresponding with eminent educationalists and churchmen about the content and style of each. Manuscripts were read and approved by all seven commissioners before going to print, and Goldstrom states that they were 'the result of a process of meticulous preparation, revision and rewriting'. The five lesson books were compiled by Carlile's brother-in-law, Alexander McArthur, who was later to

become headmaster of the Commissioners' Model School in Dublin. By 1850 the commissioners had published forty-one books, which included ten reading books, four anthologies of verse, an Agricultural class book, Lessons on Christianity, and manuals of needlework and accounting (Goldstrom,1972:64-65).

T.W.M. Marshall, the inspector for Catholic schools, considered the books were more appropriate in schools for the poor than those produced by the Christian Brothers, which he said were too difficult (Goldstrom,1972:118) and N.S. Stokes, secretary to the Catholic Poor School Committee, described the reading books as an essential part of the Catholic school book list, at a time when no books specially written for Catholic children were available (Goldstrom, 1972:135).

9. 'Clocks' probably refers to some kind of 'ticking' beetle, like the death-watch beetle.

CONCLUSION: LOST IN THE CROWD?

In Mr. Braidley's Sunday School where above two thousand children regularly attend....Irish children who are dirty and ill-clad at first, after some time improve and are lost in the crowd....(Mr. Redman, Visitor Overseer of the poor in Manchester, Poor Inquiry, 1836:445)

This study has argued that labouring Irish boys and girls in the mid-nineteenth century - those young people Dymphna McLoughlin identified as being 'lesser workers' when they were in Ireland (p.14) - learnt to become 'children' in the new urban and industrialised setting of Derby, in the English Midlands. I have shown how major institutions fashioned an area of experience called 'childhood' for the children of the Irish poor.

In Ireland, the lives of rural Irish children were intimately bound up with the cycle of growth and harvesting. As soon as children were old enough they became involved with household and agricultural tasks, working small areas of land alongside other family members, cutting and carrying turf, selling goods at the market, and

generally taking an active part in the maintenance of the family. Their dealings with the Roman Catholic church were likely to have been infrequent - the priest visited to preside over a baptism, a wedding or a wake - but at other times children had little contact with formal religious observances.

Irish families brought cultural knowledge of this rural lifestyle when they came to Derby but had to make all kinds of adjustments to meet the needs of urban living. Children who had dug potatoes were now expected to work in mills and factories and to contribute to the household wage, though in other ways life was much the same. Older children continued to look after younger ones, and helped with household tasks just as they had done in Ireland. But families now worshipped and socialised together at the new Roman Catholic church; after 1846 when the nuns arrived in Derby, Irish children went to Sunday School and some went to night and day schools too. Some parents were dependent on their children's wages, but there was a gradual move into full-time schooling, encouraged by the Roman Catholic church.

Inside their own homes in Derby Irish children must have come much closer to living as they had done in rural Ireland, taking part in social activities with the family, telling and listening to stories, singing, cooking, mending clothes, perhaps speaking in Irish, arguing with a family from a neighbouring county, or preparing for a wake or a wedding. It was in the family too that plans were likely to have been discussed for men's seasonal harvesting work - the routes they were going to take, the condition of their boots, where they would meet up with their wives and children if they had to go into the workhouse. The home was also a place for private prayer, uniting the family through religion and belief.

But though there was a certain continuity of cultural practice inside the home, Irish children were introduced to a set of new practices at church, at work or at school that inevitably took them away from traditional routines. Working as a throwster or a labourer, as a servant girl in a farm outside Derby, as a pupil-teacher at the Roman Catholic boys' school, or as a fettler in the iron foundry, presented Irish children with knowledge of particular tasks and of the specialised language they needed in order to gain a mastery of those tasks - a knowledge and a language that could never have been learnt in the home. For those who attended day, night or Sunday Schools, there was a knowledge of literacy too, and of reading the discourse of ideas.

In the course of researching and writing about this area, I have shown that the kinds of childhood experience extended to Irish children had four distinctive features:

Firstly: though Irish children entered a form of childhood experience fashioned for working-class children in Britain generally, their childhood experience was quite specific to their position as immigrant Roman Catholics because it was shaped at a *particular moment in time* by the Roman Catholic children and adults who lived through the social and cultural circumstances of immigration and social change. Moreover, there were several routes into this childhood for the children of the Irish poor.

Secondly: Irish children were not simply the recipients of this childhood experience, though it was of course set up for them. There was always an interdependence and a negotiation between the institutions who encouraged the move into childhood, and the Irish children who entered the state of childhood. Each

institution with an interest in fashioning childhood experience had its own notions of how children were expected to conform and behave. But children are social beings too, and Irish children in the mid-nineteenth century brought change to the institutions that brought childhood experience to them.

Thirdly: after 1846 the Roman Catholic church in Derby played a crucial enabling role in creating a state of childhood for the children of the Roman Catholic Irish poor. For most of these Irish children, the church was the first place where they met the experience of childhood. The Catholic mediation of childhood was not available for most children in rural Ireland for reasons discussed in Chapter 4; it was the Catholic church in Derby, more so than any other institution, that made it possible for Irish children to make the crucial move from worker to child, a move which encouraged each child to grow towards a new future. The Sisters of Mercy in particular were inextricably linked with the extension of this childhood experience because they shaped the pattern of Irish children's learning. I have argued that it was the Roman Catholic Church which functioned as the major institutional structure in holding the children together as a group, because the Roman Catholic church was the meeting place of the Irish community in Derby and the place where their various social worlds came together.

Fourthly: childhood experience brought a different kind of visibility to Irish children and to the children of the working poor in general. Street children, overwhelmingly threatening to respectable society, were brought visibly under control. When Irish children stepped off the rim of the wheel into childhood, they did so in twos, marching in formation in disciplined lines, trained to conduct themselves socially.

I have argued that the pattern of a 'working-class childhood' was not the same

of more sophisticated social experiences, and a need to make *life choices*. Irish children's lives and their futures became more complex to plan for in the new urban environment. The models shown above represent to a large extent the moves into childhood that might have been experienced in general by children of the working poor, but for Irish children, overarching all these models *was the insertion into the social and cultural life of the formal Roman Catholic church in Derby*. This crucial dimension added a particular experience of childhood that was unlike anything offered to a Protestant working-class child; learning the Catechism, preparing for First Communion, taking part in religious processions, were all stages in the ritualised formation of Roman Catholic childhood within the church. The arrival of the teaching orders of nuns, with their deep commitment to learning and their encouragement of the fostering of childhood experience, supported the introduction of routines and patterns of instruction for the young which set them apart.

Irish children in Derby were invited to enter a specific state of childhood in mid-Victorian Britain, but to suggest that they passively internalised the norms and values of a society intent on extending childhood to them would be incorrect. Though children as a group are relatively powerless, it was Irish children themselves who forged a new culture out of what was there when they arrived in Derby. They affected the groups who had dealings with them - their parents, Poor Law officials, factory supervisors, nuns and priests, even the owners of travelling menageries who gave them free entry to their shows. Everyone who was part of a social organisation that extended the notion of childhood to Irish children, had their own behaviour modified by the children's presence. Indeed, it is likely that the Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus and the Sisters of Mercy would never have been invited to Derby if Irish children had not come into the town in such huge numbers.

John Jackson's research highlights this interaction, but as a feature of immigration, rather than as a condition of childhood patterning. He writes: 'The process of settlement and accommodation to the host society cannot be adequately explained by a model which assume(s) that the immigrant is the only changeable factor in a complex situation of interchange and inter-relationship' (1963:162). I would like to argue that his point is also specifically relevant to the interaction between the *children* of the immigrant Irish and the institutions with whom they negotiated a way into childhood. Every act of communication between an Irish child and an adult - the supervisor in the winding room teaching the boy to throw silk threads; the schoolmaster reading to Irish children from Oliver Goldsmith; the priest or nun teaching the Catechism to Irish children; Tom Barclay's mother, telling her son stories of Oisín; the workhouse governor, enquiring why Joseph McKee misbehaved in lessons; George Devers, learning to weave by watching his father; the Irish tag hand and the English lad who sat alongside him and passed him the tags (and both boys learning from their supervisor): each act of communication was a negotiated childhood event, mediated through language. Each interaction was unique, part of the social and cultural organisation of Irish childhood in Derby, mutually agreed between the provider and the child. Each event involved a particular use of language because children, in the roles of learner, listener and talker, were socialised into using their language in different circumstances.

Many Irish children faced new and challenging social and linguistic experiences that they could never have encountered in Ireland. Through the children, the whole family became learners in a new cultural setting, and as members of new groups it was the children who inevitably found themselves at the forefront of change; it was they who took ideas and new uses of language back to their families and sowed the

seeds of change in their engagement with the urban world. The parents of immigrant Sikh children in the 1970s watched helplessly, but perhaps with a sense of pride, as their children begin the 'steady, inexorable process of anglicisation,' slowly growing away from their family in their uses of language, their customs and their ways of thought (James, 1974:95). It is always the children who push the boundaries of their social and geographical world outwards, extending their own sense of belonging, beginning to feel comfortable in a new language, and making choices about how they talk and listen, the clothes they wear for different occasions, and their ways of behaving.

Jackson and Nesbitt show that modern immigrant Hindu children who are confident inside their own inherited cultural environment, and in their first language, become equally sure of themselves in their second language, operating in new social situations and exhibiting what the authors describe as 'multiple cultural competence' in their ability to move 'unselfconsciously from one milieu to another' (1993:174). Irish children who arrived in Derby feeling confident and capable linguistically and culturally, initially took that learning competence forward into their new environment.

This study has shown that in the nineteenth century there was a growing disquiet as the children of the poor, hawking and begging their way around the streets, became highly and disturbingly visible. As their numbers increased in towns and cities across Britain, their indisciplined and disordered presence became a cause of anxiety. Urban street children presented a threat, and institutional forces sought to remove them from the streets. This study has demonstrated that the culture of childhood brought with it a *new* kind of visibility, one that was no longer a threat. Indeed, Irish children now walked in processions in the streets

around the town, docile and conforming. These children were now publicly visible; but they were *controlled* - no longer unruly street children, or even the fiercely independent street-sellers interviewed by Mayhew (see p.176), or the distressingly poor Irish observed by Flora Tristan (p.63); but walking *in line*, doing what adults wanted them to do and expected them to do, and meeting the requirements of the adult world by conforming rather than shocking with their presence. And with this visibility, came an objectification. Children who were entertained with parties, circuses or processions, became in turn a spectacle for adult gaze, on view. Adult pleasure grew out of watching institutional forms of controlled and supervised children's enjoyment, as well as in providing those amusements for them. This control was part of the process of laying a childhood upon them. Father Murphy's Irish Sunday School pupils had not yet achieved that state of willing conformity:

I shall never forget the opening of the Sunday School, or catechism, in the afternoon of that day. The few children who assembled in the lower school room were like wild Indians; they seemed never to have seen a priest before; and their wild disregard of order or of authority almost disheartened me (cited in Gwynn, 1950:268-269).

This study has shown that Irish children's experience in rural Ireland had not prepared them for the new social world of being a conforming scholar. Clearly Father Murphy's young scholars had not yet learnt how to fulfil their role. They were not the subordinate, happy and innocent little girls the Abbé Duval was so delighted to see in Derby, coming out of church (see p.157). The Abbé's little girls perhaps stand comparison with the London charity children observed by William Blake walking hand-in-hand in their annual procession to St. Paul's Cathedral for a thanksgiving service, in what Heather Glen describes as one of the 'great theatrical displays of eighteenth-century London (1983:125):

'Twas on a Holy Thursday, their innocent faces clean,
The children walking two & two, in red & blue & green,
Grey headed beadle walk'd before, with wands as white as snow,
Till into the high dome of Paul's they like Thames' waters flow.

O what a multitude they seem'd, these flowers of London
town!
Seated in companies, they sit with radiance all their own.
The hum of multitudes was there, but multitudes of lambs,
Thousands of little boys & girls raising their innocent hands.

Now like a mighty wind they raise to heaven the voice
of song,
Or like harmonious thunderings the seats of heaven among.
Beneath them sit the aged men, wise guardians of the poor;
Then cherish pity, lest you drive an angel from your door.

These then were the pauper children who were 'the distanced objects of professionalised charity...marching hobbledehoy through the streets of London' (Glen,1983:121). Like the pauper children in Derby, walking submissively in twos to the menagerie or the airing ground for their recreation, these children were submissive and non-threatening. They had been tamed, walking in file, controlled, innocent, and *clean* in their ceremonial dress.

The separation of the Irish child from the adult world brought new meanings into all their lives. But the separation was most notably accomplished by giving Irish children an education, putting them in institutions where they were physically separated from their parents. The psychological distance between parent and child inevitably grew wider with Irish children's increasing scholarly knowledge and understanding that was not shared by family members who had not been to school, and so there was no longer a common vocabulary in the household. At school, children had access to different and wider forms of discourse, both those they met

in books, and those they learnt from their teachers, in the teaching of reading, writing, arithmetic, geography, history, natural history, science, music and religious studies. The school system legitimated new bodies of knowledge, taught face-to-face by pupil-teachers, schoolmasters, schoolmistresses and nuns. Irish children had their own curriculum, based on the institutional organisation of the school, the workhouse and the Roman Catholic church. They had to learn that the context of schooling carried with it new understandings, including knowledge of how to conduct themselves in large groups, learning to be silent, knowing how to chant and read aloud around the class, to sing, to memorise and to answer questions.

The Lesson Books they read were carriers of a new form of consciousness and held a vast amount of factual knowledge. They provided Irish children with new world views, and with a literary environment where they could roam around inside the pages of the book and interact with the information. The Lesson Books themselves inserted children into a kind of childhood experience that could not be shared with their family, because the books were specially produced for a child audience. There were set lessons to be learnt within each passage, but of course no one could legislate for what happened in the children's heads when they read the passages, and this freedom to enter a world of the imagination was one way in which children negotiated their own learning needs.

The institutions where the Irish children became socialised as 'innocent' and 'happy' little girls, as readers and writers, as young people taking part in processions, or needing to be amused - all existed within perhaps one square mile of the centre of Derby, yet within this relatively narrow physical boundary Irish children extended their own social and psychological horizons, entering a social world of childhood far beyond anything imagined by their parents. Those who were

inserted into childhood interacted with a wider network of people in a new range of settings, and they belonged to a community more widely and socially based than that of their parents. Though in some ways the role of 'child' brought constraints, the membership of a range of organisations and the experiences these organisations provided, gave children broader perspectives on the outside world and an understanding about how to live in different social contexts. They were now participants in a larger organisation, learning new value systems, extending their social base and developing areas of thought which extended beyond their immediate family. Those who brought childhood to Irish children in Derby were the nuns who taught them and gave them tea parties at Christmas, the Poor Law masters who legislated for compulsory schooling in the workhouse, the school teachers who taught them there, the people who wrote and edited their primers, the radicals who fought for schooling on their behalf.

My own responsibility has been to reveal how the state of childhood was placed upon them. Mid-nineteenth century Irish children in Derby, with their own language, traditions, memories, and culture, have presented one of the gaps in our historical knowledge, in their transition from rural to urban life and from life as a rural worker into a scholar. Studies of nineteenth century children talk of 'armies of Victorian children whose lives were utterly determined by unpleasant urban environments' (Walvin, 1982:94) or of the 'children of the poor' in general (Cunningham, 1991). These studies are important, but they deal in undifferentiated generalities. This study has been specifically about Irish children and the childhood world they entered. My research has shown how they lived in a wider and more complex world than their parents and were transferred into a new social world of childhood where they established wider boundaries and were given the means of shaping new futures for themselves, supported by the structure of the Roman Catholic church

in Derby.

My final argument therefore is that it is no longer adequate to speak of a general group of undifferentiated children of the poor who are inserted into a state of childhood; we must ask *which* children are under consideration, and look for knowledge of their social and cultural inheritance. By doing this, we will be in a stronger position to study the history of childhood, and to locate this history within the culture of particular groups of children and the institutions which were responsible for orchestrating their move into a childhood state.

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v) Oral Evidence

- i) Hogan, I. Interview 1: Derby, November, 1992.
- ii) Hogan, I. Interview 2: Derby, May, 1993.
- iii) Holmes, J.H. Interview 1: Derby, November, 1994.

APPENDICES

1814	1	1843	16
1818	1	1844	25
1821	1	1845	17
1822	2	1846	26
1823	2	1847	14
1824	4	1848	22
1826	13	1849	33
1827	5	1950	22
1828	5	1851	36
1829	11	1852	39
1830	1	1853	24
1831	10	1854	51
1832	4	1855	42
1833	6	1856	45
1834	5	1857	45
1835	7	1858	33
1836	5	1859	47
1837	6	1860	40
1838	24	1861	37
1839	12	1862	53
1840	11	1863	47
1841	11	1864	53
		1865	54

App.1: number of baptisms in Irish families in the Derby area between 1814 and 1865. (Source: Baptismal Register for the Old Catholic Chapel and St. Mary's Church, Derby. Nottingham Diocesan Records).

(No figs. are available for 1815, 1816, 1817, 1819, 1820, 1825.)

	<u>0-5</u> <u>years</u>	<u>6-10</u> <u>years</u>	<u>11-15</u> <u>years</u>	<u>Total</u>
1841				
Boys	13	8	6	27
Girls	14	5	7	26
1851				
Boys	5	4	1	10
Girls	4	3	2	9
1861				
Boys	44	41	15	100
Girls	41	39	14	94

Total boys and girls: 1841 = 53

1851 = 19

1861 = 194

Total altogether: = 266

App. 2: showing number and ages of second-generation (non-Irish born) boys and girls living in Derby at each census date (Source: Census for Derby, 1841, 1851, 1861).

Age	1841 Male	1841 Female	1851 Male	1851 Female	1861 Male	1861 Female
0- 5	16	32	16	17	8	5
6-10	20	28	37	28	2	11
11-15	27	22	64	66	33	39
16-20	32	23	47	64	87	70
21-25	55	45	63	69	75	81
26-30	57	34	65	74	85	84
31-35	23	20	35	30	33	41
36-40	62	28	54	52	50	58
41-45	21	13	32	25	36	51
46-50	19	16	33	28	42	46
51-55	5	5	18	12	26	16
56-60	5	9	21	15	28	25
61-65	4	3	4	3	13	14
66-70	5	4	4	4	8	5
71-75	0	0	0	2	2	1
76-80	0	1	1	0	1	0
81-85	0	0	0	0	3	1
Total	351	283	494	489	532	548

Total males and females in 1841: 634
Total males and females in 1851: 983
Total males and females in 1861: 1080 *

* The addition of 10 people whose ages are not given in 1861 brings the actual total to 1090

App. 3: Breakdown of Irish population in Derby by sex and age, 1841 to 1861 (Data: Census for Derby, 1841, 1851, 1861).

1841

Mary Buley, aged 16. Her father was a Protestant minister in Derby.

Elizabeth Thompson, aged 10. Her mother was a Derby-born governess working in Derby (no details are given for her father).

Charlotte Macklin, aged 15

Martha Macklin, aged 10

Sophia Macklin, aged 10

Rosina Macklin, aged 9

Jemima Macklin, aged 7

Frances Macklin, aged 4

These were the Dublin-born children of Protestant minister in Derby.

1851

Frances Macklin, aged 12 (her sisters are now grown-up and living at home)

Constance Bradshaw, aged 10. She is a Limerick-born. Her mother is described as 'head of household' and an 'annuitant', from Jamaica. She has three servants.

Alfred Bryer, aged 12. He is a Limerick-born 'scholar at home', possibly the step-son of one Edward Brown, a chemist employing three people, but the relationship is not clear.

1861

Jessica Shaun, aged 15

Marian Shaun, aged 6

Julia Shaun, aged 4

All three sisters are Dublin-born and described as 'scholars'. Their father is a wine agent.

App.4: Irish-born middle-class children in Derby at each census year (Census for Derby, 1841, 1851 and 1861)

Agricultural labourer	2
Army	1
Blacksmith	1
Bookseller	3
Bracemaker	1
Bricklayer's labourer	1
Burnisher	1
Carver and gilder	1
Catholic priest	1
Chemist	1
Clergyman	1
Coachmaker	6
Colour	1
Cow dealer	4
Dealer	2
Draper	5
Engineer	2
Fireman to engine	1
Founder	1
Framework knitter	4
Gardener	1
Gas stoker	2
Gilder	1
Grocer	1
Groom	1
Hawker of cloth	1
Hawker	17
Hosier	3
Jeweller	1
Joiner	2
Labourer on railway	1
Labourer	94
Licensed hawker	2
Lodging house keeper	1
Mechanic	1
Needlemaker	1
Officer in county prison	1
Painter	3
Papermaker	1
Pedlar	5
Plumber	1
Porter/Railway porter	3
Printer	1
Prisoner hair cutter	1

App. 5: Irish men in employment in Derby in 1841 (Census for Derby, 1841)

Prisoner tailor	1
Prisoner labourer	4
Prisoner slater	1
Prisoner wheelwright	1
Railway	1
Sawyer	1
Shoemaker	8
Shopkeeper	1
Silk twister	1
Silk weaver	13
Silk hand	1
Silk ribbon weaver	10
Slater	1
Smith	3
Solicitor	1
Stocking maker	1
Surveyor	1
Tailor	7
Tape weaver	1
Tinman	1
Traveller	3
Upholsterer	1
Whipmaker	1

App.5: (cont'd) Irish men in employment in Derby in 1841.

Agricultural labourer	8
Bagpiper	1
Basket boy	2
Board of Ordnance Survey	1
Bookbinder	1
Bootmaker	1
Bracemaker	1
Bricklayer	1
Bricklayer's labourer	37
Butler	1
Cabinet maker	1
Carver and gilder	1
Chair bottomer	1
Chelsea pensioner	1
Chemist	1
Clothes peg maker	1
Coachmaker	1
Colour works	1
Commercial traveller	2
Cordwainer	3
Dealer	4
Domestic servant	1
Draper	1
Engine fitter journeyman	1
Factory worker	1
Founder	1
Framework knitter	2
Furniture broker	1
Gardener	4
Gas stoker	2
Gimpmaker	5
Hawker of cloth	2
Hawker of brushes	2
Hawker in tapes and cotton	12
Hawker	13
Incumbent	1
Incumbent of Trinity Church	1
Jeweller	1
Jewellery hawker	1
Labourer in chemical works	1
Labourer	127
Labourer in plaster works	9

App. 6: Irish men in employment in Derby in 1851 (Census for Derby, 1851)

Labourer at stoneyard	1
Lodging house keeper	4
Manager of brewery	1
Manager of silk mill	1
Medical assistant to G.P.	1
Orange dealer	3
Painter	3
Papermaker	1
Pedlar	2
Plumber	1
Portrait and landscape artist	1
Printer	1
Private, Royal Sappers & Marines	1
Publican	1
Rag and bone gatherer	1
Ribbon weaver	7
Royal Sapper and miner	1
Sawyer	2
Sergeant 30th Regiment	1
Shoebinder	2
Shoemaker	10
Shopkeeper	3
Silk winder	1
Silk spinner	1
Silk manufacturer	1
Silk throwster	1
Silk hand	4
Silk weaver	11
Tailor	11
Tea dealer	1
Tinman	2
Traveller	4
Wheelwright	1
Whipmaker	2

App.6 (cont'd) Irish men in employment in Derby in 1851

Agricultural labourer	36
Auctioneer's clerk and druggist	1
Baker	3
Basket maker	1
Beam hammer smith	1
Blacksmith	1
Bookbinder	1
Bottle dealer	1
Bricklayer	1
Bricklayer's labourer	50
Brushmaker	2
Canal carriers agent	1
Cattle dealer	1
Chaplain of county gaol	1
Chelsea pensioner	2
Chimney sweep	1
Coachmaker	2
Coal heaver	2
Coal miner	1
Colour	1
Comedian	1
Cordwainer	1
Culverter	2
Dealer in clothes	1
Domestic servant	1
Draper	1
Errand boy	3
Excavator	1
Fettler, iron foundry	2
Fiddler	1
Foreman stoker at gas works	1
Foundry labourer	2
Gardener	1
Gas stoker	3
Gimper	1
Glazier	1
Grocer	2
Groom	2
Ground labourer	1
Hatter	1
Hawker	20

App. 7: Irish men in employment in Derby in 1861 (Census for Derby, 1861)

Hawker of drapery goods	1
Incumbent of Christ Church	1
Incumbent of Trinity Church	1
Iron merchant	1
Iron foundry labourer	1
Joiner	2
Joiner's labourer	1
Labourer in timber yard	1
Labourer	175
Labourer on railway	6
Labourer at colour works	2
Lace maker	2
Lace tagger	1
Lagger	1
Linseed brusher	1
Mason's labourer	1
Master Grammar School	1
Merchant	1
Navy	1
Navy (invalided)	1
Ostler	1
Packer of earthenware	1
Paper mill worker	2
Pen maker	1
Pig jobber	1
Plasterer	1
Plasterer's labourer	2
Porter at marbleworks	1
Printer's compositor	1
Rag and bone gatherer	9
Railway clerk	1
Railway boiler maker	3
Rector of St. Luke's	1
Repairer of boots	1
Shoemaker	6
Shopkeeper	2
Silk hand	3
Silk spinner	3
Silk weaver	8
Silk ribbon weaver	6
Silk throwster	2
Skin merchant	1
Slater	1
Slater's labourer	1

App.7: (cont'd) Irish men in employment in Derby in 1861

Soldier 45th	1
Stationer	1
Stereotyper	1
Striker	2
Tailor	13
Tailor's foreman	1
Tin plate worker	1
Tobacconist	1
Training dealer	1
Traveller	9
Umbrella maker	1
Unemployed agricultural labourer	1
Wagoner	1
Wesleyan minister	1
Wine agent	1

App. 7: (cont'd) Irish men in employment in Derby in 1861

Cap maker	1
Charwoman	1
Cook	1
Dealer in hardware	1
Dressmaker	3
Female turnkey	1
Fitter	1
Framer	1
Hawker	6
Lace hand	1
Lodging house keeper	4
Mangler	1
Matron	1
Nurse	1
Pedlar	6
Prisoner servant	1
Shopkeeper	1
Silk trimmer	1
Silk hand	8
Silk doubler	2
Silk winder	3
Silk throwster	8
Silk weaver	1
Staymaker	1
Traveller	1

App.8: Irish women in employment in Derby in 1841 (Census for Derby, 1841)

Cap maker	1
Chambermaid	1
Charwoman	6
Cook	5
Cotton spinster	1
Cotton winder	1
Dressmaker	5
Embroiderer	1
Flax spinner	1
Frammer	7
Governess	1
Hawker (tapes and cotton)	1
Hawker	4
Laundress	6
Lodging house keeper	4
Milliner	3
Mother Superior	1
Nurse	1
Pedlar	5
Rag cutter	1
Religious	7
Seamstress	3
Servant	16
Servant out of situation (in care of the religious)	9
Shop assistant	1
Shopkeeper	1
Silk mill hand	44
Silk winder	12
Silk weaver	1
Silk throwster	7
Silk spinner	6
Silk doubler	1
Silk trimmer	1
Traveller	1
Waitress	1
Washerwoman	8

App.9: Irish women in employment in Derby in 1851 (Census for Derby, 1851)

Barmaid	1
Boot binder	1
Cap maker	1
Chambermaid	1
Charwoman	8
Cook	1
Cotton winder	2
Cotton factory worker	1
Dressmaker	7
Engine hand	1
Hawker	6
Housemaid	1
Importer of German yarn	1
Laundress	10
Lodging house keeper	9
Milk seller	1
Mother Superior	1
Nurse	1
Old clothes gatherer	1
Paper mill hand	4
Parlour maid	1
Pedlar	1
Rag cutter	2
Religious	9
Saleswoman	1
Servant	19
Shopkeeper	1
Silk twister	2
Silk mill hand	110
Silk doubler	1
Silk winder	26
Silk spinner	3
Silk throwster	8
Tailoress	2
Wardrobe purchaser	1
Washerwoman	6

App.10: Irish women in employment in Derby in 1861(Census for Derby, 1861).

Irish Children in employment in Derby in 1841

Girls

Lace winder	1
Prisoner servant	2
Servant	1
Silk mill	3
Silk throwster	3
Silk winder	4

Boys

Apprentice to machiner	1
Coachmaker's apprentice	1
Cordwainer	1
Hand silk weaver	1
Hawker	2
Labourer	10
Licensed hawker	1
Quill filler	1
Silk factory	1
Silk ribbon weaver	2
Silk throwster	2
Silk winder	2
Works mill	1

*App.11: Irish girls and boys in employment in Derby in 1841
(Census for Derby, 1841).*

Irish girls in employment in Derby in 1851

Basket girl	1
Bookfolder	1
Factory girl	3
Gimp twister	1
Household work	1
Servant	6
Servant out of situation (in care of the religious)	2
Silk paller	2
Silk drawer	2
Silk warping	1
Silk throwster	1
Silk winder	5
Silk hand	44
Silk mill	3
Silk spinner	1
Silk mill hand (engines)	1
Traveller	2

App.12: Irish girls in employment in Derby in 1851 (Data: Census for Derby, 1851)

Irish girls in employment in Derby in 1861

Domestic servant	2
Engine hand	1
Farm servant	1
Hard silk winder	3
Silk factory worker	4
Silk weaver	1
Silk throwster	1
Silk winder	5
Silk mill hand	31
Tailoress	1
(Unemployed silk factory hand)	3

App.13: Irish girls in employment in Derby in 1861 (Data: Census for Derby, 1861)

Irish boys in employment in Derby in 1851

Bobbin boy	2
Bricklayer's labourer	1
Carpenter's apprentice	1
Cloth hawker	1
Cotton winder	3
Cotton worker	1
Dyer	1
Errand boy	2
Frame maker	1
Gimp maker	4
Gimp hand	14
Household work	1
Iron founder and smith	1
Labourer	11
Labourer at colour works	1
Labourer at plaster mill	1
Lace tagger	1
Silk throwster	3
Silk cadger	3
Silk picker	1
Silk spinner	2
Silk mill hand	17
Silk winder	2
Traveller	4
Whipmaker	1

App.14: Irish boys in employment in Derby in 1851 (Data: Census for Derby, 1851)

Irish boys in employment in Derby in 1861

Apprentice to coach smith	1
Bow-driver	1
Bricklayer	1
Errand boy	3
Foundry boy	1
Glazier	1
Hawker	1
Iron fetler	1
Labourer	12
Lagger	1
Pupil teacher	1
Rag and bone gatherer	1
Railway boiler maker	1
Silk mill hand	5
Silk throwster	5
Silk factory worker	2
Slater's labourer	2
Tag hand (boot lace)	1
Traveller and hawker	1
Traveller	1
(Unemployed silk factory worker)	1
(Unemployed silk spinner)	1

App.15: Irish boys in employment in Derby in 1861 (Data: Census for Derby, 1861)

Name	Age	Wage	Occupation	Textile	Manuf.	Date
1.						
Ann Blood	16	6s 0d	---	---		Oct. 1839
Sarah Blood	16	6s 0d	---	---		Oct. 1839
Joseph Blood	13	3s 6d	---	---		Oct. 1839
2.						
John Bradford	13	3s 0d	---	---		Oct.1843
3.						
Mary Bryan	17	6s 9d	---	---		Dec.1845
4.						
Mary Clarke	16	3s 0d	---	---		July 1846
Harriett Clarke	13	3s 0d	---	---		July 1846
John Clarke	11	2s 0d	---	---		July 1846
Bridget Clarke	16	---	silk mill	---		1851 Census
5.						
Thomas Crane	11	2s 6d	---	---		April 1845
“ “	?	3s 0d	---	---		March 1847
6.						
John Davison	15	4s 0d	---	---		Feb.1843
Ellen Davison	14	3s 0d	---	---		Feb.1843
Robert Davison	12	2s 0d	---	---		Feb.1843
7.						
Margaret Doyle	15	5s 0d	---	---		Dec.1846
8.						
Mary Doyle	12	1s 6d	---	---		June 1847
9.						
William Dunn	9	3s 0d	---	---		Sept.1838
“ “	12	3s 0d	---	---		Sept.1840
Archibald Dunn	11	2s od	---	---		Sept.1840

App.16: Irish children whose wages and/or employer are recorded in the Poor Law Records. Where applicable, additional information about occupation has been added from Census Returns for 1851.

10.						
Ellen Fitzgerald	10	1s 3d	---	---	---	Dec1847
Edward Fitzgerald	8	1s 0d	---	---	---	Dec.1847
11.						
Dinah Flanagan	15	---	---	---	---	March 1847
" "	15	3s 6d	---	Johnson	---	July 1847
Mary Flanagan	10	2s 0d	---	---	---	March 1847
Jane Flanagan	13	1s 6d	---	---	---	March 1847
12.						
Margaret Gibson	10	2s 3d	---	---	---	April 1845
13.						
Helen Grady	9	1s 3d	---	---	---	June 1845
Ellen Grady	12	2s 9d	---	---	---	Sept.1847
James Grady	10	1s 9d	---	---	---	Sept.1847
14.						
Sarah Graham	15	3s 0d	---	---	---	March 1845
Eliza Graham	16	4s 0d	---	---	---	March 1846
15.						
Sarah Ann Greenwood	9	1s 0d	---	---	---	Aug.1845
Margaret Greenwood	9	1s 0d	---	---	---	Aug. 1845
16.						
Catherine Griffiths	14	1s 6d	---	---	---	June 1847
" "	14	1s 6d	---	---	---	Aug.1847
" "	16	---	silk mill hand	---	---	1851 Census
Mary Griffiths	15	1s 0d	---	---	---	Aug. 1847
Eliza Griffiths	14	---	silk mill hand	---	---	1851 Census
17.						
Margaret Harrison	13	5s 0d	---	---	---	April 1846
18.						
Martin Higgins	13	3s 0d	---	---	---	Feb.1846
19.						
Eliza Jones	12	2s 3d	---	---	---	July 1845
" "	15	5s 0d	---	---	---	Aug.1846
Elizabeth Jones	9	1s 0d	---	---	---	July 1845
" "	12	3s 0d	---	---	---	Aug.1846
20.						
Sarah Jones	16	----	---	---	---	Aug.1846

App.16 (cont'd)

21.						
Barney Lynch	14	1s 0d	---	---	---	Feb.1847
" "	14	1s 8d	---	---	---	May 1847
Bridget Lynch	12	1s 0d	---	---	---	Feb.1847
" "	12	1s 6d	---	Taylor	---	May 1847
Ann Lynch	13	1s 6d	---	Taylor	---	May 1847
22.						
Alice McCormick	16	3s 0d	---	---	---	April 1846
Catherine McCormick	12	2s 9d	---	---	---	April 1846
23.						
John McDonald	16	4s 0d	---	---	---	Aug.1847
" "	16	3s 6d	---	---	---	Sept.1847
Thomas McDonald	12	3s 0d	---	---	---	Aug.1847
" "	12	3s 0d	---	---	---	Sept.1847
24.						
Margaret McGee	12	1s 6d	---	---	---	Dec.1845
" "	12	2s 9d	---	Madeley	---	May 1846
Patrick McGee	10	2s 9d	---	Madeley	---	May 1846
25.						
William McLoughlin	14	4s 0d	---	---	---	June 1845
" "	14	5s 0d	---	---	---	July 1845
James McLoughlin	11	1s 0d	---	---	---	June 1845
" "	11	2s 9d	---	---	---	July 1845
Mary McLoughlin	12	1s 6d	---	---	---	Oct.1843
" "	16	5s 0d	---	---	---	April,1847
Catherine McLoughlin	14	1s 0d	---	---	---	April 1847
" "	16	----	Factory girl	---	---	1851Census
Eliza McLoughlin	10	1s 0d	---	---	---	Dec.1847
" "	14	----	Factory girl	---	---	1851 Census
26.						
John McNally	12	2s 6d	---	---	---	Jan.1843
" "	15	----	---	---	---	Sept.1846
Fanny McNally	10	2s 0d	---	Unsworth	---	Jan.1843
" "	13	2s 0d	---	---	---	Jan.1846
Sarah McNally	9	1s 6d	---	Taylor	---	Jan.1843
" "	12	3s 0d	---	---	---	Jan.1846
Mary Ann McNally	12	1s 6d	---	Davenport	---	Jan.1846
27.						
John Mitchell	13	4s 0d	---	---	---	Sept.1845
Thomas Mitchell	10	3s 0d	---	---	---	Sept.1845
28.						
Ann Moran	13	2s 0d	---	---	---	Dec.1843

App.16 (cont'd)

29.						
Peter Morris	12	2s 0d	---	---		July 1847
" "	12	3s 6d	---	---		Dec.1847
30.						
Mary Mullarky	12	1s 0d	---	---		Nov.1847
" "	15	---	silk hand	---		1851 Census
31.						
Ann O'Gorman	15	5s 0d	---	---		Sept.1847
Catherine O'Gorman	14	4s 6d	---	---		Sept.1847
32.						
Thomas Purfield	12	2s 0d	---	---		January,1841
33.						
James Reynolds	11	1s 8d	---	---		Oct.1845
" "	12	4s 0d	---	---		June 1847
" "	13	4s 0d	---	---		Aug.1847
Catherine Reynolds	9	2s 0d	---	---		Oct.1845
" "	10	2s 6d	---	---		Feb.1847
" "	10	3s 0d	---	---		June 1847
" "	11	2s 6d	---	---		Aug.1847
" "	11	2s 6d	---	---		Oct.1847
34.						
George Stewart	13	4s 2d	---	---		May 1847
" "	14	4s 0d	---	---		June 1847
35.						
Margaret Tosey	12	2s 6d	---	---		July,1843
" "	14	4s 0d	---	---	Marley Wright	April,1845
" "	16	5s 6d	---	---	---	Oct.1847
Wallace Tosey	12	2s 6d	---	---	Marley Wright	April,1845
" "	14	6s 0d	---	---	---	Oct.1847
36.						
Ann Williamson	15	4s 0d	---	---	Walton	March 1846

App.16 (cont'd).

Books of Lessons published by Direction of the Commissioners of National Education in Ireland

(The books with detailed contents lists are those I have read. They are housed in the Winifred Higson Collection, Institute of Education Library, University of Leicester).

The remainder of this list is taken from Akerson (1967).

First Book of Lessons James Carlile (In print between 1831 and 1865)

First Book of Lessons 2 parts William McCready (In print between 1865 - 1867)

First Book of Lessons 1 Volume William McCready (In print from 1867 onwards)

Second Book of Lessons James Carlile (In print between 1831 and 1865)

Section 1 (words of 1 syllable)

Boys and Girls

Who made all things?

Who made you?

Poem on Animals

The Horse

The Cow

The Boy and the Nuts

Puss and the Fox

The Boys and the Frogs

The Oak and the Reed

The Pins

Anne and Bess

Section II (Words of two Syllables)

How the world was made

Adam and Eve

Cain and Abel

The Flood

The Tower of Babel

The Sheep

The Hen

The Cat

The Ant

The Fox and the Stork

App. 17: Books of Lessons published by Direction of the Commissioners of National Education in Ireland.

The Robin
Bread
The Sloth and the Squirrel
The Field Daisy
Butter and Cheese
Birds
A Poem
Warm clothing
The Tree
The Idle Boy
The Story of Harry and Willy
On Plants, Flowers and Seeds

Section III (words of 3 syllables)

The Call of Abram
The Parting of Abram and Lot
Lot taken Prisoner and deserted by Abram
The Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah
Love between Brothers and Sisters
The Lark and her Young
The Little Lark
The Old Man and his Ass
The Young Mouse
The Lie
The Little Ant
The Seasons
Signs of Rain
Good Nature
Fable of the Lamb
The Boy and the Dog
The Sun
The Two Gardens - part I
The Two Gardens - part II
Of the Earth
The Four Points of the Sky
Countries
The Map
The Voice of Spring
The Cuckoo

Section IV (words of 4 syllables)

The Lion and the Mouse
The Ant or Emmet
The Works of God
The Boy and his Bantam - part I
The Boy and his Bantam - part II

App.17 (cont'd)

Martha Dunne - part I
Martha Dunne - part II
Of Nouns
My Mother
God's Family
Our Father who art in Heaven

Second Book of Lessons William McCready (In print between 1865 and 1867)

Sequel No. II to the Second Book of Lessons Richard Whately (In print between 1844 and 1865)

Contents

Monday morning, or going to school
National Anthem
The history of Columbus
The history of William Hutton
Our Ancestors
The Italian Carpenter and his Neighbour
The Italian Boy
Land
Story of a Desert
What things the Earth produces for Man
Water
Springs of Water

Ornithology

The eagle - hawks - owls - raven - robin - cuckoo - woodpecker - rasoers - poultry -
grallatores or waders - the water hen - natatores or web-footed swimming birds -
grouse - coot.

Ape and Monkey - bear - cat - lion - rodents or gnawing animals - Edentate animals -
the dormouse - Ruminant animals - the camel - pachydermata - the elephant.

Privations and Natural Defects

Of the blind - the deaf and dumb - History of Laura Bridgman
Scriptural and Miscellaneous Lessons

Third Book of Lessons William McDermott (In print between 1835 and 1846)

Third Book of Lessons revised by Richard Whately (In print between 1846 and 1866)

Third Book of Lessons William McCready (In print between 1866 and 1867)

App. 17 (cont'd)

Fourth Book of Lessons James Carlile (In print between 1835 and 1867)

Fourth Book of Lessons William McCready (In print from 1867 onwards)

Supplement to the Fourth Book of Lessons Richard Whately (In print from 1846 - ?)

Summary

Hymn - Moral Tracts - Machinery - Poems - Reflection on cultural attitudes - Chinese footbinding - Love of Animals for the Young - extracts from Gilbert White's Natural History of Selbourne

Short play

Botany

Ants and Bees

Superstitions

Biolographies

Mythological reflections on worship of different people - the Egyptians

Fifth Book of Lessons James Carlile and Alexander Arthur (In print between 1846 and ?)

Preface

This Fifth Book of Lessons has been compiled as a portion of the plan of progressive Lessons, partially developed in the preceding Books. Its object is to carry forward the instruction of the more advanced Pupils, into subjects which had been but briefly noticed, or altogether omitted in the former Numbers of the Series.

Contents

Physical Geography and Geology

Rotundity of the Earth - General View of the Globe - Mountains - The Ocean - Springs-Rivers-Lakes - Changes in the Surface of the Earth

History (2 Sections)

Ancient History

Modern History

Physiology, Vegetable and Animal

Vegetable physiology - Introduction to Roots, Stems, Functions of Leaves etc., - Animal physiology - The Integuments - The Bones - Marks of design in the Human Body - The Teeth - The Muscles - The Digestion - The Heart - Respiration

Natural Philosophy

Laws of Motion and the Centre of Gravity - The Mechanical Powers

Astronomy

The Earth's Annual Motion - Planets - Fixed Stars - The Terrestrial Globe - The Seasons - The Moon and Exlipses - The Tides

App.17 (cont'd)

Hydrostatics - Mechanical Properties of Fluids - Specific Gravity - Springs - Fountains etc.

Pneumatics - Mechanical Properties of Air

Optics - Refraction and Colours - Structure of the Eye

Electricity

Chemistry

Poetical Pieces

(26 pieces including - HM) The Last Minstrel - Scott, Benefits of Affliction - Cowper, Procrastination - Young; On Milton's Blindness - Milton; Detached pieces - Shakespeare; The Blind Mother - Anon.

Reading Book for Girls' Schools James Carlile (In print from 1838 onwards)
Biographical Sketches of Eminent British Poets from Chaucer to Burns Maurice Cross (In print from 1849 onwards)

Intended for Teachers and the higher classes in schools

Selections from the British Poets (2 volumes) Maurice Cross (In use from 1849 onwards)

Three Sections: Sacred; Didactic and Moral; Descriptive - from Chaucer, Raleigh, Spencer, Drayton, Herrick, Marvel, Pope, Cowper, Crabbe, Chatterton, Wordsworth, Scott, Coleridge, Southey, Moore, Shakespeare. Manual of Needlework for the Use of National Schools

Introduction to the Art of Reading Spaulding (In print from 1837 onwards)

English Grammar Alexander McArthur (In print from 1836 onwards)

Key to Exercise in English Grammar Alexander McArthur (In print 1838 onwards)

First Book of Arithmetic Alexander McArthur (In print from 1836 onwards)

Arithmetic in Theory and Practice John Gregory (In print 1835 onwards)

Key to above James McGauley (In print 1835 onwards)

Book Keeping James Carlile (In print 1839 onwards)

Epitome of Geography James Carlile (In print 1844 onwards)

Elements of Geometry Clairant (In print 1836 onwards)

Treatise on Mensuration John Gregory (In print 1836 onwards)

App.17 (cont'd)

Lectures on Natural Philosophy James McGauley (In print 1842-1860)

Scripture Lessons

Old Testament (2 books)

New Testament (2 books) James Carlile (In print 1837 onwards)

Sacred Poetry James Carlile (In print 1837 onwards)

Agricultural Class-book William Hickey (in print 1848 to 1867)

Agricultural Class-book Thomas Baldwin (In print 1867 onwards)

Farm Account Book Thomas Baldwin (in print 1850 onwards)

Needlework Book Mrs Campbell (In print 1838 onwards)

Preface

A practical knowledge of Plain Needlework is, probably, one of the most important acquirements for females, especially for the class attending National Schools of Ireland. In the present work are contained full directions for learning to sew, to knit, and to cut out, and for the application of this knowledge in making up and mending those articles of wearing apparel generally made by women.

The directions for Dress-making now introduced for the first time in this country into a school manual, though apparently complicated, can, with due attention, be readily understood; and it is hoped that every girl of ordinary ability in the advanced classes of National Schools will be able to cut out and make up, neatly and tastefully, a plain dress.

Needlework

Hemming - Sewing - Stitching - Button-holes - Gathering in - Tucking - Mending stockings - Knitting garters, baby's boots, stockings

Dressmaking/Alterations

Young girl's dress - Boy's jacket - Knickerbocker suit- Vest/Waistcoat

Day shirt - Flannel shirt - Blouse - Night shirt - Drawers - Petticoat - Chemise - Bibs - Stays