



NUI MAYNOOTH

Ollscoil na hÉireann Má Nuad

THE PROTESTANT ORPHAN SOCIETY, DUBLIN, 1828-1928

by

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ABBREVIATIONS:

ARDP	Association for Relief of Destitute Protestants
CPOU	Charitable Protestant Orphan Union
POS	Protestant Orphan Society
PORS	Protestant Orphan Refuge Society (later title of Charitable Protestant Orphan Union)

ABBREVIATIONS

A.R.D.P.	Association for Relief of Destitute Protestants
A.P.C.K.	Association for Promoting Christian Knowledge
I.C.M.	Irish Church Missions
I.W.S.L.G.A.	Irish Women's Suffrage and Local Government Association
C.P.O.U.	Charitable Protestant Orphan Union located in Dublin
P.O.S.	Protestant Orphan Society
P.R.A.	Philanthropic Reform Association
P.O.R.S.	Protestant Orphan Refuge Society (originally titled the Charitable Protestant Orphan Union)
T.C.D.	Trinity College Dublin

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Introduction

This is primarily a study of the earliest Protestant Orphan Society, founded in Dublin in 1828. The geographical scope of the project is not solely confined to Dublin as reference is also made to Protestant orphan societies located in Monaghan, Cork, Meath, Westmeath, Carlow, Mayo, Limerick and Tipperary. These later societies used the structures of the P.O.S. in Dublin as a blueprint. However, they worked largely independently of the Dublin society and were not subject to direction from the parent body. County Protestant orphan societies had separate committees, accounts and in some cases distinct policies and rules.

This thesis records mainly the social history of an under-documented yet eminently significant organisation affiliated with the Church of Ireland. There are two primary aims. The first is to consider the framework of the P.O.S., the basis for its foundation and the establishment of county societies throughout Ireland, funding and the separate management roles assumed by men and women. The second aim is to examine the impact that Protestant orphan societies, in particular, the P.O.S. in Dublin, had on bereaved families, to draw attention to children's life experiences and their lifecycle as P.O.S. orphans thus bringing their identity to the fore.

Chapter 1 sets the Irish political, religious, and socio-economic backdrop for the period under analysis from 1828 to 1928. The second reformation, Catholic emancipation, tithes, national education, the disestablishment of the Church of Ireland, the land war and the rise of nationalism all had profound effects on relations between Catholics and

Protestants. Ireland experienced extremes of poverty, disease, and famine, relieved greatly by the efforts of philanthropic organisations. Advances in legislative measures to protect children also took place internationally in the nineteenth and early twentieth century.

Chapter 2 analyses the origins of the P.O.S. in Dublin, the motivations of the artisan founders and the level of support that the society received from Church of Ireland clergymen and the gentry. The P.O.S. concept was replicated in counties throughout Ireland. The driving force behind this development and its time-frame are discussed. In the 1850s, the P.O.S. faced allegations of proselytizing. Counter allegations of Roman Catholic proselytising also surfaced. These claims are set out and the opposing views of each church examined.

Chapter 3 documents the sources of income that the P.O.S. in Dublin relied upon to meet their expenditure demands. Fluctuations in the contributions made to the P.O.S. had corresponding effects on the availability of provisions for the children in their care. Comparative analysis of Protestant orphan societies located in Dublin, Cork, and Monaghan stresses the financial difficulties voluntary funded organisations faced.

Chapter 4 sheds light on the paid and voluntary work carried out by women for the P.O.S. An outline of women's engagement in reformatory philanthropy, in Church of Ireland organizations, and the suffrage movement presents a background to women's role in the P.O.S. Despite men's overall authority with regard to the management of the society,

women were heavily involved behind the scenes. For the most part, in the nineteenth century, women worked as fundraisers, collectors, nurses, matrons and as members of sub-committees. Gradually their position altered particularly from the early twentieth century onwards. Women became members of visiting committees and office clerks, positions once dominated by men.

Chapter 5 discusses the transferral of guardianship during the process of relinquishment and the repercussions for the surviving parent/extended kin/older siblings and child. Families usually broke down following the death of a spouse, both parents or a series of financial set backs. Points of significance include women's attempts to prevent their families from becoming destitute, their efforts to retain ties with their children following their admission to the P.O.S. and their determination to reunite their families once in a better position to do so.

Chapter 6 examines the foster care system developed by the P.O.S. in Dublin and the experiences of foster children placed in this system. An account is given of life as a foster child in terms of education, status in the foster family and responses to mistreatment. The committee expected nurses to follow their strict rules on the appropriate care of children. Not all nurses complied. The P.O.S. adopted measures such as regular unannounced inspections to closely monitor foster care placements. Mortality rates and inspection reports provide broad conclusions on the standards achieved by the P.O.S. system in practice. A home care scheme and small children's homes became part of the existing system from the late nineteenth century.

Chapter 7 considers the apprenticeship scheme operated by the P.O.S. in Dublin. Emphasis is placed on the reasons for P.O.S. support of apprenticeships and the policies they designed to protect apprentices from exploitation and mistreatment in the work place. Apprenticeship is also discussed from the apprentices' point of view. Apprentices bound to their trade had to adhere to strict codes of conduct. Attention is drawn to indenture terms, the range of punishment meted out by employers and apprentices' responses to such treatment.

Chapter 8 questions the challenges that young men and women now former P.O.S. orphans confronted post-apprenticeship. Unless qualified in their trade, they had limited options. Measures introduced to assist former wards in their progression to independent living included, good conduct premiums, marriage portions and loans. Case studies portray the individual experiences of a select number of former P.O.S. orphans who married, emigrated or remained in Ireland. The P.O.S. endeavoured to act as a parental figure to guide and protect the children in their charge. The discussion lastly focuses on any signs that implicit parental links may have developed over time between the orphans and the P.O.S. committee and staff.

Historiography

Phillipe Aries¹ uses paintings to suggest the meaning attached to childhood. He contends that childhood did not exist in medieval times but developed from the fifteenth century onwards. According to Aries, the effects of industrialization and capitalism brought to bear a more definitive phase in the life cycle. The concept of childhood was essentially

¹ Phillippe Aries, *Centuries of childhood: a social history of family life* (New York, 1965).

socially constructed. The family changed in structure, the mother stayed at home to tend to the children and the father went out to work. The child received greater attention and therefore this phase became more distinguishable from later stages of life.

Moreover, he argues that children had to receive education because of the new skills required to meet the demands of industrialization quite apart from agriculture, which had been the main source of work in pre-industrial Britain and Europe. Children required basic level education to become productive members of the work force. In order to receive education they therefore had to remain dependents for a longer period. The state took a greater interest in children as education was also viewed as a means to retain control over the working class. Aries contends that upper class perceptions changed considerably during this period with a new regard for children as being different from adults while the working class continued to view children as small adults.

Despite the acclaim Aries's work received during the 1960s, his research methodology and the sources on which his theories are based have been criticized. Linda Pollock² disputes Aries on many points particularly the period of change in adult perceptions of children. Through her research of autobiographies that date from the fifteenth century, Pollock asserts that many parents were affectionate to their children and grieved for them in death. The diversification of the history of childhood has been under way since Aries's initial work. Dismantling the broad concepts of childhood has helped to shift attention from generalized conclusions and has called into the question the range of distinct childhood experiences that existed in the past.

² Linda Pollock, *Forgotten children: parent-child relations from 1500 to 1900* (London, 1983).

The existing historiography on Irish childhood is sparse. Historians have drawn attention to childhood in Ireland, however for the most part the culture of care in which the child was placed has taken precedence over the child's identity within that system. Joseph Robins³ records the numerous institutions that accommodated orphaned and destitute children in Ireland such as orphanages, orphan societies, the foundling hospitals, the charter schools and the workhouse. Rev. Prof. John Barkley⁴ focuses primarily on the Presbyterian Orphan Society as an organisation. Jacinta Prunty⁵ offers insights into the foundation and administration of St. Brigid's boarding-out system. Yet children's experiences of life in these various systems remain under documented.

Jane Barnes⁶ pioneering work examines the origins and development of the industrial school system. The study offers comprehensive examination of the schools with less attention paid to the children. However, Barnes does document the lives of those excluded from the industrial schools such as children whose mothers worked as prostitutes. Kenneth Milne⁷ focuses on the Irish charter schools from 1730 to 1830. The study mainly considers the schools and their management. However, references are also made to the children, particularly in terms of the severe punishment and neglect that abounded.

³ Joseph Robins, *The lost children: a study of charity children in Ireland, 1700-1900* (Dublin, 1980).

⁴ Rev. John M. Barkley, *The Presbyterian Orphan Society, 1866-1966* (Belfast, 1966).

⁵ Jacinta Prunty, *Margaret Aylward, 1810-89: lady of charity, sister of faith* (Dublin, 1999).

⁶ Jane Barnes, *Irish industrial schools, 1868-1968: origins and development* (Dublin, 1989).

⁷ Kenneth Milne, *The Irish charter schools, 1730-1830* (Dublin, 1997).

In a new departure in the historiography of the welfare child, authors have attempted to place greater emphasis on children's experiences, which has brought children's identity to the fore. Mary Rafferty⁸ reveals the horrific treatment of children in Irish industrial schools in the nineteenth and twentieth century many of whom endured severe punishments, sexual abuse and neglect, which brought to light the inadequacy of the schools' inspection policies. These children were led to believe that industrial schools were orphanages when in fact they were built for delinquent children. The author's key point centres on the lack of accountability that adult guardians' had for the welfare of the children in their care.

Margaret Humphries⁹ focuses on the British government and charitable organisations such as Dr. Barnardo's role in the transferral of children to Australia and Canada in the twentieth century not because they were orphans but because their families were poor. Humphries stresses major points such as the importance of personal identity for displaced children and the protracted damage of parent-child separation. Joy Parr sheds light on the assisted child emigration schemes to Canada arranged by Maria Rye, Annie McPherson, Louisa Birt and most prominently by Dr. Barnardo.¹⁰ Having completed her book, Parr was radicalized by her source material on these children. In subsequent publications, she asks the difficult question whether these well-meaning religious people had in fact abducted the children from their families. Little or no supervision was put in place for the children and consequently they were left unprotected and thus vulnerable to abuse. The separation of children from their families had negative consequences for the child.

⁸ Mary Rafferty, *Suffer the little children: the inside story of Ireland's industrial schools* (Dublin, 1999).

⁹ Margaret Humphries, *Empty cradles* (London, 1984).

¹⁰ Joy Parr, *Labouring children: British immigrant apprentices to Canada, 1869-1924* (London, 1980).

They were denied information on their parents and many searched all of their adult lives for links to their past.

Past historical accounts of Irish philanthropy and child welfare have only briefly mentioned the work of Protestant orphan societies. Historians have focused largely on the experiences of children reared under the auspices of Catholic run organisations. In addition, institutions such as orphanages and industrial schools have received far more attention than foster care. Therefore, a more comprehensive presentation of the policies and influential reputation of the P.O.S. in Dublin is vital in order to augment the rather narrow discourse on welfare children that presently exists. This thesis focuses on three fundamental aspects of a welfare child's history. It documents P.O.S. policies and management, questions the life of the foster child, and where possible presents the viewpoint of the child, surviving parents and extended family.

Methodology

The papers of the P.O.S. in Dublin, held in the National Archives is a wonderful collection. It offers a wide range of extremely significant primary source material that includes annual reports, minutes of committee meetings, application files, case files registers, inspectors' reports, registers of clothing, registers of children's literacy levels on admission, photographs, and application files for marriage portions. The source material gathered from this voluminous collection has shown the transparency of the child welfare methods adopted by P.O.S. in Dublin. It has also made it possible to depict the life cycle of a P.O.S. orphan in some cases from infancy to adulthood. Due to the

sensitive and personal nature of the material, it has been decided that only the Christian names or initials of children and their families should feature in the study.

Annual reports provide annual mortality and admission numbers, apprenticeship figures, policy changes, and the number of societies established throughout the country. The reports produced for the benefit of the subscribing public and the minutes written by members of the committees offer diverse insights into the P.O.S. in Dublin and its overall structure. Minutes of the committee meetings contain far more in depth discussion between committee members on matters that ranged from children's well-being and behaviour to financial management.

Three scrapbooks contain extracts from newspaper articles that refer to the P.O.S. in Dublin and in some cases county Protestant orphan societies. Separate material taken from additional newspaper articles have been used throughout the study. The annual reports of specific county Protestant orphan societies have been sourced in contemporary newspapers most notably the *Irish Times* and the *Irish Independent*.

Data collected from 500 application files such as the name and address and occupation of the applicant, the number of siblings in a family and the family member who relinquished the child or children has enabled identification of patterns of residence as well as employment trends of applicants and their spouses. These files also contain correspondence from surviving relatives and parish clergymen who supported their application. In total, 200 unregistered application files have also been consulted. These

files contain applications that the P.O.S. postponed or refused. C.P.O.U. application files to the number of 450 have been also been examined. Comparative analysis of the applications received by the P.O.S. and the C.P.O.U. assisted in the discussion of proselytising allegations.

A register of orphans' movements dated 1877-95 records the transferral of children from their surviving parents to nurses and detail any subsequent moves. Three case file registers detail children's admission date and track their journey as foster children to their later apprenticeship. Specific entries made in these registers document problems with nurses, when the committee transferred the children, occasions when children ran away, dates of emigration and reasons for the move and the dates and circumstances of a return of the child to their surviving parents. From these registers, 200 cases have been examined.

Extracts from inspection reports recorded in the minutes of the sub-committee on nurses, the minutes of the managing committee and summaries of reports found in registers have been excellent sources that broadly demonstrate the general care offered to children. The reports refer to the nurses' homes, the health of the foster children, the level of care provided, and cases of serious and minor neglect. In examining these reports, it has also been possible to identify the attitude of inspectors to child welfare and to the nurses. Inspectors also reported on the schools the children attended and the apprentices while they served their time.

Extremely rich sources such as P.O.S. apprenticeship indentures record the trades open to both male and female apprentices and the name and location of their master/mistress. In some cases, there are particulars given on the payment apprentices received and the number of years that they had to serve. A combination of information from these indentures, valuable inspection reports and the minutes of sub-committees have provided a snapshot of life as a P.O.S. apprentice.

The Kinsey Marriage Fund was created at the behest of Joseph Kinsey. The generous legacy was designed by the benefactor to offer former P.O.S. orphans marriage portions. Applications made to the fund were recorded in a register and in application files. The register contains brief overviews of the applicants' circumstances and the success or failure of the application. The application files consist of completed application forms, correspondence from clergymen and correspondence from applicants. These files hold critical evidence on former P.O.S. orphans lives as adults.

A bound volume of incoming letters received by the P.O.S. during 1898 contains a small number of letters from former orphans and from orphans still under the care of the society. These letters are exceptional as they make available the personal testimony of adolescent orphans. Registers of incoming letters provide snippets of information on the content of letters received by the P.O.S. Annual reports occasionally feature extracts from letters received from former orphans, while these must be viewed as less reliable than the original letter, they are nevertheless significant. Application files relative to the Kinsey Marriage Fund and case file registers contain valuable letters from former P.O.S.

orphans. In addition, a minor number of individual letters from orphans have been located in application files (these files correspond to later case files). The application files also contain letters from women that provide significant personal accounts of life as a destitute widow.

Monaghan, Cork and Carlow Protestant Orphan Societies permitted research of restricted archival collections held in the Representative Church Body Library. Minutes of committee meetings, annual reports, scrapbooks, apprentice indentures, inspectors' reports, and miscellaneous papers have illustrated the contrasts between the regional Protestant orphan societies and the P.O.S. in Dublin. The minutes of the Tipperary P.O.S. held in the National Library have also been utilised. The current secretary for Meath P.O.S. provided a short unpublished history of its work. Strands of information from these collections have shed light on specific issues, in particular the financial management of P.O.S. offices and the subject of home care and orphan's experiences as apprentices.

The annual reports of St. Brigid's orphanage sourced in Trinity College, Dublin contain information relevant to the discussion on foster care and proselytising. It has been useful to refer to a similar system run by a Catholic organisation. The reports were contained in a bound volume and date from the orphanage's establishment in 1856 to the 1870s.

Critical appraisal of these sources has been necessary to interpret and question inconsistencies in the text. The majority of charitable organisations including the P.O.S. used annual reports to optimise their popularity and to attract the public to their cause. Therefore, annual reports, although highly significant present only the favourable side of their work. To offset this, for instance, descriptions of the children's placements that featured in annual reports were compared with inspection reports to ensure a more accurate representation of the standards of care offered. Inspection reports offer vital accounts of foster care placements. The inspectors were clear on the criteria in place to protect the children and they frequently expressed their dissatisfaction with the nurses' standards. However, the reliability of the reports depended on the level of investigation carried out by individual inspectors.

Mortality rates and apprenticeship figures documented in the reports have also been viewed with caution. Nevertheless, the minutes of committee meetings, inspection reports and case file registers also refer to the death of any child in the society's care. Sources such as indentures offer some foundation for the apprenticeship figures recorded in annual reports at least in relation to the P.O.S. in Dublin. By combining research of the minutes of the sub-committee on nurses, the general committee and case file registers and letters from orphans, correspondence located in application files, refused application files, Kinsey application files, it has been possible to find a middle ground on which to base new findings.

The collection also contains an outstanding array of studio photographs. The undated photographs kept in an album provide an invaluable visual aspect to this work. According to an index of professional photographers active in Dublin in the nineteenth century and the advertisement at the bottom of each picture, W.G. Moore, 11 Upper Sackville Street in operation from 1885 to 1900 took a number of the portraits found in the album. He was the successor to Nelson and Marshall who advertised as photographers from 1860 to 1884. Additional portraits were taken by E. J. Lauder, Artists and Photographers, 22 Westmoreland Street, Dublin, in operation from 1880 to 1890.¹¹ This background assists in dating the photographs. A. Clarke and Son, Bangor, Wales were responsible for a number of the photographs taken of the Clio boys (sent to a training ship off the coast of North Wales). The photograph of the ship's captain, Captain Moger was taken by Brown, Parnes and Bell in Liverpool.

The photographs found in the album were taken in a studio with a staged background. Subjects wore their best clothes and were directed to pose in a certain way. Therefore, the portraits can be misleading as they do not represent the orphans in their every day life and for this reason must be treated with caution. However, the photographs provide an exceptional record of various P.O.S. orphans at different ages from infancy to adulthood. These photographs also capture a very clear expression of emotional connection between siblings that transcends any photographer's direction. Photographs of nurses, members of the committee, and other associates of the P.O.S. such as Captain Moger of the Clio training ship, breathe life into the names of those associated with the society.

¹¹Edward Chandler, *Photography in Ireland, the nineteenth century* (Dublin, 2001), p. 97.

Photographs of the children began to feature in annual reports from the early twentieth century. A loose photograph of four P.O.S. orphans has also been sourced. It is not a portrait, was not taken in a studio, and is likely to date from the end of the nineteenth century. The dry plate system was introduced in late 1878 and the first Kodak portable camera in 1888.

Neilson Hancock founded the Statistical and Social Inquiry Society of Ireland in November 1847. Relevant pieces of legislation influenced by the society include the reformatory and industrial school acts, the boarding out of pauper children and later amendments to this act. The journal for the society is an invaluable source of contemporary commentary on nineteenth century social issues.

Photoshop and Adobe illustrator software have been used to produce four maps. Relevant data extracted from numerous registers, application forms and annual reports has formed the basis for much of the statistical analysis. Information gleaned from these sources have been translated into tables, bar, line, radar and pie charts. Irish historical statistics¹² on population have also been an extremely useful point of reference on subjects such as marriage rates, religious denominations, and emigration.

¹²W.E. Vaughan and A.J. Fitzpatrick (eds), *A new history of Ireland: Irish historical statistics: population, 1821-1971* (Dublin, 1978).

New findings

This study offers insights into the outlook of the Church of Ireland from 1828 to 1928. It marks the escalation of tensions between the dominant churches in Ireland and the growing fears of an increasingly displaced church and people. Political and religious tensions compelled the Church of Ireland, which was an entity in its own right, despite its union with the Church of England (from the Act of Union, 1801 until the official disestablishment of the Church of Ireland, 1 January 1871), to devote greater attention to its rising generation because its very structure was under threat.

Discussion of proselytising allegations made against the P.O.S. in the 1850s throws new light on inter-faith conflict in Ireland and presents a fresh interpretation of this issue. The P.O.S. referred to the alleged incidence of Roman Catholic proselytising as one of its chief motivations for the establishment of a Protestant orphan society. The Church of Ireland sought to progress Protestantism through moral agencies, home and foreign mission, yet they also took an active role in the protection of the Protestant faith amongst its members.

Distinguishing between the male public persona of the P.O.S. in Dublin and the actual work carried out by staff, committee members, and volunteers has been crucial. Analysis of women's role in the P.O.S. has highlighted the enormous contributions they made. Yet the same material has also revealed the lack of formal recognition they received for their work. Ultimately, Protestant orphan societies in any county could not have

functioned without women's tireless exertions on behalf of the orphans and in support of their church.

The P.O.S. is also presented as a child welfare system in practice. Boarding-out was an extremely difficult welfare system to operate effectively particularly without government funding, yet the P.O.S. in Dublin considered it the most beneficial for children. P.O.S. inspection and vetting policies, reformed from within as part of a progressive system, reduced the possibility for mistreatment of children. The P.O.S. placed children's equal status in the foster family as well as the importance of adequate food, clothing, education and moderate punishment from foster carers, high on their agenda. The society also promoted familial ties and where possible it enabled siblings to remain together when fostered. The committee reported consistently low mortality rates that attest to the broad standard of care offered to children. The P.O.S. in Dublin pioneered a large scale foster care system that despite its weaknesses provided children with an alternative to life in an institution and paved the way for later county Protestant orphan societies, the Presbyterian Orphan Society (1866) and the Methodist Orphan Society (1870). The introduction of home care by the P.O.S. in Dublin in 1895 was a positive step that enabled mothers where possible to care for their children themselves.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, social reformers such as, Menella Smedley, Isabella Tod and Rosa Barrett amongst others produced papers on the advantages of foster care and the use of cottage homes over that of institutional care as the most effective system of childcare. Reformers contended that prolonged exposure to the

uniform and artificial environment of large orphanages and workhouses caused institutionalisation. Members of the Statistical and Social Society of Ireland such as William Neilson Hancock and John Kells Ingram supported these findings. In separate reports, Ingram in 1875 and Isabella Tod in 1878 cited the Protestant Orphan Society, the Presbyterian Orphan Society and St. Brigid's boarding-out system as positive and feasible alternatives to institutions. Both Protestant and Catholic organisations that adopted this system contributed to later childcare reform policies. In Ireland, legislation that supported the boarding-out of children from the workhouse took shape from the second half of the nineteenth century. Internationally, the acceptance of boarding-out began to take hold by the late nineteenth century.

Generally, until the second half of the nineteenth century when legal provisions were in place to protect them, children were in acute danger of severe adult exploitation, neglect, and mistreatment. In spite of reforms, children then and now represent the most vulnerable group in society. However, destitute and orphaned children in particular had limited chances of survival. Children who passed through the P.O.S. system had to overcome a number of obstacles that began with the loss of one or both parents. Parents and extended kin attempted to make provision for their children in the event of their death by subscribing to the P.O.S. In the majority of cases, because of their reduced circumstances surviving parents were forced to relinquish their children. However, they also persevered in their efforts to reunite their family in better times. The psychological pain of separation for both parent and child was immense. Transferrals were synonymous with the foster care system and some children experienced quite a transitory

life yet there was always the possibility of informal adoption. Evidence suggests that children encountered a range of treatment from their adult guardians. A common response to mistreatment as a foster child or as an apprentice was to run away. The difficult transition from foster child to apprentice and later to independent living posed further challenges for the orphans.

However, the P.O.S. in Dublin invested in the long-term care of its wards from childhood to adulthood. Provisions were made for education, an apprenticeship, the possibility of a marriage portion, loans, practical guidance, and most importantly a place in a family. Constructive policies such as these had favourable and long-lasting effects on former P.O.S. orphans that made it possible for them to integrate successfully into the wider community.

The P.O.S. in Dublin assisted 5,495 children from 1828 to the close of 1928 on either a temporary or a long-term basis. From their inception to the end of the nineteenth century county Protestant orphan societies throughout Ireland assisted in the region of fifteen thousand children. Protestant orphan societies continue to operate in most counties today.

Chapter 1

Ireland 1828-1928

The aim of this chapter is to examine the background against which the Protestant Orphan Society in Dublin operated from 1828 to 1928. First, it is useful to draw attention to the events that prompted changes in the Church of Ireland and to detail the broader Protestant outlook in Ireland as these had knock-on effects for its affiliated charitable societies. The P.O.S. existed in an era marked by Ireland's fracture and eventual split into a dual and polarised country divided by religion, politics, and culture. Periods of significance include the campaign for Catholic emancipation and its aftermath, anti-tithe agitation, the introduction of the national education system, the disestablishment of the Church of Ireland and the home rule campaign.

It is also essential to record the social and economic challenges and advances that occurred during the time-frame in question. Famines, epidemics, bouts of unemployment and insufficient social services all increased demands on organisations such as the P.O.S.. A brief account of the key developments in legislation to protect destitute children in Ireland, Britain, France, Germany, America and Australia provides an international context to child welfare reforms.

The propagation of evangelical religion occurred on an international scale. Its sphere of influence was greatly extended in central Europe and North America in the eighteenth century and continued through extensive missionary field work to make inroads in the

nineteenth century. Evangelicals placed special precedence on the scriptures. ‘Above all else, religious enthusiasm implied a personal and emotional response to the demands of biblical truth’.¹ Charitable works, self-discipline and self sacrifice were intrinsic elements of the evangelical faith.² Evangelicalism entered Ireland’s religious domain through the work of George Whitefield and Charles and John Wesley founders of the Methodist movement. John Wesley visited Ireland a total of twenty-one times from 1747 and 1789. Methodism was well represented in Ulster. It became a separate independent body in 1787 in England under the toleration act.³ (Wesleyan Methodists did not secede from the Church of Ireland until 1817). There began an immense drive to evangelise, bible societies formed in an organised attempt to spread the gospel in Ireland. ‘By 1816 there were twenty-one missionaries working from fourteen stations throughout the country, twelve of whom were able to preach in Irish’.⁴ Itinerant preachers travelled the length and breadth of the country.

In response to the power of the evangelical movement, a section of the Presbyterian Church believed that more rigid religious practice was needed in their church in order to remain vital.⁵ Evangelicalism in the Presbyterian Church was associated most notably with Henry Cooke. Cooke, who ministered in County Down questioned the Synod on theological issues and practice.⁶ With strong support from other evangelicals, he pushed for changes and in 1829 the Synod of Ulster met his demands. This led to a split in the

¹ Irene Whelan, *The bible war in Ireland: the ‘Second Reformation’ and the polarisation of Protestant-Catholic relations, 1800-40* (Dublin, 2005), p. 5.

² Frank Prochaska, *The voluntary impulse: philanthropy in modern Britain* (London, 1988), p. 22.

³ Alan Acheson, *A history of the Church of Ireland, 1691-1996* (Dublin, 1997), p.104.

⁴ Whelan, *The bible war in Ireland*, p. 87.

⁵ David Hempton and Myrtle Hill, *Evangelical Protestantism in Ulster society, 1740-1890* (London, 1992), p. 70.

⁶ See David Hempton and Myrtle Hill.

church. Latitudinarians (the Arian party) seceded and formed their own body, the remonstrant synod in 1830.⁷

The Church of Ireland prior to the ‘age of graceful reform’⁸ 1800-30 was stagnant, churches were left unattended, in disrepair, and ministrations to the people were inadequate. Criticisms against the church included pluralism, inefficient internal church structures, and a lack of religious zeal. Evangelicalism in the Church of Ireland first became visible through the Bethesda Chapel founded in Dorset Street, Dublin in 1784. The church was attended by those who wished to express their evangelical spirit without breaking away from the established church.⁹ Evangelicalism attracted a wide audience from the poor to the better off. However, despite the embrace of evangelicalism by the lower clergy and the laity of the Church of Ireland by the 1830s, and its predominance in the mid-nineteenth century, the church was not fully committed to evangelicalism until after disestablishment.¹⁰

Evangelicalism improved the outlook of those clergymen who subscribed to its doctrines and encouraged them to be more attentive to their parishioners. Like Presbyterians, members of the Church of Ireland hierarchy also realised that it needed to reform in order to retain its adherents. Moral reform agencies and considerable church building took shape in the early decades of the nineteenth century. William Conyngham Plunket surmised that the established church had a duty to bring the mission of the church to their

⁷ S.J. Connolly, ‘Mass politics and sectarian conflict, 1823-30’ in W.E. Vaughan, (ed.), *A new history of Ireland, v: Ireland under the union, 1801-1870* (Oxford, 1989), p. 77.

⁸ D. H. Akenson, *The Church of Ireland, 1800-85* (London, 1971), p. 71.

⁹ Whelan, *The bible war in Ireland*, p. 16.

¹⁰ Alan Acheson, *A history of the Church of Ireland, 1691-1996* (Dublin, 1997), p. 132.

own congregation as well as to the Catholic community. 'Her mission to Roman Catholics did not imply that they were heathen, for she had a 'mission' to her own nominal members also'.¹¹ The Association for Promoting Christian Knowledge was founded in 1792. Schools were set up with parliamentary grants and in a three month period in 1825, 4,286 bibles and testaments, 4,260 prayer books and 4,593 books and tracts were distributed.¹² The Hibernian Bible Society formed in 1806. The Sunday School Society for Ireland was established in 1809. The Religious Tract and Book Society formed in 1817 and had disseminated in the region of two and a half million tracts and 217,00 books by 1826.¹³ The Irish Society was founded in 1818. These societies were located in Dublin and members of the established church were heavily involved in their management. By 1825 the Sunday School Society operated 1,702 schools.¹⁴ In the 1830s, Church of Ireland Christian fellowship societies were founded.¹⁵ Their purpose was to encourage moral improvements and membership grew rapidly.

An important figure associated with the religious strife of the early decades of the nineteenth century was Archbishop William Magee, a high churchman who sparked controversy following the reading of his *Charge* in St. Patrick's Cathedral 24 October 1822:

We, my reverend friends are hemmed in by two opposite descriptions of professing Christians; the one, possessing a church, without what we can properly call a religion; and the other, possessing a religion, without what we can properly call a church.¹⁶

¹¹ Acheson., *A history of the Church of Ireland*, p. 196.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 121.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 122.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ John Crawford, *The Church of Ireland in Victorian Dublin* (Dublin, 2005), p. 53.

¹⁶ Desmond Bowen, *The Protestant crusade in Ireland, 1800-70: a study of Protestant-Catholic relations between the act of union and disestablishment* (Dublin, 1978), p. 89.

His advice to his parsons on the ‘true role of the parish priest’¹⁷ that implied the necessity for conversions was widely condemned by Catholics. While Magee had made similar remarks in the past prior to his appointment as archbishop, on this occasion his sermon, was received with bitter rebuke and interpreted ‘as a declaration of religious war’.¹⁸ His appointment as Archbishop meant that his later sermons were more representative of the Church as a whole rather than his own outlook as a bishop. However, poor relations between the churches were visible prior to Magee’s charge in relation to the education of Catholics in scriptural schools.¹⁹ Alternative interpretations of the sermon suggest that Magee was more concerned with the anti-tithe disturbances and the non-payment of tithes which had more urgent consequences for Church of Ireland clergymen at that time.²⁰ ‘Although he was hostile to Roman Catholics he was impartial with his patronage’.²¹ He assisted in the improvement of the standard of examinations for Holy Orders.²²

The Catholic Church also experienced a period of renewal. Catholic countries in Europe were in recovery following the revolution crisis of the eighteenth century, religious adherence had improved and in 1814 Jesuits resumed their mission of education and evangelism with the sanction of Pope Pius VII.²³ In Ireland, following complaints against priests’ practice and non-practice that included irregular preaching habits and costly fees charged to parishioners was remedied through more vigilant supervision of

¹⁷ Bowen, *Protestant crusade*, p. 89.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 91.

¹⁹ Acheson, *A history of the Church of Ireland*, p. 123.

²⁰ J.R. Hill, *From patriots to unionists: civic politics and Irish Protestant patriotism, 1660-1840* (Oxford, 1997), p. 336.

²¹ National Gallery of Ireland, *Church disestablishment, 1870-1970* (Dublin, 1970), pp 78-82.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ Franklin L. Ford, *Europe 1780-1830* (London, 1970), p. 311.

pastorals by bishops.²⁴ Substantial church building took place in the 1820s and 1830s, the revival enriched the wealthier sections of the laity initially with the formation of confraternities and the initiation of various devotional practices.²⁵

The Catholic Church embarked on a counter-offensive against the Protestant ‘second reformation’ and William Magee. Bishop Doyle endeavoured to boost support for the Catholic Church. In 1823, he wrote to Prince Hohenlohe and Alexander Emmerich, Dean of Bamberg ‘whose reputation for effecting miraculous cures had recently gained wide currency in France and Germany’.²⁶ Prince Hohenlohe agreed to a request made by Bishop Doyle to aid a woman named Maria Lalor who had lost her speech as a child.²⁷ According to reports following Hohenlohe’s intervention, Maria regained her speech. Doyle orchestrated large-scale publicity around the miracle which validated the Catholic Church to its people and simultaneously undermined the evangelical cause.²⁸ Protestants questioned Doyle’s intentions and concluded that the miracles were ‘down to the influence of imagination or nervous enthusiasm’.²⁹ In the same year Doyle produced ‘Vindication of the religious cure principles of Irish Catholics’, to justify his reasons for publicising the miracles.³⁰ In 1824, the prophecies of Pastorini that predicted the extermination of all Protestants were widely circulated. ‘Protestants are then to be driven

²⁴ S.J. Connolly, ‘Mass politics and sectarian conflict, 1823-30’ in W.E.Vaughan (ed.), *A new history of Ireland, v: Ireland under the union, 1801-70* (Oxford, 1989), p.76.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Whelan, *The bible war in Ireland*, p.194.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid., pp 194-5.

²⁹ Thomas McGrath, *Politics, interdenominational relations and education in the public ministry of Bishop James Doyle of Kildare and Leighlin, 1786-1834* (Dublin, 1999), p. 114.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 115.

away as locusts from the face of the earth'.³¹ Clergymen of the established church stressed that the prophecies had further compounded an already highly volatile situation in the south of Ireland.³²

Catholic emancipation and the campaign that brought it to fruition forged religion and politics into an unbreakable union that would shape Irish history and in particular Protestant and Catholic relations for the remainder of the century and beyond. Catholic relief acts were introduced from 1772 to 1782 and in 1793. However, while there were no outright promises made by Pitt, Catholic leaders were under the impression that following the Act of Union that came into force in January 1801, Catholic relief would be forthcoming.³³ However, following the rejection of the 1804 petition it became clear that relief would not be so easily attained. Daniel O'Connell opposed the union and became a prominent figure in the campaign for Catholic emancipation from 1804. O'Connell and Shiel Lawlor formed the Catholic Association in 1823 and created a new type of political strategy. Daniel O'Connell's efforts to achieve the final step in the relaxation of the penal laws received widespread support from the priesthood who played a key role in the political agitation of the people.

While some liberal Protestants supported emancipation and O'Connell, ultra-Protestants condemned the bill and those who supported it, whether Catholics or liberal Protestants. O'Connell won the Clare by-election in July 1828. The overwhelming success of the

³¹ McGrath, *Politics, interdenominational relations and education*, p. 114.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 113.

³³ S.J. Connolly, 'The Catholic question, 1801-12' in W.E. Vaughan (ed.), *A new history of Ireland*, v (Oxford, 1989), p. 28.

election with votes in O'Connell's favour by almost two votes to one, signalled the strength and ferocity of the Catholic pursuit of emancipation. By this time, the formation of Brunswick clubs in Ulster and in other parts of the country, clearly signalled ultra-Protestant resistance to emancipation.³⁴ Sectarianism was at fever pitch during the run up to the introduction of the Catholic Relief Act³⁵ on 13 April 1829. Orange demonstrations followed. The law stated that Catholics could sit in parliament and hold positions in the civil and military office. Restrictions included entry to the highest positions of power as regent, Lord chancellor or Lord Lieutenant. Additional restrictions added in a separate bill raised the franchise from 40s. to a £10 freehold.

Following this triumph, Catholics led by O'Connell strove to achieve further reforms and aimed at the same time to dismantle the remaining bulwarks of power that defined the Protestant ascendancy. Parliamentary reform was introduced in 1832.³⁶ The 40 shilling freehold was not restored but the reform extended the franchise to £10 householders in towns and cities. The 1833 Church Temporalities (Ireland) Act³⁷ resulted in the internal reform of the Church of Ireland which reduced the number of bishops and archbishops, set up a commission to reorganise livings and imposed a tax on wealthy clergy.³⁸

Through a careful re-evaluation of the 1831 census returns, the Church of Ireland's

³⁴S.J. Connolly, 'Mass politics and sectarian conflict, 1823-30' in W.E. Vaughan (ed.), *A new history of Ireland*, v (Oxford, 1989), p. 104.

³⁵ 10 Geo. IV, c.7 (13 Apr. 1829).

³⁶ Representation of the people (Ireland) Act, 2 & 3 Will. IV, c. 88.

³⁷ 3 & 4 Will. IV, c. 37 (14 Aug. 1833).

³⁸ Oliver MacDonagh, 'The age of O'Connell, 1830-45' in W.E. Vaughan (ed.), *A new history of Ireland*, v (Oxford, 1989), p. 172.

minority status and considerable wealth became news worthy and harsher criticism of the church duly followed.³⁹

Repeal of union was called for in 1834 by O'Connell but it was rejected out of hand. With the Lichfield House compact, the Whig alliance gave rise to an opportunity for securing further reforms. Once this alliance was broken by the departure of the Whig government in 1841, the campaign reverted to 'monster meetings' which stirred the people to agitate and caused alarm to the government. An arms bill was introduced in 1843, a repeal meeting set for 7 October was stopped and O'Connell arrested.⁴⁰

A long held grievance was the tithe, a tax on agricultural produce for the benefit of the Church of Ireland. Anti-tithe agitation was fierce. The Catholic population scorned the system. Conflict was inevitable. The 1823 tithe composition act⁴¹ fixed the tithe rate to unrealistic cereal prices, which led to Catholic and some Protestant withholding of tithes.⁴² The amendment act of 1824⁴³ called for the enforcement of tithe payment. However, without any significant relief following emancipation, bitterness over the system and compounded agrarian unrest until it could no longer be suppressed. The tithe war began in 1830 and ended in 1838 with the tithe act⁴⁴ that imposed the tax on the landlord rather than the tenant as a fixed rent-charge. Protestants including Archbishop

³⁹ Akenson, *The Church of Ireland*, p. 162.

⁴⁰ Oliver MacDonagh, 'The age of O'Connell, 1830-45' in W.E. Vaughan (ed.), *A new history of Ireland*, v (Oxford, 1989), p. 185.

⁴¹ 4 Geo. IV, c.99 (19 July 1823).

⁴² Oliver MacDonagh, 'The economy and society, 1830-45' in W.E. Vaughan (ed.), *A new history of Ireland*, v (Oxford, 1989), p. 223.

⁴³ Geo. IV, c. 63 (17 June 1824).

⁴⁴ 1 & 2 Vict., c. 109 (15 Aug. 1838).

Whately and other clergymen realised the unfavourable nature of the tithes for the people and most were in support of reform.⁴⁵

The question of an adequate system of education for Irish children caused repeated and often intense debate, primarily over religious matters. The Kildare Place Society founded in 1811 had come close to representing a national education system. It had an inter-denominational board of which Daniel O'Connell was a member. By 1825, the society managed 1,490 schools. However, dissatisfaction came to the fore, when the children were more and more exposed to scripture reading. O'Connell withdrew his support and made subsequent complaints against the schools. In 1824 a commission was set up to investigate these claims. It concluded that secular education and religious education should be taught separately. Further reports were made on this issue. The national school system was introduced in 1831.

John George Beresford, primate of Ireland from 1839 to 1860, and the majority of Church of Ireland clergymen were not in favour of the national system of education because of the separation of religious and secular education and the removal of their role as the established church to provide education.⁴⁶ This rejection gave Catholics the lead in assuming control over many of the schools.⁴⁷ However, despite their initial acceptance of the idea of inter-denominational education, by the mid to late nineteenth century, the

⁴⁵ Bowen, *Protestant crusade*, p. 169.

⁴⁶ D.H. Akenson, 'Pre-university education, 1782-1870' in W.E. Vaughan (ed.), *A new history of Ireland*, v (Oxford, 1989), p. 535.

⁴⁷ Bowen, *Protestant crusade*, p. 284.

Catholic Church pushed for denominational separation of education and made further charges of proselytising.⁴⁸

The Church of Ireland formed the Church Education Society in 1839 without state subsidies and at enormous cost to themselves. By 1860, Beresford then president of the Church Education Society, although still perhaps against the idea of national education in theory, accepted that state funding would not be forthcoming. With this in mind, he suggested that for practical reasons if necessary, schools that struggled to survive should become part of the national system.⁴⁹ From 1870 onwards, although not officially, the national schools operated on denominational lines.⁵⁰

The unreformed municipal corporations were a major source of friction between Catholics and Protestants. Despite the relief act of 1793,⁵¹ that made provisions for their membership of the corporations, Catholics remained underrepresented. Widespread claims of corruption such as bribery were made against the corporation.⁵² Taxpayers questioned the taxes imposed on them and the level of services provided which appeared to be vastly disproportionate.⁵³ Until later reforms the Cork corporation was also largely controlled by Protestants. 'A large and well run patronage operation. Its principal

⁴⁸ Sean Connolly, *Religion and society in nineteenth century Ireland* (Oxford, 1992), p. 29.

⁴⁹ Bowen, *Protestant crusade*, p. 285.

⁵⁰ D.H. Akenson, 'Pre-university education, 1782-1870' in W.E. Vaughan (ed.), *A new history of Ireland*, vi: *Ireland under the union, 1871-1921* (Oxford, 1996), p. 536.

⁵¹ 33 Geo. III, c. 21 (9 Apr. 1793).

⁵² Jacqueline Hill, 'The Protestant response to repeal: the case of the Dublin working class' in F.S. Lyons and R.J. Hawkins (eds), *Ireland under the union: varieties of tension, essays in honour of T.W. Moody* (Oxford, 1980), p. 46

⁵³ Hill, *From patriots to unionists*, p.357.

function was to supply a small group of interconnected families with offices of profit and honour'.⁵⁴ Well off Catholics campaigned against this exclusion.

The British municipal corporations were reformed in 1834. The Irish municipal reform act was passed in 1840⁵⁵ and came into force in 1841. However, unlike Britain where all ratepayers had been given the franchise, restrictions were put in place, to limit Catholic integration into the system. As noted, despite the parliamentary reform of 1832 the forty shilling freehold was not reintroduced. (In 1850 a reform act was introduced that based the right to vote on the occupation of the voter, not the property he owned)⁵⁶ Only those who held property to the value of £10 could vote in civic elections and sit on council. Daniel O'Connell became Lord Mayor in 1841, a position held by Protestants since the seventeenth century. Municipal government was reformed in 1898 following the local government act.⁵⁷

Evangelical missionary zeal became most pronounced in Ireland in the mid-nineteenth century. Edward Nangle had already begun his mission in Achill in 1834. Alexander Dallas, described as a militant evangelical,⁵⁸ officially established the Society for Irish Church Missions to Roman Catholics on 29 March 1849. The missionaries who preached on behalf of the society in Ireland could only do so in parishes where Church of Ireland ministers had given them permission.⁵⁹ The mission received vast sums from England

⁵⁴ Ian D'alton, extract from 'Municipal government in Ireland' (www.corkpastandpresent.ie) (9 Aug. 2008).

⁵⁵ Municipal Reform (Ireland) Act, 3 & 4 Vict., c. 108 (10 Aug. 1840).

⁵⁶ R.F. Foster, *History of Ireland* (Oxford, 1989), p. 169.

⁵⁷ 61 & 62 Vict., c. 37 (12 Aug. 1898).

⁵⁸ Bowen, *Protestant crusade*, p. 218.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 218.

that caused consternation amongst the Catholic hierarchy. This challenge gave impetus to the aggressive stance taken against Protestantism in Ireland.

Paul Cullen, primate and papal delegate in Ireland, archbishop from 1852 to 1879 and appointed cardinal 22 June 1866 by Pius IX, accelerated momentous changes to the whole Irish religious climate. Ultramontanism was a new ideology that was in marked contrast to Gallicanism: 'by its political conservatism, its exaltation of papal authority, and its acceptance of dogmatic, combatative theology that had by the mid-nineteenth century achieved ascendancy within European Catholicism'.⁶⁰ Cullen had studied in Rome and pushed for the reorganisation of the Catholic Church in Ireland. One of his objectives was to unify previously divided bishops. At this time, the church experienced a devotional revolution. Papal aggression was intensifying the world over at this period against Protestantism and liberalism.⁶¹ Cullen waged war against Protestant institutions most notably against Alexander Dallas and the Irish Church Missions and actively sought the disestablishment of the Church of Ireland.

The Church of Ireland was disestablished under the provisions of the 1869 Irish Church Act⁶² that came into force 1 January 1871. The main outcomes of the act included the severing of church and state, the disposal of church property such as churchyards and ruined churches. Ministers of the church received grants for life in respect of their incomes. The Church of Ireland underwent a serious phase of reorganisation and

⁶⁰ Connolly, *Religion and society*, p. 13.

⁶¹ Bowen, *Protestant crusade*, p. 264.

⁶² 32 & 33 Vict., c.42 (22 July 1869).

refinancing. The General Synod was established and the book of common prayer revised in 1878.

The possession of land was a continual point of grievance between Catholics and Protestants. The encumbered estates acts of 1848 and 1849⁶³ enabled some land purchase by tenants. Land was freed up through the Irish Church Act and through successive land acts.⁶⁴ The Landlord and tenant act that acknowledged tenant rights was passed in 1870. The land war of 1879-82 was a period of severe 'agrarian outrages' the numbers of agrarian crimes and murders rose considerably. The later 'plan of campaign' that commenced in 1886 aimed at achieving lower rents through 'boycott, intimidation as well as the rent strike and public demonstrations'.⁶⁵ The Land Law (Ireland) Act⁶⁶ passed in 1881, the 1885 act, 1891 and 1895 acts, the 1903 Wyndham act and the 1909 Birrell act⁶⁷ facilitated the transfer of land ownership to tenants.⁶⁸

Isaac Butt formed the Home Government Association on 19 May 1870 and the Home Rule League in 1873. The reform act of 1884 extended the franchise and consequently the electorate soared. Three bills were brought forward in 1886, 1893 and 1912. The 1886 and 1893 bills were defeated. Unionist power in British politics prevented further advances on the issue until 1912.⁶⁹ Hostile responses to the bills by most Protestants

⁶³ 12 & 13 Vict., c. 77 (28 July 1849).

⁶⁴ H.D. Gribben, 'Economic and social history, 1850-1921' in W.E. Vaughan (ed.), *A new history of Ireland*, vi (Oxford, 1996), p. 274.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 70.

⁶⁶ 44 & 45 Vict., c.49 (22 Aug. 1881).

⁶⁷ 3 Edw. VII, c. 37 (14 Aug. 1903); 9 Edw. VII, c. 42 (3 Dec. 1909).

⁶⁸ H.D. Gribben, 'Economic and social history, 1850-1921' in W.E. Vaughan (ed.), *A new history of Ireland*, vi (Oxford, 1996), p. 274.

⁶⁹ R. B. McDowell, *The Church of Ireland 1869-1969* (London, 1975), p. 72.

showed their rejection of the campaign. Their intransigence on the whole issue of home rule arose largely from shared concerns for their future in Ireland, a future they perceived as potentially perilous. In 1914, a failed bid was made to resolve the crisis by recommending the separation of most of Ulster from the control of the Irish parliament.⁷⁰ The outbreak of World War I in 1914 temporarily deflected attention away from problems in Ireland.

As much of this thesis is dominated by social issues an overview of the major causes of distress for families is necessary. Innumerable children were orphaned as a result of epidemics that haunted Ireland throughout the century. Cholera epidemics of 1832-4 and 1849 ravaged Dublin and the rest of Ireland and Europe. The disease originated in Bengal, India in 1817, spread on trade routes and reached Britain in 1831. The symptoms included nausea, dizziness leading to vomiting and diarrhoea followed by severe muscular cramps. In Ireland, 'the official recorded deaths showed a toll of 20,072 in 1832 and 5,308 in 1833'.⁷¹ At the time of the outbreak, doctors in Dublin held differing opinions on the cause of the disease which led to improper treatment and further deaths. (Cholera spread through drinking contaminated water or eating contaminated food that contained the cholera bacteria).⁷² The Central Board of Health for Ireland was established during the epidemic.⁷³

⁷⁰ Acheson, *A history of the Church of Ireland*, p. 227.

⁷¹ Joseph Robins, *The miasma: epidemic and panic in nineteenth-century Ireland* (Dublin, 1995), p. 108.

⁷² E. Malcolm and G. Jones (eds), *Medicine disease and the state in Ireland, 1650-1940* (Cork, 1999), p. 158.

⁷³ Oliver MacDonagh, 'Ideas and institutions, 1830-45' in W.E. Vaughan (ed.), *A new history of Ireland*, v (Oxford, 1989), p. 210

The famine period was of catastrophic proportions: starvation, zymotic diseases such as typhus and cholera decimated the population. ‘Between the period 1846-1851, 1,082,000 million excess mortalities were recorded, with even prosperous Leinster and Ulster recording 93,000 and 224,000 excess deaths respectively’.⁷⁴ Emigration soared mainly among the lowest classes of Irish society.⁷⁵ As Ireland operated chiefly an agriculturally based economy, poor harvests had devastating consequences on the wider population. Although none reached the level of disaster of the 1840s, downturns continued to ensure unemployment, emigration and dependency on the workhouse.⁷⁶ A series of particularly bad harvests in 1859-64 and 1879-81 caused widespread emigration and increases in the number of workhouse inmates. In 1880, the Relief of Distress (Ireland) Act⁷⁷ made provisions such as the availability of low interest and long term loans to overcome the related economic difficulties.⁷⁸ Subsequent bad harvests in 1894-5 and 1897-8 brought further distress to the country.

Disease related deaths occurred throughout the nineteenth and into the twentieth century. Typhus, also known as brain fever, fever of the spirits, spotted fever, petechial fever, the Irish ague, took hold in Ireland in 1816-19, 1826-7, 1836-7, 1846-9, 1879-80 and 1898.⁷⁹ Typhus was transmitted through body lice. Overcrowding in tenement housing meant the disease spread rapidly. Deaths from small pox declined in the 1860s, but rose to

⁷⁴ James S. Donnelly, jr ‘Excess mortality and emigration’ in W.E. Vaughan (ed.), *A new history of Ireland* v (Oxford, 1989), p. 351.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 354.

⁷⁶ Cormac Ó’Gráda, *Ireland, a new economic history, 1780-1939* (Oxford, 1994), pp 250-1.

⁷⁷ 43 Vict., c. 4 (15 Mar. 1880).

⁷⁸ R.B. McDowell, ‘Administration and the public services, 1870-1921’ in W.E. Vaughan (ed.), *A new history of Ireland*, vi (Oxford, 1989), p. 581.

⁷⁹ Malcolm & Jones (eds), *Medicine & disease*, p. 121.

epidemic proportions in 1871 and 1872.⁸⁰ Tuberculosis (otherwise known as consumption) related deaths occurred throughout the century but increased in numbers in the 1880s, 1890s and the first four years of the nineteenth century. The influenza pandemic also caused substantial loss of life from 1918 to 1919.

Economic downturns and industrial stagnation in Ireland led to mass emigration and migration. Irish emigrants flocked to England and America, centres of industrialisation where factory work replaced agriculture. Cities such as London and New York became urban sprawls, a result in part of the high Irish immigrant rates pre and post famine. In Ireland, Belfast took the lead in industrialisation. The shipbuilding and linen industry attracted migrants and the population of Belfast increased from in the region of 20,000 at the beginning of the nineteenth century to 387,000 by 1911.⁸¹ Families also migrated from regional areas to Dublin in search of employment. Developments in Irish communications were advanced most notably through the gradual extension of railway services throughout the country. In the 1840s the railway serviced the Dublin and Belfast area only, however from 1850 to 1880 an average of sixty miles of track was laid each year.⁸² Sizeable government loans and Irish investment had made this progression possible.

However, unemployment and underemployment were recurrent themes in Dublin and regional areas. Inner city tenement housing primed poor children for a life of poverty and

⁸⁰ Malcolm & Jones (eds), *Medicine & disease*, p. 138.

⁸¹ McDowell, *The Church of Ireland, 1869-1969*, p. 76.

⁸² H.D. Gribbon, 'Economic and social history, 1850-1921' in W.E. Vaughan (ed.), *A new history of Ireland*, vi (Oxford, 1996), p. 310.

criminality. In 1861, the housing for the poor in Dublin was described 'as a disgrace to modern civilisation'.⁸³ Young destitute children employed as street traders were a regular sight on street corners as matchbox makers and sellers. In many cases they were exploited by unscrupulous criminals. Charles Dickens' *Oliver Twist*⁸⁴ is an example of an early nineteenth century social novel that portrayed the maltreatment of the destitute child and child labour. Destitute children were commonly viewed as criminals and prior to reforms in the second half of the nineteenth century housed in prisons and institutions.

The new Poor law was passed in 1834 in England. Despite the recommendations of the Irish poor law commission (1833-6) headed by Whately and opposition to the implementation of the English model, 'the act for the effectual relief of the destitute poor in Ireland' was passed in 1838.⁸⁵ Although flawed, it was a major advance in the direction of social policy. Private philanthropy that supported benevolent and moral societies, schools, shelters, refuges, orphanages, orphan societies and hospitals attempted to meet a portion of the demands of the poor prior to the 1838 poor law. Theoretically, legislators envisaged that the law would eliminate the need for private charity. However, due to its inadequacies voluntary organisations continued their work following its introduction on a wide scale particularly during the famine. The Poor Relief (Ireland) Acts of 1862⁸⁶ and 1886⁸⁷ were less harsh than previous legislation. However, philanthropists and private charity continued to work alongside state relief mechanisms.

⁸³ Shannon Millin, 'Slums: a retrospect of the city of Dublin' in *Journal of the Statistical and Social Inquiry Society of Ireland*, xiii, part xcvi (1914), pp 301-16.

⁸⁴ *Oliver Twist* was originally published as a serial in monthly instalments from 1837-9.

⁸⁵ Poor Relief (Ireland) Act, 1838, 1 & 2 Vict., c.56 (31 July 1838).

⁸⁶ 25 & 26 Vict., c. 83 (7 Aug. 1862).

⁸⁷ 49 & 50 Vict., c. 17.

In his record of ‘Dublin charities’, George Williams⁸⁸ documented eighty-two voluntary associations that offered some form of relief in Dublin.⁸⁹

1.1 The social debate on child welfare

The good of the state and the good of the child were factors inextricably linked. Fears existed that unless children were given appropriate care they would become part of the criminal classes by adulthood spurred on social reform campaigns. From the mid-nineteenth century up to the 1900 the Dublin Statistical Society⁹⁰ provided a platform for debates on the necessity of reforms for workhouse children.⁹¹ John Kells Ingram, president of the society and William Neilson Hancock, secretary of the society contributed to the debate. In a report read before the society on 9 December 1879. Hancock referred to points raised by Mrs. O’Connell’s and Miss Smedley’s reports, such as the negative effects of institutional life for children.

John Kells Ingram presented Miss Menella Smedley’s paper that compared the boarding-out system with pauper schools on 9 December 1879. (Smedley’s article ‘Workhouse Schools for girls’ was printed in *Macmillan’s Magazine* in November 1874). Although an advocate of boarding-out, in her report Miss Smedley also spelled out its weak points that included ‘its inferior power as regards intellectual teaching and the danger of neglect

⁸⁸ George Williams was secretary to the A.R.D.P. in the 1890s.

⁸⁹ Helen Burke, *The people and the poor law in nineteenth century Ireland* (Dublin, 1987), p. 11.

⁹⁰ Established by Dr. Ingram in 1847.

⁹¹ Robins, *The lost children*, p. 272.

or ill-usage in individual cases'.⁹² According to Miss Smedley, systematic inspections were the key to remedying the latter problem:

We wish to have always the double inspection by a committee of visitors, and a paid government official, I think some orphans boarded out by charities are insufficiently inspected. We will thankfully accept every device by which such inspections can be made more thorough and searching. We desire the utmost publicity for every real case of neglect or abuse, and the most stringent care in the selection of homes. Of course a child born and brought up in its own home is guarded from much danger by the natural instincts of affection and duty in the parents. These cannot be supplied to the boarded-out orphan. He is always at a disadvantage do what we will for him.⁹³

Miss Smedley was convinced that if the boarding-out system could be supervised strictly and responsibly that the children would thrive. Placement of children in good homes was imperative, yet often a difficult task. The pauper school system or 'monster school system' was noted as being defective in four respects:

(1) Contamination of permanent inmates by casuals perpetually coming and going. (2) Want of individual care, tenderness, and cultivation, leading to apathy, hardness, hopelessness, and temporary suppression of faults which work out with double force as soon as the pressure is withdrawn. (3) Mechanical completeness of system, and immensity of scale, leading to hopelessness – "an existence without opportunities". (4) Seclusion from the world, with all its consequences of cloisteral ignorance and incapacity, which are peculiarly injurious to those who are not to continue living in a cloister, but to live and work in the world of which they know nothing, and in which they are not suffered to form a tie or perceive a hope before they actually enter it.⁹⁴

Reformers contended that foster care should be introduced into the workhouse system to improve survival rates and to ensure that children would be better disposed to the realities of life as opposed to an isolated and artificial existence in an institution. Isabella Tod

⁹² Menella Smedley 'Boarding out and pauper schools' in *Journal of the Statistical and Social Inquiry Society of Ireland*, vii, part lvi (1879), pp 31-7, p.32.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 33.

presented a paper to the British Association for Advancement of Science in Dublin, August 1878. The paper referred to the report made by Mrs. Senior to the Right Hon. James Stansfield, President of the Local Government Board on the district schools that housed girls from London workhouses.⁹⁵ In England, district schools were set up to accommodate children who would otherwise have lived in the workhouse. These schools were welcomed initially, as they appeared to offer children superior accommodation that was separate from the workhouse. Nevertheless, Mrs. Senior asserted that the opposite was true, that the schools were no better a setting for the children than the workhouse:

It needs no spirit of partisanship to see in the facts adduced by Mrs. Senior and her coadjutors, ample confirmation of the suspicion that the industrial, mental and moral results of shutting up five hundred children together, good and bad, in a huge building and with even greater monotony and restraint than the workhouse itself, differ from those of the workhouse only in degree, and not greatly even in that.⁹⁶

The consensus of feeling amongst reformers at this time was that institutional life compromised the health and well being of its child inmates.

Rosa Barrett read two significant papers before the Statistical and Social Inquiry Society of Ireland on 16 February 1892 and 25 February 1896. Both dealt primarily with the welfare of children and international legislation for children. Rosa Barrett established the Dublin Aid Committee in 1889 (later known as the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty against Children). It was a non-sectarian organisation. The society aimed to prevent the neglect of children by targeting families affected by poverty. Thomas

⁹⁵ Isabella Tod, 'Boarding out of pauper children' in *Journal of the British Association for Advancement of Science*, liv (1878), pp 293-98.

⁹⁶ Tod, 'Boarding out of pauper children', p. 294.

Agnew set up the Liverpool Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children in 1883. He was influenced to do so by a visit he had made to New York two years previously during which he was introduced to the New York Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. In 1884, a London society formed. One of its honorary secretaries was Reverend Benjamin Waugh. Rev. Waugh ‘the child’s guardian angel’,⁹⁷ campaigned tirelessly for legislation to prevent cruelty against children passed in 1889.

Practical social reform efforts continued with the establishment of the Philanthropic Reform Association in 1897 that worked alongside the N.S.P.C.C.. The mixed committee sought the reform of institutions such as reformatories, industrial schools and the workhouse. It offered former inmates of industrial schools assistance with securing employment.⁹⁸ In 1909, the P.R.A. proposed the establishment of day industrial schools to Dublin corporation that were defined in the 1876 elementary education act as ‘schools in which industrial training, elementary education, and one or more meals a day, but not lodging are provided’.⁹⁹ The P.R.A. also initiated the Children’s Clothing Society which was aided by the police. Clothes were distributed to poor children. Police involvement was considered crucial as it reduced the likelihood that parents would pawn the clothes.¹⁰⁰ The Irish Workhouse Association formed in 1896 to improve the standards of nursing and management in workhouses.

⁹⁷ Rosa Barrett, ‘Legislation on behalf of neglected children in America and elsewhere’ in *Journal of the Statistical and Social Inquiry Society of Ireland*, ix, part lxxii (1892), pp 616-31.

⁹⁸ Barnes, *Irish industrial schools*, p. 83.

⁹⁹ Shannon Millin, ‘Child life as a national asset’ in *Journal of the Statistical and Social Inquiry Society of Ireland*, xiii, part xcvi (1917), p. 314.

¹⁰⁰ Maria Luddy, *Women and philanthropy in nineteenth-century Ireland* (Cambridge, 1995), p. 95.

1.2 Legislative reforms for children in Ireland

It is significant to note the time frame for legislation enacted to prevent cruelty against animals in Britain and America. In Britain the first act to protect animals was introduced in 1822, with succeeding acts in 1835, 1876 and 1911. The British Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals formed in 1824. The Ulster Society was founded in 1836 and the American Society was established in 1866. Rosa Barrett in Ireland and other reformers in America later used the existence of such societies and legislation to strengthen their argument for legislation to protect children.

In the nineteenth century English legislation for children commenced with the factory acts passed from 1802. The first act provided only for children that worked in cotton factories. Subsequent acts for the protection of children employed in factories included the 1819 act that stated only children over the age of nine were to be employed in the production of cotton. However, these laws were not extended to Ireland. In a House of Commons speech read in 1833, Daniel O'Connell referred to the plight of child labourers and condemned the overwork and exploitation they endured.

The Reformatory Schools (Ireland) Act¹⁰¹ was passed in 1858, four years after the English act. Young offenders were sent to the schools on order of the courts instead of incarceration in an adult facility. The Industrial Schools (Ireland) Act¹⁰² was introduced in 1868. By the twentieth century, seventy-one schools existed and catered for 8,000 children. The boarding-out of children from the workhouse was introduced firstly only

¹⁰¹ 21 & 22 Vict., c.103 (2 Aug. 1858).

¹⁰² 30 & 31 Vict., c. 25 (May 1868).

for children up to the age of five in 1862 after three failed bills in 1858, 1859 and 1860. In 1876, a new bill was passed to allow guardians to board-out children up to the age of thirteen and in 1898 the pauper children act raised the limit to fifteen.¹⁰³ The Children's Dangerous Performances Act¹⁰⁴ was passed in 1879. This prevented children under fourteen from participation in exhibitions that were considered a danger to the child. If a child was involved in an accident, compensation was payable. The Infant Life Protection Act was introduced in 1872 and was amended in 1897 to protect children fostered by local authorities.

The Prevention of Cruelty and Protection of Children Act¹⁰⁵ passed in 1889. It contained provisions for the protection of neglected and mistreated children. Under the law, a parent or guardian convicted of serious cruelty against a child could lose custody of boys until aged fourteen and girls until aged sixteen years.¹⁰⁶ The act was amended to include stricter provisions in 1894. In 1903, the Employment of Children Act¹⁰⁷ was introduced and extended the provisions of the 1889 children's act. The act prohibited children under the age of eleven from street trading. Children under sixteen were to be dealt with by local authorities, Dublin was the first to bring in these laws in January 1904.¹⁰⁸ In 1904, the Prevention of Cruelty to Children Act¹⁰⁹ was passed. The Children Act¹¹⁰ of 1908 largely overruled the previous acts. The act stated that the term child referred to a person under the age of fourteen, a young person was considered over fourteen and under

¹⁰³ Tod, 'Boarding-out of pauper children', p. 296.

¹⁰⁴ 42 & 43 Vict., c. 34.

¹⁰⁵ 52 & 53 Vict., c. 44.

¹⁰⁶ Barrett, 'Legislation on behalf of neglected children in America and elsewhere', p.618.

¹⁰⁷ 3 Edw. VII, c.45.

¹⁰⁸ Millin, 'Child life as a national asset', p. 310.

¹⁰⁹ 4 Edw. VII, c. 16.

¹¹⁰ 8 Edw. VII, c. 67 (21 Dec. 1908).

sixteen. Gradually, reformers agreed that children were best served by their own families, the widows' pension act introduced in 1935 allowed women monetary assistance to provide for their dependents in their own home. Formal adoption laws were introduced in England in 1926 and in Ireland in 1952.

1.3 International legislation

The welfare of children was of international concern in the latter part of the nineteenth century. An international congress was convened in Antwerp and St. Petersburg in 1890 to discuss the protection of destitute and neglected children. The congress concluded that 'orphans, deserted or neglected children, are best placed in families, if possible in the country'.¹¹¹ Implementation of policies in relation to the protection of children varied from country to country. Steps had already been taken by some governments prior to the congress.

In France, in 1865, the 'Societe Protectrice D'enfance' was established. The objective of the society was to provide poor mothers with aid in their own home. They offered women food, clothing and cradles and rewards for keeping their homes clean and their children healthy. France's interest in child mortality lay in 'the diminution of population; the deaths now outnumbering the births'.¹¹² In 1889, an act was passed that contained provisions for destitute children. Under the law, destitute children, orphans or otherwise were provided for by L'Assistance Publique. In the case of widows and deserted wives, assistance was awarded to them in order to reduce the incidence of

¹¹¹ Rosa Barrett, 'Foreign legislation on behalf of destitute and neglected children' in *Journal of the Statistical and Social Inquiry Society of Ireland*, x, part lxxvi (1895), pp 143-215, p. 156.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, p. 150.

abandonment. The child remained with the mother or was boarded-out. The law also enabled the courts to remove children from parents who mistreated them.¹¹³

In Denmark, legislation to protect children was introduced in 1873 to outlaw the employment of children under the age of ten. Norway passed a children act in 1896. Sweden adopted an act for the protection of children in 1902. In Germany, the Imperial penal law of 1871 made provisions for the establishment of reformatories and educational homes for children over twelve. In 1878 boarding-out as an alternative to institutional care was made compulsory.¹¹⁴ By 1870 in Switzerland, out of 23,269 children dependent on the government, eighty-eight per cent were boarded out to families, many to farmers. Switzerland and Germany both had long histories of boarding out rather than institutional care that dated back to the eighteenth century.¹¹⁵ By 1850, in Australia, 'about the year 1850 the government of South Australia recognised the necessity for creating a special department to look after the destitute, called the Destitute Poor Department'.¹¹⁶ A state children's council was founded in 1886.

In America, the state of Massachusetts passed far-reaching adoption legislation in 1851 which stated that surviving parents and the child if over the age of fourteen had to give their consent to the adoption. 'The Massachusetts statute is particularly notable in that, for the first time the interests of the child were expressly emphasised and the adoption

¹¹³ Barrett, 'Foreign legislation on behalf of destitute and neglected children', pp 147-8.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 152.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 154.

¹¹⁶ Barrett, 'Legislation on behalf of neglected children in America and elsewhere', p. 157.

had to be approved by a judge'.¹¹⁷ Reverend Charles Loring Brace was a prominent and later a controversial figure in the field of American child welfare. He conducted child saving missions under the auspices of the Children's Aid Society that operated from 1853 to 1929. It has been estimated that 100,000 children were resettled in the mid west from New York during this period.¹¹⁸

The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty against Children, a voluntary funded organisation, was established in 1876. By 1892 the New York Society had rescued 30,000 children and three hundred of these societies had opened internationally.¹¹⁹ Massachusetts introduced laws to prevent children's involvement in public displays in 1887 and in 1880. Michigan amended their laws in December 1889 and provisions were made for badly treated children under the age of sixteen who were to be brought under state authority and if necessary removed from parental guardians. Following the Whitehouse Conference convened in 1909, boarding-out inspection and screening procedures were clearly outlined.¹²⁰ Missouri and Illinois were the first two states to introduce the widows' pension in 1911.

During the course of one hundred years, Ireland's social, religious and economic position had altered greatly. Catholic and Protestant relations had continued to deteriorate from the mid-nineteenth century. Religious protagonists such as Paul Cullen and Alexander

¹¹⁷ Burton Sokoloff, 'Antecedents of American adoption' in *The Future of Children*, iii, no. 1 (Spring 1993), pp 17-25.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Barrett, 'Legislation on behalf of neglected children in America and elsewhere', pp 616-31.

¹²⁰ Stephen O'Connor, *Orphan trains: the story of Charles Loring Brace and the children he saved and failed* (Chicago, 2004), p. 297.

Dallas, provoked political and cultural friction that served to heighten sectarianism. The disestablishment of the Church of Ireland redressed the balance of power in Ireland. Divisions between Catholics and Protestants on the issue of home rule challenged two increasingly separate and detached cultures to co-exist in peace. Concurrently, advances were made in social services with the introduction of the poor law and extensive legislation to protect children in the latter part of the century in Ireland and internationally. Such legislation continued to be underpinned by the work of philanthropic organisations of which the Protestant Orphan Society ranked highly.

Chapter 2

Origins and development

The first Protestant orphan society was established in Dublin in 1828. In the years that followed Protestant orphan societies formed throughout Ireland. The main aim of this chapter is to examine the motivations for their foundation. Firstly, the goals set out by the founders and later supporters of the first P.O.S. based in Dublin are considered. Secondly, the time frame for the development of Protestant orphan societies and the links that existed between them are analysed. Thirdly, an account is given of the conflicting proselytising allegations made by both Protestants and Catholics at a time when hostilities between the dominant churches in Ireland had reached new heights.

In 1828, on the threshold of a new era in Ireland, Irish Protestants faced increasingly hostile and open opposition and an uncertain future. The second reformation had begun and a Catholic counter offensive was under way. From all sides, religious and political polemic was inextricably linked and unyielding. The tide was turning and changes to the country's political framework were afoot.

Protestant operative mechanics named Joseph Williams and John Staunton were the driving force behind the Protestant Orphan Society founded on 30 November 1828. According to annual reports, the founding members learned at a funeral of a mutual acquaintance, that the deceased's widow felt compelled from the effects of poverty to give up her children to a Catholic orphan society, as she was unable to secure relief from a Protestant source. The artisans reacted, with 'a reproachful indignation at the non

existence amongst the Protestant community of an asylum for the relief of destitute Protestant orphanage'.¹ They commented on the number of Catholic orphan societies in Dublin and reported that Protestant families subscribed to them. On that winter's day, the 'Protestant Orphan Society' was founded and each founding member 'put down a penny' in the graveyard of St. Catherine's church.

Table 2.1 Catholic orphan societies established in Dublin

orphan society	date of establishment
The Patrician Orphan Society	1750
Christian Doctrine and Orphan Society	1810
St. Andrew's Orphan Society	1812
The Sisters of Charity took over the Trinitarian Orphan Society	1815
St. Peter's Orphan Society	1817
St. Francis' Orphan Society	1817
The Metropolitan Orphan Society	1822
The Malachean Orphan Society	1822
St. Nicholas of Myra Orphan Society	1825
St. John of the Cross Orphan Society	1826
St. Vincent De Paul Orphan Society	1826
St. Michael's Orphan Society	1827
St. Patrick's Orphan Society	1827
Society for Destitute Orphans	1828
St. Stephens's Orphan Society	1828

Source: Desmond J. Keenan, *The Catholic Church in nineteenth-century Ireland, a sociological study* (Dublin, 1983), p. 127.

¹ Annual report, 1830 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/1/1, p.2).

Eighteenth century Catholic orphan societies such as the Patrician Orphan Society placed children in the homes of families in Kildare. (Fosterage was an ancient Irish custom²). Many of the early Catholic run orphan societies also set up in Cork and Waterford were founded by laymen.³ Nine of the societies were established in Dublin from 1822 to 1829 and do not appear to have been adequately funded or organised on a large scale. In total, three of these societies admitted 480 children during the period 1817-40.⁴ While these orphan societies did not have a major impact individually, when combined they overtook the efforts of a society such as the P.O.S. in Dublin that admitted 280 orphans in the same period. By 1834, twenty-four Catholic organisations existed in Dublin that provided for 800 orphans.⁵

The P.O.S. boarded-out children primarily in County Wicklow, and later apprenticed them to Protestant masters and mistresses. The aims of the P.O.S. were two-fold, first, to preserve the children's faith and second, to prevent the destitution of Protestant widows and children. 'Conversion in Irish history is most easily thought of as what Protestants hoped to do to Catholics. However, there was always a reverse flow of Protestants to Catholics as well'.⁶ J. Hill has noted that Fr. Cornelius Nary, an eighteenth century Dublin priest, had 'retained hopes and strategies for the conversion of Protestants'.⁷ Despite Bishop Doyle's suggestion of a union between the churches in 1824, anti-Protestant as well as anti-Catholic sentiment was fierce in the late 1820s as the

² Kenneth Milne, *The Irish charter schools, 1730-1830* (Dublin, 1997), p.143

³ Robins, *The lost children*, p. 119.

⁴ Desmond J. Keenan, *The Catholic church in nineteenth century Ireland* (Dublin, 1983), p. 127.

⁵ Robins, *The lost children*, p. 119.

⁶ Joseph Liechty, 'The problem of sectarianism and the Church of Ireland' in A. Ford, J. McGuire, and K. Milne (eds), *As by law established, the Church of Ireland since the reformation* (Dublin, 1995), p. 221.

⁷ Ibid.

emancipation campaign gained momentum.⁸

Evangelical bible societies were in operation during this period on a wide scale. ‘The need to evangelise, strongly felt, especially in the early nineteenth century, by both Catholics and Protestants, ensured that tension arose over the care of children’.⁹ Joseph Robins has concluded that Catholic orphan societies were established to protect Catholic children from Protestant evangelical proselytising efforts. For those who founded the P.O.S. and those who later supported it, Catholic orphan societies represented yet another symbol of Catholic resurgence and consequently a serious threat to the Protestant community, already inflamed by economic decline, consequent loss of status, political instability and evangelical anti-Catholic spirit.

Particularly in urban areas, the Protestant artisan and working class minority were at risk of cultural assimilation into the Catholic population. A number of Protestant artisan and unskilled workers lived in many of the poorest parishes in Dublin and endured unemployment and poverty throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth century. The better off classes migrated to the newly formed suburbs throughout the century and once comfortable residential homes became tenement slum dwellings.¹⁰ Through their migration out of the city, upper class Protestants became gradually more detached from the poverty that befell Dublin’s tenement dwellers. Societies such as the A.R.D.P.¹¹ and the P.O.S. highlighted the fall in status experienced by many Protestant artisans.

⁸ Whelan, *The bible war in Ireland*, p.132.

⁹ Luddy, *Women & philanthropy*, p.77.

¹⁰ John Crawford, *The Church of Ireland in Victorian Dublin* (Dublin, 2005), p. 47.

¹¹ Association for the Relief of Distressed Protestants.

By 1834, in Dublin, Anglicans numbered 106,599 (21%), Roman Catholics 391,006 (78%), Presbyterians, 2,290 and 2,082 Protestant dissenters.¹² By 1836, Protestants resided in inner city parishes to the number of ‘2,700 (St. Michan’s), 2,380 (St. Paul’s), 2,808 (St. George’s) and 6,946 (St. Thomas’s)’.¹³ Protestants and Catholics lived side by side. With roughly three Catholics for every Protestant in Dublin,¹⁴ these urban communities above all others were most likely to develop a siege mentality.

The range and frequency of religious practices exercised by Catholics, outside the realms of church authority served to underpin differences between the two peoples:

Celebration of certain festivals, making turning points in the agricultural year, for example St. Brigid’s day when crosses were woven from rushes and hung in the house and farm buildings to provide protection for the coming year. On May Eve and St. John’s Eve both marked by the lighting of bonfires, which became the focus both for protective rituals and for boisterous celebration. A similar combination of ceremonial and festive elements was seen in patterns, held at a holy well or other sacred site on the feast day of the saint to whom that site was supposedly dedicated.¹⁵

The Irish culture was resilient. ‘The ascendancy people had had so little cultural impact even in Leinster where they had been so strong for so long’.¹⁶ While wealthy Protestants could separate themselves from the Catholic majority if they wished, in many cases unemployed artisans and working class Protestants could not. Inter church marriages were also a cause of this cultural absorption. ‘At all times the culturally besieged Protestants feared assimilation through intermarriage and sometimes feared annihilation

¹² Donald H. Akenson, *The Church of Ireland, 1800-85* (London, 1971), p. 165.

¹³ Kenneth Milne, *Protestant Aid, 1836-1936: a history of the Association for the Relief of Distressed Protestants* (Dublin, 1986), p. 3.

¹⁴ Jacqueline Hill, ‘The Protestant response to repeal: the case of the Dublin working class’ in F.S. Lyons and R. J. Hawkins (eds), *Ireland under the union: varieties of tension, essays in honour of T.W. Moody* (Oxford, 1980), p.35.

¹⁵ Connolly, *Religion & society*, pp 49-50.

¹⁶ Bowen, *Protestant crusade*, p. 132.

through some kind of jacquerie'.¹⁷ Dramatic population increases in Dublin from 1821 exasperated the situation further when competition for jobs increased.

Table 2.2 Population of Dublin city, 1821-81.

year	male	female	total	percentage change
1821	82,648	95,955	178,603	-
1831	91,557	112,598	204,155	14.31 +
1841	104,630	128,096	232,726	13.99 +
1851	119,181	139,188	258,369	11.02 +
1861	118,283	136,525	254,808	1.38 -
1871	115,618	130,708	246,326	3.33 -
1881	119,806	129,796	249,602	1.33 -

Source: W.E. Vaughan and A. J. Fitzpatrick (eds), *Irish historical statistics: population 1821-1971* (Dublin, 1978), p. 5.

Despite the religious concerns, the falling economic status of Protestant artisans was a primary impetus for its establishment. The society's organisers arranged their first meeting convened by advertisement to the public on 24 May 1829. Six committee members were appointed at the first official P.O.S. meeting held in the Tailor's Hall, Back Lane in the Christ Church area.¹⁸ Members of the first committee included Joshua Tate, Thomas Elward, Samuel Rea, Abel Mcintosh, John Staunton and John Britain. It was decided at this meeting that a further twenty-four members would be appointed to collect on behalf of the committee.¹⁹ These members assembled every Tuesday evening at eight o'clock.

¹⁷ Bowen, *Protestant crusade*, p. 132.

¹⁸ Tailor's Hall dates to 1706, at this point one of the largest guild halls in Dublin, it was also used by hosiers, saddlers and tanners. It provided the location for meetings of societies such as the P.O.S. and for social gatherings. Most famously, Wolfe tone met with the United Irishmen.

¹⁹ Papers relating to the rules and schemes governing the society, 1829 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/6/2/1).

A manuscript document dated 1829 recorded the objectives of the society:

Finding it necessary as far as in our power to promote the comfort of Protestant widows and deeply impressed with their exigency. We in conformity with the true spirit of our own religion deem it expedient to come forward and use every effort to affect a measure and to render every exertion and assistance to alleviate their sufferings.²⁰

The society provided relief for the most destitute of Protestant orphans only, under the age of eight years and offered them 'blessings of a moral and religious education and afford them such pecuniary means of relief as the funds of the society might with safety permit'.²¹ In the months that followed funds enabled the admission of nine orphans.

Subscribing to the P.O.S. was similar to investing in a life assurance policy. In the event of death, the P.O.S. was at hand to take responsibility for the children, if required to do so. The founding members viewed the P.O.S. as a solution to the destitution they had witnessed in their own community. 'In communion with our fellow Protestants of the city of Dublin we are called upon at a period when poverty and distress surround the dwellings of Protestant widows'.²² Economically, artisans had been hit hard by slow downs in the textile industry based in the Liberties. In 1792, there were 60 master clothiers, 400 broad cloth looms, and 100 looms in the Liberties that employed approximately five thousand people.²³ The silk trade dominated by Protestants had experienced downturns from the eighteenth century.²⁴ The Napoleonic wars ended in 1815 and trade slackened. The silk trade suffered further after 1824 once duties that had once protected industries such as silk, wool and cotton manufacturers from English

²⁰ Papers relating to rules and schemes governing the society, 1829 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/6/2/1).

²¹ Annual report, 1830 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/1/1, p.8).

²² Papers relating to rules and schemes governing the society, 1829 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/6/2/1).

²³ Samuel Lewis, *Irish topographical dictionary*, i (London, 1837), p. 534.

²⁴ Hill, *From patriots to unionists*, p. 201.

competition were brought to an end. The cost of this to the respective trades was severe, production and employment decreased by more than fifty percent.²⁵ An 1834 petition made by the 500 handloom weavers still in business claimed that 9,000 weavers had worked in the city in 1800.²⁶

Relaxation of the penal laws between 1772 and 1793 and the likelihood of full emancipation meant that Catholics' status was on the rise. Struggling Protestant artisans no doubt envisioned a very different Dublin with Catholics taking the dominant role in all areas of public and religious life. The corporation in Dublin opposed Catholic emancipation and aimed at upholding Protestant interests.²⁷

Economic depression gripped Ireland and England from 1839 to 1842, with low grain and meat prices, crop failures and further serious downturns in the textile industry. Conditions were ripe to apportion blame for the economic depression. Catholic tradesmen considered the act of union a cause in the decline and Protestants may have felt pressure to support repeal.²⁸ However, they were led in a different direction by evangelical clergyman Tresham Gregg (not supported by middle or upper class Protestants), which led to the formation of the Dublin Protestant Operative Association in 1841.²⁹ Unemployment gave rise to poverty, competition for jobs and a reliance on the poor law. 'Protestants and Catholics were to be treated alike, and in the elections for

²⁵ Oliver McDonagh, 'The age of O'Connell, 1830-45' in W.E. Vaughan (ed.), *A new history of Ireland*, v (Oxford, 1989), p. 228.

²⁶ Cormac Ó'Gráda, *Ireland, a new economic history, 1780-1939* (Oxford, 1994), p. 277.

²⁷ Hill, *From patriots to unionists*, p. 341.

²⁸ Jacqueline Hill, 'The Protestant response to repeal: the case of the Dublin working class' in F.S. Lyons and R. J. Hawkins (eds), *Ireland under the union: varieties of tension* (Oxford, 1980), p. 43.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, pp 35-67.

poor-law guardians in Dublin, Catholics had won a majority of the new posts'.³⁰ A combination of these changes and anti-tithe agrarian disturbances elsewhere led to wide-scale Protestant emigration.

It is estimated that from late in the eighteenth century to the 1840s, 500,000 Protestants emigrated from southern Ireland.³¹ Seven hundred and ten Protestant families hailing from Carlow and Wexford comprising four thousand and twenty-seven individuals departed from Ireland, 29 November 1817.³² Violent disturbances over the tithe issue drove many out of the country. 'Earl Grey reported to the House of Lords that in the year 1832 enforced payment of tithe had resulted in 242 homicides, 1,179 robberies, 401 burglaries, 568 burning, 290 houghings of cattle, 161 serious assaults, 203 riots, and 723 attacks on houses'.³³ Tensions between Protestants and Catholics compounded throughout the era of tithe disturbances.

Protestant 'middle men' were amongst those who emigrated prior to the famine, middle men were head tenants who sublet their land to other tenants. They were also investors, acted as magistrates and employers. Their departure seriously compromised the economic stability of shopkeepers, small farmers, artisans and affected the infrastructure of the ascendancy class.³⁴

³⁰ Jacqueline Hill, 'The Protestant response to repeal: the case of the Dublin working class' in F.S. Lyons and R. J. Hawkins (eds), *Ireland under the union: varieties of tension* (Oxford, 1980), p. 43.

³¹ Kerby Miller, 'No middle ground: the erosion of the Protestant middle class in southern Ireland during the pre-famine era' in *Huntington Library Quarterly*, xlix (1986), p. 285.

³² 'A release of Protestant families preparing to emigrate', 29 Nov. 1817, 384, i, pp 178-87, N.A.C. m.c. B-876 ([http: www.shipslist.com](http://www.shipslist.com)) (10 Oct. 2007).

³³ Desmond Bowen, *Souperism, myth or reality?* (Cork, 1970), p. 38.

³⁴ Miller, 'No middle ground: the erosion of the Protestant middle class', p. 285.

A number of factors then, motivated Protestant artisans to establish and support the P.O.S. Their own fallen economic status, a surge in evangelical and thus philanthropic zeal gained from the bible societies and Methodist preaching and an urgency to protect the rising generation of Protestants and thus Protestant interests in the face of Catholic emancipation. Catholic orphan societies already in existence influenced the organisers of the P.O.S. who aimed to provide the same principle of care for their own children. The P.O.S. adopted similar fundraising methods to those used by bible societies such as the collection of subscriptions.³⁵

2.1 Clergymen and the P.O.S.

Nine months following the establishment of the P.O.S. its first publicly advertised meeting in 1829 attracted the attention of Church of Ireland clergymen. ‘This circumstance attracted the attention of some Protestant clergymen and highly respectable laymen who attached themselves to the society and in the most efficient manner have zealously exercised their influence on its behalf’.³⁶ The Church of Ireland reforms post union included church building and the formation of moral reform agencies. Evangelicalism had also made its mark on the laity and initially a small section of Church of Ireland lower clergymen. The established church realised that the Methodist movement was gaining ground amongst the lower orders, which posed a threat to their authority that encouraged improvement of their own religious practice.³⁷

³⁵ Discussed in chapter 3.

³⁶ Annual report, 1831 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/1/1, p.7).

³⁷ Whelan, *The bible war in Ireland*, p. 7.

Prior to the reforms that occurred in the Church of Ireland from 1800-30, there was little to keep the poor in the Church of Ireland. 'The poor of the Protestant persuasion are almost without religion: in the country they speak with more derision and contempt of their own clergy, than the poor of the Catholic persuasion think it decent to do. In the towns, they become Roman Catholics or Dissenters'.³⁸ In 1831, in spite of the prevalence of bible societies and moral reform agencies, clergymen speaking on behalf of the P.O.S. claimed that the Church of Ireland was guilty of neglecting its people. They warned that they should be anxious to improve the condition of those who remained in the church. Clergymen also contended that in parts of Ireland Protestants remained adherents of that religion at their own personal risk.³⁹ Many of whom it was claimed would have to emigrate if they did not wish to forsake their religion. Through the P.O.S., clergymen involved in the inspection of children in their foster homes had the opportunity to monitor the moral and religious habits of the lower classes.

The Home Mission Society established in 1828 was active in promoting the evangelical message to clergymen of the Church of Ireland.⁴⁰ The P.O.S. received the support of a large number of clergymen, some of whom were part of the growing evangelical wing in the Church of Ireland while others were not. The P.O.S. did not operate as a missionary society like the A.P.C.K., the Irish Society, the Scripture Readers' Society⁴¹ or the Church Home Mission. However, it was closely affiliated with the Church of Ireland, and therefore represented one part of the wider movement in the church at this time. The

³⁸ Bowen, *Protestant crusade*, p. 61.

³⁹ Annual report, 1831 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/1/1, p. 30).

⁴⁰ Irene Whelan, 'The bible gentry: Evangelical religion, aristocracy, and the new moral order in the early nineteenth century' in C. Gribben, A. Holmes (eds), *Protestant millennialism, evangelicalism and Irish society, 1790-2005* (London, 2006), p. 77.

⁴¹ Established in 1822.

Church of Ireland was concerned with the progression of Protestantism as well as its preservation. The P.O.S. in Dublin sought to protect the faith of children whose deceased parents were Protestant, this included members of the Church of Ireland, Presbyterians and Methodists. (The two latter churches established their own separate orphan societies in 1866 and 1870 respectively).

Once clergymen became involved in the society, its management structure became more sophisticated. In place of the previous stand-alone committee, there existed two, the first included fifteen clergymen and six gentleman. Two additional clergymen acted as secretaries and another as treasurer. Twenty-seven laymen (mainly Protestant artisans) made up the second committee of collectors, one of whom acted as secretary.⁴² In 1830, vice presidents of the society in Dublin included the provost of Trinity College and the Dean of St. Patrick's. Clergymen and laymen met every Friday at three o'clock at Mr. Watson's, No. 7, Capel Street. The collectors' committee met at the Tailors Hall, Back Lane, every Tuesday evening at eight o'clock and collected subscriptions of one penny per week or upwards from those wishing to contribute to the society. Members of the committee suggested that its management structure was in contrast to other leading charities:

It differs from every other charitable association in this country, as the government of the society is not as in other societies confined to the wealthier classes of subscribers. All classes poor as well as rich are eligible and by existing laws a certain number of both must annually be elected.⁴³

⁴² See P.O.S. management structure, p. 401.

⁴³ Annual report, 1830 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/1/1, p.11).

In addition, both committees shared the same powers and one committee could not make a final decision on any matter without the consent of the other committee:

The general committee is divided into two branches; or rather the business of the society is conducted by two committees one composed of clergy and others composed exclusively of operative mechanics and other respectable individuals of inferior station. These two committees have equal powers, have exactly the same duties to perform and no act of one is valid until sanctioned by the other.⁴⁴

In subsequent years, the above system became unworkable mainly because of differing opinions and miscommunication between the two committees that led to delays in the decision making process.⁴⁵ The operative mechanics did not retain their own committee. From the late 1830s, clergymen dominated the society. The P.O.S. office was located at 16 Upper Sackville Street and in later years at 28 Molesworth Street.

The Archbishop of Dublin acted as patron of the P.O.S. in Dublin. Archbishop William Magee was the first patron. Initially, the P.O.S. approached the Primate of Armagh to assume the role. However, he suggested that as the society was located in Dublin, the position would be better suited to the archbishop. ‘Your committee have further to state that a manuscript copy of the rules having been laid before his grace the Archbishop of Dublin he kindly consented to become our patron and liberally contributed towards our funds’.⁴⁶ Magee most probably viewed the society as a worthy cause but one that should continue to operate as a church affiliated organisation. ‘He therefore did not so much give evangelicals a strategy, rather he sought to harness the rising evangelical impulse

⁴⁴ Annual report, 1830 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/1/1, p.11).

⁴⁵ Annual report, 1834 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/1/1, p. 13).

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 9.

under the control and authority of the established church'.⁴⁷ He referred to the P.O.S. as a means to counteract Roman Catholic proselytising.

The strident language expressed in the first annual report of 1830 demonstrates the weight of evangelical zeal that had permeated a section of the Church of Ireland at this juncture. 'We have now hoisted the banner of scriptural Protestantism and there is no Protestant from the Giant's Causeway to Cape Clear who will not rank himself amongst our army'.⁴⁸ A number of prominent evangelical clergymen were members of the first P.O.S. committee.

Rev. Caesar Otway was a member of the P.O.S. committee in 1830. Reverend Otway was born in 1780 and died in 1842. He was assistant chaplain at Leeson Street Magdalen Chapel. In 1825 he set up the *Christian Examiner* with Joseph Henderson Singer. Otway was also literary editor of the *Dublin Penny Journal* and wrote under the pseudonym of 'Terence O'Toole'. 'Evangelicals used such periodicals to promote revival and their very publication "reflected the growth of denominationalism and the concomitant decline of ecumenical protestant evangelicalism".⁴⁹ He was also a travel writer.

Joseph Henderson Singer was born in County Dublin in October 1786. His father James Singer was the deputy commissioner-general in Ireland. J. H. Singer studied at Trinity College Dublin and was 'regarded as the most influential leader of the Evangelical party

⁴⁷ Hill, *From patriots to unionists*, p. 335.

⁴⁸ Annual report, 1830 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/1/1, p. 30).

⁴⁹ Acheson, *A history of the Church of Ireland*, p. 155.

in the Church of Ireland.⁵⁰ Singer was also co-founder of the Established Church Home Mission ‘with the avowed intent of reviving the Church according to evangelical values by proselytising among Roman Catholics’.⁵¹ He was chaplain of the Magdalen Asylum and appointed bishop of Meath in September 1852. He died 16 July 1866. An entry in a register of incoming letters dated 10 May 1833 referred to Rev. Dr. Singer. It stated that ‘he expressed a desire that his name might be removed from the list of the committee’.⁵² There is no record of the motivation for his request. However, annual reports confirm that he continued his involvement with society after this time.⁵³

George Blacker was a Church of Ireland clergyman born in 1791. A Trinity graduate he served for several years as curate of St. Andrews, he was also chaplain of the city corporation.⁵⁴ Rev. Blacker became vicar of Maynooth in 1840 where he continued to live until his death in 1871. He wrote local histories such as the *Castle of Maynooth* in 1853. Rev. Blacker served on the P.O.S. committee from its earliest years.⁵⁵

John Richard Darley was born in 1799. He was bishop of Kilmore, Elphin and Ardagh. Darley was a graduate of Trinity. He was a school master for many years in Dundalk. He married the sister of William Conyngham Plunket in 1851. He was an evangelical who ‘sought to reunite the Primitive Methodists in Ireland with the Church of Ireland’.⁵⁶ He died in Cavan in 1884.

⁵⁰ Oxford dictionary of national biography ([http:// www.oxforddnb.com](http://www.oxforddnb.com))(9 June 2008).

⁵¹ Bowen, *Protestant crusade*, p. 67.

⁵² Register of incoming letters, 10 May 1833 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers MS 1045/3/11).

⁵³ Annual report, 1835 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/1/1, p. 10).

⁵⁴ Oxford dictionary of national biography ([http:// www.oxforddnb.com](http://www.oxforddnb.com))(9 June 2008).

⁵⁵ Annual report, 1830 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 10451/1).

⁵⁶ Oxford dictionary of national biography ([http:// www.oxforddnb.com](http://www.oxforddnb.com))(9 June 2008).

John Gregg, an evangelical clergyman and an influential preacher was born in 1798. He was bishop of Cork, Cloyne and Ross.⁵⁷ Trinity Church was built for him in 1839 and it remained the epicentre for evangelicals in Dublin. Gregg preached charity sermons on behalf of the P.O.S. in Dublin and was a member of the committee in later years.

The Incorporated Society in Dublin for Promoting English Protestant Schools in Ireland headed the administration of the charter schools from Wednesday 6 February 1733/34.⁵⁸ In 1740, it was decided that Protestant children should only make up twenty per cent of the total numbers in the schools, which was reduced to ten per cent in 1745, and these children had to be orphans.⁵⁹ From 1775 to 1803,⁶⁰ only Catholic children were admitted. From 1803 onwards, Protestants and Catholics were received by the schools.⁶¹ Discovery of gross negligence following an investigation in 1825 called an eventual halt to the once large parliamentary grants. The schools received their last grants in 1828 in the amount of £12,000 and £6,000 in 1829, which led to their eventual closure.⁶²

With a major reduction in the number of schools and no provisions made in their stead, Protestant orphans became more susceptible to destitution. At annual meetings, clergymen who campaigned on behalf of the P.O.S. suggested that the closure of the charter schools and parochial boarding schools had left a gap in the relief offered to Protestants. 'The large and extended charter schools receive no children and the

⁵⁷ Oxford dictionary of national biography ([http:// www.oxforddnb.com](http://www.oxforddnb.com))(June 2008).

⁵⁸ Kenneth Milne, *The Irish charter schools, 1730-1830* (Dublin, 1997), p. 23.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

⁶⁰ D.H. Akenson, 'Pre-university education, 1782-1870' in W.E. Vaughan (ed.), *A new history of Ireland*, v (Oxford, 1989), p. 526.

⁶¹ Robins, *The lost children*, p. 87.

⁶² Nigel Yates, *The religious condition of Ireland, 1750-1850* (Oxford, 2006), p.54.

parochial boarding schools⁶³ in the poorest parishes do not exist and in all are quite unable to meet the distressing cases which abound'.⁶⁴ According to P.O.S. annual reports, it was believed that the demands of Protestant orphans could be met with Protestant orphan societies.

Other Protestant run charitable organisations that provided for orphaned children prior to 1828 included the Masonic Female Orphan School, established in 1792, a boarding school for the daughters of deceased freemasons, Pleasant's Asylum formed in 1815 and St. Thomas' Female Orphanage formed in 1768 to provide education and lodging for daughters of respectable parents. The Female Orphan House, established in 1790 also housed destitute orphans. In many cases, these orphanages did not admit children unless both parents were deceased. Widows gained some relief from the Moravian widow's house established in 1802. The P.O.S. hoped to assist children whose parents were both deceased as well as widows and their dependents. Clergymen, who later applied to the P.O.S. on behalf of families in distress, regularly commented on the lack of available and appropriate relief systems.

The gentry also became involved in the P.O.S. In many cases, the organisers of the society in Dublin and later Protestant orphan societies applied to the local gentry to request their support, which they might not otherwise have offered.⁶⁵ Once their attention was drawn to the P.O.S. in Dublin, influential landlords foresaw that their involvement could redefine relations between the lower and upper classes. 'Your pastors, your

⁶³ Parochial schools under Henry VIII.

⁶⁴ Annual report, 1830 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/1/1, p.11).

⁶⁵ See chapter 3 on funding.

benefactors, whom the Lord has placed higher than yourselves, rescue your orphans from distress to which circumstances may firmly hope that there is a bond of union formed between the higher and lower classes of Protestantism'.⁶⁶ Growing numbers of the gentry such as Lord Farnham, Lord Powerscourt and the Earl of Roden became associated with the evangelical section of the Church of Ireland in the early nineteenth century and were key figures in the 'second reformation' movement.⁶⁷ Lord Farnham founded the Cavan Association for Promoting the 'Second Reformation' in Ireland.⁶⁸ It was believed that if Ireland was Protestant in character, political peace and advances in industry would follow. Ulster was referred to as an example of the pacifying and progressive influence of Protestantism where crime rates were lower.

The Earl of Roden was a committed evangelical, who preached sermons and taught in Sunday schools on his estate in County Down. He held public meetings in 1834 and 1837 to appeal to Protestants for their support of the Church of Ireland. He also shared connections with the controversial Achill island mission set up by Edward Nangle in the 1830s. He was grand master of the Orange Order, and an ardent protester against the disestablishment of the Church of Ireland. 'The most emphatic apologists for the Church of Ireland depicted it as the only institution with the capacity to withstand the onslaught of Catholic resurgence'.⁶⁹ The Earl of Roden's place in the history of the P.O.S. in Dublin began in 1833 when he became one of its patrons. He occasionally presided over meetings and garnered support for its cause.

⁶⁶ Annual report, 1830 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/1/1, p.9).

⁶⁷ Irene Whelan, 'The bible gentry' in C. Gribben and A. Holmes (eds), *Protestant millennialism, evangelicalism and Irish society, 1790-2005* (London, 2006), p. 76.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 77.

Speakers at annual meetings in Dublin referred to the P.O.S. as a means to stem the tide of Protestant emigration with the children representing future skilled workers, who could replace the many Protestants who had or who were intending to leave Ireland.⁷⁰ To strengthen Protestant infrastructure in the face of the Catholic middle class growing political force was certainly on the minds of the better off classes.

The Cork P.O.S. stated in later years that, 'it has been a great cause of regret that emigration had gone to such an extent from this country that a fearful diminution had taken place among the Protestant population'.⁷¹ The C.P.O.U. referred to the great need for trades people in an annual report featured in the *Irish Times* in 1861:

The children of the nobility were all well off, being born with silver spoons in their mouths; but the little children of the poor classes were not a whit less interesting—they were the very foundation of society. What would they do for furniture but for the trades people? What would they do for those things produced by manual labour but for the labouring population?⁷²

The better off depended on artisans and the working class as components of their class structure that was weakened through the emigration of agriculturalists and artisans. The gentry considered the P.O.S., a winning formula that would preserve a Protestant workforce and protect the interests of the Church of Ireland in the future.

The Association for Relief to Distressed Protestants formed in 1836. Its founding members were equally concerned with the preservation of the established church's influence in Ireland:

⁷⁰ Annual report, 1832 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/1/1).

⁷¹ Minutes of committee meetings, 1856 (R.C.B.L. Cork P.O.S. papers MS 519.1.1).

⁷² *Irish Times*, 3 Apr. 1861.

A number of friends principally members of the Irish Metropolitan Conservative Society a political grouping that was totally opposed to such measures as the reform of the Irish corporations and existed to maintain Protestant influence in Irish life, united for the purpose of forming the association for the relief of distressed Protestants exclusively.⁷³

Conservative Protestants set up the Protestant Association of Ireland and the Protestant Conservative Society during the period 1832 to 1836.⁷⁴ Therefore, the Protestant drive to protect the established church was under way.

2.2 *The C.P.O.U.*

The original rules that governed the P.O.S. as set out by the artisan founders stated that only children of Protestant parentage were admissible. None the less, committee members held conflicting views regarding the religious dimension of the admission policy. Following the receipt of several urgent applications from families of mixed marriages, the committee deliberated on whether they should reconsider the admission of these children. They concluded that to do so would be in violation of the society's original principles.⁷⁵

On this basis, in 1830 they reconfirmed their ruling to receive only children whose parents were both Protestant. 'In order therefore that this question might be set at rest for ever a motion was submitted to this effect that the orphans of Roman Catholics either on the father or mothers side be and are inadmissible into the exclusively Protestant

⁷³ Milne, *Protestant Aid*, p.4.

⁷⁴ Jacqueline Hill, 'The Protestant response to repeal: the case of the Dublin working class' in F.S. Lyons and R. J. Hawkins (eds), *Ireland under the union: varieties of tension* (Oxford, 1980), p. 40.

⁷⁵ Minutes of committee meetings, 1830 (MS 1045/2/1).

society'.⁷⁶ However, not all of the committee members agreed with this policy. 'In consequence of the decision of the committee namely, that none but the orphans of Protestant parents be admissible in this society. That several of the committee have taken offence at the same and have resigned up their collection books and places on the committee'.⁷⁷ A subsequent resolution requested the formal resignation of those who objected to the rule with immediate effect.

Animosity between committee members over this issue reached its peak when those in opposition to the rule chose to establish a separate society titled the Charitable Protestant Orphan Union. 'We have heard with upset that more seceding members have endeavoured to establish a society in opposition to this exclusively Protestant institution by the illegitimate and degrading means of impugning the principles and maligning the character of its friends'.⁷⁸ The P.O.S. claimed that the newly organised C.P.O.U. had attempted to use 'undue influence' to gain the support of their subscribers.

The relationship between the two societies remained acrimonious for up to seven months. After this time, the P.O.S. committee members suggested on 9 November 1830 that all Protestants should refrain from any further divisions that would only serve to weaken the Church of Ireland. However, the two societies continued to work separately until their amalgamation on 1 November 1898. Each had their own committee and subscribers, annual reports and financial management.

⁷⁶ Annual report, 1830 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/1/1, p.12).

⁷⁷ Minutes of committee meetings, 30 Mar. 1830 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/2/1/1, p. 35).

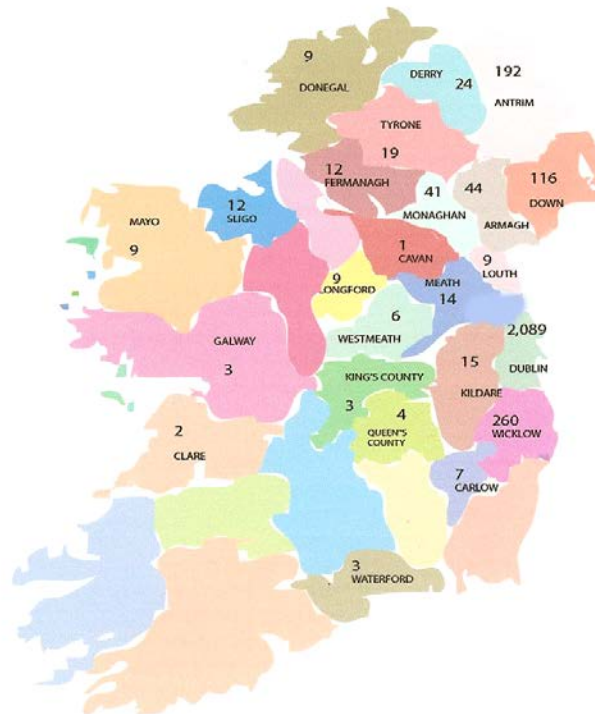
⁷⁸ Ibid.

2.3 Development

The Protestant orphan society concept did not remain isolated to Dublin. The idea spread with the establishment of auxiliaries and county Protestant orphan societies in regional areas. Organisers referred to Protestant orphan societies as benevolent charities associated with the Church of Ireland. The P.O.S. in Dublin stressed the importance of preventing Protestant children from entering workhouses. They suggested that this was a strong impetus for the extension of their services. Increases in the number of evangelical clergymen in the Church of Ireland whose duty it was to promote and protect Protestantism were also factors.

The following map illustrates the number of children from Dublin and other counties that the P.O.S. in Dublin admitted from its establishment to 1895. The figures highlight the already strong demand for places from families who resided in the Dublin and Wicklow areas without the further pressure of applications from other regional counties. (The figures for Dublin include some applicants from England who had returned home to Dublin following the death of their husband).

Profile of children's origins 1828-95



Source: Annual report, 1895 (N.A.I, POS papers, MS 1045/1/1)

The P.O.S. in Dublin continued to serve the Protestant community in areas where a county society had not yet been set up which placed considerable strain on their administrative capabilities. In 1865, the P.O.S. in Dublin noted that its sphere of operation embraced areas that contained two thirds of the country's Protestant population, Antrim, Armagh, Down, Dublin, Kildare, Monaghan and Wicklow:⁷⁹

Surely, the most destitute of the destitute are the helpless orphans. None of the great public measures of relief reached them, this society and the various local societies which stimulated by its example, have been established in several counties and constitute a great relief to which orphans of our suffering brethren can look for permanent aid. The parent society received the claims of orphanage in twelve counties in Ireland independent of the metropolis.⁸⁰

⁷⁹ Annual report, 1865 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/1/1, p. 31).

⁸⁰ Annual report, 1847 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/1/1, p. 17).

The actual development of the society name on a nationwide basis began with the foundation of auxiliaries. Each auxiliary that collected sufficient funds could recommend orphans from their parish for admission to the P.O.S. in Dublin. They opted either to co-exist with the P.O.S. in Dublin or to separate and open their own society. In some cases, if the P.O.S. in Dublin refused the admission of a child or children recommended by an auxiliary because of age limits, or because of a lack in funds, that auxiliary and its subscribers may have viewed this with resentment. For instance, the P.O.S. auxiliary in Arklow threatened to form its own orphan society for this very reason.⁸¹ This example suggests that if the rules laid down by the P.O.S. in Dublin conflicted with the subscribers wishes, it became a natural progression for them to establish an independent Protestant orphan society. The P.O.S. in Dublin encouraged and welcomed the foundation of new orphan societies. They anticipated that this would reduce the applications made to their society and at the same time assert Protestant influence in regional areas.

Newly formed societies communicated with the parent body primarily in the initial months of their establishment to seek advice on appropriate salaries and financial management. The Tipperary P.O.S. resolved at their inaugural meeting held at the Courthouse, Clonmel, 16 December 1835, that ‘requests be made to Protestant Orphan Society in Dublin for information respecting the duties of the assistant secretary, the annual expense of each orphan and the salary allowed to nurses’.⁸² It should be remembered that prior to the establishment of a county society, the P.O.S. in Dublin may already have admitted children from that county. To prevent the destabilisation of these

⁸¹ Rev. R.C. Hallows, ‘A plea on behalf of orphans left unprovided for by our church’ 1895 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers MS 1045/1/2/2, p.8).

⁸² Minutes of committee meetings, 16 Dec. 1835 (N.L.I., Tipperary P.O.S. papers, MS 32,521-32,538).

placements, on the establishment of a county P.O.S., for example, County Monaghan, children remained under the direction of the Dublin P.O.S. Gradual transferral of children most recently admitted to the P.O.S. in Dublin followed. During this period, the County Monaghan society was liable for the maintenance of the children. In 1871, one year following its formation, the County Monaghan P.O.S. owed the P.O.S. in Dublin £57.11s..2d. towards the children's upkeep.

Two identifiable phases of development took place. The initial phase occurred from 1828 to 1844 and the second commenced following the devastation of the famine era and concluded in 1870. During the years 1828 to 1844, twenty-two Protestant orphan societies were established. Auxiliaries were also set up in most parishes. At this time the Church of Ireland was training ministers, engaged in church building and heavily involved in poor relief.⁸³ The Monkstown P.O.S. opened in 1830. The Cork P.O.S. formed in 1832, in response to the effects of the cholera epidemic. The Limerick P.O.S. was founded to meet the demands of the cholera crisis in their locality. Rev. R. O'Callaghan, vicar of Clogheen established the Tipperary P.O.S. on Tuesday 8 December 1835.

The Meath P.O.S. was founded on Friday 13 September 1844 at a public meeting held in the Courthouse, Kells. Lord Dunsaney was the first president. The first honorary secretary was John Tisdall, Esq. of Charlesfort and the first honorary secretary Rev. Anthony Blackburne, rector of Kilshine.⁸⁴ The Carlow P.O.S. was established in October

⁸³ Acheson, *A history of the Church of Ireland*, p. 139.

⁸⁴ Rev. Rowland Athey, 'A short history of the Meath Protestant Orphan Society' (Meath, 1966), p. 7.

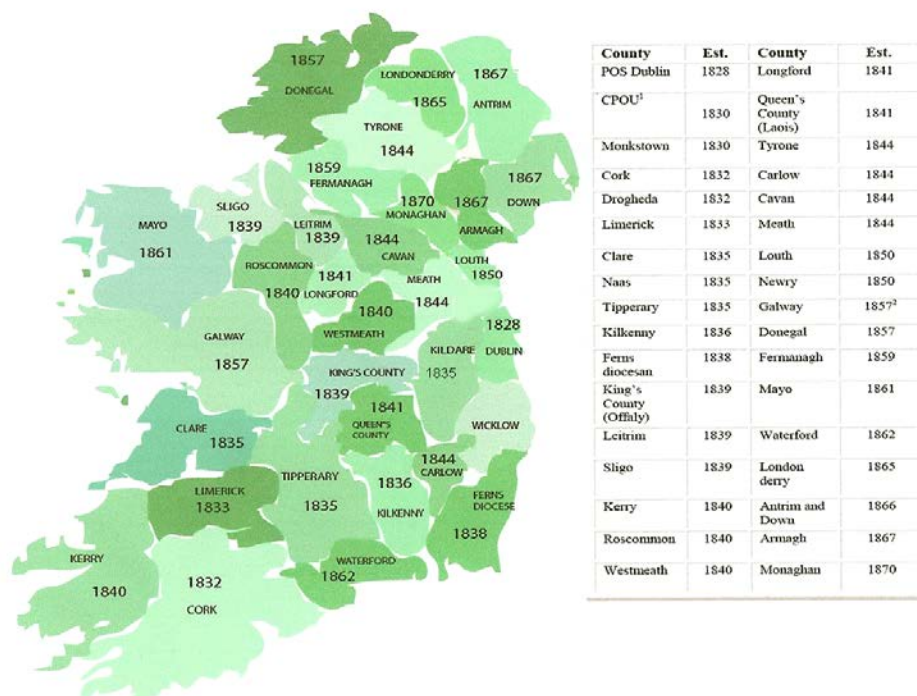
1844. According to its rules, if its funds permitted the committee considered families in very poor circumstances as well as orphans eligible for assistance. In the year 1847, 1,785 children were under the guardianship of various Protestant orphan societies throughout Ireland.

Although inspired by the parent body (the P.O.S. in Dublin), for the most part county Protestant orphan societies operated independently and amended their rules to suit their own circumstances. This meant that among other variations in policy, specific Protestant orphan societies chose to admit children of mixed marriages and others did not. 'It became clear that in areas where Catholicism was strong, Protestantism needed not only to be promoted but also protected'.⁸⁵ However, the aims of all the Protestant orphan societies followed that of Dublin, to protect Protestant children's faith and physical well-being and at the same time prevent the extinction of the Church of Ireland.

⁸⁵ Myrtle Hill and David Hempton, *Evangelical Protestantism in Ulster society, 1740-1890* (London, 1992), p. 90.

Map 2.2

Protestant orphan societies of Ireland



Source: Annual report, 1895 (N.A.I., Protestant Orphan Society papers, MS 1045/1/1)

The above map and table reference thirty-three of the thirty-seven Protestant orphan societies and the year of their establishment. For the most part, county societies actually managed the children's placements and welfare. Local parish Protestant orphan societies (often as auxiliaries to county branches) were founded in Athboyne and Drumconrath, prior to the establishment of the County Meath society. In 1835, a Protestant orphan society also formed in Naas, County Kildare, an area formerly served by Dublin.

According to the reports of the P.O.S. in Dublin, additional Protestant orphan societies did not form in any county from 1845 until 1850. The famine period had placed overwhelming pressure on voluntary organised charitable organisations. As Protestant

orphan societies survived on voluntary contributions, no further societies opened at this time. The death of parents from typhus, cholera, and starvation left multitudes of children orphaned. The majority Catholic community, particularly working-class and pauper families were worst hit. However, working-class and middle-class Protestant families also experienced a relative degree of loss.

The Meath Protestant Orphan Society a much smaller society was wary regarding the release of funds during the famine years.⁸⁶ The P.O.S. in Dublin assisted a number of families however, they claimed that if they had admitted children over and above their means the future wellbeing of all newly admitted orphans as well as those already in their care would have been jeopardised. At a meeting dated 2 July 1847, they discussed their current applications and committed to take twelve extra children in light of the unprecedented number of urgent cases presented to them.

In relation to the famine period, the Church of Ireland has been repeatedly criticised for its work because of charges of 'souperism'. According to Bowen these charges are largely unproven and relate to only a minor number of clergymen.⁸⁷ From other quarters, clergymen's ineffectiveness as relief providers also came into question. However, many clergymen lost their lives during the famine because of their efforts to alleviate the suffering of others.⁸⁸ The discussion focuses on the issue of proselytising in more detail later in the chapter.

⁸⁶ Athey, 'A short history of the Meath Protestant Orphan Society', p. 5.

⁸⁷ Bowen, *Souperism, myth or reality?*, p. 227.

⁸⁸ Acheson, *A history of the Church of Ireland*, p. 187.

A further eleven Protestant orphan societies formed during the period 1850-70. Post famine years were economically turbulent and although there were periods of improvement, cases of poverty and destitution continued which led many families to enter the workhouse. 'They venture to express a hope that no parish will send to the poor-house the orphans of their Protestant brethren'.⁸⁹ They advocated that the P.O.S. should continue to open further county societies to limit the number of Protestant families dependent on the workhouse:

The orphan children of our poorer fellow Protestants should not be thrown into a position calculated to undermine their faith and deteriorate their morals and which experience has proved to be one attended with awful mortality in the case of children.⁹⁰

In 1860, the *Christian Examiner* stated that the P.O.S. preferred to establish 'a family system of rearing orphans rather than workhouses'.⁹¹ Through the P.O.S., Protestants laid the groundwork for an alternative to the workhouse, one that they considered superior for widows and their dependents. In addition, supporters of the Protestant orphan societies sought to simultaneously, consolidate Protestantism in regional areas, and intercept any risk of Roman Catholic influence:

Children taken care of by the poor law guardians of the union workhouse where their faith would not be fostered but tampered with, for he saw by the papers every day facts happening, the quiet system of proselytism which has been going on in this country by the members of the church of Rome. It was a principle of philosophy that when two bodies, one large and the other small are floating on any fluid, the large body always attracts the smaller; and so they should take care that the relative numbers of the Roman Catholics in workhouses, which are the larger body, do not absorb the Protestant portion, which is the smallest.⁹²

⁸⁹ Annual report, 1841 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/1/1).

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 1843.

⁹¹ *Christian Examiner*, Dec. 1860 in scrapbooks (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers 1045/6/1).

⁹² *Irish Times*, 23 Nov. 1861.

Such allegations of Roman Catholic proselytising justified the establishment of further Protestant orphan societies. The Catholic Church was also not in favour of the workhouse as the law stated that orphans whose parents' religion was unknown should be reared in the established church.⁹³

In the years prior to disestablishment, the Church of Ireland continued to make efforts to justify its place as the established church. The 1859 Ulster revival helped to reinvigorate the Protestant churches. Presbyterianism was impacted most significantly but the Church of Ireland was also affected. Attendance at church and its related societies such as the Sunday schools increased greatly. However, the 1861 census exposed the major imbalance between the numbers of adherents to the Church of Ireland and that of the Catholic majority. Cullen claimed that this was a result of his attack on Protestant proselytising as Protestant numbers formerly on the increase had fallen.⁹⁴

The inaugural meeting of the County Mayo Protestant Orphan Society held in the schoolhouse of the Church Education Society, Castlebar in November 1861 details the rationale behind setting up a Protestant orphan society at this point in time. Although not directly responsible for its establishment the Bishop of Tuam hoped the society would prove an important symbol of the Church of Ireland's worth:

And, as a Protestant institution, it deserves the support of all Protestants, especially when there are parties at the present day, who are loudly calling out for the spoliation of the church in this land, who think it is a lifeless corpse which it is time to bury. At such a time it is a pleasing thing to everybody interested in the welfare of the church, and a subject of congratulation to its members, that it is

⁹³ Prunty, *Margaret Aylward, 1810-89*, p. 59.

⁹⁴ Bowen, *Protestant crusade*, p. 299.

showing this fact of life and vitality.⁹⁵

The Bishop of Tuam's words attest to the Church of Ireland's attempts to justify its place in Ireland. 'He thought that this meeting having for its object the formation of a Protestant Orphan Society, spoke volumes for the vitality of the church, as well as it afforded them an opportunity of preserving that vitality'.⁹⁶ The Mayo P.O.S. suggested that the Galway P.O.S. had been in operation for a couple of years already and that Sligo too had a Protestant orphan society for a number of years. Bishop Plunkett suggested that 'the fact that there is no orphan society in Mayo, does not result from their backwardness, but because it was not suggested to them'.⁹⁷ This does appear then to have been a cohesive or particularly well developed plan of expansion. Antrim and Down established their own P.O.S. office in 1866. The Armagh P.O.S. formed in 1867.

In the final years that preceded disestablishment of the Church of Ireland, the P.O.S. in Dublin reflected the consensus of feeling amongst the wider Protestant community:

The present time is marked by circumstances of deep and momentous significance. It may be said in reference to its bearing upon religious topics- 'without are fightings, within are fears'. Men can no longer remain indifferent spectators of the great strife that is going on. Some indeed there are who feel ashamed of the name of Protestant at this crisis, but it is all the more incumbent upon those to bestir themselves who recognise in that glorious title the symbol of the most perfect of all liberty and the highest of all truth.⁹⁸

In the concluding words of the annual report, the committee expressed concern for their future in Ireland as well as a clear sense of defiance.

⁹⁵ *Irish Times*, 23 Nov. 1861.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸ Annual report, 1867 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/1/1, p. 18).

The Meath Protestant Orphan Society expressed greater trepidation in their annual report of the same year:

We cannot hide from ourselves the fact that we are entering upon an anxious seas in the history of our church and nation. Our society, in common with other charitable institutions must bear its part in contending against the waves of the sea of troubles on which we have been launched. The ancient irish Church has been disestablished and disendowed by the act of legislature. This momentous crisis, fraught, we believe, with danger to the whole kingdom, now hangs like a storm on our horizon.⁹⁹

The Church of Ireland was disestablished by the Irish Church Act of 26 July 1869, which became law 1 January 1871. Despite the concerns expressed by churchmen and laity, the church emerged from the process relatively unscathed. Reorganisation of the church affairs and its structures led to the introduction of the General Synod, made up of the House of bishops and the House of Representatives. Although the church underwent a phase of reorganisation, it maintained its financial security.

The P.O.S. in Dublin continued to insist its valuable contributions to the greater good of the Church of Ireland following disestablishment:

The Protestant Orphan Society still maintains its ground, the prosperity of the institution is intimately connected with that of the entire church in our land. Every agency, which tends to unite the members of our church in close fellowship one with another, is most valuable at the present time. Every effort to keep the young of our communion and to educate them in the fear and love of god, is now specially required, and the committee venture to claim for the Protestant Orphan Society a foremost place in promoting these great objects.¹⁰⁰

The land war, the plan of campaign and the push for home rule proved to be periods of unrest and again a time when the Church of Ireland broached the future with

⁹⁹ Athey, 'A short history of the Meath Protestant Orphan Society', p. 8.

¹⁰⁰ Annual report, 1873 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/1/1, pp 16-17).

apprehension. In the 1880s, P.O.S. annual reports referenced the unsettled state of the country and the consequent increase of Protestant emigration. ‘The special sessions of the General Synod in 1886, 1893 and 1912 – the years in which the three home rule bills were introduced – revealed a reawakening of the ‘sense of danger’ of 1689-91’.¹⁰¹ In general, Protestants predicted that home rule would essentially mean an end to Protestantism in Ireland under the supreme power of the Catholic Church. The weight of their opposition was decisively marked by the signing of the Ulster’s Solemn League and Covenant by 471,414 Protestant men and women.¹⁰² Similar sentiments were expressed in the year of the rebellion and the War of Independence. ‘We are now standing at the threshold of the most critical points of our church and our country in the present time of stress, turmoil, and uncertainty’.¹⁰³ Later annual reports offer only brief if any reflections on the political affairs of the country in any given year.

¹⁰¹ Acheson, *A history of the Church of Ireland*, p. 225.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 22.

¹⁰³ Annual report (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers MS 1045/1/1).

Table 2.3 Number of orphans supported by regional P.O.S. branches 1914 to 18¹⁰⁴

branch	year of report	no. of orphans
Longford	1918	16
Roscommon	1917	11
Tyrone	1918	133
Cork	1917	76
Meath	1918	27
Tipperary	1918	28
Donegal	1918	60
Ferns	1917	50
Donegal	1918	60
Armagh	1917	20
Derry	1918	114
Clare	1918	10
Lisburn	1917	21
Louth	1918	23
Monaghan	1918	50
Mayo	1918	16
Leitrim	1917	16
Kerry	1917	24
Limerick	1917	57
Sligo	1914	44
Galway	1914	20
Newry	1918	18
Antrim & Down	1917	1,025
Kings Co.	1918	16
Waterford	1914	7
Queen's co.	1914	18
Monkstown	1917	26

Source: Report on amalgamation of P.O.S. (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/6/2/5)

In 1919, the possible amalgamation of Protestant orphan societies came up for discussion. However, following closer examination of the outcomes of such a move, the compiled reports suggested that despite in some cases supporting very few children, amalgamation would undermine the authority of individual societies and would diminish the pride taken

¹⁰⁴ See figures for 1894, p. 405.

in their own local society.¹⁰⁵

In 1935, the rector of Enniscorthy Rev. Charles Tyndall again suggested that Protestant orphan societies might merge.¹⁰⁶ The P.O.S. in Dublin requested an amalgamation with Monkstown P.O.S., in the 1950s, which Monkstown refused. Individual Protestant orphan societies located in the majority of counties in Ireland continue to operate autonomously today.¹⁰⁷ Some of the societies are well financed and have few orphans while others are able to finance the orphans in their care adequately. Much depended on the sums each society received from legacies, their terms, and management. Limerick P.O.S. sought to broaden its scope and extend its services in 2003. As the society had few orphans to assist in its area and as destitution occurred less because of becoming an orphan and more because problems that relate to drug and alcohol abuse and parental neglect it applied to the courts to alter its framework to enable diversification. 'It appeared that at present the Society's income was exceeding its expenditure, due primarily to socio-economic changes and the declining number of Protestant orphans in the country'.¹⁰⁸ It is currently titled the Limerick Protestant Orphan and Child Care Society.

¹⁰⁵ Report on amalgamation of P.O.S. offices (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/6/2/5).

¹⁰⁶ *Irish Independent*, 18 June 1935.

¹⁰⁷ Canon Cecil Mills, Chairperson for Protestant orphan societies in Ireland.

¹⁰⁸ *Irish Independent*, 27 Mar. 2003.

2.4 Alleged proselytising

The meaning attached to the term proselytise has become increasingly distorted over time and in the context of Irish religious conflict, it has 'become associated in the Irish popular and Catholic press with accusations of unfair practices, bribery, souperism and colonial exploitation'.¹⁰⁹ Margaret Aylward played a leading role in the Ladies' Association of Charity for the Relief of the Sick Poor in their homes established in 1851. Aylward later set up St. Brigid's Orphanage in 1856 to defend the faith of Catholic children under threat of alleged Protestant proselytising.¹¹⁰ Catholics and Protestants were undertaking missionary work on an international basis at this time. Paul Cullen instigated major changes in the Catholic Church in Ireland. Alexander Dallas controlled the Irish Church Missions and became a prominent figure in the religious combat that ensued. Ellen Smyly a Protestant and stalwart supporter of the I.C.M. and Margaret Aylward were fieldworkers in this battle for souls. Both the P.O.S. in Dublin and St. Brigid's¹¹¹ claimed that their purpose was to protect the faith of orphans from the clutches of the opposing church.

From 1856, organisers of St. Brigid's orphanage alleged that the Protestant Orphan Society operated as a proselytising agency. The P.O.S. was evaluated in terms of it being one unified body. This broad critique did not consider the individual character of county societies. Protestant orphan societies did not all operate the same admission policy, specific societies admitted children of mixed marriages, others did not. While the annual

¹⁰⁹ Prunty, *Margaret Aylward, 1810-89*, p. 41.

¹¹⁰ See Jacinta Prunty, 'Battle plans and battlegrounds: Protestant mission activity in the Dublin slums. 1840s-1880s' in C. Gribben, A. Holmes (eds), *Protestant millennialism, evangelicalism and Irish society, 1790-2005* (London, 2006), p. 119.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 125.

reports of St. Brigid's distinguished between the P.O.S., the C.P.O.U. and the I.C.M., in some instances generalisations were also made, which offers a misleading interpretation of their respective work. It is essential therefore to outline the differences between these societies and to explain the background to these allegations.

2.5 *The I.C.M.*

The Irish Church Missions was to become one of St. Brigid's and the Catholic Church's greatest adversaries. The I.C.M.'s goal was to 'to communicate the gospel to the Roman Catholics and converts of Ireland by any and every means which may be in accordance with the United Church of Ireland and England'.¹¹² From a Catholic perspective, one of the most alarming features of the mission was the vast sums it received from England. In the year 1860, the society had raised £26,212.¹¹³ Reports of the seemingly steady progress of the mission in the west of Ireland and in Dublin featured in newspapers such as the *Tablet* and the *Nation* in the early 1850s and outraged the Catholic Church.¹¹⁴

In Dublin, Ellen Smyly, established ragged schools from 1850 in the Coombe, Townsend Street, Lurgan Street, Grand Canal Street, and Luke Street.¹¹⁵ In addition to the schools, Smyly founded the Bird's Nest Home at 12 York Road, Kingstown in 1859 and an orphanage in Spiddal, County Galway.¹¹⁶ Ellen Smyly was a close affiliate of Alexander Dallas. The I.C.M. organised the teachers for the ragged schools that were managed by

¹¹² Prunty, *Margaret Aylward, 1810-89*, p. 42.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

¹¹⁴ Bowen, *Protestant crusade*, p. 265.

¹¹⁵ Luddy, *Women & philanthropy*, p.81.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 78.

Mrs. Smyly and a committee of women.¹¹⁷ As the schools were located in predominantly Catholic areas of the city controversy inevitably followed. St. Brigid's annual reports refer to the condemnation expressed by the Catholic Church against Protestant missionary work:

The vilest machine of all. They pay fourteen agents whose business is to pry into poverty of the city, and to find Catholic families in destitution and poor widows in distress to whom they give a few shillings weekly or put their names in the Protestant registry office, and thus they get their poor infants.¹¹⁸

English Protestants who directed the I.C.M. plans in Ireland from a London based committee had little or no understanding of the ramifications of their mission. Members of the established church such as John Gregg, a committed evangelical who spoke on behalf of the P.O.S. and who later became committee member, also assisted in the early work of the I.C.M.. However, even strong speakers such as John Gregg and Robert Daly had differing ideas on the strategies applied by Dallas. 'They were well acquainted with the habits, the prejudices, and the good qualities too, of their fellow countrymen' and wished ultimately to benefit the land of their birth and of their affections rather to make war with Rome as an end to itself'.¹¹⁹ Archbishop Whately was also not a keen supporter of I.C.M. methods. 'Whately did not support the missionary societies, questioned their influence and even curbed the activity of the I.C.M. in one parish'.¹²⁰ Nevertheless, despite this, Archbishop Cullen denounced Whately as a proselytiser in relation to the scripturally based material he had prepared for use in national schools.¹²¹

¹¹⁷ Luddy, *Women & philanthropy*, p. 81.

¹¹⁸ St. Brigid's annual report, 1859 (T.C.D., OLS B3 744 no. 1, p.19).

¹¹⁹ Bowen, *Protestant crusade*, p. 250.

¹²⁰ Acheson, *A history of the Church of Ireland*, p. 199.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*

Alexander Dallas who died in 1869 was aggressive in his goals and claimed the famine was a sign of the 'second coming'. This millenarian prediction gave urgency to his mission. By the late 1840s, only a quarter of the Church of Ireland clergy had fully embraced evangelicalism.¹²² Many Church of Ireland clergymen were criticised for their lack of engagement with Roman Catholics in their parish. Irish Protestants in Kilkenny and elsewhere complained of the disturbances that the missionaries caused.¹²³

2.6 Protestant orphan societies

The Female Orphan House, North Circular Road, the Protestant Orphan Society and the Charitable Protestant Orphan Union were also targeted as proselytising agencies and were mentioned in a Catholic address to the people in 1856. Protestant orphan societies and the C.P.O.U. did not receive a government grant, or vast financial backing from England, rather they each survived on voluntary contributions.¹²⁴ Despite St. Brigid's acknowledgement of the P.O.S. (Dublin) policy of admitting only children of Protestant parentage, its funding and admission lists came under close scrutiny. It was reproached for the large number of orphans on its roll and the £3,676 collected in funds for the year 1855. Its management also caused concerns:

Some of the persons who patronize and support this institution are at the same time, active heads of proselytising establishments; and hence Catholics may entertain very just suspicions of the workings and designs of the society, especially when we see therein orphans bearing such names as O'Neill, O'Flaherty, Kelly, Magennis, Kennedy. In the printed list of their report for 1855 several such names are found.¹²⁵

¹²² Bowen, *Protestant crusade*, p. 236.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, p. 242.

¹²⁴ See chapter 3 on funding.

¹²⁵ St. Brigid's annual report, 1864 (T.C.D., OLS B3 744 no. 1, p. 21).

Following further investigations, claims were made that ‘Protestant societies’, (no distinction was made between the P.O.S., the C.P.O.U. or the I.C.M. in this instance), approached Catholic widows to induce them through bribery to give up their children. The report does not suggest whether these widows were married to Protestants. The *Catholic Telegraph* stated that a report from the Ladies of St. Vincent De Paul or St. Brigid’s orphanage had alleged that it was impossible to find the number of Catholic children taken by the P.O.S. Henry H. Joy Esq. commented on the proselytising allegations on 14 April 1860.

Having listened attentively to the reading of the report and looking into the rules of the society it seemed to him almost incredible how it is and why it is that our Protestant Orphan Society had so much misrepresentations at the present day. Why was it that especially the Roman Catholic brethren had so much representations within the present year not only from the dignitaries and priests of that church but from the laity of the Church and gentlewomen. What had they done to call done this storm of misrepresentation. The Protestant Orphan Society was not a proselytising agency one of its cardinal rules being to admit no children no matter how poor however destitute that was not the orphan of Protestant parents.¹²⁶

Mr. Joy referred to the report in the *Catholic Telegraph* and suggested that Protestants believed Archbishop Cullen was ‘responsible for such misrepresentation’.¹²⁷ The conflict between the churches was becoming increasingly hostile.

The P.O.S. in Dublin claimed that it was their duty to protect Protestant children from Roman Catholic proselytising, which they alleged was in full force at the time of their establishment. The language expressed in St. Brigid’s annual reports of the 1850s echoed the terminology used by the P.O.S. in Dublin in 1832:

¹²⁶ *Irish Times*, 14 Apr. 1860, Scrapbooks (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/6/1).

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*

Thirty-two Romish institutions for the care of their own orphans, also for the purpose of endeavouring to entrap the orphans of Protestants within their snares with a view to buying them over to popery. We are not kidnappers our object is but to hinder our children from being kidnapped.¹²⁸

In 1835, the P.O.S. in Dublin asserted that ‘they could point to one parish in this city, in which they have ascertained that for want of some such provision as this society affords, forty Protestant children have been within the last twelve years brought under Roman Catholic training’.¹²⁹(Under Roman Catholic training refers to children brought up under the religious authority of the Roman Catholic Church). The committee contended that orphans of mixed marriages were particularly vulnerable and they suggested that due to the ‘alarming extent’ of such proselytising that their current provision for 160 orphans was inadequate.¹³⁰

The P.O.S. in Dublin again expressed concern for Protestant children in 1843. ‘The Protestant Orphan Society stated that it was a powerful barrier against those who were “ever ready to take the children of poor Protestants and bring them up in the errors of the Church of Rome”’.¹³¹ In 1866, the P.O.S. reiterated its status as a defensive society and persisted in its claim that Protestant orphans were under serious threat:

Let it not be imagined that the faith of Protestant orphan children in Ireland is in less danger of being tampered with now than it was eight and thirty years ago, when this society first started upon its mission of mercy. The experience, which the committee have gained during their tenure of office, abundantly proves to them that busy, zealous underhand efforts are incessantly made to turn aside these friendless ones from the good and right way of gospel truth.¹³²

¹²⁸ Annual report, 1832 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/1/1, p. 28).

¹²⁹ Annual report, 1835 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/1/1, p. 19).

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Margaret Preston, *Charitable words: women, philanthropy and the language of charity in Dublin* (Conneticut, 2004), p.70.

¹³² Annual report, 1866 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/1/1, p. 18)

Examination of 500 registered application files suggests that in the majority of cases applicants came from traditional Protestant backgrounds, Church of Ireland and England, Methodist and Presbyterian. Inspectors noted the religion of the parents and in many cases provided a brief description of their family history.¹³³ In 1835, committee members read the names of children recently admitted:

There are many you may recognise among them the names of those with whom they once have been acquainted as friends, as domestics, as dependents or those to whom they may have been useful, or to whom they may owe a debt of gratitude.¹³⁴

The P.O.S. in Dublin required marriage certificates, birth certificates and burial certificates from every applicant to confirm their Protestantism. The committee asserted:

As the sole object of the society is the relief of the most wretched and deserving objects of our fellow Protestants. In order to guard against any imposition being practised upon them they have agreed that the petition of each child for admission into this society shall be accompanied by certificates of marriage of the parents and baptisms of the children or if this cannot be conveniently procured such other documents as shall appear satisfactory.¹³⁵

For the most part, application files contain these certificates, or letters from curates or incumbents. If these certificates were not submitted cases could be deferred for months or refused altogether. According to the minutes taken at committee meetings and unregistered application files, (cases postponed, withdrawn or refused) this rule was consistently upheld. Mrs. S., a milliner, applied to the P.O.S. for the admission of her youngest daughter of five children on 11 May 1847 following the death of her husband, who was employed as a clerk. ‘Case refused because no marriage certificate was

¹³³ See second part of P.O.S. application form, p. 399.

¹³⁴ Annual report, 1835 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/1/1, p. 10).

¹³⁵ Minutes of committee meetings, 27 Mar. 1830 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/2/1/1).

provided and no other evidence in lieu of it'.¹³⁶ Such delays occurred in the P.O.S. in Dublin and the C.P.O.U.¹³⁷ and in specific cases, applications were postponed for up to one year. In other cases, applications were not approved the first time, which led to a second and a third application. Mrs. J., a children's maid applied to the P.O.S for the admission of her son William following the death of her husband, a soldier, 25 February 1848.¹³⁸ The case was refused. Mrs. J. wrote to the P.O.S. to ask the committee to reconsider their decision:

I having my only child William of about twenty-two months of age, a candidate for admission into the above society, now, for the second time, beg leave to state, that I understand it be your general principle to give preference in the selection from the candidates, to the children of those parents who have more children and to full orphans. While I acknowledge that this is in general fair and reasonable, I must humbly submit to your respectable committee that there may be exceptions to that general rule.¹³⁹

In 85.02 per cent of the application files examined, some form of evidence survives to confirm the religion of the applicant. These include birth certificates, death certificates, marriage certificates and or declarations made by the parish vicar or curate. In 14.98 per cent of files, no records other than the application form survive. The religious origins of these specific applicants cannot be verified. Although the application forms in these cases state that the applicants were both Protestant, there is no further evidence to substantiate these claims. One explanation for the absence of such certificates is that families or the orphans themselves sought the release of these extremely important documents. Entries made in case file registers and in application files refer to the return

¹³⁶ Unregistered application files (postponed, withdrawn or refused) (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/5/4).

¹³⁷ See chart 5(b), p. 403.

¹³⁸ Unregistered application files (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/5/4).

¹³⁹ Ibid.

of certificates to former P.O.S. orphans.¹⁴⁰

Analysis of 200 refused and postponed application files, has shown that Protestants who applied to the P.O.S. in Dublin were refused admission because of limited funds, age restrictions, or because their parents were considered disreputable. Managers of the P.O.S. continued to exert caution with the outlay of funds, which led to fewer admissions, even in more prosperous times.

These files also suggest that the P.O.S. refused the admission of Roman Catholic children. The P.O.S. inspectors investigated the petition of Richard R. aged five in February of 1829. Mr. G. one of the inspectors stated that he called at the applicant's residence accompanied by two other inspectors. Mr. C. and Mr. L. saw a man who claimed he was a Protestant and the uncle of the child. When the inspectors inquired as to what church he attended, he replied, 'his poverty and want of time prevented him from attending any place of worship'.¹⁴¹ His wife indicated that the orphan's mother was also a Roman Catholic. The inspectors called on the applicant's employer who informed them that he was a Roman Catholic. The case was refused.

In a second case, John W.'s parents claimed that they were Protestant. On making enquiries, the inspectors discovered, 'petitioner was a Roman Catholic and likewise that John W. was baptized by a priest – petition rejected'.¹⁴² There is no doubt that poor Catholic families applied to Protestant and Catholic charities to secure relief. St. Brigid's

¹⁴⁰ Application files (N.A.I. P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/5/3).

¹⁴¹ Minutes of committee meetings, 1829 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/2/1/1).

¹⁴² Minutes of committee meetings, 27 Mar. 1830 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/2/1/1).

and other Catholic agencies aimed to eliminate this demand. With the establishment of a plethora of Catholic orphanages in Dublin and the rest of Ireland Catholics had less and less need to approach Protestant charities unless they chose to do so.

In 1864, St. Brigid's referred to further investigations they had made in relation to the P.O.S. in Dublin:

Undoubtedly, many of them are the children of Protestant parents but strangely enough we find one third of them bearing names that are in Ireland eminently Catholic such as Kelly, McCann, O'Flaherty, Geraghty. The truth is that several adults who live as hypocrites upon the bribes of the proselytisers are sometimes taken away in their sins and then the orphans become the prey of the society.¹⁴³

St. Brigid's confirmed through their own findings that many of the children reared by the P.O.S. in Dublin were of Protestant parentage. Names were an unreliable source of religious identification. Catholics may have converted to Protestantism and remained in that church despite being ostracised by their families, neighbours and church. A number of Protestants had also converted to Catholicism. As the extract reveals there was a strong denial that *bone fide* conversions could take place without 'bribery'. In 1850, Archbishop Whately founded the Society for the Protection of the Rights of Conscience for the benefit of poor Protestants and converts.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴³ St. Brigid's annual reports (T.C.D., OLS B3 744 no. 1, p. 18).

¹⁴⁴ Acheson, *A history of the Church of Ireland*, p. 199.

Parsons applied to their local Protestant orphan society in cases that related to mixed marriages even if the said society as a rule did not approve such applications. In 1859, a letter was sent to King's County (Offaly) P.O.S. to request the admission of a young girl. However, the parson had to apply separately to the C.P.O.U. as 'owing to one of our county Protestant orphan society rules she cannot be elected as her mother is a Romanist'.¹⁴⁵ In a second case, the rector of Moate, County Westmeath wrote to the Westmeath P.O.S. in the hope that they would receive a child one of whose parents was a Roman Catholic. The Westmeath P.O.S. replied 2 July 1864. 'The Westmeath Protestant Orphan Society was founded for the purpose of providing for the children of Protestant parents. We were therefore obliged to decline to take into consideration Rev. Flynn's case as we have at present some very pressing cases of our own'.¹⁴⁶ However, as the applicant was in such great need of assistance the clergyman forwarded a second letter to the society.

In their second reply, the committee reiterated their stance, 'it is not a rule of the Westmeath Protestant Orphan Society to admit the offspring of a mixed marriage or a child when the surviving parent is a Roman Catholic. The committee have here to fore admitted some extreme cases of this kind and had reason to regret it, this should be a case for the Orphan Refuge'.¹⁴⁷ These letters confirm that the P.O.S. in Westmeath, King's County and Dublin did not wish to accept these cases because of the religious persuasion of the surviving parent. Organizers of the Tipperary P.O.S. hoped to guard against proselytising allegations by requesting baptismal certificates for all applicants. John

¹⁴⁵ Registered application files (N.A.I., C.P.O.U. papers, MS 1045/11/2) (284-299).

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., (423-50).

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

Bagwell Esq. referred to the Tipperary P.O.S. rules in the *Clonmel Advertiser*:

The privileges of membership were open to the poorest individual, the subscription for which having been made so low as five shillings per annum. Also, as to the charge likely to be brought against the society of an intention to proselytise, that was provided against, by the rule making it necessary to produce a certificate of Protestant baptism on the part of every applicant.¹⁴⁸

In Limerick, Godfrey Massy was concerned during the famine that the P.O.S. was in danger of closure 'by the diversion of the support of Protestants of Limerick whose time and means were then nobly engaged in feeding their famishing Romish neighbours'.¹⁴⁹ He began an appeal in England on behalf of the society 'as embracing the descendants of English colonists, of whom many have shed their life-blood conquering or in preserving Ireland for the British Crown'.¹⁵⁰ In 1841, Lord Guillamore, a committee member, stated that 'though it was true that this society was exclusively Protestant, it interfered with no other faith'.¹⁵¹ According to their individual rules, Carlow P.O.S. admitted children of Protestant parentage as a priority. Monaghan¹⁵² and Meath¹⁵³ Protestant orphan societies admitted only children of strictly Protestant parentage.

Protestant orphan societies had their own separate set of accounts and were funded by voluntary contributions mostly from Irish sources, they offered long-term care, which was expensive, and as noted delays in admission were frequent and many applications were refused. Moreover, many Irish Protestant clergymen were reluctant to offend their Catholic neighbours, as they were well aware of the dangers that discontent might cause

¹⁴⁸ Scrapbooks (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/6/1).

¹⁴⁹ 'Godfrey Massey's memoirs of the famine years in Bruff' in *The Old Limerick Journal*, Famine edition, no. 7, summer 1981, p. 93, available at (<http://www.limerick.ie/media>) (4 Apr. 2008).

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 94.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵² Annual reports (R.C.B.L. County Monaghan P.O.S. papers, 692.6).

¹⁵³ Athey, 'A short history of the Meath Protestant Orphan Society' (Meath, 1966).

as the tithe war years had clearly demonstrated.¹⁵⁴The P.O.S. in Dublin suggested:

It was called the Protestant Orphan Society merely to show that it was Protestant orphans who were assisted by it and surely the first duty incumbent on Protestants was to assist those belonging to that class. So that it could not be offensive to anyone else and as the objects of the society could not be offensive to any one, they should take care not to say anything that would give umbrage to anyone.¹⁵⁵

It would have been a futile exercise to attempt to bring the gospel to the Catholic majority, an almost impossible task as William Conyngham Plunket remarked in 1827, ‘the merest chimera that ever bewildered the mind of man’,¹⁵⁶ while at the same time neglect Protestants who had fallen in status and were most likely to be swallowed up by the majority religion through interdenominational marriage and cultural absorption. ‘If the union were repealed and the exclusive system abolished, the great mass of the Protestant community would with little delay melt into the overwhelming majority of the nation’.¹⁵⁷ There were two-fold objectives in the minds of Protestants in Ireland throughout the nineteenth century to advance but also to protect Protestantism.

2.7 The C.P.O.U.

The Charitable Protestant Orphan Union was also strongly criticised. The P.O.S. and the C.P.O.U. featured in consecutive annual reports produced by St. Brigid’s and were repeatedly branded proselytisers. The C.P.O.U. maintained 103 children in 1855. ‘Their income for the year 1855 was £700, which was collected, generally in very small sums, all through the country; the agents and collectors, being in several cases, the Protestant

¹⁵⁴ Bowen, *Protestant crusade*, p. 301.

¹⁵⁵ *Irish Times*, 12 June 1863.

¹⁵⁶ Whelan, *The bible war in Ireland*, p. 230.

¹⁵⁷ Bowen, *Protestant crusade*, p. 263.

shopkeepers of country towns'.¹⁵⁸ The C.P.O.U. also organised auxiliaries throughout Ireland. The C.P.O.U., like the P.O.S., boarded-out children and apprenticed their wards to Protestant masters and mistresses.

The C.P.O.U., later known as the Protestant Orphan Refuge, had a clear purpose. It aimed 'to preserve the Protestantism of the orphans of mixed marriages'.¹⁵⁹ The committee noted that to offer provision to children of mixed marriages was not proselytising for they claimed surely if that was so, the children of mixed marriages raised by Roman Catholic institutions were also victims of the same religious interference. 'Unless, therefore, you bring these children up as heathens, it is impossible to bring them up by any means unless what will be liable to the charge of being a proselytising society'.¹⁶⁰ The C.P.O.U. also suggested that unlike their society, subscribers favoured the P.O.S. in Dublin because they did not regard it as a proselytising agency primarily because it did not admit children unless both parents were Protestant:

I have heard and no doubt you have heard people speak very favourably of the Protestant Orphan Society, and very depreciatory of ours, although they are the same in principle. People say, "I do not like your society, it is a proselytising society".¹⁶¹

Nevertheless, the C.P.O.U. was aware of the implications of its admission policy and the suspicion it might arouse, yet it was adamant that it was their right to claim the children of mixed marriages.

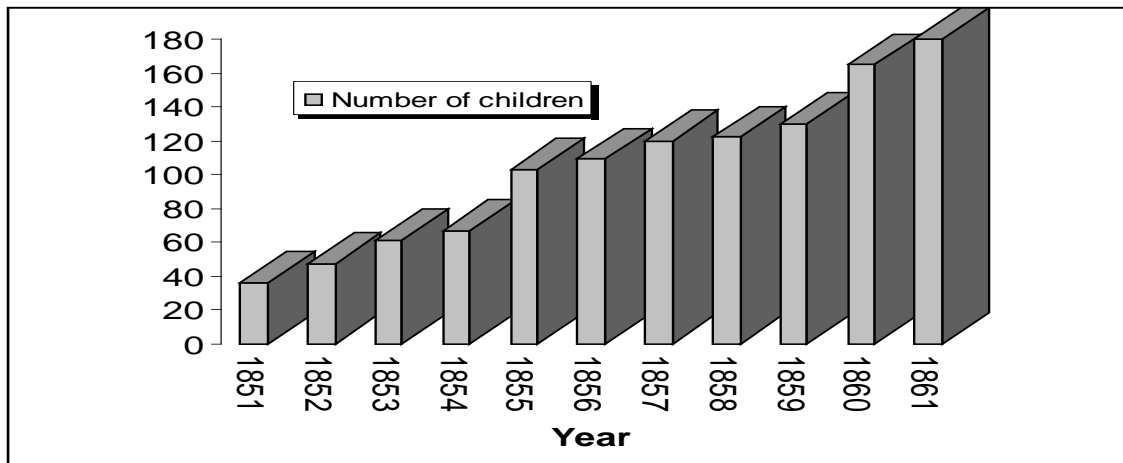
¹⁵⁸ St. Brigid's annual reports (T.C.D., OLS B3 744 no. 1, p. 10).

¹⁵⁹ *Irish Times*, 27 July 1861.

¹⁶⁰ *Irish Times*, 8 Apr. 1863.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*

Chart 2.1 Children on the C.P.O.U. roll, 1851-61



Source: C.P.O.U. annual report, in *Irish Times*, 27 July 1861.

Although there is a steady rise in the number of children on the roll, the figures must be set in context, only 175 children were on the roll in 1861, many of whom may have been nearing the age of apprenticeship or the end of their apprenticeship. By 1859, the C.P.O.U. sought an amalgamation with the P.O.S. in Dublin because of a lack in funds but the P.O.S. committee declined. They stated that their society was only to serve Protestants and not the children of mixed marriages. The motion not to merge the two societies was carried by 29 votes for and 9 against.¹⁶²

Through comparative analysis of the application files and associated correspondence drawn from the C.P.O.U. and the P.O.S. in Dublin, many differences between the societies have emerged. The C.P.O.U. files contain references to the interference of priests and Roman Catholic relatives with whom some form of struggle had taken place because of an intention by a Protestant relative or surviving parent to place their children in the care of the C.P.O.U. These types of references were not detected in the application

¹⁶² Minutes of committee meetings, 1859 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/2/1/1-8).

files of the P.O.S. in Dublin.

In 1859, the C.P.O.U. received a letter in relation to a case where the father, a Protestant, had died leaving his Catholic wife and four children. The parish clergyman who forwarded the case to the C.P.O.U. considered the children to be under threat from a Roman Catholic 'atmosphere' in spite of the mother's acceptance of her children's Protestantism. The curate who supported the case wrote 'I am well aware that the children could be laid hold of by agents of the priests but for the strict watch that has been set on them by myself and Protestants in the neighbourhood'.¹⁶³ The case was akin to a militaristic plan of action.

In a letter dated 21 April 1864, the C.P.O.U. were informed of a situation wherein, a Mr. A., a struggling Protestant unable to support his children, had applied for their admission. 'His wife was a Roman Catholic and unless an effort is made to place them under the care of the society the Roman Catholic relatives are anxious to take them and place them in a convent school. It must be desirable therefore that they should be admitted'.¹⁶⁴ Extended kin, whether Protestant or Catholic, were frequently at the heart of these religious disputes and sometimes manipulated tensions that existed between the churches in order to have their relatives placed immediately.

¹⁶³Registered application files (N.A.I., C.P.O.U. papers, MS 1045/11/2) (423-50).

¹⁶⁴Ibid.

In March 1864, Thomas P. wrote to the C.P.O.U. regarding his application for the admission of his four children. He was a Catholic who married a Protestant woman in 1854. He explained to the C.P.O.U. that he had had misgivings with the Roman Catholic Church in earlier years and had attended no place of worship prior to his marriage. Following his marriage, he attended church regularly with his wife and became a Protestant, greatly against his parents' wishes. His wife died in November 1863. Despite Thomas's application to the C.P.O.U., his mother approached the parish priest on the matter:

Rev. Mr. Murphy gave her a note to the superiors of St. Brigid's, she was told to call on board day and that they would be taken in if circumstances required it, my mother was prevented from going by illness, the Rev. Mr. Murphy called to hear her confession and took the names and ages of the four children and they were to be taken in on the following board day. My wife's mother having heard of it went to the Rev. Mr. Jordan and that gentleman got them sent to Haddington Road.¹⁶⁵

Thomas wrote to the C.P.O.U. to inform them of the situation as he had applied to the C.P.O.U. not to St. Brigid's. His mother had taken it upon herself to approach Rev. Murphy who then notified St. Brigid's.

St. Brigid's annual reports recorded similar sets of circumstances from a Catholic perspective:

A Catholic woman gave her child to its aunt a Protestant, she put it to nurse waiting for its admission to a Protestant orphanage, we were told of it. A person went to speak to her and persuade her to come and take the child. She did so and gave her to St. Bridget. The next day however, the aunt assailed the unfortunate mother and made her demand on the child. When she was told the fate that awaited her, she began to pray to the blessed virgin that she might die before she became a Protestant. When she saw the aunt, she ran to the other side of the hall in the greatest distress saying, Aunt I cannot go with you, you are a Protestant.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁵Registered application files (N.A.I., C.P.O.U. papers, MS 1045/11/2) (423-50).

¹⁶⁶Annual report, 1858(T.C.D., St. Brigid's annual reports, OLS B3 744 no. 1, pp 9-10).

These types of dramatic situations were noted regularly and skirmishes broke out in particular between St. Brigid's and I.C.M. workers, over the rightful place for these vulnerable children.¹⁶⁷

2.8 Interdenominational marriages

Clearly, a significant point of tension between the churches lay with mixed marriages. A crucial aspect of the Catholic response to the C.P.O.U. and Protestant orphan societies that admitted children of mixed marriages is the term heresy. Heresy is defined as 'a belief or opinion which goes against traditional religious doctrine'.¹⁶⁸ Daniel Murray, Archbishop of Dublin 1823-5 told parliamentary commissioners in 1825 that 'we at present use the term "heretic" very sparingly, we choose rather, as it an offensive word, to say "our dissenting brethren" or our "separated brethren"'.¹⁶⁹ St. Brigid's annual reports repeatedly use the term heretic in reference to Protestants. This later explicit use of the term symbolises the strong Catholic opposition to the I.C.M. and the wider Ultramontane movement in the Catholic Church. It is clear that St. Brigid's did not acknowledge Protestants in mixed marriages or their right to reclaim children who they believed should remain Protestant. Conversely, societies such as the P.O.S. and the C.P.O.U. felt it their duty to protect children from 'error', 'irreligion', and 'popery'.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁷ Prunty, *Margaret Aylward, 1810-89*, p. 53.

¹⁶⁸ Oxford English dictionary.

¹⁶⁹ Bowen, *Protestant crusade*, p. 8.

¹⁷⁰ Annual report, 1830 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/1/1).

In 1831, the P.O.S. claimed that the ‘Church of Rome’ boasted the increase of inter-denominational marriages yet they insisted that Protestants who read and loved the bible would not intermarry.¹⁷¹ Fifty-eight years prior to the introduction of the *Ne Temere* decree, at the Synod of Thurles, Cullen introduced new regulations concerning mixed marriages. Protestant marriage partners had to pledge that all children from that marriage would be reared in the Catholic Church.¹⁷²

In 1864, St. Brigid’s alluded to the likelihood that most Catholics would comply. ‘A Catholic parent cannot under pains of eternal separation from God give his children to be reared in heresy. Besides we must charitably believe what in fact almost always happens, that the Catholic parent has had his children baptised in the Catholic Church’.¹⁷³ Therefore, the Catholic Church had greater powers to deny proselytising and make allegations of proselytising, if the children were baptised Catholics, children who ‘ought’ to be Catholic, despite this being in many cases against the wishes of the Protestant parent. The 1908 decree formalised the system of raising all children from mixed marriages as Roman Catholics.

The Tenures Abolition Act, 1662,¹⁷⁴ held the common law rights of the father as sole guardian of his children. ‘It gave him the right to appoint a person to act as guardian of his children after his own death and it set out powers of a guardian so appointed’.¹⁷⁵ This

¹⁷¹ Minutes of committee meetings (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/2/1).

¹⁷² Connolly, *Religion & society*, p. 27.

¹⁷³ Annual report, 1864 (T.C.D., Early Irish books, bound volume of St. Brigid’s annual reports, OLS B3 744 no. 1, p. 18).

¹⁷⁴ 14 & 15 Chas. II, c. 19.

¹⁷⁵ *Seanad Éireann, parliamentary debates, official report*, (vol. lvii), 4 Mar. 1964 (<http://historical-debates.oireachtas.ie>) (Sept. 2008).

law was in place until the 1873 Custody of Infants Act,¹⁷⁶ the 1886 Guardianship of Infants Act¹⁷⁷ and the 1891, Custody of Children Act.¹⁷⁸ The 1873 custody of infants act changed the absolute power of the father. Mothers could petition the court for the right to access their children and to seek custody of their children.

The 1886 guardianship of infants act, ‘the mother’s act’ gave mothers additional rights. The act contained provisions that allowed mothers guardianship of their children after their husband’s death, alone or with a joint guardian appointed by the husband. A mother could also appoint a guardian in the event of her death, which only came into force if both she and her husband were deceased. They could otherwise appoint a person to share guardianship with the husband following her death but only if the court ruled that the father was unfit to take sole custody. Nevertheless, the matter of religious adherence of children continued to be at the discretion of the father. The 1891 Custody of Children Act limited the rights of parents who were unfit to take charge of their children and restricted the father’s right to custody.

The well-documented Mary Mathews case caused questions to arise over St. Brigid’s methods and triggered a mixture of commentary in the public press. Mary’s dying father, a Catholic, brought his daughter to St. Brigid’s in April 1858. Subsequently, Mary was taken abroad first to France and then to Belgium.¹⁷⁹ ‘It was a nasty and complicated case,

¹⁷⁶ 36 Vict., c.12.

¹⁷⁷ 49 & 50 Vict., c. 27.

¹⁷⁸ 54 Vict., c. 3.

¹⁷⁹ Prunty, *Margaret Aylward, 1810-89*, p. 92.

a *cause celebre* in its day, adopted by the I.C.M. in an effort to break St. Brigid's'.¹⁸⁰ St. Brigid's claimed that Mrs. Mathews was an unfit mother, 'the child's mother had tried to reclaim her when she returned to England after being expelled from Nassau in the Bahamas for drunkenness and neglect of the children in her care'.¹⁸¹ Margaret Aylward spent six months in prison for contempt of court when she denied knowledge of the child's whereabouts. Prior to his death, Mary's father did not appoint St. Brigid's as guardians in writing, which meant they had no legal custody rights.¹⁸²

St. Brigid's was accused of proselytising as a result of the bad publicity that surrounded the trial and consequently Catholic support for St. Brigid's waned at least temporarily. St. Brigid's claimed that the P.O.S. and other Protestant institutions made allegations of Roman Catholic proselytising in order to deflect attention away from their own proselytising efforts:

And so likewise, they say this association is endeavouring to proselytise. This way of imputing ones opponents of what you are about to do yourself in order to distract attention from your object is by no means a novel device. The devil vexed at loosing its prey has employed many agents to try to bring this institution into disrepute by representing it as an agency for entrapping Protestant children and some well meaning Catholics have become the dupes of this calumny and spoken against us.¹⁸³

St. Brigid's decried these accusations, and contended unreservedly that they were a defensive society. If the Catholic Church regarded the C.P.O.U. and the Protestant orphan societies that chose to admit children of mixed marriages as proselytisers then St.

¹⁸⁰Jacinta Prunty, 'Protestant mission activity in the Dublin slums' in C. Gribben, A. Holmes (eds), *Protestant millennialism, evangelicalism and Irish society, 1790-2005* (London, 2006), p. 136.

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

¹⁸² Annual report, 1861 (T.C.D., St. Brigid's annual reports, OLS B3 744 no. 1 p. 26).

¹⁸³ Ibid., 1863, p. 6.

Brigid's in order to combat this charge was also guilty of the same offence.

In 1894, the P.O.S. also became involved in a court case because it refused to return two children to their mother. The case concerned a widow named Mrs. K. who was originally Protestant and whose first husband was Protestant. Mrs. K. applied to the P.O.S. for the admission of her children. She subsequently remarried a Catholic man and conformed to Roman Catholicism. In November 1893, Mrs. K. applied to the society for the custody of her children. While the committee did not venture to suggest that Mrs. K was unfit or unsuitable to take charge of her children they refused her request.¹⁸⁴

The society attended court regarding Mrs. K.'s children and returned the charge with an application that the children's paternal Protestant uncle, a pharmaceutical chemist, together with a Protestant clergyman in the parish of Baltinglass, should act as joint guardians to ensure that Mrs. K. would bring up her children as members of the Church of Ireland. 'Unless you think it proper for the interests of the minors that they should remain in their custody, they do not seek to keep them at all. I may say that this society is in no way a proselytising agency. All the children it takes charge of are Protestants'.¹⁸⁵ It was observed that the P.O.S. representatives wanted only to abide by the judge's directions on the matter.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸⁴ *Irish Times*, 8 Aug. 1894, scrapbooks (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers MS 1045/6/3).

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

The judge returned the children to their mother and appointed the children's uncle as guardian, despite his admission that, 'he had not the least fear that the mother would interfere with the religion of the children'.¹⁸⁷ It was also contended that despite the introduction of the Guardianship of Infants Act,¹⁸⁸ while the mother gained legal guardianship, 'she has no right whatever to interfere in any way with the religion of the father or to impress any religion that she may or chooses to adopt'.¹⁸⁹ The report acknowledged that the P.O.S. in Dublin had taken good care of the children.¹⁹⁰ The Mary Mathew's case, the P.O.S. case and the C.P.O.U. case histories reflect the rivalry that existed between the churches and the extremes that organisations would go to, in order to save children's souls.

Despite the amalgamation of the P.O.S. and the C.P.O.U. in 1898 under the title the P.O.S. and a redefined admission policy that permitted the admission of children of mixed marriages, the P.O.S. continued to prioritise families of Protestant parentage. The committee refused numerous applications on the basis that the applicant was part of an interdenominational union. In its attempt to prevent accusations of proselytising, this led in later years to accusations of sectarianism because it admitted primarily Protestant children. In the early twentieth century, the P.O.S. noted the difficulties they encountered in dealing with mixed marriage cases. In one example, a parish clergyman expressed his disapproval of a mixed marriage, as the husband was, 'old enough to be her father and

¹⁸⁷ *Irish Times*, 8 Aug. 1894, scrapbooks (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers MS 1045/6/3).

¹⁸⁸ 49 & 50 Vict., c. 27.

¹⁸⁹ *Irish Times*, 8 Aug. 1894, scrapbooks (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers MS 1045/6/3).

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

turned out a bad husband and got hold of her money and left her a widow'.¹⁹¹ On his death, 'priests and Roman Catholic relatives pestered her with offers of aid and her one great object is to get him (her son) out'.¹⁹² The boy in this case was baptised a Roman Catholic, 'but has always been brought up with the father's consent as a Protestant, he attended church, secondary school and parochial school'.¹⁹³ The child was baptised a Roman Catholic, however the mother in this case raised her son as a Protestant and wished to continue to do so. The P.O.S. could not assist the woman in this case.

In 1914, the P.O.S. in Dublin received an application from the aunt of a young girl whose mother was a Roman Catholic and whose deceased father was a Protestant.¹⁹⁴ In his will, the girl's father specified that his children should receive a Protestant upbringing. At the time of the application, his son was attending the Cottage Home for Little Children and it was desired that as he was doing very well there, his sister should join him. The committee noted that this could not be done without the consent of the child's mother, which they subsequently received.¹⁹⁵ However, the committee was divided on the case and chose not to elect the child and instead suggested that 'if it were the wish of the mother he would do what he could to set the child into some home or institution of her own religious persuasion'.¹⁹⁶ In many instances, the P.O.S. was unwilling to become involved in cases of this kind, due to the tense religious climate.

¹⁹¹ Unregistered application files (refused, postponed or delayed) (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers MS 1045/5/4).

¹⁹² Unregistered application files (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers MS 1045/5/4).

¹⁹³ Ibid.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

Archbishop Cullen's denunciation of Protestant institutions via mediums such as the annual reports of St. Brigid's and the Catholic press was a response to understandable concerns over the poorer members of the church. The earlier work of the charter schools, the legacy of the penal laws, the overt missionary impulse of the I.C.M. and the questions raised over Ellen Smyly's schools inflamed controversy. However, the anti-Protestantism espoused by Cullen was also a war waged against all Protestant institutions and the Church of Ireland itself. 'In 1864, he was instrumental in forming the National Association. The goal of the association was the manipulation of public opinion to bring pressure upon political candidates to support the demands of the Catholic Church'.¹⁹⁷ At this time, the Church of Ireland remained in need of further reform. Its days as the established church were numbered.

Preservation of the Church of Ireland and the ascendancy class upon which it hinged were imperatives until disestablishment. Essentially, Protestants faced an uncertain future in Ireland. This fear produced a defensive response to the political and religious climate, which bound the interests of the Church of Ireland laity and clergy, firmly together. The P.O.S. in Dublin was established at a time when such political and religious tensions gave urgent impetus to preserve the faith and futures of its children, in the face of an increasingly nationalist and aggressive Catholic majority. It was due to these aspirations as well as the benevolence of the individuals who supported and managed the society, that the orphans received a good overall standard of care, emphasised in later chapters.

¹⁹⁷Akenson, *The Church of Ireland, 1800-85*, p. 214.

The allegations of proselytising made against Protestant orphans societies are a complex matter. It has been imperative to at least make clear distinctions between the work of individual Protestant orphan societies. They were not all one and the same. The P.O.S. in Dublin and the C.P.O.U. worked separately for almost seventy years, as did the county orphan societies. On this basis, it would be necessary to carry out further research on all of the societies to make any fair conclusions on this subject. The P.O.S. in Dublin certainly maintained its defensive stance. The children caught up in the religious crossfire between Protestants and Catholics benefited from the relief measures, but through this conflict, young minds were soured with contempt for the opposing church and people, as intended, these sentiments served only to divide.

Chapter 3

Funding

Voluntary funded charities required reliable sources of income that would ensure their longevity. All Protestant orphan societies were responsible for the maintenance of the young orphans in their charge for many years with only voluntary contributions on which to depend. The aims of this chapter are two fold. First, to analyse the sources of income received by the P.O.S. in Dublin and second to compare the individual management of funds by Protestant orphan societies in Dublin, Monaghan and Cork. Reference is also made to societies located in Tipperary and Meath.

The founders of the P.O.S. incorporated a subscription system similar to that used by evangelical bible societies, such as the Church Missionary Society in London that collected £14,000 in penny-a-week subscriptions from the poor.¹ The P.O.S. also considered the success of the O'Connell campaign as proof that collections from the poor were vital. 'As the Catholic rent and the O'Connellite tribute show of what value the contributions of the poor are, it is our business to establish an orphan rent and a Protestant tribute'.² The society relied on regular offerings of a penny a week subscriptions from working class and artisan Protestants. 'The zeal and exertions of not a few in humble life who have subscribed from their small store, servants even collecting from servants to relieve orphan's wants'.³ In 1831, the committee documented the receipt

¹ Annual report, 1830 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/1/1, p. 38).

² Annual report, 1832 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/1/1, p. 40).

³ Annual report, 1831 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/1/1, p. 13).

of one thousand one hundred and twenty-four separate subscriptions at a penny or more. The middle and upper classes offered sums ranging from £1. Larger subscriptions were offered by the Archbishop of Dublin in sums such as £10 and Sir Augustine Fitzgerald £3. The 1832 annual report recorded an increase of subscriptions of £124 4s. 6d. from the previous year. Subscribers who donated ten pounds or more became life members.

Expenditure obligations in the early stages of the society's establishment rendered increased funding a prerequisite for the admission of more children. The P.O.S. depended largely on clergymen's dedication to publicise the cause of widows and orphans. Rev. Shore, a P.O.S. supporter surmised, 'the Protestant Orphan Society is so judiciously managed and the object so undeniably praiseworthy it would be disgraceful were our clergy to be lukewarm in their attachment to the cause'.⁴ Rev. Woodward, a member of the committee, presented a circular to clergymen in the country to encourage the formation of local auxiliaries.

The onus was on these local clergymen to promote the P.O.S. and to persevere in their attempts to organise auxiliaries in their own parish. They sought full co-operation from their congregation. Evangelicalism had a positive influence on the Church of Ireland in that it inspired congregational renewal that helped to bring about cohesive support for the P.O.S.

⁴ Minutes of committee meetings, 30 Mar. 1830 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/1/2, p. 36).

In an attempt to bolster funds, the committee recommended the establishment of auxiliaries in all parishes in Dublin initially and later in numerous towns throughout the country. The P.O.S. discussed the importance of auxiliaries in the early 1830s:

In connection with the subject of finance, your committee are happy to state that the system of parochial auxiliary associations announced in the last report as just formed, has worked most beneficially. In the course of the year, two new ones were added St. Peter's and St. Thomas's.⁵

The committee expected that it would not be long before every parish and district in the city would have its own local auxiliary. Increased support soon emerged and a number of parishes in Dublin collected on behalf of the P.O.S. In 1836, the income accrued from auxiliary collections was as follows:

Table 3.1 The P.O.S. in Dublin auxiliary collections 1836

<i>auxiliary</i>	<i>collections</i>		
	£	s.	d.
St. Andrew's	37	19	0
St. Bridget's	41	12	11
St. Catherine's	4	18	7
St. George's	59	9	3
St. Michan's	42	14	11
St. Paul's	2	13	8
St. Peter's	30	19	1
St. Thomas's	2	18	0
St. Werburgh's	14	13	9

Source: Annual Report, 1837 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/1/1).

The amount of funds collected in each parish corresponded to the level of Church of Ireland presence therein. By 1870, approximately seventy auxiliaries contributed to the

⁵ Annual report, 1835 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/1/2).

P.O.S. from Dublin city, County Dublin, Wicklow and Kildare parishes. The King's County P.O.S. received support from twenty-two auxiliaries by 1889.

The P.O.S. approached England to attain contributions in the hope that they would gain the support of Protestants in England and Irish Protestants who had emigrated earlier in the century. Due to the violent clashes in Ireland, the passing of emancipation and allegations of Roman Catholic proselytising, it is likely that the committee members believed that they could expect sympathy from England:

A door has been opened though to a trifling extent and as yet with little success. To introduce through the medium of the public press – this society to the notice of Protestants of England. A letter has been received from the highly respectable house of Messrs. Puget Bainbrige and Co. Bankers London, expressing their readiness to receive subscriptions for your society.⁶

In May 1832, the chairperson of the P.O.S. read a copy of an appeal to the Protestants of England, which the committee agreed to insert in the *Record* newspaper in London. The P.O.S. set up auxiliaries in areas populated by Irish Protestant migrants such as Manchester and Salford. Charity sermons and the occasional apprenticeship of P.O.S. orphans to English employers publicised the society's work.

⁶ Annual report, 1832 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/1/2, p.10).

Table 3.2 English P.O.S. auxiliaries record of contributions, 1851

<i>Source</i>	£	s.	d.
Birkenhead	18	14	7
Eccles	10	10	0
Hull	16	10	0
<hr/>			
Manchester & Salford	57	1	2
Newcastle upon Tyne	3	0	0
North Repps	10	10	0
Norwich	20	11	5
Nottingham	35	19	4
Southport	4	7	0
<hr/>			
<i>Liverpool</i>			
St. Barnabas	3	1	0
Christ Church	58	12	10
St. Mark's	2	2	10
St. Paul's	10	7	1

Source: Annual report, 1852 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/1/1).

Despite their earlier efforts, to attract English support, this never materialised to any large degree. By 1905, only two English auxiliaries contributed to the P.O.S. in Dublin, Manchester, and London with minor donations received from Scotland.

Annual and public meetings were used to raise awareness of the P.O.S. and to induce people to contribute to the society. In Dublin, annual general meetings were most frequently held in the Rotunda. The most effective way to attract the attention of prospective donors at these meetings was to present once destitute orphans as thriving and healthy. 'We now present them before you as objects of your bounty comfortably clothed and placed in state of comparative independence from their once forlorn and

destitute condition'.⁷ Subscribers who attended the annual meeting had the opportunity of seeing the children who had benefited from their financial contributions. 'The great annual meeting of the society shall be held on the first Monday in June when the children shall receive a suitable supply of clothing and be inspected by the general body of subscribers'.⁸ The committee presented their children in their good suits, new caps and bonnets rather than their every day clothing. The annual report of the Meath P.O.S. stated that 'the orphan children who were present were marched round the room, their cleanly and healthy appearance drawing forth many remarks from those present'.⁹ The children may not have enjoyed the process. However attendees described the children as well fed and happy, sentiments that encouraged patronage of the P.O.S. in Dublin and other counties as it provided 'a living testimony of the benefits of the institution'.¹⁰ The County Monaghan P.O.S. noted in their 1887 annual report that following the annual meeting 'the orphans and their nurses retired to the assembly rooms, where a very sumptuous tea was awaiting them, kindly provided by the friends of the society in Monaghan'.¹¹ An annual meeting of the Cork P.O.S. held in Wesley chapel in the 1880s recorded a large, respectable, attendance that included one-hundred and twenty children:

It seemed to create a very general interest from the cheerful and contented appearance which they presented the children, all looked to be comfortably clothed, and apparently in good health. It was in truth a most gratifying spectacle to behold so many young creatures rescued from the evils attendant on neglect ignorance and destitution.¹²

⁷ Annual report, 1830 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/1/2, p.10).

⁸ Annual report, 1829 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS. 1045/1/2, p. 1).

⁹ Rev. Rowland Athey, 'A short history of the Meath Protestant Orphan Society' (Meath, 1966), p. 8.

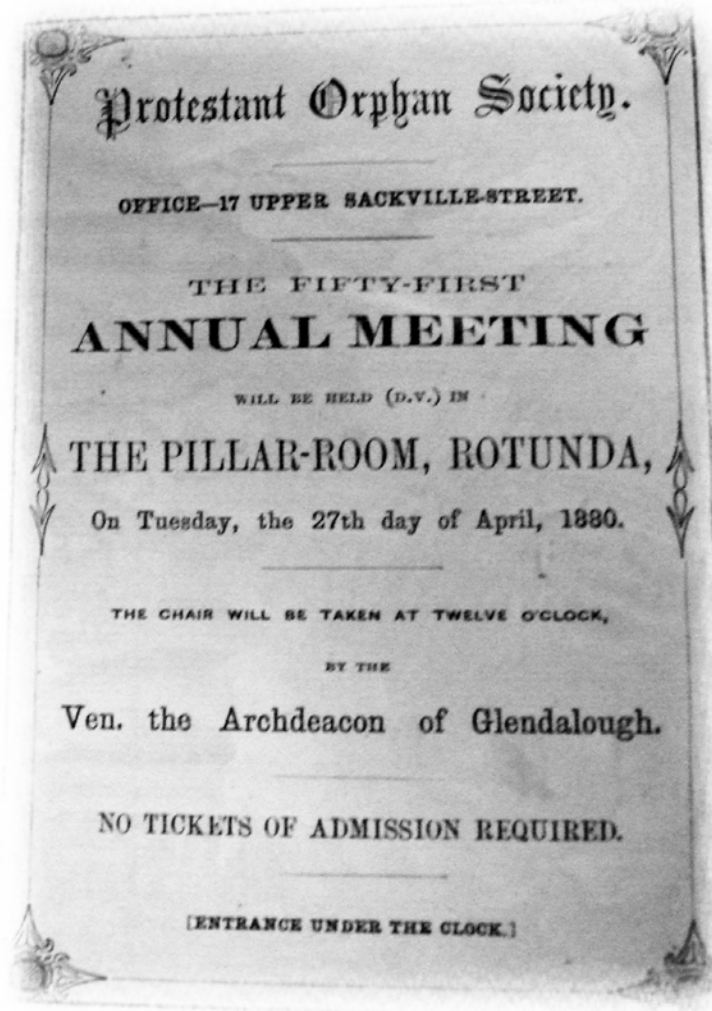
¹⁰ Scrapbooks, 1882 (R.C.B.L., Cork P.O.S. papers, MS 519.16.2).

¹¹ Annual report, 1887 (R.C.B.L., County Monaghan P.O.S. papers, MS 692.6).

¹² Scrapbooks, 1882 (R.C.B.L., Cork P.O.S. papers, MS 519.16.2).

By putting children on display, the committee showed the transparency of their methods and provided proof that the children were doing well.

Figure 3.1 Advertisement for an annual meeting, 1880



Source: Scrapbooks (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/6/3).

Numerous clergymen preached charity sermons, praised the significant work undertaken by the society and highlighted the importance of the orphan's cause. Many undertook the task of giving temporal and spiritual aid to children with great seriousness, as they

strongly believed that divine providence would prevail, that God was watching over them and would reward their efforts. In their charity sermons, they repeatedly referred to the providential blessings that confirmed the value of their work. ‘The intervention of divine providence in the daily affairs of men and women became a familiar theme in sermons and anecdotes’.¹³ In Dublin, Rev. John Gregg, the well-known and influential evangelical orator preached regularly in Trinity church on behalf of the P.O.S, ‘Rev. John Gregg whose unwearied devotedness to the orphan’s cause, this society has for so many years been largely indebted’.¹⁴ The charity sermon was widely used in the eighteenth and nineteenth century to attract respectable patrons to a charitable cause. Protestant and Catholic charitable organisations throughout Dublin placed advertisements for sermons in newspapers, for instance, the *Freeman’s Journal* informed readers of an upcoming sermon on behalf of the Female Orphan House 9 May 1807:

The humane inhabitants of the city are most respectfully informed that a sermon will be preached in support of the Female Orphan House by the Rev. James Dunn at St. Peter’s Church on Sunday next, his Excellency the Lord Lieutenant has been pleased to signify his intention of being present.¹⁵

The Sick and Indigent Roomkeeper’s Society established in 1790 also regularly held charity sermons. The charity sermon was a social event and its success depended on the calibre and the delivery of the sermon and on the attendance of wealthy patrons.

At an annual meeting in 1884, the Tipperary P.O.S. discussed the importance of gaining the support of respected gentlemen, in this case Viscount Lismore, to secure support:

¹³ David Hempton and Myrtle Hill, *Evangelical Protestantism in Ulster society* (London, 1992), p.30.

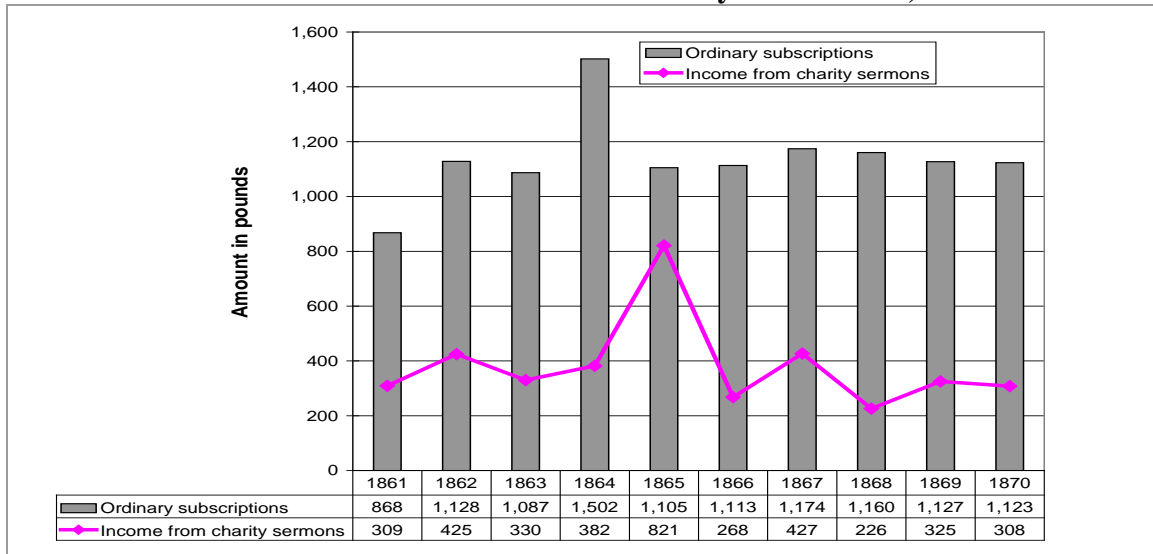
¹⁴ Annual report, 1850 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/1/1, p. 11).

¹⁵ *Freeman’s Journal*, 9 May 1807.

Those who are in a high rank have a great talent in that rank committed to them. For their very presence on occasions where any good thing is going on or any plan for the benefit of the people around them is being laid down or advanced – their very presence is an encouragement to us to look to them from our humble level.¹⁶

Support from the gentry was crucial to validate the society’s work not only in terms of financial contributions but also with regard to their actual presence at fundraising events whether in Dublin or elsewhere. Additional advertisements such as pamphlets, annual reports and newspaper coverage further publicised P.O.S. services.

Chart 3.1 Breakdown of income received by Cork P.O.S., 1861-71



Source: Scrapbook (R.C.B.L., Cork P.O.S. papers, MS 519.16.1).

Chart 3.1 illustrates the income derived from charity sermons in comparison to ordinary subscriptions. The figures were drawn from a summary of income located in a Cork P.O.S. miscellaneous file that covered only the years 1861-71.¹⁷ It suggests that ordinary subscriptions far surpassed the funds raised from charity sermons. Ordinary subscriptions

¹⁶ Minutes of committee meetings, 1884 (N.L.I., Tipperary P.O.S. papers, MS, 32,521).

¹⁷ *Clonmel Chronicle*, 17 May 1884, in scrapbook (R.C.B.L., Cork P.O.S. papers, MS 519.16.1).

(penny a week or more) were consistent and regular. Charity sermons reached their peak during this period in 1865 when £821 16s. was collected in aid of the Cork P.O.S. The Tipperary P.O.S. recorded in their forty eighth annual report the poor response to various charity sermons held throughout the year that resulted in relatively meagre collections, Clonmel £16 4s. 0d., Cahir £6 11s. 0d., Cashell £4 8s. 5d., Fethard £2, Templemore £3 0s. 6d., Tipperary £3 8s. a total of £39 7s. 11d.

Table 3.3 Tipperary P.O.S. income for the year ending, 1883

Income source	£	s.	d.
Subscriptions & donations	469	11	3
Collections after sermons	39	7	11
Collections after meetings	59	4	6
Interest on running account	6	12	7
Interest on consols	74	13	0
Legacy	69	4	6
Arrears from 1882	13	11	0
Income tax refunded	4	19	0
Total	776	10	10

Annual report 1884, (R.C.B.L., Cork P.O.S., MS 519.16.2).

In 1883, Tipperary P.O.S. supported forty-two children.¹⁸ The P.O.S. in Dublin required £2,296 17s. 6d. to maintain two hundred and seventy-one children. Although the P.O.S. in Dublin and elsewhere continued to utilize sermons as a fundraising event, the once generous collections had gradually decreased.

Minor societies such as Monaghan collected for individual cases as and when required. For instance at a meeting dated 3 May 1888, the committee discussed the case of Jane C.

¹⁸ *Clonmel Chronicle*, 17 May 1884, in scrapbook (R.C.B.L., Cork P.O.S. papers, MS 519.16.1).

aged three years. Jane's father a guard on the railway died in a tragic work accident.¹⁹ The community came together to collect for Jane, as the family was well known and because of the nature of the accident. The collection raised the sum of £60, half of which was given to her mother and half placed in the savings bank for Jane's benefit.²⁰ The trustees, the bishop and two railway officials requested that the P.O.S. care for Jane and offered the collection proceeds to the society to pay for her maintenance. Well known businesses and wealthy patrons also occasionally sponsored an orphan by contributing toward their P.O.S. maintenance costs, for instance Messrs. Guinness & Co. offered £7 10s. 0d. for Edward H. in 1894.

3.1 Why support the P.O.S.?

In May 1832, the P.O.S. in Dublin offered thanks to the 'corporation of the city of Dublin for their determination at their last quarterly meeting to maintain vigorous support of the objects of the society so long as it continues purely Protestant'.²¹ At this time, the corporation was interested in the continuance of their privileged place in light of the recent success of the Catholic emancipation campaign in 1829 and the extension of the freehold (£10 householders in towns and cities) with parliamentary reform in 1832.²² Irish municipal reform was introduced in 1840.²³ For the corporation, the P.O.S. represented a vehicle with which to preserve Protestantism in Ireland.

¹⁹ Minutes of committee meetings (R.C.B.L. County Monaghan P.O.S. papers, MS 692.1).

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Minutes of committee meetings, May 9 1832 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 10451/1).

²² Representation of the people (Ireland) Act, 2 & 3 Will. IV, c. 88.

²³ Municipal Reform (Ireland) Act, 3 & 4 Vict., c. 108 (10 Aug. 1840).

Protestant orphan societies throughout Ireland usually approached wealthy families to become involved with their work in the hope that they would elevate the society's status in the wider Protestant community. In Dublin, the committee resolved in 1832, 'the committee in Capel Street be requested to apply to the Honourable Sydney, Herbert and Dowager and Ladies to become subscribers to the society'.²⁴ Members of the Capel Street committee were mainly clergymen. They had already indicated that the founders of the society (members of the collections committee) had been unsuccessful in earlier attempts to attain subscriptions from the better off.²⁵ The Tipperary P.O.S. sent parcels that contained rules, 'to the respective clergymen of the county and that they be requested to direct these circulars to the several influential gentlemen of their neighbourhood'.²⁶ As discussed in chapter 2, a number of landlords viewed the society as a means of bridging the gap between landlord and tenant. It was conceived that tenants would look to them with gratitude for their support of a society that assisted in the care of their children. As donations and their sources featured in annual reports and in local newspapers, wealthy patrons could enjoy the good publicity, which propped up their social standing in the parish. The threat of disestablishment of the Church of Ireland in later years also gave urgency to their cause. For many contributing annual donations to the society became a family tradition.

Legacies were the most significant source of income for the P.O.S. Those who supported it steadily in life usually set aside a sum for the society in their last will and testament. 'Legacies as a rule are bequeathed by those who have very materially helped the society

²⁴ Minutes of committee meetings, May 9 1832 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 10451/1).

²⁵ Annual reports, 1830 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/1/1).

²⁶ Minutes of committee meetings, 16 Dec.1835 (N.L.I., Tipperary P.O.S. papers, MS 32,521-32,538).

during their life'.²⁷ For example in 1904, the committee acknowledged John Denis Totenham whose legacy amounted to £2,000 'a most generous supporter of the P.O.S. for a considerable number of years'.²⁸ A strong religious conviction and duty to preserve the Church of Ireland motivated many benefactors to give so generously to the P.O.S. Benefactors also hoped to retain a place in history posthumously by having special funds named after them such as the generous and revered Kinsey legacy, which enabled the creation of the Kinsey Marriage Portion Fund Charity.²⁹

As the next case suggests, supporters trusted the P.O.S. management perhaps over other charities to utilise donations appropriately. William Finn donated large sums to the P.O.S. in Dublin over a lifetime. He appeared to have perfect confidence in the managers of the committee and 'sincerely hoped that in the coming years that honest and faithful successors to the position now fill, may never be wanting to perpetuate the good work so happily begun and successfully managed from the commencement up to the present time'.³⁰ The committee referred to his donation in their annual report. 'A very large subscription came indeed, all the way from America to this Society, and from a native of Dublin, Mr. William Finn, of Cincinnati, Ohio, in the month of October last'.³¹ Mr. Finn wrote to the trustees of the P.O.S. 1 October 1880 confirming the contents of his gift. 'I have pleasure in handing you herewith ten consolidated mortgage sinking fund seven per

²⁷ Annual report, 1881 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/1/1, p.20).

²⁸ Annual report, 1904 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/1/1).

²⁹ See chapter 6.

³⁰ Donations, 1 Oct. 1880 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/4/8/9).

³¹ Annual report, 1905 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/1/1).

cent bonds of the Cincinnati Hamilton and Dayton Railroad³² Company'.³³ The American railway bonds were to the value of £2,220.

The committee invested this money into special funds which became known as the Finn Exhibitions used to set up premiums and rewards for proficiency in learning for children, 'whose conduct, intelligence, and industry affords the best expectation of their being fitted to fill worthily higher positions in life than the society'.³⁴ The P.O.S. used Mr. Finn's generous donation in a manner that greatly benefited the children. Noting the preferred management of his donation, Finn stated:

I give these bonds to the trustees for the time being of the Protestant Orphan Society of this city in trust for the uses and purposes of that society. To be held as a permanent fund or endowment to aid in promoting the charitable and benevolent objects and purposes of the society. I desire that the principal of this fund represented by the face of these bonds shall be kept forever intact and that only the interest and income there from as the same shall accrue shall be expended for the current uses proposed and objects of the society.³⁵

Finn gave a further gift of \$5,000 stock in Dayton rail to commemorate his eightieth birthday in 1894. Mr. Finn's younger siblings or relatives may have received assistance from the P.O.S. to warrant such repeated generosity on his part. He may have had a younger brother supported by the P.O.S. called H. J. Finn. The P.O.S. arranged for this orphan to go to America 1 January 1869, which might explain William's consistent interest in the society.³⁶ This example has reflected the immense charity of lifelong

³² The Cincinnati Hamilton & Dayton Railroad Company started in 1853 with primarily Irish and German immigrants working on the track as navigational engineers or navvies.

³³ Donations, 1 Oct. 1880 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/4/8/9).

³⁴ Annual report, 1882 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/1/1).

³⁵ Donations (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/4/8/9).

³⁶ Register of incoming letters (N.A.I. P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/3/1/13).

supporters of the P.O.S. It has also shown that the P.O.S. committee were obligated to follow the instructions laid out by the donor, which had the potential in some cases to limit their distribution of funds.

The P.O.S. in Dublin invested legacies and donations to acquire interest, this interest financed expenditure costs while still securing a capital surety that would grow over time. However, while the P.O.S. invested a number of legacies in trust and under the guidelines of the benefactor, when under financial strain they used the money attained from legacies to cover their running costs. This led to fewer long-term investments, and a depletion of the large sums donated in the form of bequests. The committee only drew on such monies as a solution to expenditure demands when subscriptions, charity sermons and other contributions waned, leaving a margin of unresolved debt.

3.2 Financial management

The final part of analysis compares Dublin, Cork, and Monaghan Protestant orphan societies in terms of their financial management to highlight the difficulties involved in running a voluntary funded charitable organisation. To reiterate the separate character of the societies, reference is made to a legacy that was bequeathed to the 'Protestant Orphan Society in Ireland' in 1917. The case was taken to court, as there was no such organisation of that name:

Upon the publication of the notice of charitable bequest a difficulty presented itself as to the intentions of the testatrix and the true construction of her last will and the devise of her property to the Protestant Orphan Society in Ireland. There being strictly speaking no society answering this description a correspondence arose between several societies and their solicitors.³⁷

Each society was responsible for its own accounts. If they ran into debt, they had to resolve the problem themselves.

The financial management of the Cork P.O.S. came under scrutiny in 1863 as their debts gradually escalated. A subscriber to the society highlighted this fact at a meeting dated 1863. The Cork P.O.S. admitted children of Protestant as well as children of mixed marriages, which accounted for higher admission rates that at their peak reached sixty children per annum. The speaker at the meeting made comparisons between the Cork, Limerick and the Dublin P.O.S. Unlike Limerick and Dublin, Cork did not take stock of its income or expenditure until year-end at which point they had found that their expenditure far surpassed their income leaving them in debt of £650. Attempts to identify the cause of debt revealed that the Cork P.O.S. paid nurses two pounds more than either Limerick or Dublin. Cork P.O.S. did so because they contended as other Protestant orphan societies did, that nurses could not adequately care for the children on a lesser wage. However, had they reduced the number of children they admitted and continued to pay the nurses a higher rate they would not have accrued this debt.

³⁷ Bequests, 1917 (N.A.I., P.O.S. (Dublin) papers, MS 10454/13).

Based on this critique, the secretary to the Cork P.O.S., the highly respected Mr. Woodroffe re-evaluated their finances because the children in their care were at risk if the society could no longer operate efficiently. The debts accrued had serious consequences for the future running of society. For one entire year in fact, the Cork P.O.S. could not accept any further admissions. In 1862, the committee resorted to loans in order to pay their nurses. ‘Resolved that members of the committee be requested to wait on the manager provincial bank and ask him for a loan of £200 to pay nurses’.³⁸ On 26 May 1862, the committee stated ‘that the society is so much pressed for funds an urgent application be made to Mr. Peterson for payment of the late Mr. Morris’s bequest £100’.³⁹ The following month showed no improvement with £300 drawn from the funds to meet the urgent needs of the society.⁴⁰

On 23 June 1862, the committee suggested that a special meeting of the general committee should be convened on the 7 July to consider the depressed state of the society’s funds.⁴¹ Accordingly, on 28 December 1863 the committee resolved that ‘in consequence of the inability of the society to meet punctuality its liabilities we deem it necessary not to admit another orphan until the society is out of its present difficulties’.⁴² The following chart shows the inadequacy of income over expenditure for the period 1861 to 1870. The deficit is clearly visible as expenditure remained relatively constant and in contrast, income fluctuated.

³⁸ Minutes of committee meetings, 26 May 1862 (R.C.B.L., Cork P.O.S. papers, MS 519.1.1).

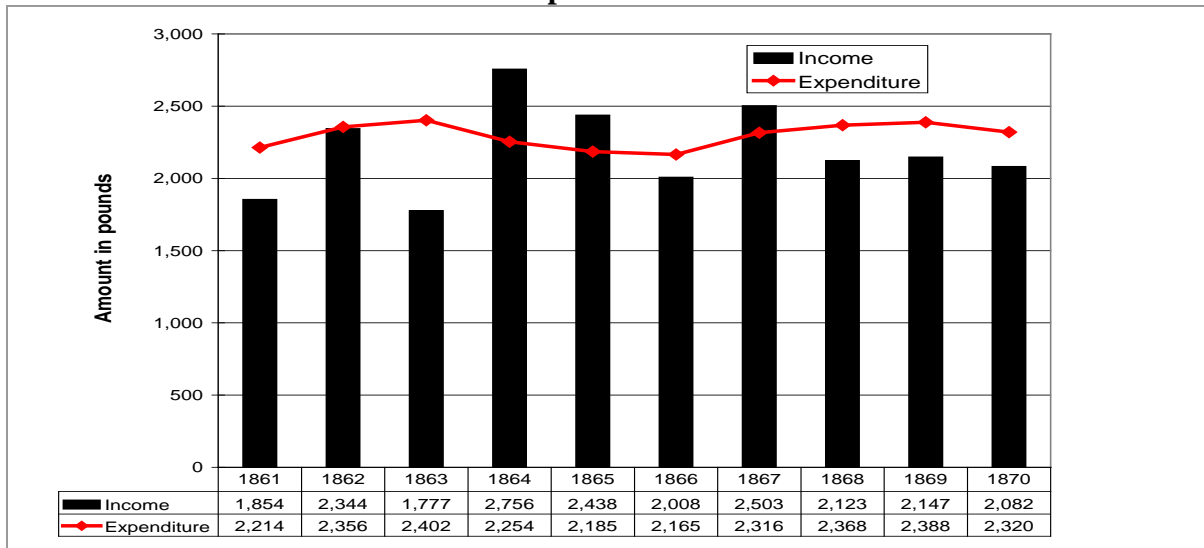
³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid., 28 Dec. 1863.

Chart 3.2 Income and expenditure Cork P.O.S. 1861-7



Source: Minutes of committee meetings, 1861–70 (R.C.B.L., Cork P.O.S. papers, MS 519.2).

Other Protestant orphan societies also suffered a decline in funds at this time, which reflected the more general trends of economic downturns that related to the poor harvests of 1859-64. In 1863, the Meath P.O.S. also experienced financial problems:

The demands arising from considerable distress among our own people and from those in Lancashire, who, without fault of their own, were plunged into deep poverty, may have caused this diminution in our funds. The distress in Lancashire was occasioned by the cessation of the export of raw cotton from America. The expense of clothing is now much greater than it was before the American war.⁴³

Protestant orphan societies that operated on a more minor scale and those that were located in areas under populated by Protestants were most likely to come up against financial difficulties unless they received substantial legacies.

⁴³ Athey, 'A short history of the Meath Protestant Orphan Society', p. 8.

The P.O.S. in Dublin also accrued debt at different periods particularly during economic downturns. However, a larger Protestant population in Dublin, and a strong foundation of investment and capital meant that the society usually pulled through these periods of financial uncertainty. In addition, the secretary for the P.O.S. in Dublin Mr. George Jepps was commended for his admiral work and dedication to the society:

Many rare qualities natural and acquired rendered him singularly fitted for the post he occupied for nearly forty years, the duties of which he discharged with credit to himself and benefit to the society. To his intelligence and capacity for business, we are indebted for the discipline of the office, the exactness of the accounts and the record of the multifarious details of the society's work. He was affable to all, kind in his intercourse with the widows and orphans, gentle and forbearing towards the refractory.⁴⁴

The following summary of accounts, drawn from the records of the P.O.S. in Dublin for the year 1838 details their expenditure demands. Nurses' wages represented the largest outgoing. The cost of clothes for the children was also considerable. Other costs included rent, printing, stationery and other miscellaneous office expenses.

⁴⁴ Annual report, 1877 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers MS 1045/1/1, p. 13).

Table 3.4 Abstract of the P.O.S. (Dublin) cash account 1 Jan. - 31 Dec. 1838

Expenses	£	s.	d.
One year's wages to nurses to 1 Nov. 1838	898	15	7
Orphans clothing	355	5	5
Education of orphans	48	2	9
Travelling expenses of nurses and orphans	36	13	3
Apprentice fees	24	0	0
Prayer books for orphans	3	15	0
Medicine and burial expenses	1	16	6
Years salary to assistant secretary	100	0	0
Collectors poundage on subscriptions	14	0	0
Years wages to messenger	20	0	0
Rent of Office fires candles etc	46	25	0
Printing annual reports and other costs	94	0	0
Meetings collecting cards circular letters		12	6
Advertising	14	10	5
Account books stationary	4	18	7
Expense of annual meeting	17	13	9
Expenses of deputations & inspections	35	19	11
Furniture and repairs	9	7	8
Postage, carriage of parcels	16	0	0
Total	1,741	17	6

Source: Annual report, 1839 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/1/1).

In 1838, the Dublin P.O.S. committee received subscriptions and donations for £1,717 11s. 1d. and a further £70 6s. 8d. arising from collections after sermons for the year 1838. Therefore, income met expenditure leaving a surplus.

Epidemics and famines put a serious strain on their finances, which they resolved in later years:

The year 1846 was one in which the society had to encounter no ordinary trials, and they have but too much reason to apprehend that the year now commencing will be one of great anxiety to their successors and requiring the most earnest

exertions for the support of the society. Everyone is now pressed by the destitution in his own immediate neighbourhood, therefore public institutions may not be supported as in other years. But the society has now more than ever a claim for liberal support. It feels the pressure of the times severely. It is a parent of the largest and most destitute family in the land, like all families of the poor, it has to meet a serious increase of expense.⁴⁵

Cracks also began to appear in their accounts due to heightened expenditure caused by increased applications and the cost of living during the 1880s following the famine of 1879 and subsequent poor harvests. At this time, the P.O.S. in Dublin received sharp criticism for its financial management. Accusations of hoarding large sums began to emerge against the P.O.S. In reply to a letter published in the *Daily Express* that claimed the P.O.S. had ‘some £30,000 (or its equivalent) laid by and bringing in an income of £1,500 per annum’⁴⁶ the committee stated:

Instead of hoarding this fund, they have from time to time drawn largely upon it. They have always admitted every deserving case of orphanage which has been brought before them; but the ordinary income of the society – derived from subscriptions, sermons, meetings and collecting cards, together with items of interest – has been insufficient of itself to enable them to do so. In order to supply the deficit they have for several years been obliged to sell out principal at the rate of about £1,000 per annum.⁴⁷

The P.O.S. made public these facts in the hope that subscriptions, collections and donations might increase. However, funds decreased. The subject of finance was of great anxiety to the committee for the ensuing years. This decline in subscriptions, collections and sermons continued and increased speculation regarding the money actually allocated to orphans’ care coupled with outdated rules no longer supported by all subscribers, gave rise to a shake up within the managing committee.

⁴⁵ Annual report, 1847 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/1/1 p. 17).

⁴⁶ Scrapbooks, 1882 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/6/2).

⁴⁷ Ibid.

Rev. Richard Hallowes a clergyman in Arklow parish brought grievances against the committee's financial management of the P.O.S. in Dublin to the fore. Rev. Hallowes was a source of controversy in his own parish. He preached provocative evangelical street sermons during the early years of the 1890s. He voiced his opinions against Home Rule a sentiment shared by the majority of the Church of Ireland and wider Protestant population. The street preaching aggravated the Catholic community of Arklow that led to sectarian disturbances. Arthur Balfour, the chief secretary wrote of Hallowes 'a mad attorney turned parson – a horrible combination'.⁴⁸ Despite his reputation, Hallowes does appear to have been concerned for the welfare of his parishioners. Families in Arklow had subscribed to the P.O.S. in Dublin for many years but because of age restrictions, two young orphans in his congregation were refused admission. This may have caused considerable upset to the families who were likely to have been reluctant to apply for assistance in the first place.

He compiled a report titled, 'A plea on behalf of orphans in the counties Dublin, Wicklow and Kildare left unprovided for by our Church' dated 1895. It comprised letters written to the P.O.S. committee, analysis of accounts and proposals for change. He strongly opposed a number of contentious issues including the level of funds expended by the P.O.S. on official salaries. 'There is another matter which I did not mention, but which has for a long time been in my mind as a grave objection to your society, and that is the large sum of money expended yearly on salaries and expenses'.⁴⁹ He indicated that

⁴⁸ Martin Doherty, 'The Arklow disturbances of 1890-92' in James Murphy (ed.), *Evangelicals and Catholicism in nineteenth-century Ireland* (Dublin, 2005), p. 229.

⁴⁹ Rev. R.C. Hallowes, 'A plea on behalf of orphans left unprovided for by our church', 1895 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers MS 1045/1/2/2, p.8).

following close examination of the accounts printed in the annual reports he considered the sums expended on the secretarial and office expenses out of proportion with annual collections.

He noted that the committee had expended a total of £446 5s. 0d. on official salaries. Hallowes compared the P.O.S. in Dublin to its neighbouring society in Monkstown noting that its cost of management was insignificant. There were no paid officials, and the small outgoings consisted of printing and postage expenses. All subscriptions made to Monkstown appeared to benefit the children. Likewise, he contended that Antrim and Down shared the same policy. 'No other society, as far as I have been able to ascertain, expends such large sums on salaries and expenses'.⁵⁰ However, according to the P.O.S., Hallowes had never been present at a P.O.S. annual meeting despite requests by the committee for him to attend. Neither had he ever been a member of the committee.

Considering all facets of the plea, the P.O.S. presented a reply in which they accused Rev. Hallowes of making erroneous claims and attempting 'to injure the society'. The P.O.S. claimed that when compared to three other leading charitable organisations, they in fact paid proportionately less salaries. They recorded that these charities' average expenditure for administration, salaries and office expenses came to 52 per cent of their total income whereas the P.O.S. in Dublin claimed that theirs was in the region of 33 ½ per cent of their annual income. Moreover, the P.O.S. stated that the secretary whose salary amounted to £200 per annum in 1894 was commensurate to both his experience

⁵⁰ Hallowes, 'A plea on behalf of orphans left unprovided for by our church', p.9.

and extensive duties. He had been in the employment of the society for seventeen years and his was a position of great responsibility and trust.

Rev. Hallows then produced a second plea, which he circulated to subscribers as well as members of the committee. In it, he disregarded the argument put forward by the P.O.S. that former secretaries had received higher salaries in previous years and suggested instead that these committee members were even more extravagant. Rev. Hallows' censure was in many respects flawed and misrepresentative. For example, along with his other suggestions, he contended that the funds expended on inspections of children boarded-out and older apprentices were excessive. The P.O.S. retorted, 'without a regular system of frequent inspection and superintendence the boarding out plan adopted by the society would become little better than a system of baby farming.'⁵¹ The P.O.S. condemned this practice and prioritised inspections as a matter of course as they were a key mechanism to ensure the children's safety and well-being. Inspections also copper fastened the society's good reputation.

In the years that followed, the P.O.S. in Dublin responded in part to the case presented by Rev. Hallows because on matters such as age limits and staff salaries he had some grounds on which to criticise. Moreover, he seemed to have the backing of a section of the subscribing public. Committee members appointed a sub-committee to investigate the working expenses of the society. They examined all of the expenditure details and proposed various amendments:

⁵¹ 'The reply of the committee of the P.O.S. to Rev. Hallows' plea on behalf of the orphans' (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/1/2/3, p.6).

They have made certain changes in the staff and the working arrangements, which will considerably reduce the expenditure. And will ensure the working of the society with the least possible expense consistent with the proper maintenance and supervision of the orphans under their care.⁵²

In 1898, following the amalgamation of the Protestant Orphan Refuge Society (formerly known as the Charitable Protestant Orphan Union) and the P.O.S. in Dublin, committee members distributed an urgent appeal to subscribers that outlined recent alterations to the original rules, which included, an increase in the admissible age limit from nine to thirteen. The appeal also recorded a reduction in their expenditure costs. The new figures were considerably less than they had been at any time for the previous fifty years. The 1905 accounts showed a decrease in staff salaries of £146 5s. 0d. In previous years the secretary, assistant secretary and a clerk managed the office, however, by 1905 only the secretary and assistant secretary received salaries that amounted to £300 (£150 each per annum).

Despite an increase in subscriptions for a short period, the P.O.S. in Dublin faced further financial difficulties in the first years of the twentieth century. The Archbishop of Dublin convened a conference at the Palace, St. Stephen's Green on Friday, 36 October 1906 to highlight the need for members of the Church of Ireland to renew their financial support of the P.O.S. The very Rev. Dean of the Chapel Royal, hon. secretary, asserted that the P.O.S. income stood at approximately £1,500 per annum gained from subscriptions, collections, and offertories and £1,300 interest on funded property. The expenditure was approximately £3,600 per annum, which left a deficit of £800. The P.O.S. used legacies as they came in, however if there was a year without legacies or a succession of bad years

⁵² Annual report, 1896 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/1/1).

the society accrued debt, and consequently they had to appeal to the public for further contributions.

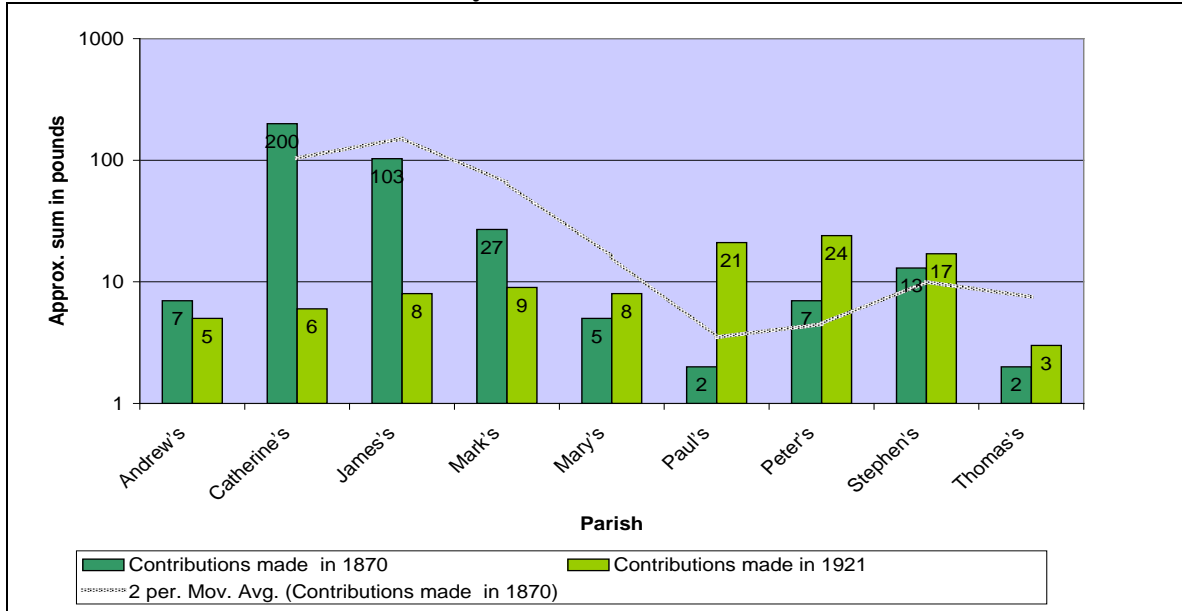
In attempt to reconcile their financial difficulties, the P.O.S. honorary secretary suggested: 'To enable the society to do the work it sets before it –viz to elect every eligible case of destitute orphanage that seeks its aid – it needs a permanent increase of income'.⁵³ He noted that a gentleman and his wife had recently made a generous offer. 'That they will place £1,000 at the disposal of the society if it succeeds in increasing its income by £400 per annum before the close of its financial year. To take counsel as to the best means of securing this generous offer and permanently increasing the society's income is the object of this conference'.⁵⁴ In 1929, the Archbishop reiterated earlier statements in relation to the society's funds: 'The falling off in their income was doubtless due to the lamentable shrinkage of the Protestant population of the Free State'.⁵⁵ Further discussion on the declines in income was a common feature of later reports.

⁵³ Annual report, 1906 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/1/1).

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ *Irish Independent*, 25 Apr. 1929.

Chart 3.3 Financial contributions made to the P.O.S. in Dublin by Dublin auxiliaries



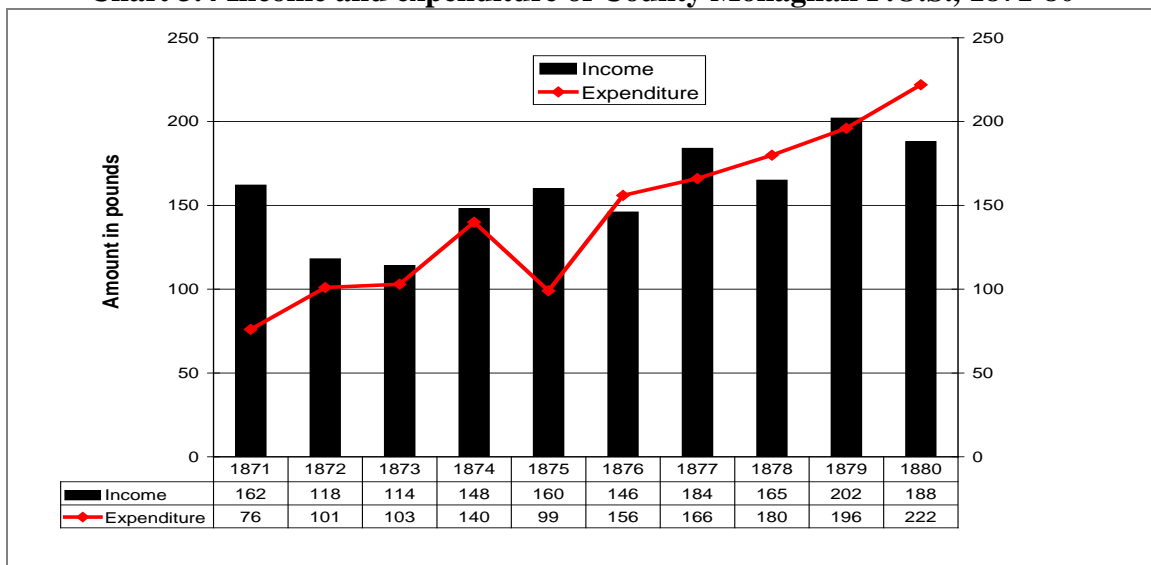
Source: Annual Reports (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/1/1 (1871), p.13 (1922), p.17).

Chart 3.3 shows the sums collected in Dublin parishes in 1870 compared with that of 1921. These changes were due to a decline in Protestant numbers through migration from the city to the suburbs, emigration, and outbreaks of disease in the late 1870s, with small pox and typhoid fever in the early 1890s. Moreover, people tended to divide their charitable contributions between the growing numbers of charitable causes seeking assistance in Dublin.

The County Monaghan P.O.S. formed in 1870. Vice Presidents included Colonel Leslie M.P., the Earl of Dartrey, Evelyn Philip Shirley Esq. and the Rev. Archdeacon Wolfe. The honorary secretaries included Major Lloyd and Rev. E. J. Bury. In 1912, the Monaghan P.O.S. was in debt and expended funds derived from two small legacies in order to carry on the work of the society. However, in 1918 they recorded an upsurge in contributions. With the conclusion of World War I, they accumulated a surplus income,

which they hoped would allow for additional admissions. In an annual report dated 1919, the committee of the Monaghan P.O.S. noted that they had also used this surplus to benefit the children already on the society roll, ‘the income is the largest on record, enabling them to supplement the usual maintenance allowance by a bonus of £1 towards each child’s support’.⁵⁶ In 1922, due again to a surplus income the committee chose to increase children’s maintenance payments from £8 per child to £10 per child. However, if subscriptions, charity sermons, donations, and legacies decreased the society was liable to amass debts that could take between one and two years to clear.

Chart 3.4 Income and expenditure of County Monaghan P.O.S., 1871-80



Source: Annual reports, 1871-80 (R.C.B.L., Monaghan P.O.S. papers, MS 692.6).

As chart 3.4 shows, the income accrued by the Monaghan P.O.S. was relatively consistent. It was not until the severe economic problems of the late 1870s that they recorded a shortfall. Declines in funding severely affected children in terms of their standard of living whether in Dublin or other county branches. Moreover, increases in

⁵⁶ Annual report, 1918 (R.C.B.L., Monaghan P.O.S. papers, MS 692.6)

the cost of living without a corresponding increase in nurse wages had a direct effect on the orphan's status within the family circle, in some cases jeopardising their place altogether. Nurses could not keep children in their home unless they had the adequate funds to do so. The P.O.S. provided nurses with bonuses to prevent any loss to the children.

During World War I, the Cork P.O.S. distributed bonuses amongst the nurses:

It was perhaps more pressing this year and if it was at all possible to consider whether they might be able to increase the amount of pay given to their nurses. It would be a very important thing something in the nature of a war bonus as provisions had gone up enormously and their children should be fed properly if they were going to attain the best mentally and physically. He did not know if it could be done but it would be seriously considered.⁵⁷

The Dublin P.O.S. also offered their nurses the same bonus system in 1917 because food and clothing prices had risen considerably. The committee used money derived from legacies to increase nurse's wages by £1 for every child in her care. Reflecting on the previous year the committee observed; 'Special War bonuses for maintenance of orphans to the extent referred to in last year's report were made during the year amounting to £422 and the committee recommends their continuation for the present'.⁵⁸ The War had destabilising effects on many of the societies. In 1914, Meath P.O.S. increased their maintenance allowance by £1 to £8 and in 1916 offered war bonuses of £2 to nurses for each orphan in their care and finally in 1919 the clothing allowance was increased from £2 to £3 10s. 0d.

⁵⁷ Scrapbook, 1919 (R.C.B.L., Cork P.O.S. papers, MS 519.16.1).

⁵⁸ Annual report, 1917 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/1/1).

Down through the years, committee members and staff attempted to keep the P.O.S. in Dublin afloat. Their careful management of the funds meant that they did not suffer from debt problems a great deal. If they had, resources for separate funds that financed apprenticeships, other forms of training and clothing may have dried up. As the Protestant population declined in numbers particularly after World War I, the P.O.S. lost its former prominence as an organisation. Nevertheless, the consistent dedication of the Church of Ireland laity in their support of the P.O.S. pre and post disestablishment is a testament to their commitment to their church and to the less well off families in their communities.

Chapter 4

Women's role

Women consistently contributed to philanthropy and social reform in Ireland throughout the nineteenth and twentieth century. The aim of this chapter is to analyse the role that women assumed in the overall management of the P.O.S. in Dublin. A brief overview is given of the wider discourse on women's commitment to charity, women's rights, and the rights of the child. The discussion then considers women's responsibilities as P.O.S. collectors, fundraisers, nurses, matrons, and later as inspectors and members of sub-committees. Brief reference is also made to the voluntary work undertaken by women for Protestant orphan societies located in Monaghan, Fermanagh, Cork, and Meath.

Women became visible in public life through their participation in philanthropy. Some historians maintain the spread of evangelicalism as a major factor in this development. 'With its emphasis on the sanctity of life, social pity and moral fervour, evangelicalism had the important side-effect of opening up greater opportunities for women in charitable service'.¹ With financial security and time at their disposal, upper class and middle class women could invest in the organisation and management of charities. Works of charity were regarded as appropriate pastimes for such women. The Victorian ideal of the woman was feminine, caring, well tempered, generous, and kind, attributes that translated well to the care of the poor.

¹ Frank Prousheska, *The voluntary impulse: philanthropy in modern Britain* (London, 1988), p. 23.

In the eighteenth century, women positively influenced the lives of many of the less well off in their community. Grizel Stevens founded a hospital for curable diseases in 1733 and Mary Mercer transformed an almshouse into a hospital in 1734. Mrs. Tighe and Mrs. Este opened the Female Orphan House for girls in 1790. In the nineteenth century, Protestant women participated in the temperance movement. The Strand Street Institute formed in 1868, set up clubs and associations such as the Total Abstinence Association.² For the most part women took the lead in the organisation and running of these clubs. The Church of Ireland Total Abstinence Association was founded in 1862, the Ladies Temperance Society formed in Belfast in 1838 and the Women's Temperance Association was founded in Belfast in 1874. Father Mathew was a leading figure in the total abstinence crusade and nuns engaged in this field of work through confraternities and sodalities.³

The Fishamble Mission was founded in 1862 and the Mission to the Liberties in 1874. The Dublin Prison Gate Mission established in 1876 sought to assist women discharged from prison. Overseas missions were of also of great interest to women of the church with 165 female missionaries from the Church of Ireland during the period 1874-1934.⁴ Charlotte Pym organised the Leprosy mission in 1874 and an auxiliary of the Church of England Zenana Mission formed in 1897. Ellen Smyly managed ragged schools in

² Oonagh Walsh, *Anglican women in Dublin: philanthropy, politics, and education in the early twentieth century* (Dublin, 2005), p. 89.

³ Luddy, *Women & philanthropy*, p. 208.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 217.

Dublin. Miss Carr's Homes were established in 1887 to care for destitute children.⁵ Rosa Barrett founded the Cottage Home for Little Children in 1879.

Generally, Catholic bishops did not approve of social activism by Catholic lay women and nuns carried out much of the early charity work such as schools, hospitals and asylums. The Sisters of Charity opened St. Vincent's Hospital on 23 January 1834.⁶ Catholic priests did not have the same record of social activism and philanthropy as their female counterparts. Catholic women's involvement in charity work escalated after the famine. The number of nuns soared from 1,500 in 1850 to 8,000 in 1901.⁷ Female religious thus dominated this area of work. Margaret Aylward, Mary Aikenhead and Nano Nagle are some of the well known figures. Numerous orphanages and hospitals were founded and run by nuns. Missions abroad were also established. Catholic laywomen were also involved in charitable work if on a lesser scale or in a collaborative role with the church. In 1855, Ellen Woodlock, founded St. Joseph's Industrial Institute in Dublin. Woodlock and Sarah Atkinson established the Children's Hospital in Temple Street and contributed to the debate on workhouse children in 1861.⁸ The Dublin's Ladies Clothing Society formed in 1846 to distribute clothing to the poor.

The religious divide led Protestant and Catholic female charity workers to compete against each other to help the poor. 'All philanthropists, whether Catholic or Protestant, were intent on imparting their own religious views to their charges, and amassing souls

⁵ Luddy, *Women & philanthropy*, p. 87.

⁶ T.W. Moody, F.X. Martin, and F.J. Byrne (eds), *A new history of Ireland*, viii: *a chronology of Irish history to 1976* (Oxford, 1982), p. 313.

⁷ Luddy, *Women & philanthropy*, p. 23.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 194.

for God was seen as part of their duty'.⁹ The Dublin Discharged Roman Catholic Female Prisoner's Aid Society based itself on the template of the Protestant and Quaker run Prison Gate Mission. St. Brigid's Orphanage established by Margaret Aylward opposed the work of the Protestant Orphan Society, the Protestant Orphan Union, the Ragged Schools, agents of the I.C.M. and the Female Orphan House.

4.1 Reformative philanthropy

Isabella Tod, a Presbyterian was born 18 May 1836 in Edinburgh. Tod was a prolific writer who campaigned determinedly for women's rights. A paper Tod had written titled 'On advanced education for girls of the upper middle classes' was read before the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science in 1867. The paper led to discussions on women's property rights. Heavily involved with the Belfast Ladies Institute that assisted women to access education Tod also pushed for women's entrance in examinations at Queen's College Belfast. A provision for girls in the Intermediate Education (Ireland) Act¹⁰ was yet another cause. Tod also argued that women's participation in temperance work showed their positive influence on the moral good of the poor in society, which suffrage could extend further.¹¹

Miss Menella Smedley was born in London in 1819 and died in 1877. A poet and novelist, Miss Smedley later became interested in pauper girls' education. Rosa Barrett established the Cottage Home for Little Children, the Dublin Aid Committee, (N.S.P.C.C) engaged in the work of the Philanthropic Reform Association and Lady

⁹ Luddy, *Women & philanthropy*, p. 83.

¹⁰ 41 & 42 Vict., c.66 (16 Aug. 1878).

¹¹ Luddy, *Women & philanthropy*, p. 208.

Aberdeen's Irish Home Industries Association. Barrett also compiled reports on the extent of legislation for children abroad, read before the Statistical and Social Inquiry Society of Ireland.¹²

Reformative philanthropy politicised some women's outlook on social issues,¹³ yet their influence was largely restricted until they could cast their vote. Anna Haslam born in 1828 in Cork engaged in work with the P.R.A., the Irish Workhouse Association and established the Dublin Women's Suffrage Association in 1876. Louie Bennett and Helen Chevnix founded the Irish Women's Suffrage Federation in 1911. Hannah Sheehy Skeffington and Margaret Cousins initiated the Irish Women's Franchise League in 1908. In total, twenty suffrage related societies existed by 1913.¹⁴ However, the outbreak of war temporarily impeded their struggle. By February 1918, women over thirty could vote.

4.2 Women in the Church of Ireland

Following the disestablishment of the Church of Ireland and the 1870 General Convention, women's powers to 'attend and vote at vestry meetings and fill the office of churchwardens'¹⁵ were withdrawn by the General Synod, with 158 votes to 108.¹⁶ By this vote, women were excluded from all church offices such as attendance at general vestry meetings and the duties of churchwardens. The select vestry managed the parish finances. Presbyterian women were involved in matters of the church and so too were

¹² Luddy, *Women & philanthropy*, p. 93.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 209.

¹⁴ Myrtle Hill, *Women in Ireland: a century of change* (Belfast, 2003), p. 54.

¹⁵ Acheson, *A history of the Church of Ireland*, p. 271.

¹⁶ R. B. McDowell, *The Church of Ireland, 1869-1969* (London, 1975), p. 54.

women of the Church of England.¹⁷ The wider suffragist movement may have had an impact on the decision by Church of Ireland women to question their weakened position in the church. They did not make a serious or official attempt to reverse their status in the church until 1914, forty-three years after disestablishment. In 1914, 1,400 women petitioned to the General Synod to call for change.

The network of Mother's Union branches throughout the country was likely to have given women the opportunity to organise and carry out the preparation of the petition. Canon J.A.F. Gregg and Mr. Justice Madden presented the petition.¹⁸ However, it was unsuccessful. J.A.F. Gregg (then Bishop of Ossory and by 1920 Archbishop of Dublin¹⁹) presented the petition to the Synod for a second time in 1919 and emphasised the level of parish work undertaken by women.²⁰ Yet in spite of disestablishment, certain sections of the church hierarchy remained conservative. It was not until 1920 that the church returned women's rights to hold vestry office.²¹ Women were ordained in the Church of Ireland from 1990 however, from the 1970s they had acted as readers and deacons in the church.

Despite these earlier restrictions, women continued to engage in organisations founded by women and affiliated with their church. The Girl's Friendly Society and the Mother's Union were two of the many organisations supported by Church of Ireland women. Both originated in Winchester in England. The Irish branch of the Girl's Friendly Society was

¹⁷ Acheson, *A history of the Church of Ireland*, p. 218.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ National Gallery of Ireland, *Church disestablishment, 1870-1970* (Dublin, 1970), pp 125-30.

²⁰ Acheson, *A history of the Church of Ireland*, p. 219.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 218

established in 1876 in Bray, County Wicklow with the aim of helping ‘lonely girls from the country, working in cities’.²² The Dublin office formed in 1878 and a hostel for the society’s use was founded in 1880. Mary Sumner founded the Mother’s Union in 1876. Annabella Hayes, married to the rector of Raheny, Dublin founded the Dublin Mother’s Union in 1887. The union ‘pledged to support marriage and family life’.²³ Additional branches opened in Wales, New Zealand, Hong Kong, Canada and India and by 1900 members totalled close to 170,000 women. The Mother’s Union was an exceptional outlet that unified women with a common voice on social, charitable, and on occasion political issues. The employment laws introduced in 1935 impinged on women’s employment rights and the Mother’s Union along with other organisations such as the I.W.G.S.L.A.²⁴ and the United Irishwomen expressed their opposition.²⁵

4.3 Women and the P.O.S.

From the outset, the P.O.S. in Dublin was at least superficially a male dominated organisation. The first annual report records that every member of the main committee, all patrons and vice patrons were men. However, this changed over time. Despite their informal role, women’s influence, and contributions on a grass roots level was immense.

Clergymen’s wives and their daughters had an obligation to support their husband’s/father’s charitable endeavours and their input constituted an important asset to Protestant orphan societies, they acted as collectors, fundraisers as well as being on call

²² Acheson, *A history of the Church of Ireland*, p. 217.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Irish Women’s Suffrage and Local Government Association.

²⁵ Hill, *Women in Ireland*, p.100.

to offer additional support and advice when needed. In 1869, the Cork P.O.S. noted in their minutes that Mrs. Woodroffe, (the secretary Rev. Woodroffe's wife) was requested to help persuade a young orphan to reside with another nurse for health reasons. 'Mrs. Woodroffe to try and induce her to go'.²⁶This is just one example that illustrates the implicit ways that women facilitated the smooth operation of the society. Clergymen were also likely to have sought their advice on matters such as the appropriate care of foster children.

One over-riding difference between male and female contributions to the P.O.S. was the monetary payment made to each. Salaried male office staff and officials received large salaries while the women who undertook extensive groundwork to bring in funds to pay them, received nothing. Men considered women's participation in charitable works as an innate feature of their character, one that they undertook not as a means of earning money but rather as a spiritual duty. This relieved the P.O.S. of payment demands from women.

In many respects, the P.O.S. management structure mirrored the family unit in terms of distinct gendered roles. Women assumed positions that fell, if somewhat broadly, into the category of the domestic such as fundraisers, nurses and matrons while men took on tasks such as administration, management and rule making. Women's role in the Dublin P.O.S. gradually changed in the early twentieth-century, when they took on positions such as inspectors, members of visiting committees, education committees, and office clerks.

²⁶ Minutes of committee meetings, 2 Aug. 1869 (Cork P.O.S. papers, MS 519.1.1).

4.4 Collectors

Originally, only men collected on behalf of the P.O.S. in Dublin. However, following a number of embezzlement cases, the committee chose to recruit women to carry out the task. Joseph Williams originally presided over the collections committee and deployed members to collect subscriptions, weekly, monthly or quarterly as suited the subscriber. On 26 January 1829, the committee investigated ‘the John M. affair’ relative to ‘his having embezzled nine weeks of subscriptions’.²⁷ The committee also faced the problem of impersonators falsely claiming to be P.O.S. representatives, discussed in the 1831 annual report. ‘In collecting in several districts it has been observed that subscriptions have been called for and obtained by persons not connected with this society’.²⁸ Some unscrupulous people saw this as a perfect opportunity to make money. In response, the committee circulated a printed notice to the subscribers with advice not to pay their subscriptions to any collector without seeing their collection books. The committee realized the possibility of foul play and attempted to curb any further incidences by setting out two regulations. The committee endorsed the books with a special form that certified that they were collecting on behalf of the P.O.S. and two stewards checked the collectors’ books off weekly and then gave them to the treasurer who lodged the proceeds in a savings bank to the credit of the society.

However, despite these regulations, further cases of embezzlement from the collectors’ coffers occurred. The P.O.S. chose to remove Mr. John J. from the committee 16 October 1832, as he had not returned his collections for eight weeks. The committee

²⁷ Minutes of committee meetings, 26 Jan. 1829 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/2/1/2).

²⁸ Annual report, 1831 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/1/2, p.8).

directed one of their members to write to Mr. J. demanding that he return his collecting book and any money owed to the society. On 23 October 1832, the committee stated that because Mr. J. did not respond to an official letter sent by the assistant secretary, it was necessary to send other members of the committee to wait for him and retrieve the books of the society and any subscriptions he held.²⁹

The committee referred to a third occasion of thievery, the culprit a once respected P.O.S. member of the general committee and a collector. A select committee discussed the issue 9 November 1832 and the members resolved to investigate the charges brought against Mr. B. At a subsequent meeting, they noted that they had enough evidence against the collector to dismiss him. ‘Your committee after duly investigating the general conduct of Mr. B. as collector for their own society unanimously recommend his immediate removal from the general committee’.³⁰ In this case, Mr. B. perhaps believed that he could evade detection because of his position of responsibility.

Women became involved in the collection process from 11 July 1832 onwards, ‘Mr. D. gives notice that he will on next Wednesday evening move to solicit religious females to collect for this society’.³¹ By 1834, twenty-nine women collected subscriptions on behalf of the P.O.S. Twenty-seven men collected in the same year. ‘Your funds have been largely increased through collections which have been made among the upper classes of life by many benevolent ladies in the city and in the country’.³² Collections had to be made regardless of the weather and it was not an enviable task. Women were convinced

²⁹ Minutes of committee meetings (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/2/1).

³⁰ Minutes of committee meetings, 1832 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/2/1/2).

³¹ Minutes of committee meetings, 11 July 1832 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/2/1/2).

³² Annual report, 1831 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/1/1, p.13).

of their duty to support their church and at the same time ease the suffering of widows and their children. The committee recruited women because they believed that they were morally superior and therefore less likely to misappropriate funds. By the early twentieth century, card and box collections were co-ordinated in the majority by women.³³

4.5 Fundraisers

Women participated in extensive fundraising activities to contribute to and feel part of their community. Women with a strong religious conviction were moved by children's suffering and believed it their bounden duty to contribute to an organisation so closely linked to their church. They also sought the respect and admiration of their congregation and parish clergyman. A large number of single women became involved in church organised charities to give further meaning to their lives. As marriage constituted such a major part of their expected role, women perhaps viewed philanthropic work as a means of reinventing their personal identities.³⁴

Married middle-class women engaged in P.O.S. fundraising activities as a social outlet to break their everyday routine, which gave them a strong purpose and role outside the limits of the home. There was also a social dimension to events such as the bazaar, women not only organised the event but they attended it, which represented one of the few outings open to them. Nevertheless, their position as wife and mother had to come first.³⁵

³³ Annual reports, list of collectors (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS, 1045/1/1).

³⁴ Walsh, *Anglican women in Dublin*, p.91.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 91.

To supplement the funds raised from subscriptions and charity sermons, the P.O.S. organised annual bazaars. The Society of St. Vincent De Paul in Dublin used similar fundraising methods ‘concerts, church gate collections, an annual bazaar’.³⁶ Bazaars defined as a market or fete were usually held in a parish hall with various wares for sale with an admission fee charged.

Wealthy patronesses called on their own social networks to support the event. The Countess of Limerick, the Countess of Clonmel and Lady Isabella Fitzgibbon were patronesses of the Limerick Protestant Orphan Society. A ‘ladies bazaar’ was held in the Philosophical Society Hall over two days in 1845 in aid of the bereaved widow and the forlorn orphan. Curiosities, bouquets, useful and ornamental articles, needlework and craft items represented focal points on the stalls. Refreshments were also available. Admission to the Limerick P.O.S. bazaar in 1845 cost one shilling for adults and 6d. for children.³⁷ People who attended bazaars availed of a popular social event and at the same time contributed to a worthy cause.

The *Cork Constitution* featured an article on a bazaar held in 1857 in aid of the Cork P.O.S. The report described the large attendance. ‘Crowds of visitors thronged the Athenaeum on the last days of the exhibition’.³⁸ It also remarked on the presence of the influential patronage who the newspaper claimed made the event such a success. The various wares such as sewing work and ornamental articles also received mention. ‘It would be quite impossible to give any adequate catalogue of the innumerable and

³⁶ Mary Daly, *Dublin the deposed capital: a social and economic history, 1860-1914* (Dublin, 1981), p. 94.

³⁷ Scrapbook (R.C.B.L., Cork P.O.S. papers, MS 519.16.2).

³⁸ Publicity material, 30 Mar. 1857 (R.C.B.L., Cork P.O.S. papers, 519.16.2).

diversified gems of needlework, which covered the extensive tables'.³⁹ The Cork P.O.S. thanked the numerous contributors and the women who co-ordinated the event 30 March 1857. 'To those numerous Friends who by their liberal contributions in money, refreshments, and fancy work of various kinds have enabled them to realize the large sum of £400 7s. 10d. in aid of the funds of the P.O.S. and also to those ladies who so kindly assisted at the tables during the days and evening of the bazaar'.⁴⁰ The successful coordination of the bazaar was a laborious task that took up a great deal of these women's time in terms of organisation and management.

Further evidence of women's participation in fundraising events appears in Monaghan and Cork P.O.S. records in which the committees of each society offered thanks to specific women for their exertions. The County Monaghan P.O.S. acknowledged the support of the Countess of Dartrey in 1887, 'who always took the warmest interest in the orphans, and by whose assistance and advice the cause of the society was greatly furthered'.⁴¹ The committee of the Monaghan P.O.S. also paid their respects to a consistent supporter of the society who had recently passed away. 'The committee has heard with the deepest upset of the death of Mrs. Tardy of Aughmullen rectory who has been from the first one of the best friends of the County Monaghan Protestant Orphan Society'.⁴² The deep interest that Mrs. Tardy, a clergyman's wife had personally taken in P.O.S. children living in her locality and her consistent collections of large sums for the society marked the level of women's devotion to their philanthropic work.

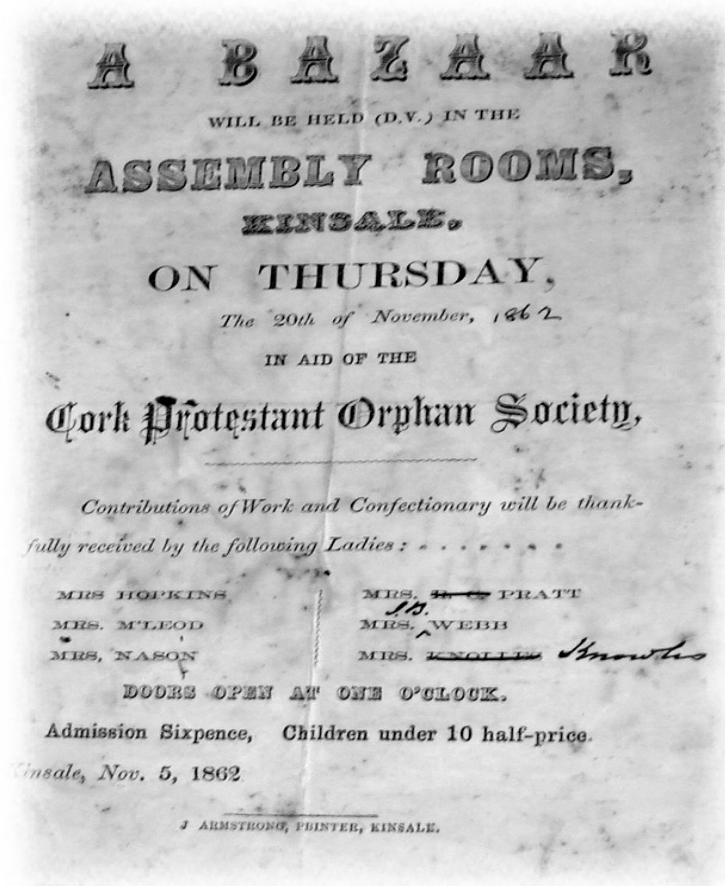
³⁹ Publicity material, 30 Mar. 1857 (R.C.B.L., Cork P.O.S. papers, 519.16.2).

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Annual report, 1887 (R.C.B.L., County Monaghan P.O.S. papers, MS 519.16.2).

⁴² Minutes of committee meetings, 7 May 1885 (R.C.B.L., County Monaghan P.O.S. papers, MS692.1).

Figure 4.1 Advertisement for a bazaar



Source: Publicity Material, Nov. 1862 (R.C.B.L., City and County Cork P.O.S. papers, MS 519.16.1).

The P.O.S. in Dublin and county societies continued to organise bazaars into the twentieth century when legacies and subscriptions decreased and when banks demanded payment of overdrafts. For instance in 1903 the committee of the P.O.S. in Dublin reported a heavy overdraft amounting to £1,400. The committee opted to organise a bazaar and used the funds derived from this and other extra collections to meet the overdraft repayment.

Additional female fundraising efforts included the preparation of orphan baskets.⁴³ Women made an assortment of needlework, presented in a basket, and exhibited at gatherings such as the annual meetings. The needlework could be prepared at home but was likely to have been time consuming.

The *Irish Times* recorded the musicianship of women who came together to organise an amateur concert in aid of the Cavan P.O.S. Mrs. Whyte Venables composed the music, a piece that was also set for publication. Choral singers also contributed to the night. ‘The quality of Mrs. Wolfe’s singing, there can be no second opinion. The kindness that induced her to lend her service is only equalled by the excellence of her performance. Her management of her voice we have seldom, if ever, heard equalled by an amateur’.⁴⁴ Better off women engaged in musicianship as it was viewed as an cultured and feminine pursuit.

In Tipperary as in many of the Protestant orphan societies, women organised and prepared the breakfast and dinner for the orphans when they arrived for the annual meeting. The *Clonmel Chronicle* recorded thanks given to the ‘sub-committee of the P.O.S. for providing breakfast and dinner for the orphans who contributed with practical help, funds and food provisions’.⁴⁵ Thirty-eight women were named in the article.

⁴³ Athey, ‘A short history of Meath Protestant Orphan Society’, p. 8.

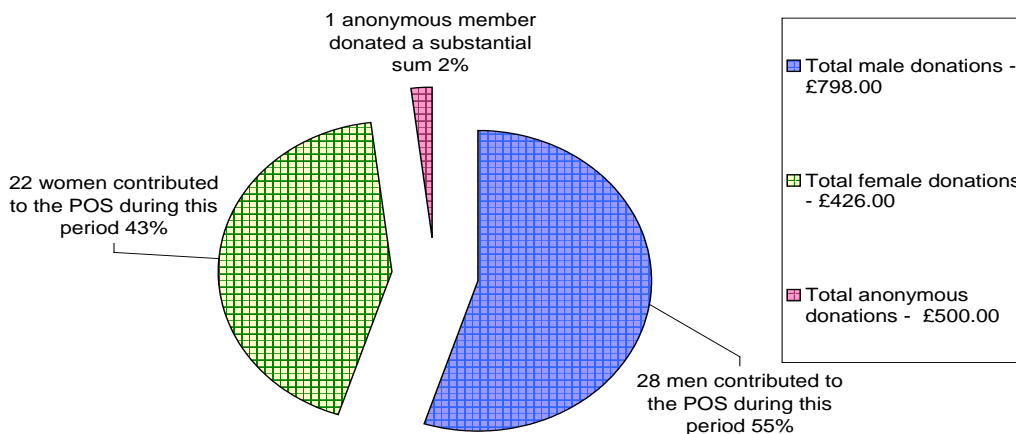
⁴⁴ *Irish Times*, 6 July 1863.

⁴⁵ *Clonmel Chronicle*, 17 May 1884, in scrapbooks (R.C.B.L., Cork P.O.S. papers, MS 519.16.1).

4.6 Financial support

The P.O.S. was accessible to all classes as it accepted minimal subscriptions. Women directed their energies into the society's maintenance and progression in part, to provide for their own children in the future.⁴⁶ In numerous cases, clergymen who recommended applications to the P.O.S. committee for admission noted that the family had subscribed to the P.O.S. for many years.⁴⁷ In 1833, 143 women subscribed to the P.O.S. in Dublin. In this year alone, women stood out as leading donors, making up 56.81 per cent of the total sum collected. Many women made ongoing donations of both their time and their money and later bequeathed their estates because they believed in the overall purpose of the P.O.S. Women's donations made up to 43 per cent of the total contributions received during the years 1834–64. Therefore, women's financial support of the P.O.S. was extremely significant.

Chart 4.1 Donations of £10 or more made to the P.O.S. in Dublin, 1834-64



Source: Annual Report, 1865 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/1/1).

⁴⁶ Annual reports, lists of subscribers (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/1/1).

⁴⁷ Registered application forms (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/5/3).

Women contributed to the growth of the P.O.S. in Dublin from its early establishment. In 1866, Mrs. Handy's legacy amounted to £862 7s. 3d. In 1870, the P.O.S. in Dublin received bequests, from two long-standing friends of the society named Mrs. Boyle and Miss Burnell. Their combined legacies amounted to £7,000.

The plight of young children separated from their kin at a young age resonated with certain sponsors of Protestant orphan societies who may have experienced life as an orphan first hand. Mrs. Dundas, wife of Dr. Dundas late of Kingstown, Dublin, was the benefactor of a bequest to the P.O.S., 18 December 1917. 'I Ellen Dundas of 46 Northumberland Avenue, Kingstown give devise and bequeath all my real and personal estate of every description unto the Protestant Orphan Society in Ireland absolutely'.⁴⁸ Ellen Dundas formerly known as Nellie Burton and previously a resident in Enniskillen, lived with her aunt after her father a sea captain and her mother died, while she was still a child. An orphan herself, Nellie clearly empathised and sympathised with children who had lost their parents. Without close family or children of their own, a bequest to the P.O.S. represented a meaningful use for the wealth she and her husband had accumulated over their lifetimes.

Nellie chose Canon Kennedy of Kingstown to execute the will. The late Mr. Dundas and Mrs. Dundas held investments in the form of shares, foreign investment and property. She and her husband held shares in the Northern Nigeria (Bauchi) Tin mines Ltd. 'Mrs. Dundas from an inspection of the register of the Minna (Nigeria) Tin company, (1914 ltd. and as far as I can gather she was a shareholder in the Gow Nigeria Co. Ltd. and received

⁴⁸ Bequests, 18 Dec. 1917 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/4/13).

one Minna share for each two of the Gow Company'.⁴⁹ Her husband also invested in the Standard Oil Company of Mexico and the Wassaw West Amalgamated Mines Ltd, 21 Ironmonger Lane, London 9 August 1917 with a return of two shillings per share. The executor of the estate, Canon Kennedy sold all shares and property and transferred the proceeds to the society.

Miss Charlotte Burroughs, an exceptional contributor to the cause of P.O.S. orphans, established and ran a home for girls based in Kilternan, County Dublin. Miss Burroughs set up the Sunnyside Home for girls in 1895. In 1916, the committee reported Miss Burroughs's retirement. Prior to her subsequent relocation to England she signed over the home to the P.O.S. 'Through her generosity the home established and conducted by her for so many years at Kilternan, has now been vested in the society and partly endowed as a home for little girls'.⁵⁰ Miss Burroughs died on 8 January 1930 in China and bequeathed a sum of £500 to the P.O.S. to be utilised for the benefit of Sunnyside.

4.7 Matrons

The P.O.S. in Dublin operated a small home for their apprentices to receive further training. Married couples were employed as managers. In a newspaper advertisement dated 1874, the P.O.S. in Dublin outlined the definition of their roles:

A married man of competent qualification as a teacher to undertake management of the apprentice class both boys and girls. It is especially important for the wife, who is to act as matron of the institution should be kind and motherly person competent to instruct the girls in needle and household work.⁵¹

⁴⁹ Bequests, 18 Dec. 1917 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/4/13).

⁵⁰ Annual reports, 1916 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/1/1) (55-144).

⁵¹ Scrapbooks (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers MS 1045/6/2).

The P.O.S. attempted to recreate a family setting for the children by employing a husband and wife to act as joint managers. The Cork P.O.S. committee discussed their advertisement for the position of matron for their training home for girls located in Dean Street, and were of the opinion that she 'should be a married woman who has brought up her own children, be qualified by experience and age to undertake the care and training of our elder girls'.⁵² The Tipperary P.O.S. referred to the children's home they managed in 1884. 'Children from the Home at Marfield in charge of Miss Large, their superintendent; in their neat attire and very healthy appearance bespoke at once the great care and attention bestowed upon them'.⁵³ In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, women solely managed the Sunnyside Home, the Swords Boy's Home and the Malahide Home, three small homes associated with the P.O.S. Matrons such as Mrs. Talbot who managed the Malahide Home undertook enormous responsibility. The matron was expected to provide a home like atmosphere, ensure the children's physical well-being, tend to sick children, impart religious and moral training, mend clothes and keep abreast of the housekeeping costs. Miss Neville ran the Swords Boy's Home. The committee stated that the matron was kindly and zealous in her management of the home.⁵⁴

4.8 Nurses

Nurses had to manage the demands of their own role as a wife and mother, along with their duties as a farmer's wife and the added care of foster children. Women who engaged in this work were motivated to do so by their own economic needs and for many a strong sense of Christian duty. The role they assumed was one of a substitute mother.

⁵² Minutes of committee meetings, 1 Mar. 1869 (R.C.B.L., Cork P.O.S. 519.1.1)

⁵³ *Clonmel Chronicle*, 17 May 1884 in scrapbooks (R.C.B.L., Cork P.O.S. papers, MS 519.16.1).

⁵⁴ Annual reports, 1902 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/1/1).

Children admitted to the society may have had emotional problems, displayed bad behaviour, been malnourished and sickly.⁵⁵ If the nurse was committed to the child's care, as many were, the job was a heavy burden. Women who applied to the P.O.S. to obtain a nursing position had to undergo inspections of their homes and careful judgement of their characters.⁵⁶ As the century progressed, the committee introduced tighter supervisory regulations. Nurses were subject to the authority of the P.O.S. committee on all aspects of the children's welfare. Inspectors paid unannounced visits to the nurse's homes. If unsatisfied with the level of care provided, it was the duty of the inspector to criticise and admonish the nurses.⁵⁷ While these measures were adopted to protect the child, the intrusion was likely to have been felt by the nurse and her family particularly as inspections became more frequent.⁵⁸ The P.O.S. committee enforced their own class assumptions on the correct way to raise children, standards that not all nurses could meet.⁵⁹

Nurses also had to contend with the relatives of the children they fostered. It was commonplace for relatives to visit without warning to check on their children's progress in spite of the committee's objections unless given written permission to do so. If a child fell ill, if a child ran away, if a child did not attend school, or was improperly dressed, the committee placed all blame on the nurse and her family. Nurses also had the pain of separation from children in cases where strong relationships had developed, if they

⁵⁵ Sub-committee on nurses and education (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/2/3).

⁵⁶ See chapter 6.

⁵⁷ Sub-committee on nurses and education (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/2/3).

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

returned to their surviving relatives or when they took up an apprenticeship. Good nurses were the backbone of the society, without their work it could not have functioned.

4.9 Sub- committees

The P.O.S. in Dublin formed a clothing sub-committee on 4 May 1836 to ascertain recently admitted children's clothing requirements. 'It shall be the business of the standing committee for clothing to provide a stock of clothes in order that each child on admission may be furnished with such articles as the committee of inspection shall think necessary'.⁶⁰ Responsibility for the distribution and maintenance of the children's clothing was an important task. It was essential that children receive sufficient articles of clothing from their admission. The sub-committee made the clothing available to the nurses for collection at Percy Place Home, the society house.

Women's contributions in this area of work recorded by Protestant orphan societies such as Meath attest to their commitment to the society and the children:

In 1922, the society sustained a serious loss in the death of Miss Isabel Tisdall who from 1876 had rendered valuable assistance in purchasing and distributing the girl's clothing. 'Mrs. J.H. Nicholson kindly undertook the task. Ladies who had previously held themselves responsible for them were Mrs. Samuel Garnett from 1844 to 1866. Miss Stopford of Kells, from Lord Mouteagle in 1875 and her sister from 1875 to 1876.'⁶¹

The clothing sub-committee was a fundamental component of the overall system. The committee could not monitor children's clothing on a day-to-day basis as in an orphanage situation. Instead, they had to liaise with inspectors and the main committee to confirm the requirements for all of the children. Moreover, tenders had to be arranged and sent to

⁶⁰ Minutes of committee meetings, 4 May 1836 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/1/2).

⁶¹ Athey, 'A short history of Meath Protestant Orphan Society', p. 12.

local newspapers for material to make the clothing worn by the orphans. The P.O.S. in Dublin hired women to make the clothes for the orphans, which supplied valuable employment.

Under the policy adopted by the Fermanagh P.O.S. established in 1859, a female committee supervised nurses and orphans. In 1861, their annual report stated ‘I must express my great obligations to Mrs. Maxwell and Mrs. Dandas of Dromoren, for their unremitting and invaluable superintendence of both the nurses and orphans’.⁶² The women that organised the clothing sub-committee in Fermanagh also received praise for their economy in the production of clothes for the orphans.⁶³

Women in the Cork P.O.S. were members of a sub-committee to oversee the management of the training home for girls. In November 1869, the ladies’ committee set the rules for the management of the home. ‘The ladies require that the managing committee will hand over to them the sole management, direction and control of the home and its inmates’.⁶⁴ The management of the home involved close supervision of the girls and arrangement of apprenticeships.

Unlike the Fermanagh P.O.S., in Dublin clergymen took the lead in supervision of foster children and their assigned nurses. Prior to 1904, clergymen and laymen vetted families and transferred orphans from one home to another if mistreated or neglected. Women gained ground in this department from 1904 when a visiting committee was set up to

⁶² *Irish Times*, 22 Jan. 1861.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ Minutes of committee meetings (R.C.B.L. Cork P.O.S. papers, MS 519.1.1).

include six women.⁶⁵ This sub-committee inspected all children in foster care. The introduction of an independent committee augmented the existing system and allowed for comprehensive evaluation of cases. The managing committee remarked in 1905 that the work of the 'visiting committee' was of great benefit to the children's welfare and happiness.⁶⁶ Men also dominated in the office as clerks and secretaries. However, the position of assistant secretary was filled by a woman in 1909. 'Miss E.J. Le Poer Trench commenced work 1 March 1909 with a salary of £50 per annum rising to £75'.⁶⁷ This was a well above average wage for most men at the time. In 1914, approximately 8,000 women were employed as office clerks.⁶⁸

This conservatism was not specific to the P.O.S. in Dublin. In February 1917 the honorary secretary of the Meath P.O.S., the Rev. R. J. Merrin died. 'The wife of the Reverend Lancelot Coulter of Ardraccan was appointed in his stead. At the annual meeting, the same year, ladies were for the first time elected members of the committee'.⁶⁹ Once one woman became a committee member, she paved the way for other women. In Monaghan, women were not part of the executive or general committee in the late eighteenth century, by the early twentieth century four women were appointed to the general committee.⁷⁰

⁶⁵ Annual report, 1905 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/1/1).

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Minutes of the executive sub-committee, 1901-30 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 10452/7/1).

⁶⁸ Hill, *Women in Ireland*, p. 47.

⁶⁹ Athey, 'A short history of Meath Protestant Orphan Society', p. 11.

⁷⁰ Annual reports, 1871-1930 (R.C.B.L., County Monaghan P.O.S. papers, MS 692.6).

The Church of Ireland restrictions on women's role in church affairs affected their formal position in societies such as the P.O.S. to some degree. However, women continued to participate in church work although not officially acknowledged. 'They provided a crucial support network that bound the church together, and alleviated the burden of work on the clergy'.⁷¹ At this time, women could become more involved at a higher level in organisations established by women for women such as the Mother's Union.

The intermediate act⁷² was introduced in 1878. The university act⁷³ was passed in 1879, which made it possible for women to hold a degree. Middle class girls attended schools like Alexandra College in Dublin. By the early twentieth century, Alexandra and Victoria College in Belfast offered a full range of academic subjects outside the domestic and therefore the possibility of better-paid employment. Improvements in education for women, calls by the Irish Workhouse Association for female visiting committees, long running debates on the employment of women and the growing support of the suffrage movement all promoted the role of women in public life.

Determined predominantly by nineteenth century gender assumptions, women were active in work that was associated with the feminine, nurses, fund-raisers, and matrons, while men managed the finances and overall decision-making. The distinct roles were symbolic of marriage and the home. Women gave their time freely to the P.O.S. and their contributions were integral to its success and longevity. Their work was time-consuming and extremely significant to the overall standards of care achieved by the

⁷¹ Walsh, *Anglican women in Dublin*, p. 12.

⁷² Intermediate Education (Ireland) Act, 1878, 41 & 42 Vict., c.66 (16 Aug. 1878).

⁷³ University Education (Ireland) Act, 1879, 42 & 43 Vict., c. 65 (15 Aug. 1879).

society. Sub-committees completed much of the groundwork for the main committees who made judgements on the information presented to them. In the early twentieth century, women became paid members of the office staff, inspectors, and members of visiting sub-committees. The challenges women faced in the context of motherhood and widowhood are discussed in chapter 5.

Chapter 5

Relinquishment of children

This chapter analyses the experiences of poor families in desperate circumstances who relinquished their children for admission to the P.O.S. in Dublin. Reference is also made to the C.P.O.U. and the Tipperary P.O.S. Firstly, the admission process is outlined. Secondly, it is argued that the often traumatic decision to relinquish a child to the P.O.S. was one of a number of survival strategies used primarily by women to cope with the deterioration in their standard of living. For the most part, women took this course of action as a last resort, because of inadequate support networks, limited employment, and poor wages. Despite grave economic pressures, the available evidence suggests that women did so reluctantly. Finally, the temporary or permanent nature of parent-child separation is discussed with particular attention paid to women's determination to reunite the family.

The starting-point for the discussion is to consider the P.O.S. admission process. If children had Protestant relatives who could ably care for them, the P.O.S. recommended that they remain with their own kin. Each person who subscribed one penny per week had the privilege of recommending one orphan annually and committee members had the privilege of recommending an orphan every three months that they served.¹ Details of the subscribers who had recommended the case, their names and their place of residence were included as part of the application form.

¹Annual report, 1830 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/1/1, p.8).

A further note stipulated that, 'persons signing this certificate are liable to have the child returned to them, if the statement should be found untrue in *any* particular'.² The local parish curate or incumbent was also required to sign the form. By doing so, the committee dispersed responsibility for the child between the subscribers, parish minister and the family requesting aid and reduced the incidence of fraudulent applications. As only 37 per cent of males and 17 per cent of females were literate in 1841,³ the application form in itself caused problems for applicants. In many cases in the first half of the century, the parish curate or a subscriber completed the form on the applicant's behalf, the applicant made their mark and the application was then forwarded to the P.O.S. committee.

Inspectors (committee members) investigated and reported on each case to corroborate the applicant's claims. An annual report dated 1834 noted the importance placed on incorporating the 'lower orders' into the inspection process. 'They are by their circumstances in life most likely to be made acquainted with cases of distress, and best fitted to detect and guard against imposition'.⁴ The inspectors presented their reports to the committee for final approval of the case. In later years, clergymen dominated the committees and thus the role of inspector. They were concerned with the moral character of the applicant as well as their level of destitution.⁵

² Registered application forms, general information. (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers MS 1045/5/3).

³ Cormac Ó 'Gráda, 'Poverty, population, and agriculture, 1801-45' in W.E. Vaughan (ed.), *A new history of Ireland*, v (Oxford, 1989), p. 110.

⁴ Annual report, 1834 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/1/1, p.12).

⁵ Minutes of committee meetings (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers MS 1045/2/1).

The committee held executive powers and did not officially admit any child until the quarterly meetings held in June, September, December and March⁶. However, they resolved in 1831, that to effectively deal with cases of extreme urgency that arose between quarterly meetings, 'a small sum may be drawn from the treasurer until such time as the helpless and perishing child shall be brought before quarterly meetings'.⁷ Without such an amendment, families might have had to wait two months before the committee met to review their case with absolutely no means to take care of their children. Although this did not apply to all cases, it was an extremely beneficial measure.

Delays in admission were frequent and the P.O.S. could not always legislate for the problems that arose. Marriage certificates and baptismal certificates were required to prove the legitimacy of birth and religious denomination. If the applicant could not procure the certificates, delays in the process occurred. Periods of economic downturns, and during epidemics and famines the committee received a corresponding influx of applications that put strains on their funds and held up admissions.⁸

The P.O.S. did not approve applications from single women with dependents, women working as prostitutes or idle but able-bodied men and women. The age limit for admission was originally eight, then nine, in 1897 the committee raised it to thirteen, and by 1914 it was increased to fourteen. According to the P.O.S., it received only children of Protestant parentage (up until 1898 when the P.O.S. and C.P.O.U. amalgamated). Other reasons for refusal included if the child was illegitimate or if a

⁶ See P.O.S. application form, p. 398.

⁷ Annual report, 1831 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/1/1, p.10).

⁸ See admission process time, 5(b) p. 403.

child suffered from mental or physical health problems.⁹ In spite of the rule that related to less able children, the P.O.S. financially supported children in the Stewart Institution¹⁰ located in Palmerstown, County Dublin and made arrangements for children's transferral to homes such as the Molyneux Home for the Blind, Claremont, the Deaf and Dumb Institute and the Cripples Home in Bray, County Wicklow.¹¹ In other cases, they offered temporary payments to the family concerned or admitted an older or younger brother and sister in the family, which alleviated their financial burdens.

The P.O.S. prioritised the admission of children bereft of both parents. Children whose parents subscribed to the P.O.S. were assisted in advance of other applicants. Children with one surviving parent were among the most frequently approved cases. The P.O.S. admitted children from respectable parentage, married, hardworking and committed Protestants.

5.1 Applicants to the P.O.S.

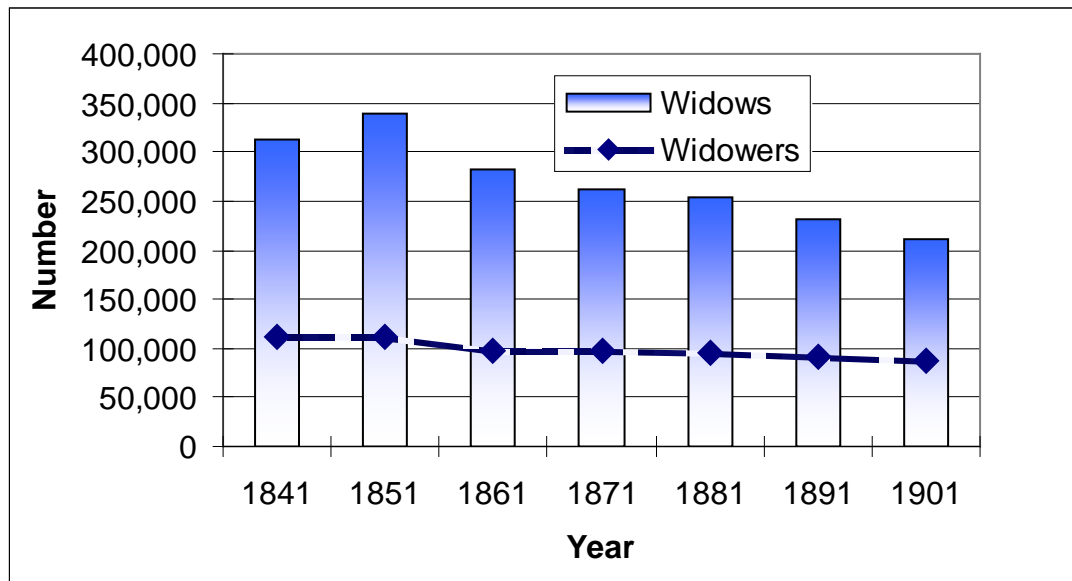
In the majority of cases examined, female-headed households sought to relinquish one or all of their children to the guardianship of the P.O.S. and the C.P.O.U. with the greatest of urgency and the highest frequency. From the total number of files examined, 77.4 per cent of applicants were widows with the remaining 22.6 per cent of applications made by widowers/extended kin and siblings.

⁹ Refer to P.O.S. rules, p. 400.

¹⁰ In May 1876, the P.O.S. noted that it paid £10 per annum towards the support of Mary Anne R. in the Stewart Institution, see scrapbooks (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/6/3).

¹¹ Minutes of committee meetings (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/2/1).

Chart 5.1 Ratio of widows to widowers in Ireland, 1841-1901



Source: W.E. Vaughan and A.J. Fitzpatrick (eds), *Irish historical statistics: population 1821-1971*(Dublin, 1978), p. 27.

As chart 5.1 suggests there were almost double the number of widows over that of widowers in Ireland during the period 1841-1901. The numbers of male deaths had a direct impact on the numbers of dependents on poor relief:

Mr. Willis calculated that, out of 100 children of the labouring classes born in Dublin, but 34 live to be 20, 20 to be 40 and only 14 to be 50. Applying these proportions to the male population of the city, it follows that about 20,000 men will die between the ages of 20 and 40 and 10,000 between 40 and 50. Most of these will leave widows and orphans, who usually become objects of poor-law relief. Overcrowding, impure air, insufficient water and sewerage, debility, contagious scourges, death, widowhood, orphanage, and excessive taxation are in this city sequential terms.¹²

For the vast majority of women, widowhood spelled disaster and an extremely bleak future. With no income, women faced the dilemma of whether to go out to work or to remain at home and care for their children. Women were most at risk of destitution primarily because of the limited educational opportunities open to them. Female

¹² E.D. Mapother, M.D., 'The sanitary state of Dublin' in *Journal of the Statistical and Social Inquiry Society of Ireland*, vi, part xxvii (1864), pp 62-76, p. 71.

education was rooted firmly in preparation for marriage and the domestic life. 'The restricted education offered to girls at all social levels, reflected society's attitudes to women's proper place'.¹³ Women were not encouraged to excel outside of this domain. Both the Catholic and Protestant middle class subscribed to this view of female domesticity.

Middle and working-class widows' experience in relation to the relinquishment process forms the major basis for discussion here. For the most part, middle-class women relied on their father or brothers prior to marriage and on their husband thereafter. 'The woman who is considered the most fortunate in life has never been independent, having been transferred from parental care and authority to that of a husband'.¹⁴ The daughters of deceased merchants, lawyers, clergymen and country gentlemen approached the Queen's Institute, Molesworth Street established in 1863:

They come to the society for advice and direction as well as instruction; literally placing themselves under the guidance to choose for them an occupation that would be found suitable to their ability and to their circumstances. How much difficulty had to be encountered in furnishing these ladies, inexperienced in the ways of trade, with occupations which would secure to them the probability of self-support.¹⁵

The death of a father or brother pushed these women into the labour market. Their role within the framework of marriage related to managing the house and the family. Unless forced by necessity, middle-class married women did not take up work otherwise utilized and greatly needed by working-class women.

¹³ Maria Luddy, *Women in Ireland 1800-1918: a documentary history* (Dublin, 2005), p.6.

¹⁴ Deborah Gorham, *The Victorian child and the feminine ideal* (London, 1982), p. 102.

¹⁵ Arthur Houston, 'The extension of the field for employment of women' in *Journal of the Statistical and Social Inquiry Society of Ireland*, iv, part xxxii (1867), pp 345-53, p. 346.

In the event of their husband's death and consequently the loss of the only source of income, they became perhaps for the first time dependent on their own industry. 'For many women the death of a father or partner caused an immediate change for the worse in social class'.¹⁶ There was no guarantee that they would receive any inheritance on their husband's death, married women did not have property rights until the passing of legislation in 1870, 1874 and 1882.

Middle class widows feared the loss of their respectability if they worked. The only socially acceptable occupations for middle class women were as artists or governesses:

To hardship and privation they soon learn to submit with laudable resignation, but they cling desperately to that respectability which they have been taught to associate with idleness. They fear to accept even the most genteel employment, lest they should lose their position in the circle in which they have been accustomed to move.¹⁷

Women who had the foresight to expect their fall in status looked to domestic thrift and put some money by. However, if a husband had endured prolonged illness prior to his eventual death, living costs swallowed up any savings. 'The consumption being so long an illness it has drained every farthing which industry had enabled them to save in a lifetime'.¹⁸ In other cases, widows whose husbands' died after a long sickness had to sell furniture and even clothes to obtain subsistence for their families.

¹⁶ Kenneth Milne, *Protestant Aid: a history of the Association for the Relief of Distressed Protestants, 1836 to 1986* (Dublin, 1986), p.5.

¹⁷ Houston, 'The extension of the field for employment of women', p. 347.

¹⁸ Letter found in registered application files (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/3) (1-113).

The annual reports of the Association for the Relief of Distressed Protestants indicate, ‘many cases of great distress where the parties had been respectable: widows of clergymen, doctors, attorneys and merchants, and of gentlemen who had been officers’.¹⁹ The Room Keepers Society also reported the frequency with which once wealthy women sought assistance. The Church of Ireland Clergy Widow’s and Orphan’s Society was established in 1863 to provide financial assistance for widows and orphans of Church of Ireland clergymen. The Dublin Widow’s Fund Annuity Society rented the front parlour of the committee house for charitable societies located in upper Sackville Street from 1866.²⁰

Two case studies denote the repercussions of widowhood for middle-class women.

The first case dates from 1885:

Her husband a most devoted one and I believe a pious man, he was Captain of a Brigantine. All were lost nearly three months ago on a voyage from London to Liverpool. Five children and a widow have been left destitute, and only for the timely aid extended to them by the kindness of some sympathizers here, they would now be in a sad way.²¹

The widow in this case although being married to a wealthy man had no means after his unexpected death. Evidently, her husband had not made any provisions for his family. The widow may not have been privy to this fact until after his death, which left her completely unprovided for in widowhood.

¹⁹ Milne, *Protestant Aid*, p.5.

²⁰ Minutes of the committee house for charitable societies (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers MS 1045/15).

²¹ ‘A brief review of the society’s work 1885’ loose pamphlet in annual report files (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers MS 1045/1/1).

A second case also drawn from 1885, describes a middle-class woman whose status fell rapidly on the death of her husband. ‘The father was in a very respectable position – a commercial clerk – and the son of a solicitor; the mother states that she has three children, no income whatsoever, or no means of earning a living.’²² Mrs. M. became solely responsible for the care her family, perhaps without any previous employment experience and certainly without a trade of any kind.

On the other hand, in pre-famine Ireland, working-class women worked because economic pressures required them to do so. Their earnings ranged from fifteen per cent to twenty-five per cent of the total family income.²³ The mechanisation of flax spinning in the early nineteenth-century and changes in agricultural methods caused a substantial drain on female employment. Post-famine, from 1850, generally, the level of work available to women decreased. However, working-class women had no other recourse but to rely on their own industry to supplement the families’ earnings. In the process, they became astute at replenishing a depleted family economy. ‘In female-headed households ideological norms associated with respectable feminine domesticity were necessarily modified by re-entry into the workforce or continuous employment to “make ends meet”’.²⁴ A letter of recommendation from an employer dated 13 January 1853 recounted Mary P.’s efforts to maintain her family single-handed, through her work at a laundry, it stated that, ‘her family depended mainly on her exertions for their support, because her husband was continuously ill and often

²² Annual report, 1885 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/1/1) (55-144).

²³ Mary Cullen, ‘Breadwinners and providers: women in the household economy of labouring families, 1835-6’ in Maria Luddy and Cliona Murphy (eds), *Women surviving: studies in Irish women’s history in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries* (Dublin, 1990), p. 99.

²⁴ Margaret Kelleher and Laurence Geary (eds), *Nineteenth-century Ireland: a guide to recent research* (Dublin, 2005), p. 109.

confined for months to the house'.²⁵ Her daughter aged eighteen was 'obliged to be at home minding her sick father who is unable to work. The other sister is only three years and five months old'.²⁶ Mary continued to provide for her family after her husband's death but eventually had no other choice but to apply to the P.O.S.

In a second case, Mrs. B. was described by the parish clergyman as 'extremely industrious and has managed to support herself and four children by charwork and knitting (with very little assistance) ever since the death of her husband which took place last November from cholera'.²⁷ Work was an obligation for women whose status within the family was that of the major breadwinner. In numerous applications, clergymen referred to women's unsuccessful attempts to support their family in the long term through poorly paid work.

In the end, working-class women suffered a fall in status on the death of their husband, just as middle-class women did, without supplementary income from older children or a spouse. 'Women's earnings were insufficient to sustain a family single handed and the fate of widows was grim'.²⁸ Essentially, widowhood made an already bad situation far worse. Successive births and the burden of a large number of dependents caused constant anxiety for families who could not afford to keep themselves or their children in sufficient food and clothing. Many women in this position aged prematurely and possibly died from a combination of overwork and worry over the future well-being of their family.

²⁵ Registered application files (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers MS 1045/3/1) (1-113).

²⁶ Registered application files (N.A.I., C.P.O.U. papers, MS 1045/11/2) (1-159).

²⁷ Ibid., (152-59).

²⁸ Mary E. Daly, *Women and work in Ireland* (Dublin, 1997), p. 15.

While records of deserted wives are minimal compared to widows they make up the second most likely category to relinquish their children as a response to economic crises. The P.O.S. did not originally accommodate for women in these circumstances however, they chose to amend the rules having heard a number of distressing cases. Deserted wives could not easily access charitable aid because there was no documentary evidence available to prove that their husbands had indeed forsaken them. The P.O.S. committee refused admission unless presented with all the required documentation. In cases of abandonment, the death certificate did not apply therefore women had to obtain alternative proof of their husband's whereabouts. On occasion, it was necessary to make a solemn declaration to this effect. This declaration reinforced the case and complied as much as possible with the committee's guidelines.

Catherine K. solemnly declared that her husband deserted her on 23 January 1845:

I Catherine K. do solemnly declare, that I was lawfully married on the 17th Day of December 1837. That subsequent to said marriage we lived together as man and wife. That in or about the year 1840 he left me to go to New York in America and that I have not heard of him for upwards of four years. And I moreover do solemnly and sincerely declare that I believe him to be deceased.²⁹

Anne F. who resided in Dublin and married a Protestant named Thomas F. on 18 June 1835. 'In or about six months afterwards that is to say about the 20 December 1835 he left her. She believes he went across the sea'.³⁰ Anne never heard of or from him again and believed but had no proof that he was dead. Women in this position had few options but to wait for a sufficient time to lapse before they could suggest that their husbands would not return or that they were dead. In general, charitable

²⁹Solemn declaration found in registered application files (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/3/1).

³⁰Registered application files (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/3/1) .

organisations prioritised widows' cases over deserted wives because there was always the possibility that the husband could return.

Although many husbands did desert their families, others sought employment abroad, remained in contact with their wives and sent a portion of their wages back to Ireland. Therefore, certain families received charitable assistance based on a desertion ruse, while all the while husband and wife remained in contact. 'It could be suggested that this temporary desertion of wife and children was part of a subsistence family survival strategy'.³¹ The P.O.S. admitted Robert R. on 29 April 1833 aged five. His mother resided at 14 Clarence Street, worked as a bonnet maker, and recorded her husband's occupation as a seaman and deceased. However, in February of 1835 the committee returned Robert to his mother having found that his father was living and had in fact returned from sea.³²

Two examples suggest the consequences of desertion for the family members left behind. The first example documents Mr. W. who deserted his wife and his daughter in 1856. He left little information as to his intended destination. Mrs. W. a charwoman presumed her husband had relocated to America. In desperation, she resorted to theft in order to provide sustenance for her little girl. She stole honey, which led to her imprisonment in Monaghan gaol where she died during her incarceration.³³ Margaret, an eight year old and her only child, remained in the gaol for a short time following her mother's death until the matron at the gaol gained her admission to the C.P.O.U.

³¹Dympna McLoughlin, 'Workhouses and Irish female paupers' in Maria Luddy and Cliona Murphy (eds), *Women surviving: studies in Irish women's history in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries* (Dublin, 1990), p.129.

³² Case file register (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/5/1).

³³ Registered application files (N.A.I., C.P.O. U. papers MS 1045/11/2).

The second example depicts a father who deserted his wife and two young daughters in 1901. He had promised to send seven shillings a week for the children but never wrote or sent any money and left them to fend for themselves. His wife recorded that her husband was a drunkard.³⁴

Deserted wives also sought relief from the Association for the Relief of Distressed Protestants:

A poor woman, E.B., with an infant child, had been deserted by her husband. Previous, to her marriage she had lived in good places with credit to herself. But when her confinement drew nigh she was obliged to relinquish her service. When she came out of the lying-in hospital with her baby, she could get no situation. By degrees every article of clothing was disposed of and as her destitution made progress, she became less and less likely to be employed.³⁵

This case clearly demonstrates the enigma of marriage that offered the semblance of a secure future but could also lead to possible destitution. Prior to her marriage E.B. had lived respectably, after her husband's desertion, she had a young child and little chance of securing work. Legislation to protect women in cases of desertion came into force in 1886.³⁶

Women who endured marital violence confronted probably the greatest hardship. The decision to leave these unsafe situations was extremely difficult to make, as women relied on their husband's income to purchase food and provide shelter. Thus, women invariably remained in the home to prevent the displacement of their children. If they did leave, they assumed a similar status to that of deserted wives. However, charitable institutions did not prioritise their cases, as they, like deserted wives, could

³⁴ Registered application files, 18 Dec. 1903 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/3/1).

³⁵ Milne, *Protestant Aid*, p. 5.

³⁶ Married Women (Maintenance in case of desertion) Act 49 & 50 Vict., c. 52.

not easily prove their claims. In 1860, George G. relinquished his eleven-year old niece to the C.P.O.U. following his sister's death. Supporting correspondence submitted by his sister's friend stated, 'E. aged eleven years the orphan of a mixed marriage her mother who was so ill treated by the father that she was obliged to separate from him'.³⁷ This example suggests that the husband's mistreatment of his wife had become unbearable, she may have feared for her own life and the life of her child and had no other alternative but to leave.

The Matrimonial Causes (Britain) Act³⁸ passed in 1878 (an extension of the 1857 act³⁹ that introduced secular divorce) provided a level of protection for women and enabled legal separation in cases of marital violence. However, these pieces of legislation were not extended to Ireland. 'There was no public outcry and nor was there a demand to extend English legislation on the matter in Ireland'.⁴⁰ Social reformer, Francis Power Cobbe, did however direct attention to the extent of the domestic violence problem in Ireland. The Irish Women's Reform League established by Louie Bennet in 1911 set up a committee 'to watch the courts' committee to observe and report on cases involving injustice to women and girls, most of the cases reported concerned marital violence, indecent assault on children and the seduction of young girls'.⁴¹ In cases of marital violence, women with dependents already dragged down by poverty had to cope with psychological abuse, physical assaults, and the strong possibility of destitution.

³⁷ Registered application files (N.A.I., C.P.O.U. papers, MS 1045/11/2) (424-450).

³⁸ 41 & 42 Vict., c.19.

³⁹ Matrimonial Causes (Britain) Act, 20 & 21 Vict., c. 85.

⁴⁰ Rosemary Cullen Owens, *A social history of women in Ireland, 1780-1939* (Dublin, 2005), p. 176.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 85.

5.2 Women's survival strategies

The priority of mothers was to care and provide for their children. No matter what their circumstances, women managed to navigate themselves out of many precarious situations by applying identifiable strategies to keep their family intact and avoid destitution. For instance, by reverting to their own kin, women gained invaluable support in terms of emotional comfort, childcare and other practical assistance. By leaving young dependents with family members, they had the opportunity to seek out work. This was crucial to a family's survival and served to lighten the heavy responsibilities of motherhood. In some cases, middle class women who lost their status and their circle of friends on the death of her husband could not always rely on this mutual help. This frequently led them to turn to the parish clergyman or the P.O.S. immediately.

In order to highlight the significance of such kin networks the following three cases depict the fate of women who could not rely on the same support. A letter dated March 1852 from a clergyman to the P.O.S. illustrates women's urgent need for a reliable and permanent source of assistance:

She and her two children are gradually wasting away and sinking from want of nourishing food. They are living with some one who allows them for the present a temporary station but says that he will not continue it much longer. The only food the mother is able to provide for them is some Indian meal or turnips.⁴²

This was typical of the scene described by women and clergymen in numerous requests for assistance. Family and friends were willing to help but their own financial constraints often prevented them from doing so in the long term.

⁴² Registered application files (N.A.I. C.P.O.U. papers, MS 1045/11/2) (1-152).

While women who married outside their church or against their family's wishes must have known the risks of doing so, it was not until widowhood that they fully understood the consequences of their decision. Women faced severe isolation and a denial of financial/practical provisions, which close family networks would have otherwise provided. A clergyman wrote to the P.O.S. on behalf of a parishioner whose family essentially cut her off on these grounds. 'Permit me to call your attention to Widow D. and her children Catherine and Caroline. Her husband died in Antigua. She belongs to a very respectable family but married a man far beneath her in rank and is now obliged to go to service'.⁴³ The clergyman offered assistance on a temporary basis but could not afford her the permanent provision she required.

The final case describes the trials of a widow who arrived in Ireland with her four young children from England during winter, bereft of relatives or friends except for one contact given to her by her husband before his death. 'Being a stranger in this country and were it not for the humanity of an acquaintance of her deceased husband would in all probability be obliged to travel about for the purpose of seeking an asylum to shelter her orphan children from the cold winter'.⁴⁴ Without at least one reliable contact, a woman with young dependents whether deserted or bereaved endured a daily toil just to subsist. They could not leave their children alone but had to work to purchase food. This cycle of poverty could not be broken unless women received a degree of relief that enabled them to focus on improving their situation on a permanent basis rather than merely subsistence living.

⁴³ Registered application files (N.A.I. C.P.O.U. papers, MS 1045/11/2) (1-152).

⁴⁴ Registered application files (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/3/1) (152-59).

Clergymen or mothers' themselves alluded to the benefits of surrendering their younger children or one of many children to the P.O.S. so that they could re-establish themselves. However, from the outset, the P.O.S. recognised the dangers of separating mothers from their infant children. In 1850, the committee recommended that infants remain with their mother, if possible, until they reached eighteen months to prevent infant mortality discussed in detail in chapter 6. Women without suitable accommodation, continued as a matter of urgency to relinquish their youngest children, as it was this or absolute destitution for all the family.

Three cases suggest the benefits of taking this course of action. Elizabeth C. returned from New York following the death of her husband Henry in 1838. The local clergyman reported that she had three children, her last born only months before her husband's death. She attempted to carry on in small jobs to pay for the children's support but expended the greater part of her wages on paying a nurse to care for her youngest child while she attended work. She requested that the P.O.S. care for her baby. 'For as it takes all her wages to pay for the nursing of two she has no means to pay for the third or to cloth herself or them, consequently the children are almost naked'.⁴⁵ It is clear that Elizabeth regarded the relinquishment of her child as the only way to ensure her family's survival.

⁴⁵ Minutes of committee meetings, 1838 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/2/1/1).

In the second case, an applicant wrote to the P.O.S. on 21 April 1841 and suggested that if they were to take one or all of her children she stood a far better chance of finding work. 'I have no trade or way of earning support for my three children, were they settled I would look out for a situation as it is now my whole dependence'.⁴⁶ The clergyman who recommended the case wrote, 'she is obliged to watch a child of two and a half, too young to be left in the care of its sister'.⁴⁷ He suggested that if the P.O.S. could take in the younger child the mother could go to work and her daughter could attend school. Clergymen made numerous other requests to admit young children so that their mothers could immediately seek out employment. This strategy of relinquishing the youngest children or two out of three children was effective but traumatic, the push of economic pressures forced women to consider this course of action but the emotional pull of their children made the final decision heart-rending.

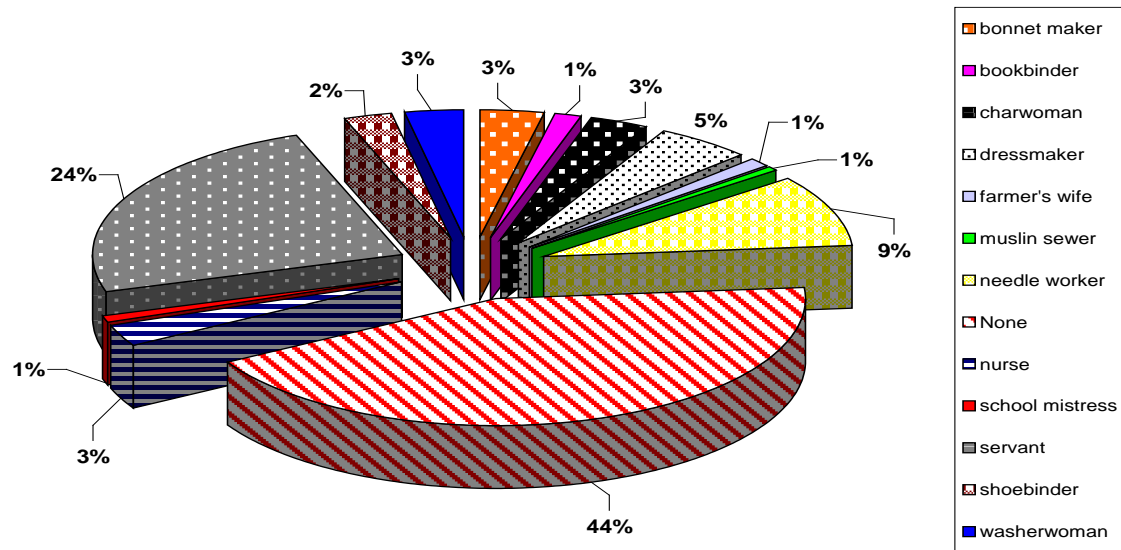
⁴⁶ Minutes of committee meetings, 21 Apr. 1841 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/2/1/2).

⁴⁷ Registered application files (N.A.I., C.P.O.U. papers, MS 1045/11/2) (300–45).

5. 3 Women and work

The following chart documents the occupations recorded by female applicants to the P.O.S. It clearly illustrates the narrow employment avenues open to women.

Chart 5.2 Women's occupations, 1840-1864



Source: Registered application forms (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers MS 1045/5/30).

Chart 5.2 was compiled using data drawn from the P.O.S. registered applications for the period 1840–64.⁴⁸ Occupations least recorded included charwoman, washerwoman, worker woman and farm servant. Dressmakers made up 5 per cent and seamstresses 10 per cent. The census of 1871 ‘showed 2,604 women employed as seamstresses and shirt makers in Dublin’.⁴⁹ Long hours and poor working conditions were associated with this type of work. ‘Toiling at the needle for twelve to fourteen hours a day, in a heated atmosphere, without sufficient food’.⁵⁰ The pay was not reflective of the work involved and it had a serious impact on women’s eyesight. From the 1820s, in Cork, agencies were set up to employ poor women to knit, sew

⁴⁹ Cullen Owens, *A social history of women*, p.192.

⁵⁰ Houston, ‘The extension of the field for employment of women’, p. 348.

muslin, embroider and crochet.⁵¹ The wages for such work was low. In Ulster, the linen and cotton industry were highly significant from the 1840s to the 1900s women who took up this work could earn satisfactory wages while also care for their children at home.⁵²

Approximately, 24 per cent of women who applied to the P.O.S. during the period 1840-64, recorded their occupation as domestic servants. 'In 1881 48 per cent of employed women were in the domestic class'.⁵³ The increasing demand for domestic servants was dependent in part on the growth of the middle class. Domestic service was a constant form of respectable employment that continued throughout the year unlike seasonal agricultural work. 'The poor inquiry (1830) suggests that the only women with year long employment were live in servants'.⁵⁴ However, servants were constantly at the disposal of their mistress and the work was slave-like. Lodging and food were usually included in the conditions of employment but women could not have their children live with them. They approached the P.O.S. to relieve them of their dependents so that they could keep their situation. Wages in domestic service depended on the area of work. From 1880-95, the top wage was approximately £47 paid to housekeepers and at the lower end, laundry maids received ten pounds.⁵⁵

⁵¹ Maura Cronin, 'Work and workers in Cork city and county, 1800-1900' in Patrick O'Flanagan and Cornelius Buttimer (eds), *Cork: history and society: interdisciplinary essays on the history of an Irish county* (Dublin, 1993), p.738.

⁵² Margaret Neill, 'Home workers in Ulster, 1850-1911' in Janice Holmes and Diane Urquhart (eds), *Coming into the light: the work, politics and religion of women in Ulster, 1840-1940* (Belfast, 1994), p. 2.

⁵³ Mona Hearn, 'Life for domestic servants in Dublin, 1880-1920' in Maria Luddy and Cliona Clear (eds), *Women surviving* (Dublin, 1990), p. 48.

⁵⁴ Daly, *Women and work*, p. 14.

⁵⁵ Mona Hearn, *Below stairs: domestic service remembered in Dublin and beyond, 1880-1922* (Dublin, 1993), p. 48.

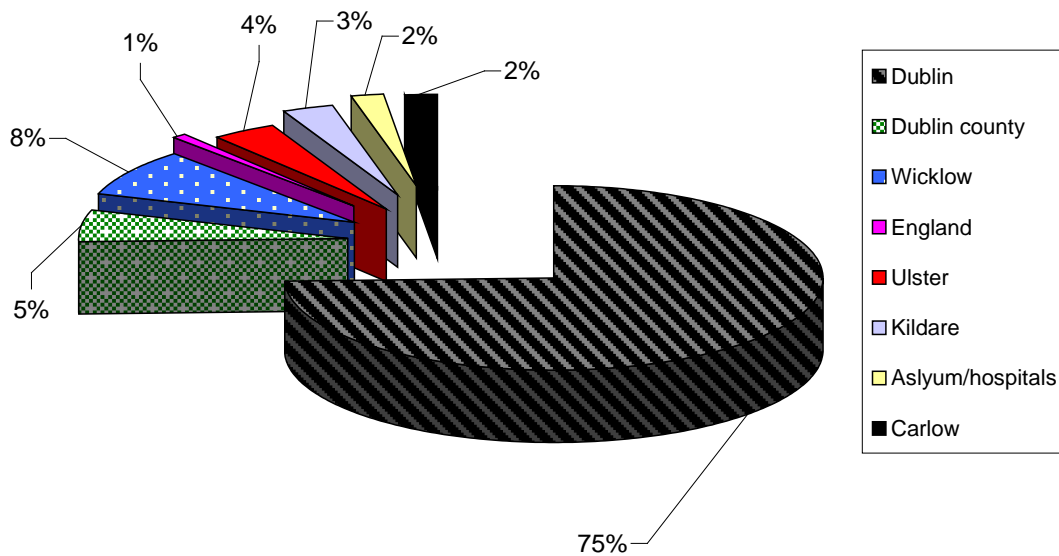
Women did not become involved in trade unions to regulate their working conditions until the early twentieth century. From 1901, the Drapers Assistants Association union represented women. The Irish Women's Workers' Union formed in 1911 with James Larkin as its president and his sister Delia as secretary. The union was supported by Helen Chenevix, Countess Markievicz and Louie Bennett.⁵⁶

Finally, chart 5.2 suggests that 44 per cent of women who applied for charitable assistance to the P.O.S. had no occupation. Women recently bereaved were more likely to have been in the process of securing a situation. These figures also take into account middle class applicants who could not or chose not to secure employment. In 5.6 per cent of cases, widows recorded that their husbands had worked in the professions. In 82.27 per cent of cases, they had been skilled tradesmen. In 11.68 per cent of cases, their spouses had worked in unskilled occupations such as labouring. In some of these cases, applicants noted their husband's occupation as a labourer along with an additional entry of their trade such as a weaver. This suggests that skilled tradesmen worked as labourers because of declines in their own industry and out of necessity.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ Myrtle Hill, *Women in Ireland: a century of change* (Belfast, 2003), p. 50.

⁵⁷ Registered application files (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/5/3).

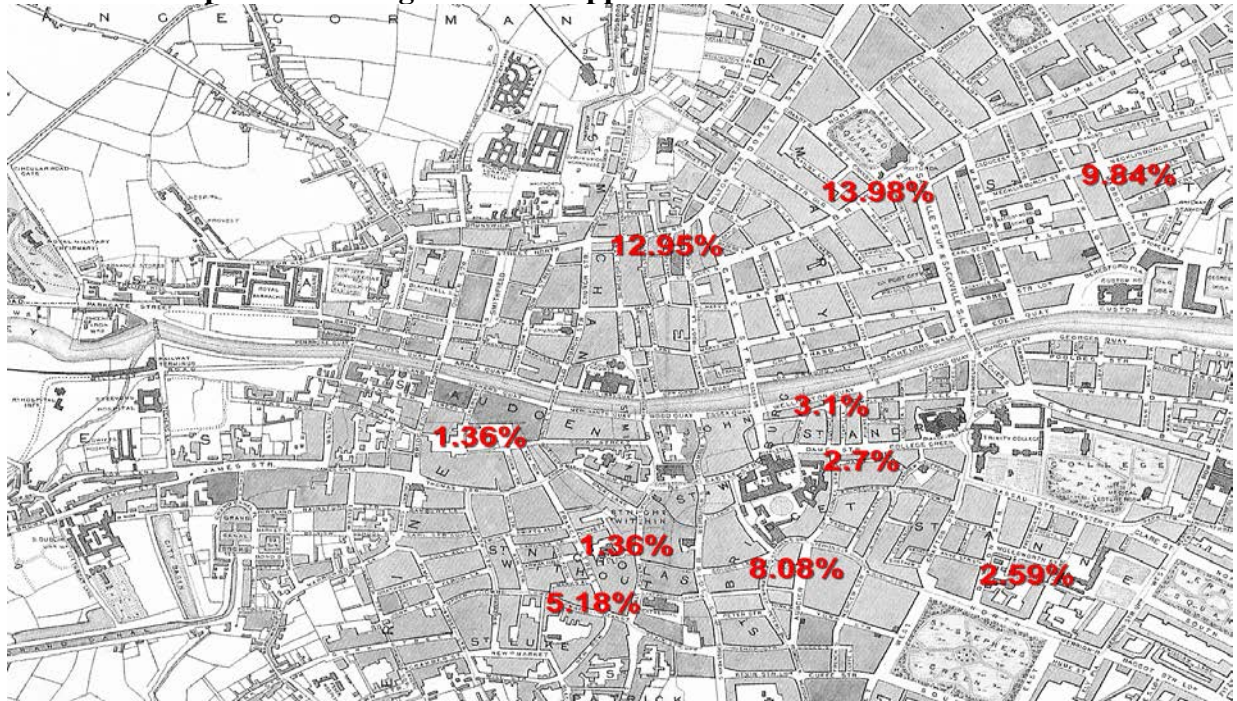
Chart 5.3 Residential patterns of female applicants to the P.O.S. in Dublin, 1844-64



Source: Registered P.O.S. applications (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/5/3/1).

Chart 5.3 shows that 75 per cent of applicants recorded their addresses in Dublin city and a further 5 per cent hailed from County Dublin. Applicants from County Wicklow made up 5 percent with 4 per cent from County Kildare. The P.O.S. in Dublin continued to accept applications from Ulster until the establishment of separate P.O.S. branches in the second half of the nineteenth century. A minor number of applications were made from England. A small percentage of women recorded that they were at the time of their application, a patient in a hospital or in other cases employees of a hospital or asylum.

Map 5.1 Percentage of female applicants resident in Dublin



parish	%	parish	%
St. Bride's	8.08	St. Mary's	13.98
St. Anne's	2.59	St. Michan's	12.95
St. Andrew's	2.07	St. Nicholas within	1.36
St. Audeon's	1.36	St. Nicholas without	5.18
St. Catherine's	9.32	St. Paul's	4.14
St. George's	4.66	St. Peter's	12.44
St. James's	3.1	St. Thomas's	9.84
St. Mark's	5.7	St. Werburgh's	3.1

Source: Registered application forms, 1844-64 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/5/1).

Map 5.1 indicates that St. Mary's, St. Michan's, St. Catherine's, and St. Thomas's represented the most frequently recorded addresses by applicants to the P.O.S. in Dublin. Comparatively, St. Michan's an inner city parish was one of the poorest. Women's residence at the time of their application may not have been their residence when married. They may have had to migrate from the country, from England or from other parts of Dublin to seek employment. Many of the women who applied to the P.O.S. would have lived in just one room of dilapidated tenement buildings. A P.O.S. inspector reported on an applicant's home in the winter of 1829. 'The little children are sitting in the dark without any fire before them; the room had no windows

in it, the landlord having taken them out as she was unable to pay him the rent'.⁵⁸ Rent demands were often too great for women to afford which contributed further to their decline.

P.O.S. application files also indicate that in some cases, women resided at one address while their children lived close by. This suggests that they had taken up a situation while their children remained with friends or extended kin until their official relinquishment to the P.O.S. Children's mobility therefore began prior to their admission to the P.O.S. The first period of adjustment occurred immediately after the death of a parent or prior to that death.

Rosa M. Barrett provided much needed crèche facilities in Kingstown,⁵⁹ in 1878 to provide respite for women who had to work to support their family. Subsequently, two Catholic crèches operated from 1884 in Dublin, one in Holles Street and one in Gardiner Street, the Liberty Crèche was managed by Quaker women in 1890s.⁶⁰ While this was of immense benefit to women in general, some widows could not keep their children with them in their own home because of inadequate lodging and they continued to relinquish their children to charitable organisations in order to re-establish themselves or merely survive.

⁵⁸ Minutes of committee meetings (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/2/1/1).

⁵⁹ Dun Laoghaire

⁶⁰ Luddy, *Women & philanthropy*, p. 89.

5.4 Mental and physical illness

Additional factors that frequently prevented women from securing any type of employment included the onset of mental illness had the same outcome for the family. Without an income, the family eventually sank into poverty. Provisions for the insane poor and mentally ill in general were few prior to the 1830s. The Dublin House of Industry later known as the Richmond Lunatic Asylum was the major centre for the care of the mentally ill in Ireland between 1811 and 1815.

Houses of industry were severely overcrowded and unsanitary. Thomas Spring Rice (MP) described the Limerick House of Industry (1817) in the following terms: 'I found four and twenty individuals lying, some old, some infirm and in the centre of the room in the adjoining room I found a woman with corpse of a child left on her knees for two days, it was almost in a state of putridity'.⁶¹ Rates of female asylum inmates were high, 'Consumption often caused dementia in its final stages and undiagnosed puerperal fever caused many a woman to be committed to an asylum only to die there two or three days later'.⁶² The Spring Rice committee noted in 1817 'wandering lunatics were dispersed over the country in the most disgusting and wretched state'.⁶³ The 1821 statute enactment saw the establishment of lunatic asylums throughout Ireland.

Women in the nineteenth century usually gave birth to children consecutively, which put their bodies and their mental health under severe and prolonged pressure.⁶⁴ Depression and mental health issues surfaced after childbirth and perhaps

⁶¹ Helen Burke, *The people and the poor law in nineteenth century Ireland* (Dublin, 1987), pp 2-3

⁶² Catriona Clear, *Nuns in nineteenth-century Ireland* (Dublin, 1987), p.12.

⁶³ Frederick W. Powell, *The politics of Irish social policy, 1600-1990* (New York, 1992), p.24.

⁶⁴ Ellen Ross, *Love and toil: motherhood in outcast London, 1870-1918* (New York, 1993), p. 125.

more seriously following many births.⁶⁵ However, women could not freely express these emotions. Those who did break down or demonstrated behaviour that did not conform with their expected feminine role, in some cases found themselves confined to asylums with little prospect of release. A clergyman documented the circumstances of six children in extreme distress on 13 November 1880, following the death of their father and the subsequent admission of their mother to the Richmond Lunatic Asylum. 'The youngest a seven year old, a three year old, a two year old and a baby of seven weeks old. Four of the above children, being eligible, were duly elected. The poor mother has since been admitted to the Richmond Lunatic Asylum, and there is little hope of her recovery'.⁶⁶ Grief coupled with the responsibility of young dependents, a seven-week-old baby to care for and financial instability proved too much for this mother to bear. In this case, without their mother to seek work and provide for them, these children, three of whom were infants, had little chance of survival without P.O.S. intervention.

Physical illness or disability suffered by women with dependents seriously diminished their capacity to provide for the family. Elizabeth T.'s husband, previously a carpenter, died leaving her with four boys and three girls the eldest aged twenty and the youngest a mere one year and eight months.⁶⁷ Unfortunately, due to the onset of blindness, she was unable to work. Loss of eyesight was a common feature of women's lives in the nineteenth-century. Significantly, young girls rather than boys 'were more prone to blindness as a result of scarlatina, measles, smallpox and

⁶⁵ Ross, *Love and toil*, p. 125.

⁶⁶ Annual report, 1880 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/1/1, p.14) (55-144).

⁶⁷ Registered application files (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers MS 1045/3/1).

ophthalmia'.⁶⁸ The P.O.S. admitted three of Elizabeth's younger children 16 August 1845.

In a second case, Anne F. owing to her diminishing health requested that her employer recommend the admission of her child to the P.O.S. She had formerly worked as a servant at the Molyneux Asylum. Her employer Ellen H. described her as well conducted, exemplary in manner and extremely trustworthy. The letter went on to state, 'but now she is totally unable to earn her bread from loss of health'⁶⁹. Her employer continued her recommendation by noting the further deterioration of her employee's health. 'In pity to herself and child, I have endeavoured for the last six months to keep her on, although from her wretched state of health, she was quite unequal to the work of any House, much less that of the Molyneux Asylum'.⁷⁰ Although Anne had secured employment, her own ill health prevented her from continuing to engage in any work.

In numerous cases women were ill at the time of their application. Mrs. P. married her husband in 1843 at the age of eighteen. Her husband formerly a labourer was recorded as living but insane at the time of her application to the P.O.S. Unable to cope alone, she relinquished her eight-year-old only daughter on the 7 September 1854. Mrs. P. succumbed to fever only sixteen days after her daughter's admission and was buried 23 September 1854 aged twenty-nine.⁷¹

⁶⁸ Catriona Clear, *Nuns in nineteenth-century Ireland* (Dublin, 1987), p.11.

⁶⁹ Registered application files (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/3/1).

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid.

Ellen M. relinquished her daughter Margaret born 7 March 1881 after the death of her husband. The date of Maggie's election was 27 May 1881. Ellen wrote to the P.O.S. secretary 14 January 1882 to inform him of her change in address:

I write to let you know that I have changed my residence I left my situation in Spencer Hill, Eglinton Park on the first of December and have obtained the present situation this month. I hope you are quite well and all your family. I saw you one day in Dublin and I waited a long time to get to speak with you, but you were engaged speaking with a gentleman at the corner of Grafton Street and you walked on with him, so I was disappointed. Dear sir, it is rather late for me, but I must wish you a happy new year. I am happy to hear that they have another orphan she will be good company for my little Maggie I hope soon to be able to go see her.⁷²

The committee noted on 20 January 1886, 'mother in Baggot Street Hospital suffering from cancer'.⁷³ Three months later, 19 May, Ellen died in South Dublin Union. The P.O.S. arranged Maggie's admission to the Female Orphan House, North Circular road, on 7 June 1886.

Self-inflicted health problems such as drinking to excess had a considerable impact on the entire family. Annie Jane M.'s case came before the committee on 3 March 1841:

Her husband left Dublin in a merchant vessel upwards of three years ago and has not been heard of, no letter has been received from him during that period he left that vessel which returned and went on board another, name not known. The mother is unfortunately addicted to drinking and the child would have starved and been deserted but for the intervention of a lady who has kindly done something occasionally towards her support.⁷⁴

⁷² Letter attached to entry in case file register (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/3/1).

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Letter from clergymen in registered application file (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/3/1).

Annie's case portrays the hopelessness felt by many women left alone to provide for their family. Turning to alcohol was a common means of shielding themselves if only for a temporary period from the intense economic pressures they faced on a daily basis.

The poor law passed in 1838⁷⁵ made provisions for the destitute by adopting a workhouse system throughout the country. In 1845, 126 workhouses were in operation. Women, who could not secure employment or became ill, regularly entered the workhouse and subsequently sought P.O.S. assistance to prevent their children from enduring the dire conditions therein:

The workhouse walls alone welcome her to their forbidding shelter, but the knowledge of the dreary desolation of those prisons for the poor deter her from entering within their portals. Separation from her loved ones await her at the threshold; indiscriminate association with the criminal and worthless are her likely lot within; home and children become but tear-dimmed visions of dead past.⁷⁶

The C.P.O.U. and the P.O.S. regarded the workhouse as a place from whence Protestant widows and children required rescue, primarily because of the deplorable conditions and the risk that they might convert to Catholicism. Catholics were equally as opposed to the system, which they regarded as a den for Protestant proselytising.

In April 1844, Mrs. K. requested aid from the P.O.S. The committee asked the clergyman to evaluate the applicant's current circumstances. 'Being unable to pay for the support of her children by anything she might earn at service, she was compelled

⁷⁵ Poor Relief (Ireland) Act, 1838, 1 & 2 Vict., c.56 (31 July 1838).

⁷⁶ Alfred, Dickie, 'State insurance and mothers' pensions' in *Journal of the Statistical and Social Inquiry Society of Ireland*, xiii, part xcvi (1917), pp 675-9.

to seek refuge in the union workhouse of Rathdrum where she still remains with her children'⁷⁷. A further note confirms the following. 'Relative to the case of orphans K. Widow K. and her children are in the workhouse of Rathdrum, but would leave if relieved of her children'.⁷⁸It was often very difficult for some families to break away from the workhouse system without charitable intervention, due to the real danger of institutionalisation.

A second case dated 6 April 1846 describes Catherine M.'s entry and later departure from the workhouse:

Catherine M. a consequence of many severe trials and afflictions was obliged to seek refuge in the workhouse of the North Dublin Union. A few months since she obtained the situation of laundress to the Richmond Lunatic Asylum earning seven shillings per month and left the work house with her two sons, the eldest upwards of fourteen years of age and other boys not nine years old, who is the subject of the present application.⁷⁹

Catherine readmitted her older son into the workhouse and placed her youngest son with the P.O.S., as she could not keep him with her in the asylum. Catherine used the workhouse and P.O.S. assistance as a temporary solution to her destitution.

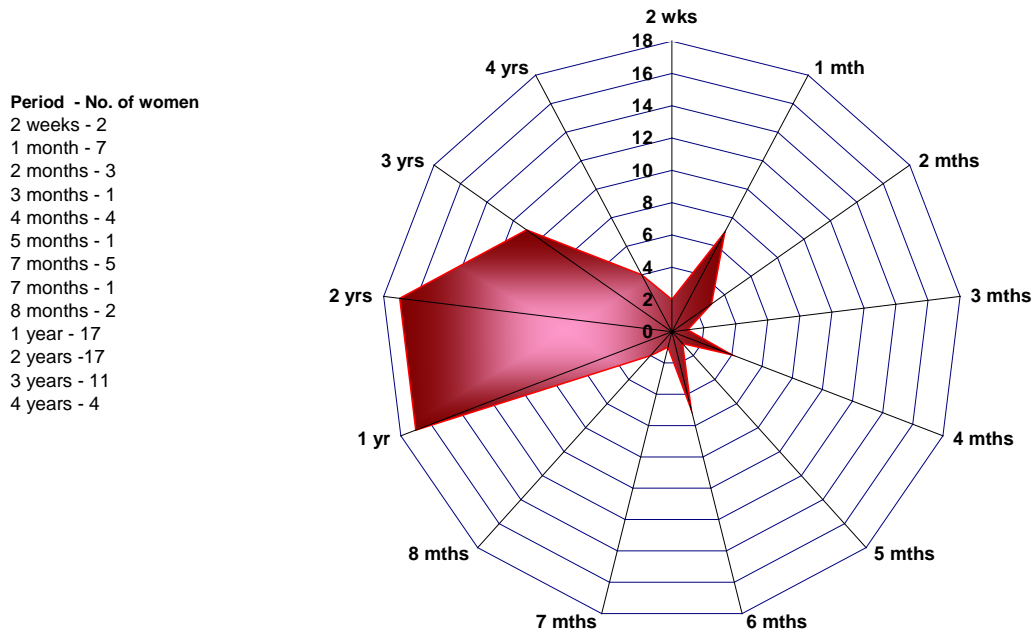
In consideration of the often insurmountable obstacles women faced, how long could they sustain their family alone? This period of extreme hardship spanned from the time of bereavement or desertion to their application for charitable assistance.

⁷⁷ Letter in registered application files (N.A.I., C.P.O.U. papers, MS 1045/11/2).

⁷⁸ Letter in registered application files (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/3/1).

⁷⁹ Letter in registered application files (N.A.I., C.P.O.U. papers, MS 1045/11/2).

Chart 5.4 Length of time women provided for their children alone prior to C.P.O.U. assistance 1840-70⁸⁰



Source: Registered application forms (N.A.I., C.P.O.U. papers, MS 1045/11/2).

Chart 5.4 shows that approximately thirty percent of women applied to the C.P.O.U. within the first year following the dramatic change for the worse in their economic circumstances. The period ranged from two weeks to eight months. A further thirty percent of applicants applied within two years. The length of time that women took to approach the P.O.S. or C.P.O.U. depended entirely on each individual case. For example, a servant whose husband deserted the family home waited five years before applying to the P.O.S. on 4 August 1842. It is likely that her application may not have been valid until authorities confirmed her husband's death. Middle-class widows who had received inheritance or a pension of some kind could live without charitable aid for far longer following spousal death than working-class widows. However, once this temporary income was exhausted widows had no other choice but to approach

⁸⁰ Figures from the C.P.O.U. application files were used for this chart, as the same information was not available from all P.O.S. application files.

charitable organisations. E.H. a police constable died of consumption in Sligo, 12 June 1861. His wife worked as a seamstress. She had received an annual gratuity after his death, at its end she applied to the C.P.O.U., October 1863.

Pride often stood in the way of women's acceptance of charity. Instead, they persevered until they had no other choice but to seek help. A widow from Kildare did not apply for the admission of her son aged seven to the P.O.S. for two years after the death of her husband. The eldest boy aged sixteen was physically less able and resident in the workhouse. The sisters were at home with their mother. The older boy's inability to earn extra income for the family rendered charitable assistance vital. The P.O.S. approved the younger boy's admission in March 1855.⁸¹

However, reluctance to relinquish children was the most significant reason for families to postpone their application to the P.O.S. and C.P.O.U. The greater number of files examined have shown evidence of strong familial ties whether found in clergymen's letters recommending the admission of a child/children or declarations made by the parent/surviving relative themselves. In a letter dated 21 April 1841, a widow indicated her late husband's fondness for his children 'I am the distressed widow of F.M. who was an industrious Protestant that kept his family comfortable by his work. Indeed, I have lost a good husband and my three little children a most affectionate father'.⁸² She concluded her letter by recording that her husband's death had driven her family to poverty.

⁸¹ Registered application files (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/3/1)

⁸² Ibid.

A second letter dated 29 May 1844 written by a parish clergyman described a widow's concern for the fate of her little boy. 'All her wages have been expended on the maintenance of her poor child, and she is now in most destitute circumstances, suffering great bodily affliction and more mental anxiety as to the fate of her poor boy'.⁸³ Working-class families set aside small subscriptions that they could not easily afford, to provide for their children following their death. 'Poverty no doubt blunted the emotions of parents to some degree, but it would be wrong to conclude that affection was necessarily less or that there was less concern for children's health and welfare'.⁸⁴ Many parents cared deeply for their children's welfare and drew comfort from the knowledge that the P.O.S. would provide for them. Families in dire straits depended on each other and made consistent efforts to stay together.

The onset of grim economic circumstances was the dominant reason for women/men extended kin or older siblings to relinquish a child to the P.O.S. Inspectors' reports bring to light the level of poverty that families endured before they approached the P.O.S. In 1880, inspectors reported 'a family of eight living in one small room, in great poverty with no means of support except 8s. per week'.⁸⁵ A P.O.S. inspector made the following report in 1885. 'When I saw them they were engaged, as I supposed, eating their dinner which consisted of dry potatoes, which they were picking with their fingers, having no spoon or fork. It seems to me a real case of destitution, the mother having no means for their support'.⁸⁶ The committee elected all three children.

⁸³ Registered application files (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/3/1) (1-152).

⁸⁴ Harry Hendrick, *Children, childhood and English society, 1880-1990* (Cambridge, 1997), p.19.

⁸⁵ 'A brief review of work to date 1885' (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/1/1).

⁸⁶ 'A brief review of work to date 1885' (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/1/1).

The P.O.S. noted the benefits of temporary relinquishment for all members of the family in 1843:

By affording temporary shelter to orphans, this means widows or the elder member of the family are often given opportunity to make successful efforts to obtain a livelihood and may be enable them to take back their charge with gratitude. Which if left to them at first must have paralysed these efforts, and kept the whole family in abject pauperism.⁸⁷

Despite P.O.S. initiatives to ensure temporary rather than permanent relinquishment of children where possible, families still suffered acute psychological turmoil during the process. The succeeding examples drawn from the Dublin and Tipperary P.O.S. collections refer to women's apprehension, hesitation and outright refusal to part with their children. Furthermore, they reflect empowered women who challenged the male authority of the P.O.S. committee during the process.

The Tipperary P.O.S. recorded 6 April 1836, 'the election of Eliza and Ellen T. was deferred in consequence of the doubt expressed in Rev. Edward's letter that the mother would part with these children'.⁸⁸ Similarly, on 6 July 1836 'Mr. Wilson appointed at last meeting to inspect Isabella B. from Fethard, County Wexford, reported through the secretary that the child's mother will not part with her'.⁸⁹ The committee scheduled the departure of three children to their assigned nurses 16 January 1879 from Dublin to Nurse Anne B. Carnew. However, the register that recorded orphans' movements also noted that the children's mother Mrs. D. 'would not give them up'. It is unclear whether the mothers in these cases kept their children with them, relinquished them at a later date or made alternative arrangements for their care.

⁸⁷ Annual report, 1843 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/1/1).

⁸⁸ Minutes of committee meetings (N.L.I., Tipperary P.O.S. papers, MS 32,521-32,538).

⁸⁹ Ibid.

Women regularly reconsidered their decision to relinquish their children to the P.O.S. On 1 February 1837, the committee ordered ‘Abigail P. and Mary P. be located with Nurse. M and that Michael H. and Patrick H. (as soon as his mother will permit him to go) be located with Nurse H’.⁹⁰ Similarly, the committee asked Mrs. M. resident of Wicklow to come to Dublin with her two children. She was due to arrive on Wednesday 9 July 1879 by train to Harcourt Street at 11.15 a.m. to give up her children to Mr. Jepps the then P.O.S. secretary. Nevertheless, the committee recorded her refusal to part with her children. ‘Arrived but would not give them up’.⁹¹ Five days later, the P.O.S. noted that Mrs. M. eventually brought the children to Dublin. Mothers chose to delay relinquishment for as long as possible, in order to postpone the emotional pain caused by separation from their children.

The committee had arranged for Mrs. O.’s two children to go to nurse L. in Straffan. They notified her on 1 October 1879 that she was required to come to their office from Castleknock on ‘Monday next the 6 o’clock bringing with her two children Thomas and Anne to be handed over to the society’.⁹² The committee documented Mrs. M’s unwillingness to part with them on 10 October 1879. ‘Gave up two children – then not willing to give them up, children sent back to think it over’.⁹³ The mother’s indecision and confusion are clear signs that she could not bear to leave her children, but felt pressured into doing so by her poor circumstances. In the end, she chose to keep them with her.

⁹⁰ Register of orphans’ movements (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/5/6/7).

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Register of orphans’ movements (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/5/6/7).

Widowers also participated in the relinquishment process if on a far less well-documented scale. This was largely due to practical and economic factors such as the onset of poor health or unemployment or in other cases because they wanted to remarry soon after the death of their wife. In a letter, dated 4 March 1861 a widower originating from Meath relayed his circumstances to the C.P.O.U. committee. 'As I am very much away from home and having no Protestant relatives that I could give him to and my wages is so very low'.⁹⁴ A clergyman supported his claims noting that he wished to leave Dublin urgently to engage in employment elsewhere and could not afford the expense of employing a nurse to care for his five-year old son. In other cases, widowers too displayed a reluctance to relinquish their children. At the age of six George H.'s mother died. His father was a farmer and suffered from paralysis.⁹⁵ He applied to the P.O.S. for his son's admission in 1881. However, when it came time for George's admission the committee recorded 'father would not give up the boy'.⁹⁶ While, Mr. H.'s reasons for keeping his son with him are undocumented, it is clear that due to his paralysis he needed George both as a carer and as an indispensable helper on the farm.⁹⁷

Other members of extended kin also shared in this process. If both parents were deceased, it frequently became the responsibility of grandmothers, aunts and uncles to relinquish their young relatives. The P.O.S. approached extended kin to take charge of orphans. However, for the most part surviving relatives' own financial restraints repeatedly prevented them, even if willing, to act as permanent guardians. Extended

⁹⁴ Registered application files (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/3/1).

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

kin cared a great deal for their relatives and provided for them for as long as possible. The following example emphasises this point.

William A.'s grandmother, a widow, applied for his admission to the P.O.S. 24 April 1849. William was eleven years of age and an only child. His father was a bookkeeper and had died seven years previously. His mother had died eleven months prior to his father. William's grandmother spent seven years providing for him, until she was no longer physically able.⁹⁸

Older siblings also had to make the very difficult decision to relinquish their younger brothers and sisters to the P.O.S. in order that they could seek employment. Evidence taken from case file registers suggests that in many cases they made great efforts to re-establish links with their siblings in later years once they had secured employment to support themselves.

5.5 Relinquishment from the parent and child's perspective

Children's lives had already begun to fall apart following the death or desertion of a father. They had not only lost a parent but the primary source of economic stability. The prospect of further separation from their mother and caregiver signified deep emotional loss, bewilderment and fear. Two cases in particular illustrate this point. A P.O.S. committee member informed a family in 1841 of their application's approval indicating that the child would have to leave for the country in two days. 'On my saying that it would be requisite for her to be removed the day after tomorrow, the

⁹⁸ Registered application files (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/3/1).

anguish of the child would have shaken stronger nerves than mine'.⁹⁹ In August 1852, the sub-committee on nurses and education noted, 'Ellen A. seems a little delicate her mother stated that she had fretted when she heard she was to come to town'.¹⁰⁰ The age at which children left their mother, father or surviving relatives had a great bearing on how they responded to this process. Until 1898, only children under the age of nine were admissible.

Once the P.O.S. or C.P.O.U. admitted a child to their care, they simultaneously reduced that family's heavy financial responsibilities. However, while this represented a form of relief, many families found the restrictions on their future involvement in their child's life, difficult to bear. They had signed the P.O.S. application form that read, 'I hereby promise and consent and agree that if elected, he shall be entirely given to the care and management of the Committee of said society, to be by them disposed of and when fit, apprenticed or otherwise provided for in such place and manner as the committee shall decide'.¹⁰¹ This was a serious declaration that transferred guardianship from surviving relatives to the P.O.S. Mothers who placed their child or children with the P.O.S. or C.P.O.U. were no longer a central figure in their life. Charitable intervention forced the mother figure/surviving relative to an outer circle of influence. The substitute mother/nurse and the overall patriarchal authority of the institution overshadowed her position as mother. The P.O.S. governed the decision-making process concerning the child's clothes, daily sustenance and place of residence, education, child-rearing methods in terms of appropriate punishment, thereby isolating surviving relatives, most notably mothers, who were no longer responsible for such decisions.

⁹⁹ Annual report, 1841 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/1/1).

¹⁰⁰ Minutes of sub-committee on nurses, 13 Aug. 1852 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/2/3).

¹⁰¹ Registered application forms (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/3/1) (1-113).

However, the P.O.S. did not cut familial ties between newly admitted children and their extended kin altogether. The committee resolved on 4 December 1832 that 'Mrs. C. mother of an orphan now under the care of the society applied to the committee to allow her child to spend the Christmas with her, agreed to'.¹⁰² On 29 November 1833, the committee again agreed to permit a visit with relatives, 'the uncle of the orphans P. having applied for leave that the children should spend the children's holidays with him, we agree that his request should be complied with'.¹⁰³ Evidence drawn from a register of incoming letters for the years 1868-9, further expounds the relative flexibility with which the P.O.S. accommodated relative's requests to spend short-term periods with their children. In fact, the committee granted 86.6 per cent of written requests made by mothers and various members of extended kin seeking permission to see their children, during the period 1 July 1868 to 23 December 1869.¹⁰⁴ The number of days that children visited with their families ranged from one to two days to one week.

None the less, the P.O.S. did not allow all requests. They refrained from setting precedents and judged each case on an individual basis. Their intention was never to return a child to an improper or harmful situation. Therefore, the P.O.S. took the then status of the family into serious consideration prior to their approval of such terms. The very fact that women had to seek permission in the first place underlined their subordinate position in relation to the P.O.S.

¹⁰² Minutes of the committee (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/2/1/1).

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Register of incoming letters, 1868-9 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/3/1/13).

During the same period, (1 July 1868 to 23 Dec. 1869) the committee received seventeen letters from concerned mothers, siblings, aunts and uncles who were clearly restless and worried about their children's well-being.¹⁰⁵ Mothers also enclosed letters, requesting that the committee pass them on to their children. On 27 May 1868, the P.O.S. delivered a letter from Mrs. M to her daughter then attending apprentice class in the Protestant orphan home located at 55 Percy Place, Dublin. Mrs. G. wrote to the P.O.S. in August 1868. She requested that the secretary forward a parcel to Mrs. T. (P.O.S. nurse) in Baltinglass where her daughter resided, which they did. It is clear that retaining some form of communication with their children helped extended kin to put aside their fears and concerns.

The overall loss of control, caused by charitable intervention, frequently motivated women to re-establish themselves in order that they could reunite with their children on a permanent basis. Remarriage was one of the most effective and commonly used strategies to achieve this outcome. Records suggest that a relatively high number of women remarried and then approached the P.O.S. to take over the guardianship of their children on a permanent basis. Mrs. D. formerly of Mary's Lane, Dublin who 'sold bibles for 8d to get her supper'¹⁰⁶ admitted her son Richard aged six to the P.O.S. in 1834. In 1841, the committee reported 'the child taken away by the mother who has become rich having married well in London'.¹⁰⁷ Richard was a foster child for six and a half years.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Case file register (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/5/3).

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

Women often remarried and subsequently relocated abroad or emigrated and then remarried. Many middle-class women emigrated to avoid losing their social status at home. Once re-established they approached the P.O.S. for their children. Children sometimes had to make extensive journeys abroad to reunite with their mothers. They may have viewed this as a long awaited return to a permanent family life and a true sense of belonging. William W.'s mother admitted him to the P.O.S. on 28 April 1834. Following her remarriage twelve years later and subsequent relocation to Quebec she requested that the committee send William to Quebec, which they granted in 1846.¹⁰⁸ Meeting a new father figure was equally daunting. His presence along with any children from a second marriage may have considerably weakened the child's place within a restructured familial framework. A child's stepfather may have been happy to marry their mother but perhaps far less committed to the care of her children. It was for this reason that the P.O.S. made every effort to avoid the return of children to unsuitable homes.

In other cases, intending emigrants requested assistance from the committee to bring their children with them. Mrs. Emily M. from Kildare requested assistance to bring her two sons with her to America. The P.O.S. furnished her with £20 in lieu of the boys' apprentice fees and £5 toward their outfits.¹⁰⁹ The P.O.S. committee members held lengthy discussions on such requests, particularly cases where the mother had emigrated or intended to emigrate. In these cases, where possible the P.O.S. contacted Protestant clergyman in the country of destination to confirm the applicant's

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Case file register (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/5/1)

claims.¹¹⁰ The child's return also depended on the outcome of investigations made by the P.O.S. regarding the character and religion of a new husband.

The P.O.S. considered the child's welfare in physical and religious terms of paramount importance and they thoroughly investigated the applicant's circumstances. 'The committee always make the strictest inquiries for their relatives and never give them but where they are convinced it is for the benefit of the orphan'.¹¹¹ For example, on 16 April 1833 the committee resolved 'that Oscar K. now under the care of the society be given up to his mother provided that her circumstances are found to be so much improved as to give grounds for believing that henceforth she will be able to support and educate him'.¹¹² Inspectors visited the applicant's residence and judged the suitability of their home environment and finances.

Having deliberated on Catherine M.'s case, the committee asserted, 'we do not consider the circumstances of the mother of Orphan Catherine M. be such as would justify in giving up the child to her'.¹¹³ In a separate case, Eliza S.'s mother wrote to the society requesting the transferral of her daughter from the guardianship of the P.O.S. to her own but the committee refused. 'We do not consider it would be for her advantage that Eliza S. should be removed from under the protection of the society'.¹¹⁴ The committee was adamant that the children should not be removed from

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Annual report, 1843 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/1/1).

¹¹² Minutes of committee meetings, 16 Apr. 1833 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/2/1/3).

¹¹³ Minutes of committee meetings, 23 Feb. 1849 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/2/1/3).

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 27 Apr. 1849.

the society roll, unless they were offered a permanent home, further evidence of the committee's commitment to the care and well-being of its wards.¹¹⁵

For the most part, the P.O.S. complied as much as possible with mothers' wishes to have their children returned to them, on condition that their circumstances had improved. Rev. O. reported that Mary Anne J.'s mother, 'having procured good situation is desirous of relieving the society of the burden of her maintenance'.¹¹⁶ Considering all aspects of the case, the committee approved of Mary Anne's return to her mother. Similarly, the committee resolved 26 November 1847 that 'William R. to be given up to his mother according to the request contained in her letters, her circumstances having been much improved since the child was elected'.¹¹⁷ Although they approved these cases with caution, committee members were also acutely aware of the numerous other cases that awaited approval. By allowing children to return to their kin, they in turn made way for other desperate applicants.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 26 Jan. 1849.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 26 Nov. 1847.

A repossession form as shown in figure 5.1 suggests that surviving relatives could withdraw their children regardless of whether the society agreed with their decision or not, unless the P.O.S. had particular reason to impede the process.

Figure 5.1 P.O.S. repossession form

PROTESTANT ORPHAN SOCIETY,
OFFICE—17 UPPER SACKVILLE-STREET, DUBLIN.

In taking my daughter Rachel Elsworth
off the Protestant Orphan Society, ~~contrary to the advice and
opinion of the Committee~~, I do so on my sole responsibility, and
by such action thereby relieve the Society of all further care
with said child

(Signed) _____
Date w/ 18 May 1875

Witness _____

Source: Register of orphan movements (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/5/6/7).

If unhappy with the arrangements made by the P.O.S., mothers could withdraw their children prior to and following the introduction of legislation to support mothers' custody rights. Mrs. R. wrote to the *Freeman's Journal* in 1873 and criticised 'certain members of the P.O.S. committee' for alleged inadequate care of her two children who suffered from whooping cough¹¹⁸ not long after their arrival with a nurse residing in Carnew. The nurse contacted the P.O.S. office to inform them of the illness. The secretary claimed, 'in consequence of the favourable state of health in which the children were found only a fortnight before, it was deemed unnecessary to report the

¹¹⁸ Highly infectious bacterial disease that affects the respiratory system.

fact to Mrs. R. at once, lest needless alarm should be awakened'.¹¹⁹ Mrs. R. came before the committee, stated that she had been to see her children and insisted on their return to her immediately, as she no doubt feared that otherwise she would lose them permanently.

However, the committee noted that she made no complaint of neglect against the nurse at this time. They asked her to leave the children until they had recovered, 'especially on the grounds of the peril of removing the children under the circumstances'.¹²⁰ Mrs. R. persisted and eventually the committee although still concerned for their welfare, approved the children's return to their mother. The parish clergyman wrote 17 August that the children were 'going on quite well'. Nevertheless, on 20 August, Mrs. R. proceeded to the country to collect her children, 'all expenses having been paid by the committee. Since then she never came to the office to report the state of her children, and nothing was heard of the matter till her letter appeared in the *Freeman*'.¹²¹ These examples confirm the conflict that could arise between the committee and kin. Moreover, they reflect women's ability to challenge the male authority of the P.O.S. committees on issues relating to their children's welfare. Some mothers would have done anything to ensure their children's health and safety.

¹¹⁹ Scrapbooks (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/6/2).

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Ibid.

Mothers and surviving relatives had the opportunity of seeing their children at the P.O.S. annual meetings. Women whose attempts to reclaim guardianship of their children were unsuccessful, on occasion attended the annual meeting with the express purpose of retrieving them. 'Mrs. M. the mother of orphan George C. having taken him away from the nurse at the annual meeting resolved that George C.'s name be removed from the list of orphans'.¹²² Similarly, the committee noted, 'that the name of Eliza K. be struck off the list of orphans it appearing to us that her mother has not only misrepresented the causes of taking her away, but has done so in manner which disentitles her to any favourable consideration of this committee'.¹²³ The annual meeting presented women with the opportunity of gaining access to their children, which may have otherwise been impossible.

However, overall, re-establishing permanent guardianship of their children with the cooperation of the P.O.S. meant a great deal to mothers who regularly forwarded words of thanks for the good care taken of them. Four examples support this point. On Monday 15 June 1863, the Cork city and Cork P.O.S. received a letter that stated, 'Mrs. L.'s letter read thanking the committee for aid to her children while in need and now withdrawing them being able to support them'.¹²⁴ The P.O.S. in Dublin received a letter dated 13 July 1868 from Mrs. Jane S. who had remarried and relocated to Iowa. The committee assisted with fares and Jane's son and daughter were able to make the journey to America. Jane wrote, 'George and Martha arrived safely, many thanks for all kindness and the children are doing well'.¹²⁵ Reunions of this kind were

¹²² Minutes of committee meetings, 24 April 1846 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/2/1/2).

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Scrapbooks (R.C.B.L., Cork P.O.S. papers, MS 519.16.1).

¹²⁵ Register of incoming letters, 1868 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/3/1/13).

made possible by the committee's willingness to support women's attempts to re-establish themselves.

The P.O.S. received a letter in 1885 from a mother who requested the return of her little boy Abraham, 'I am now in a position to provide for him in every respect. I am chiefly acting under the advice of my two eldest sons, who are most anxious to have him under our charge and they join with me in expressing our thanks to your committee'.¹²⁶ Lastly, in 1893 the committee received a letter from Mrs. W. who sought permission for her daughter's return to her care, she wrote, 'I am fully conscious of the excellent care and attention she has received from the society. I can hardly find words to suitably express my gratitude for the heaven sent help the society has been to us'.¹²⁷ Two of these letters are taken from extracts that featured in annual reports, however, the level of gratitude expressed to the committee is easily confirmed by numerous examples derived from other sources. The register of incoming letters for the 1868 contains several references to such gratitude. For example in June 1869, Mrs. G. wrote to the P.O.S. 'thank you for your kindness to my son John'.¹²⁸ Some women utilised the P.O.S. primarily as a temporary measure and ended the period of separation from their children as quickly as possible.

Women developed strategies to overcome the challenges of widowhood. They formed support networks with extended kin, neighbours, and friends and sought the crucial assistance from their older children. However, if this support was no longer available they approached the P.O.S. or C.P.O.U. to relieve them of their dependents leaving them free to seek employment. Women's determination to keep their families

¹²⁶ 'A brief review of the society's work' (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/5/1).

¹²⁷ Annual report, 1893 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/1/1, p. 19).

¹²⁸ Register of incoming letters 1868-9 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/3/1/13).

together is most significant. A key aim of this chapter has been to document strong parent-child emotional attachments and the psychological complexities involved in the relinquishment of children whether on a permanent or temporary basis. Finally, it has identified women's protracted efforts to reunite their families through employment, remarriage, and emigration.

Chapter 6

Foster care

In the nineteenth century, orphaned and destitute children were routinely placed in orphanages and institutions. From the 1850s onwards social reformers began to draw attention to the adverse effects of rearing children in this type of environment. The aims of this chapter are to portray the childhood experience of orphans boarded out by the P.O.S. in Dublin, to assess the system in practice and to argue the comparable benefits of the boarding-out system over institutional care.

Firstly, the child's journey to their foster home, aspects of their education, home life and their status in the foster family are analysed. Secondly, examination of the relationships that developed between foster parent and child shows a mixture of both positive and negative adult treatment of children. Thirdly, the measures adopted by the P.O.S. to protect children from neglect and mistreatment while fostered coupled with evidence based on orphan mortality rates, presents a broad picture of the overall standards of the physical care provided. Finally, the discussion focuses on the introduction of home care and small children's homes into the P.O.S. welfare system.

6.1 The children's foster care experience

What came next for children once relinquished by their parent/extended kin and placed under the guardianship of the P.O.S.? The committee relocated children directly to their

nurse, or to the society house¹ located at 55 Percy Place, Dublin, for a short time, until they arranged a suitable foster family in the country. Evidence also suggests that during this interim period, a number of children stayed with Mrs. Copeland and Mrs. McCrum who ran small boarding houses. For instance, on 12 March 1878, ‘that orphans Arthur and Hannah are to be taken from their grandmother Mrs. M. who is dangerously ill and the orphans are to be sent to lodge with Mrs. Copeland, 42 Middle Abbey Street’.² On 22 September 1879, the committee resolved, ‘William C. is to come to Dublin from Ballinaclash³ on Monday next per the train arriving at Harcourt Street to go to McCrums until a place is found for him’.⁴ The committee called on the same reputable people to house the children. They also relied on specific nurses in Dublin, in areas such as Ballyfermot and Dolphins Barn with whom children might stay as occasion might require.

In what condition did the committee find the children once relinquished to their care? The committee recorded the state of health of each newly elected⁵ child in a register. In 1855, 59.3 per cent of children admitted, arrived clean and in good health. The secretary to the P.O.S., Mr. Jepps recorded his observations on the newly admitted children such as ‘clean and altogether a respectable looking child’.⁶ Children in good health and relatively clean, most probably came from middle-class families who had just recently experienced bereavement. In these cases, children’s health and general appearance had not yet

¹ Large premises located at 55 Percy Place, Dublin used for children’s reception once admitted.

² Register of orphan movements (N.A.I. P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/5/6/7).

³ County Wicklow.

⁴ Register of orphan movements (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/5/6/7).

⁵ Term used by the committee when they approved a child’s application for admission.

⁶ Register of reports on state of health and education of newly elected orphans in order of election, Mar. 1855 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/5/6/8).

declined but they were probably the group most emotionally traumatised by this experience because the change was so drastic. The register also provides an outline of the children's literacy levels. Mr. Jepps, observed, 'Hanes B. aged eight as an intelligent boy, can spell'.⁷ Children's educational ability was an additional signifier of a middle-class background.

A further 23.7 per cent of children appeared dirty but in good overall health, described in some cases, by Mr. Jepps as badly fed or rough and small for their age. Malnourished children were more likely to suffer from stunted growth and later medical problems. Limited literacy levels were also an indicator of their poor circumstances. Poor children had to work to contribute to the family economy and many did not attend school. More severe cases made up 16.9 per cent of children who arrived in a delicate⁸ state. These children came from extremely poor families who may have endured destitution for a prolonged period. Esther M. elected aged three and a half in 1855 was 'delicate after measles' and her 'hair is coming off, eyes weakly, scruff in head'.⁹ Ellen C. aged seven when elected 'had delicate eyes, sore on neck, very dirty'.¹⁰ Despite the best efforts of these families to care for their children, extreme poverty meant that living conditions were often appalling with little or no furniture, in some cases with straw in place of beds, which gave rise to infestations of lice and other parasites. Alternatively, children's poor state of health and appearance may have indicated that their family had deserted them.

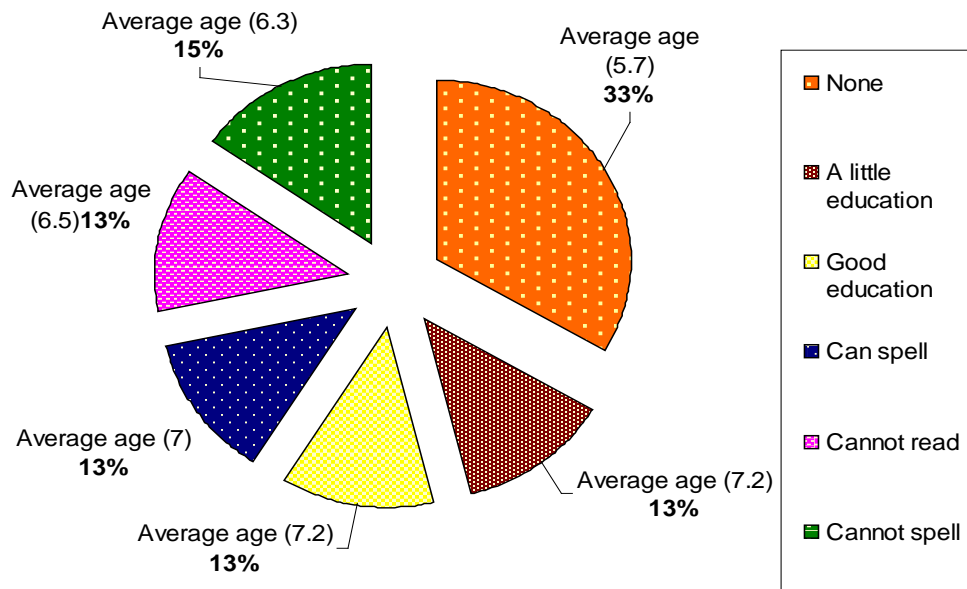
⁷ Register of reports on state of health and education of newly elected orphans in order of election, Mar. 1855 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/5/6/8).

⁸ The term delicate referred to children who were sick for a long period.

⁹ Register of reports on state of health and education of newly elected orphans in order of election, Jan. 1855 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/5/6/8).

¹⁰ Ibid.

Chart 6.1 Profile of children's literacy levels on admission to the P.O.S. in Dublin, 1855



Source: Register of health and education of newly elected orphans, 1855 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/5/6/8).

Chart 6.1 denotes the level of children's education on admission to the P.O.S. The majority of children had at least some reading and writing skills that corresponded to their age.

Many children admitted to the P.O.S. arrived with tattered and worn clothes. A sub-committee responsible for the distribution of the children's apparel was formed in May 1836 to resolve this problem. Nurses collected the clothing from the society house. In May 1880, the committee sent nurses a circular requesting their presence to collect 'the

annual supply of clothing for the orphans in your care'.¹¹ Fragmentary evidence drawn from a register dated 1862, refers to the distribution of clothing to boys and girls. It recorded that girls received three shifts, two petticoats, two frocks, one bonnet, two pairs of shoes, three pairs of stockings and one new coat.¹² Boys received one to two suits that included a jacket, vest and trousers, one cloth cap, one coat new or worn, suspenders, three shirts and three pairs of socks.¹³ In January 1880, the committee sent a circular to nurses with regard to their shoe allowance that stated:

By an order of committee, dated 16 May 1879, every nurse is to receive the following rate of payment for shoe money, in half yearly instalments as usual; the rate, which has been increased 3s. per head, per annum, for each orphan. For orphans under 8 years of age 6s. 6d. from 8 to 12 years, 7s. 6d. and over 12 years 8s. 6d.¹⁴

Inspectors regularly reported on the state of the orphans' clothing and shoes and noted any necessary replacement items. This clothing was a badge of orphan identity, the only real signature apart from their city or regional accent that set them apart from the other children.

¹¹ Scrapbooks (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers MS 1045/6/1).

¹² Register of clothing issued to girls, 1861-87 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/5/8/2).

¹³ Register of clothing issued to boys, 1861-87 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/5/8/4).

¹⁴ Scrapbooks (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/6/1).

Figure 6.1 Children on the roll of the P.O.S. in Dublin



Source: Undated photograph¹⁵ (N.A.I. P.O.S. papers MS 1045/5/10/2).

This photograph differs greatly from the portraits also used in this study. While the quality is inferior to the other photographs, it, unlike the studio pictures, captures the children in their everyday environment. The boys are wearing the P.O.S. uniform, a suit that was usually made from corduroy, a cap, and a necktie. The girl is wearing a pinafore and dress.

The sub-committee on the management of nurses carefully arranged for the young orphans' transferral to their foster homes in the country, leaving nothing to chance. Committee members noted that they spent many hours on the organisation of the

¹⁵ This photograph is likely to date from the late nineteenth century. The dry plate process was developed in 1878 and portable cameras such as the first Kodak were introduced in 1888 see Edward Chandler, *Photography in Ireland: the nineteenth century* (Dublin, 2001), p. 99.

children's transferral and the successful execution of this task.¹⁶ A committee member or a chaperone usually accompanied orphans to their assigned nurse from Mrs. McCrums or Percy Place. The committee sent a young girl named Ellen B. to reside with Nurse Anne T. Baltinglass, County Wicklow on 10 January 1879. She departed 'that Friday morning under the charge of Mrs. Mew'.¹⁷ A note beside this entry recorded the child's safe arrival. If the children travelled by coach, the committee advised nurses to make sure that they or someone that they trusted should meet the child. In addition, they asked the nurse to check that the orphan's bundle¹⁸ contained all of the clothes provided by the clothing committee.

Other children travelled to their assigned nurse's home with their mother or a member of their extended kin. For example, on 10 January 1879 the committee ordered, 'orphans Henry G. and William M. are to go to Nurse Eliza O. Baltinglass, County Wicklow on Friday next, per the long car, their mother to accompany them down, (Mrs. Mew to bring them to the coach office)'.¹⁹ Similarly, on 14 January 1879 'Mrs. D. is to go down to Inch on Tuesday morning per the 9 o'clock train from Harcourt Street with her son John to nurse Mary H'.²⁰ At this point, mothers/extended kin were likely to have reassured their anxious and most probably very emotional children that their stay with a different family was a temporary rather than a permanent arrangement in an effort to encourage them to settle and to facilitate the move.

¹⁶ Minutes of sub-committee, nurses and education (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/2/3).

¹⁷ Register of orphan movements (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/5/6/7).

¹⁸ A small cloth bag.

¹⁹ Register of orphan movements (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/5/6/7).

²⁰ Ibid.

The age at which the P.O.S. admitted children had a bearing on their ability to adapt to their surroundings. Older children retained memories of a different life that may have impeded their acceptance of change. Evidence suggests that in some cases children attempted to return to their surviving kin.²¹ In August 1885, brother and sister, Edward and Francis Amelia, aged thirteen and eleven respectively, left their foster home to seek out their grandmother who resided in Dublin. The committee found the children and returned them safely to their foster home.²² For younger children adjustment was easier as they had less well-formed ties to the past. In general, however, this was a very difficult transition for all.

Each assigned nurse used different methods of settling children on their arrival from Dublin. One case in particular, illustrates a nurse's acute awareness of the child's emotional vulnerability. Nurse C. received Robert L. into her home, in Coolkenno, County Carlow 30 June 1898. 'Mrs. C. brought Robert upstairs to a room next to her own fearing that the boy would feel lonely if left in the lower part of the house'.²³ By doing so, this nurse encouraged Robert to feel comfortable in his surroundings. An inspector reported in 1884 that a nurse had left her own children to sleep in the garret while the foster children slept in her room.²⁴ This was likely to have been a temporary arrangement that enabled the children to feel secure in their new home. Nurses regularly noted their attempts to avert children's loneliness and encouraged the committee to send two children rather than one. However, not all nurses applied this level of sensitivity.

²¹ Case file registers (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/5/1/9).

²² Ibid.

²³ Incoming letters, 1898 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/3/1/25).

²⁴ Topographical register of nurses, 1890 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/5/6/13).

What was the aftermath of the relinquishment process in terms of the child's emotional and psychological responses? Children already experienced a sense of dislocation and bewilderment when initially separated from their kin and felt further deep emotional loss during the preliminary stay with their foster family. Often with no outlet to express their pain, they responded by sometimes exhibiting unruly and out of character behaviour.

Robert L. as mentioned in the above example arrived at Mrs. C.'s home in 1898. Even though Mrs. C. attempted to settle him, shortly after his arrival, the committee received a letter from the parish clergyman who notified them of an incident that had taken place at Mrs. C.'s home. Her husband had recently visited Dublin to attend his sister's wedding. 'This boy went into Mrs. C's room and took her nice little gold watch and her marriage present ring while she was out attending to her farming business he lost the gold ring and he smashed her nice watch'.²⁵ The clergyman relayed that he reprimanded the boy 'which I fear will have little effect'.²⁶ The clergyman confirmed that Robert who was not much more than nine years of age displayed shame and remorse for his actions. He had not stayed long enough with Mrs. C. to form any relationship good or bad. Robert acted in this way most probably because of his own serious emotional distress.

Bed-wetting was an additional manifestation of psychological and emotional distress usually caused by extreme trauma. The committee gave specific directions to the nurses on how to prevent its reoccurrence:

²⁵ Incoming letters, 1898 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/3/1/25).

²⁶ Ibid.

1. To bathe the loins with cold water every morning.
2. To cause the child to rest on either side as much as possible; and never to allow it to sleep on its back.
3. To have every convenience close to the bed
4. To use every exertion to prevent the children going too often for that purpose during the day; for the habit of going frequently tends to produce a need of it.
5. To give but a very small allowance of drink at supper.²⁷

None of the guidelines²⁸ prescribed by the committee to stop the children's 'infirmity at night'²⁹ would have worked, as each direction related only to the perceived physical causes. It is far more likely that children wet the bed, (particularly during their initial stay with their nurse) because of a sense of fear and post familial separation anxiety.

In what ways did the presence of siblings comfort children when the P.O.S. removed them from their family home to their foster home? To preserve such a strong connection with their past and their future provided great comfort for children. It represented a means of protecting key aspects of their previous identity as part of a family. A siblings' presence softened feelings of alienation. Evidence suggests that brothers and sisters formed strong alliances³⁰ and acted as close confidantes in times of despair.

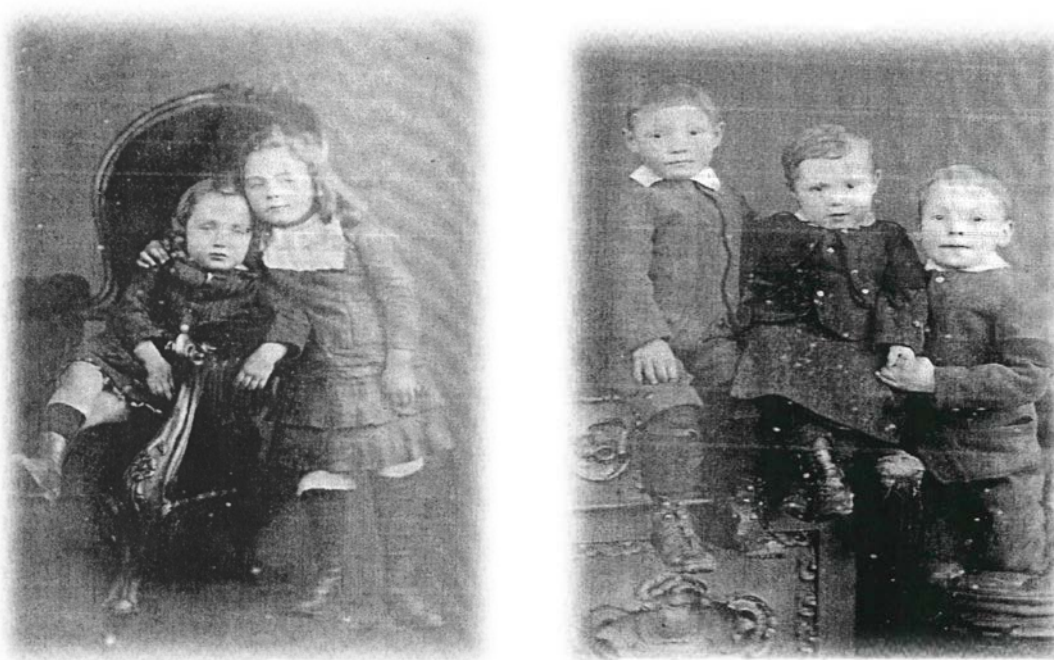
²⁷ Directions given to nurses, Oct. 1854 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/5/6/13).

²⁸ The committee noted in 1854 that they should review these guidelines.

²⁹ Directions given to nurses, Oct. 1854 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/5/6/13).

³⁰ See examples pp 234-5 and p. 250.

Figure 6.2 Sarah and Elizabeth A. and Richard, Henry and James M.



Source: Album of photographs (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/5/10/1).

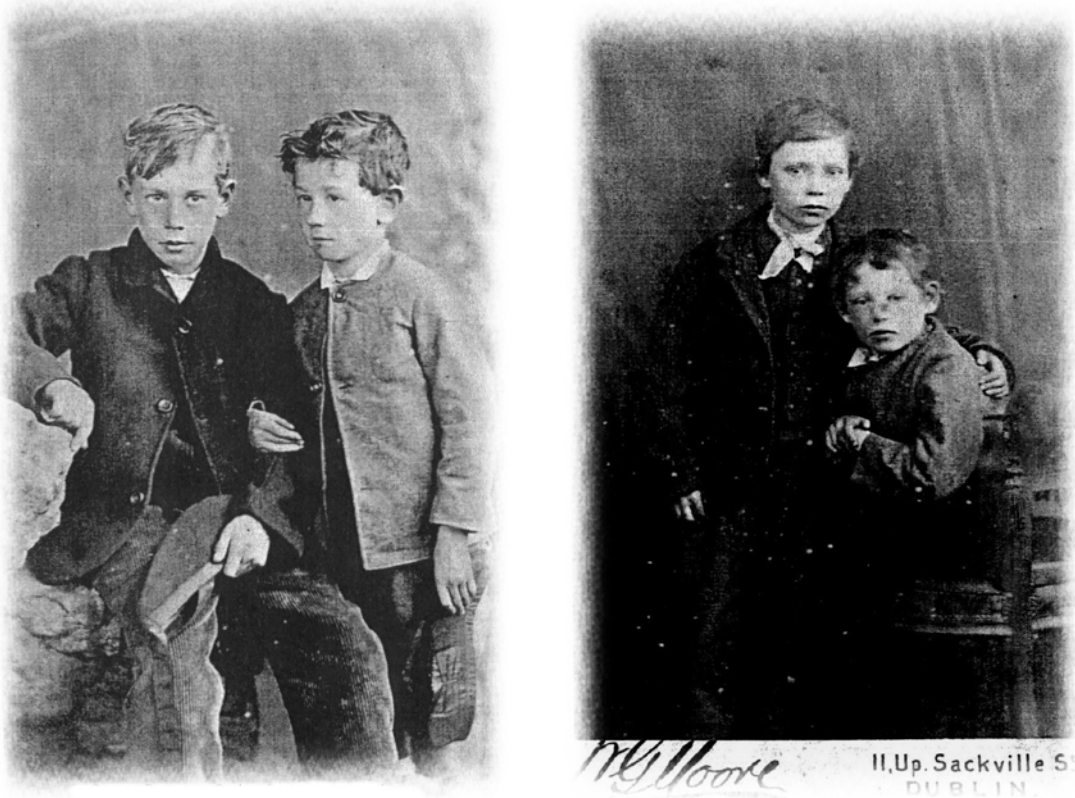
The presence of siblings was usually of vital emotional significance to the children's foster care experience and their later development. The P.O.S. attempted to retain familial links by ensuring that siblings reside together with the same foster family. On 4 December 1835, the committee resolved, 'that a letter be written to Reverend J. Webber stating that the two children allocated to Nurse L. one brother and sister, whom it is most desirable not to separate'.³¹ Similarly, they removed George L. from his nurse and placed him with his sister at Nurse L.³² The P.O.S. appeared to acknowledge that the children were more likely to thrive if placed in a home with their siblings. However, due to age limit restrictions, the committee could in no way guarantee that brothers and sisters stay

³¹ Minutes of committee meetings (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/2/1/2).

³² Ibid.

together. Children over the age of nine were inadmissible until the latter part of the nineteenth century therefore sibling separation was inevitable to some degree.

Figure 6.3 William and James A. and Edward and Arthur E.



Source: Album of photographs (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/5/10/1).

Figure 6.2 vividly shows physical closeness and strong emotional connections. While these are studio photographs, the sense of fear in the boys' eyes, and a sense of the older brother's determination to protect are clearly visible in both pictures. In many respects, older siblings felt obliged to take over the parental role, to 'look out for' and protect the younger ones. Application files contain numerous references to siblings who became

solely responsible for the rest of the children following the death of both parents.³³ Nevertheless, siblings did not always get along and in some cases had to be separated from each other. In 1905, the Monaghan P.O.S. reported that a young orphan named John C. had run away because his brother Samuel 'had been cruel and unkind to him'.³⁴ The committee transferred John to another nurse.

Emotionally, children were likely to have felt unsure of themselves as they now lived with a person perhaps for the first time that was not a parent or a relative. They did not know what to expect in terms of punishment or in terms of affection, what was acceptable and what was unacceptable behaviour. To transpose their learned behavioural patterns from their own family to a set of rules in their foster family posed many challenges for children, who essentially had to relearn how to act in order to fit in with their new way of life. Friction between foster children and the nurse's own children was bound to have occurred on some level.

The children's personal identity had also altered following parental death. They were not the same person because the family that once defined them was not the same. Now orphans their change in circumstance carried with it a stigma that would remain with them for the duration of their fostered childhoods and perhaps for the rest of their lives. Adults referred to the children as orphans. The term was repeatedly used as a prefix to their name, which is evident in P.O.S. minutes of committee meetings, inspection reports, case file registers and entries made in the photograph album.

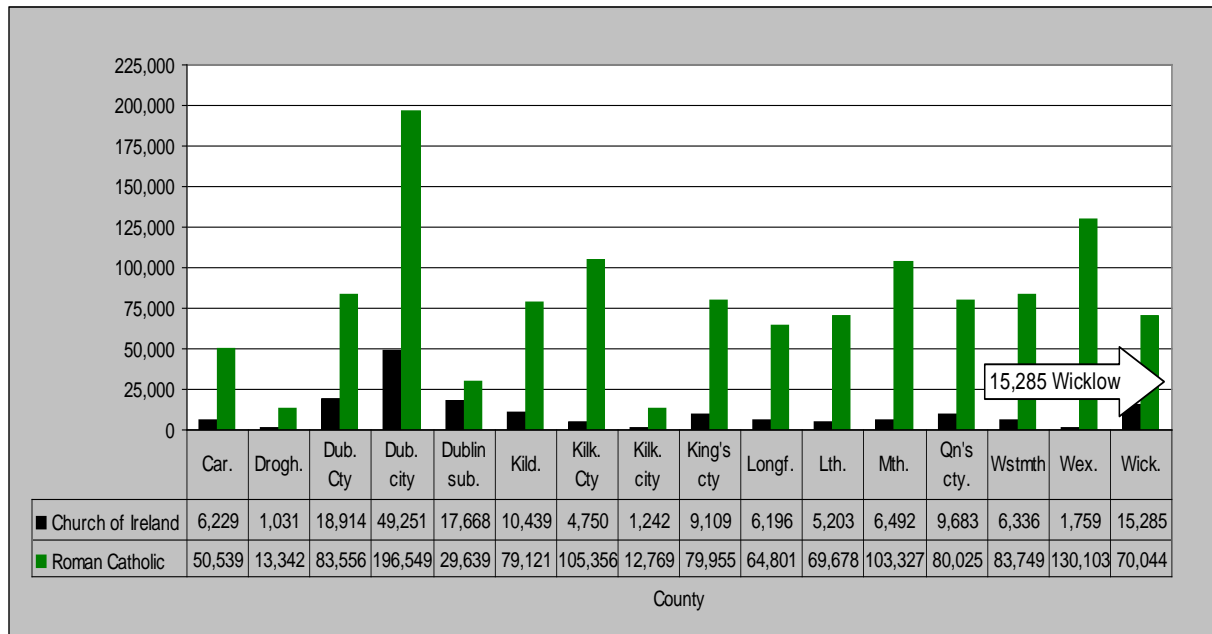
³³ Registered application files (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/5/3).

³⁴ Minutes of committee meetings, 2 Nov. 1905(R.C.B.L. papers, MS 692.1).

6.2 Placement of orphans

The P.O.S. removed children from the general urban landscape of Dublin, the familiarity of buildings, streets, shops and even smells and placed them in a rural setting. Some settled more easily than others, much depended on their age and the presence of siblings. The P.O.S. chose to relocate children from the urban to rural settings for three main reasons. Firstly, by extracting children, from the city setting in which Catholic and Protestant working-class lived side by side, the P.O.S. hoped to segregate children from Roman Catholic influences.

Chart 6.2 Religious denominations in Leinster, 1861



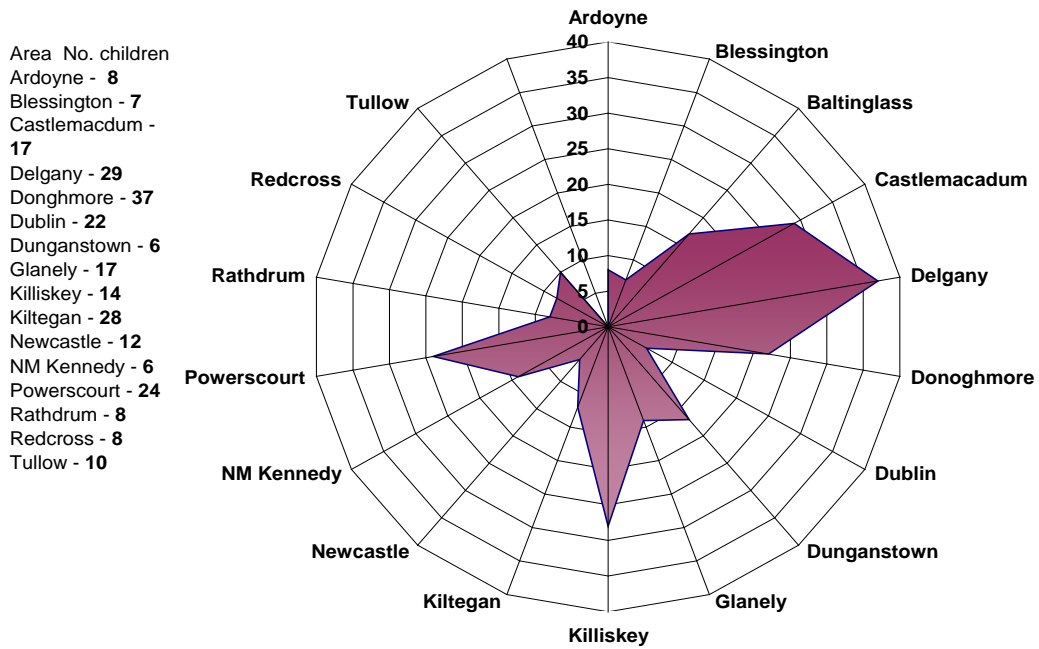
Source: W.E. Vaughan and A.J. Fitzpatrick (eds), *Irish historical statistics: population, 1821-1971* (Dublin, 1978), p. 51.

As chart 6.2 indicates, the P.O.S. sent children to Wicklow in particular because of the large Church of Ireland population therein, with Wicklow holding 9.01 per cent and Dublin holding 50.61 per cent of the total Church of Ireland population in Leinster.

Secondly, the P.O.S. believed that the transferral of children from over-crowded urban centres to rural idylls would eliminate the possibility of juvenile delinquency. Rule XVIII stated, that P.O.S. nurses had to live in the country. Thirdly, the P.O.S. highlighted the health benefits of sending children to farming communities. These homes could provide a nutritional diet of fresh vegetables, meat and plenty of milk. 'The abundance of milk and a supply of other comforts are secured for the orphans'.³⁵ The committee considered fresh air, particularly country and sea air to be extremely advantageous to good health. The Fresh Air Association formed in 1885 to enable sick children the opportunity of staying in the country to recover from their illness.

³⁵ Annual report, 1841 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/1/1) (1-54).

Chart 6.3 Placement of children, 1839-41

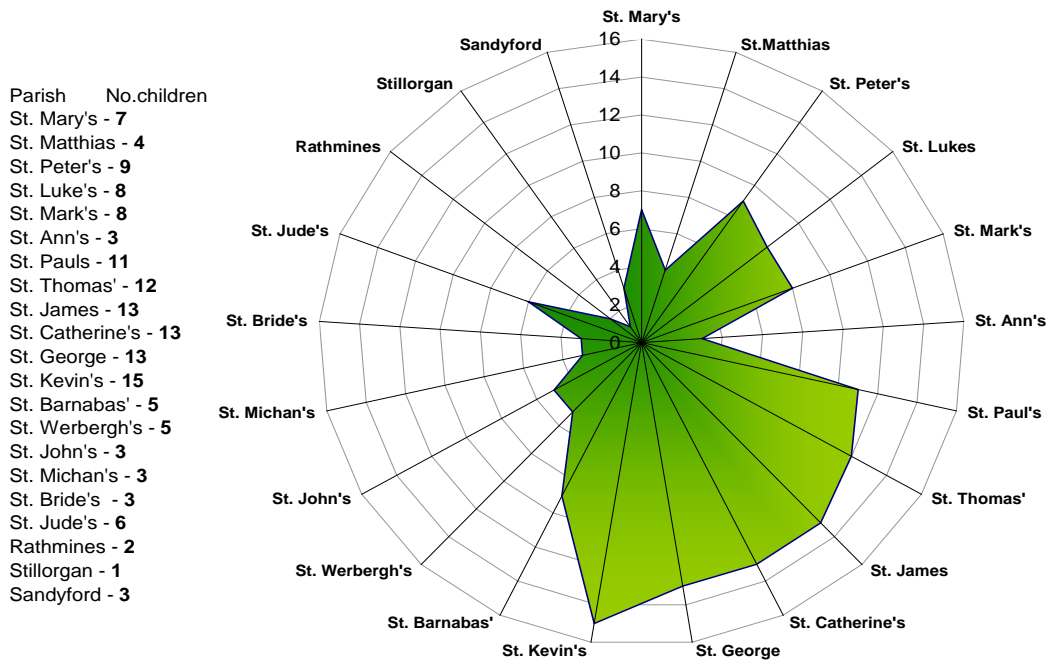


Source: Annual reports, 1839-41 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/1/1).

Chart 6.3³⁶ provides a guide to the areas where the P.O.S. chose to send children. Delgany received the highest number of children during the sample period with Powerscourt a close second. Powerscourt was also heavily populated by members of the Church of Ireland. The P.O.S. hoped that the children would become permanent members of the community.

³⁶ See map of County Wicklow, p. 409.

Chart 6.4 Dublin parishes where children resided prior to their admission to the P.O.S. 1885



Source: Annual report, 1885 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/1/1, p.14).

This chart depicts the areas that children resided prior to their admission to the P.O.S. However, it should be borne in mind, that the addresses recorded on application forms may have been temporary accommodation for many surviving relatives.

6.3 Education

Children attended parish schools with the rest of the Protestant children in the village. The Church Education Society, a Church of Ireland initiative formed in 1839. It operated alongside the national school system established in 1831. The system flagged in the 1850s and 1860s due to serious financial problems. 'By 1870, the national school of education had become denominational in fact, in even if still non-denominational in

theory'.³⁷ Attendance at schools was made compulsory in 1892 but this only applied to those who lived in towns.³⁸ The Powis commission was set up in 1868 to discuss the national school system. It approved the 'payment-by-results' scheme which was introduced in 1871 and continued until the Belmore report of 1897-8 and the selection of Dr. William Starkie as the official for national education. The reformed system brought about payment of teachers based on their teaching ability, (payment by results ended in 1899), new teaching techniques, and a greater variety of subject matter apart from the three Rs such as manual instruction, singing and drawing.³⁹ Schools became more child centred as a result of the reforms. Inspectors recorded children's attendance at school as regular or irregular and observed progress in education as good, tolerable, bad or incapable of learning. In particular, the inspector was required to identify the children most likely to attend apprentice class in the coming months.

In 1854, P.O.S. inspectors identified the serious mistreatment of a small number of their orphans by their teacher. They discovered that the teacher had flogged children, boys and girls. Two children placed in this school also had to endure their master at home, for their schoolmaster was also their foster father. Inspectors had already expressed concern over the 'leanness' of these children. It emerged that the children regularly asked their fellow students for food. These findings, and past inspections reinforced the case against the teacher who when questioned did not dispute the claims and stated that he exercised severity when the children deserved it. The inspectors were appalled at what they heard

³⁷ D. H. Akenson, 'Pre-university education, 1870-1921' in W. E. Vaughan (ed.), *A new history of Ireland*, vi (Oxford, 1996), p. 536.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 533.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 535.

and expressed a sincere disbelief at the teacher's behaviour on all levels. 'We need hardly add this is a distressing narrative. We have no doubt our committee on the presentation of our report will deem it their duty to remove our orphans from this school as soon as circumstances permit'.⁴⁰ They recognised that children should receive discipline but not to this extreme. The P.O.S. orphans were subsequently transferred to another location.⁴¹ From the available reports on children's education, this case stands out as atypical. The committee also recorded the prizes granted to teachers whose students excelled in class and in examinations.

Living in a rural location often on a farm setting guaranteed that children would spend much of their time attending to chores. However, P.O.S. policy forbade nurses from putting children to work instead of school. 'No boy or girl shall be kept from school to do work at a farm, or go for messages, nor at all, except during sickness or under peculiar circumstances, such as the clergyman of the parish would approve'.⁴² However, the subject was raised again in September 1859, inspections had shown that specific children were absent from school for prolonged periods. 'Rev. Halahan spoke very severely to the nurses and they promise to send them regularly'.⁴³ The committee suggested at a meeting dated 24 July 1869 'nurses who keep the orphans from school will get no gratuity'.⁴⁴ Keeping children home from school was not uncommon, the commissioners of National education in Ireland remarked on the subject in 1870:

⁴⁰ Minutes of sub-committee, nurses and education, 7 June 1854 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/2/3).

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Directions to nurses by the committee, Oct. 1854 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/5/6/14).

⁴³ Minutes of sub-committee, nurses and education, Sept. 1859 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/2/3).

⁴⁴ Register of incoming letters, 1868 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/3/1/13).

The love of money which appears to be the besetting sin of this age has so influenced the people here, that the little boys and girls are engaged in out-door labour, which should be done by other means, and thus, their school-going years are frittered away with but poor educational results.⁴⁵

The commission recommended 'school attendance in rural areas should not be compulsory, but provision should be made in urban areas for all children not at work'.⁴⁶

Legislation to enforce compulsory education was not passed until 1926.

Economic pressures on the family to provide meant that all children whether foster child or not had to contribute. The P.O.S. requested that nurses should treat all children equally in this regard. 'The committee require that the orphans shall not be put to unreasonable hard work at any time; in fact, they hope to see them treated the same in every respect as the nurse's own children'.⁴⁷ However, the degree of work assigned to foster children may have been disproportionately high depending on their status in the family. A case in point, dated 1852 relates to a boy named Richard C. Richard stated that he was kept hard at work on a field frequently for the entire day and then sent later in the evening on messages.⁴⁸ The sub-committee on the management of nurses accordingly removed all orphans from that nurse's care.

⁴⁵ *Thirty-seventh report of the commissioners of national education in Ireland, 1870 with appendices*, p. 259, H.C. 1871 (360), xxiii (<http://www.eppi.ac.uk>) (27 Jan. 2008).

⁴⁶ John Coolahan, *Irish education, history and structure* (Dublin, 1981), p. 51.

⁴⁷ Directions given to nurses by the committee, Oct. 1854 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/5/6/14).

⁴⁸ Minutes of sub-committee, nurses and education, 2 Nov. 1852 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/2/3).

Children also attended Sunday school and the P.O.S. expected nurses to practice daily family prayer.⁴⁹ Sunday school teachers were unpaid and the schools were an excellent source of education quite apart from scriptural learning. The schools provided:

Bibles, testaments and instructive books, plain useful clothing, the privilege of borrowing books from the library, admission into evening school where writing, arithmetic and plain work were taught, marks of kindness and attention to deserving families or their families, recommendations for service and a testimonial on leaving the school.⁵⁰

The number of Sunday schools in Leinster numbered 455 by 1841.

6.4 Nurses

As figures 6.3 and 6.4 illustrate, nurses varied in age and appearance. The committee made nursing application forms⁵¹ available to women of the parish. These forms sought to establish the prospective foster family's financial circumstances, moral and religious habits. The application had to include a reference from an additional respectable member of the parish. The parish clergyman then recommended and verified the nurses' claims. In 1830 the P.O.S. resolved, 'Inspectors will be occasionally sent down by the society to see if the nurses are in comfortable circumstances according to the statements contained in certificates'.⁵² It was common for women to submit fabricated accounts of their circumstances in order to secure a wage.⁵³

⁴⁹ The Hibernian Sunday School Society formed in 1809 in Dublin and aimed to bring the scriptures to the poor by offering free bibles, education and grants.

⁵⁰ David Hempton and Myrtle Hill, *Evangelical Protestantism in Ulster society* (London, 1992), p. 59.

⁵¹ See nurse application form, p. 406.

⁵² Annual report, 1830 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/1/1)

⁵³ Minutes of committee meetings (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/1/1).

Figure 6.4 P.O.S. nurses with children⁵⁴



Source: Album of photographs (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/5/10/1).

⁵⁴ See two additional photographs of nurses, 16(a), p. 413.

The P.O.S. commenced stricter guidelines on nurse selection following a meeting dated 8 July 1836. 'Five members with secretaries shall be appointed to a standing sub-committee to whom shall be confided the selection of nurses'.⁵⁵ From this point onwards, an all male committee dealt with the nurse selection process. The sub-committee assessed the suitability of the applicant and her family, determined the standard of living and the available accommodation for orphans. Members of this sub-committee also acted as inspectors who visited the applicant's home to confirm that their character and circumstances were conducive to the care of children. 'That each inspector make inquiry into the circumstances of new nurses applying for orphans and return the names of the three whom he shall consider the most eligible'.⁵⁶ Parish clergymen continued to recommend women in their locality. However, only the sub-committee and managing committee could sanction their application following an inspection.

In 1841, the committee recorded their nurse selection guidelines. 'The utmost care is taken (founded on the personal inspection of a member of the committee), to have the several localities where orphans are placed, suited to the age and sex of the children'.⁵⁷ This was an imperative yet difficult task, as the committee had to consider the foster family as a whole, rather than the nurse as an individual as well as any servants or workers. Inspectors reported in 1854 that a servant boy had made inappropriate advances to a young orphan girl. At a later date, the nurse and her husband left the girl and her younger brother without adequate supervision and the servant 'took advantage of her'.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ Minutes of committee meetings (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/2/1/1).

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Annual report, 1841 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/1/1) (1-54).

⁵⁸ Sub-committee on nurses minutes (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers MS 1045/2/3).

The younger brother stood by his sister and confirmed her allegations were true. The committee subsequently transferred the children from this location.⁵⁹

The committee endeavoured to place orphans with farmers who owned at least eight to ten acres of land. Other farms consisted of twenty, thirty, forty and in some cases up to above seventy acres. Inspectors visited nurses' homes to confirm the statements made in their application were accurate. Each report outlined the size of the applicant's home and farm to establish the number of orphans for placement. Descriptions of nurses' homes consisted of terms such as roomy, confined, clean or dirty. The first case conveys the accommodation offered by Mrs B. in 1870. The inspector reported that the family owned eight acres and two cows and stated that Mrs. B had two houses on her farm within thirty yards of each other. 'The one in which the orphans are located contains a kitchen and three bedrooms, Mrs. B. states that some members of the family also sleep in this house (about one mile from school and church)'.⁶⁰ The nurse, her husband and their three daughters resided in the other house and the inspectors concluded that there was enough accommodation for four orphans.

The second case describes Mrs. M.'s property. She and her husband held eighteen acres and owned two cows. Her home consisted of a kitchen and three bedrooms and was located two miles from the school and the church. Case three outlined that Mrs. B.'s held seventy acres and five cows in Carnew and her home consisted of a kitchen, sitting room and three bedrooms. The farm was located half a mile from the church and school and

⁵⁹ Sub-committee on nurses minutes (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers MS 1045/2/3).

⁶⁰ Nurses inspection book (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/5/6/13).

the nurse had no children, she and her husband lived on the property with servant girls. The nursing sub-committee made recommendations regarding the suitability of nurses' applications. The managing committee made the final decision on such applications. Despite the efforts of the P.O.S. committee to assign children to good foster families, evidence suggests that the nurse selection process was not full proof. Examples of unsuitable placements are discussed later in the chapter.

Nurses were obliged to bring the children to annual meetings. They had to produce a certificate signed by a parochial clergyman that confirmed the children's regular attendance at church, Sunday school and daily schools. The committee foresaw advantages in locating children with hard working respectable Protestant families. 'That in the house of a decent farmer recommended and constantly visited by the local clergyman. A child is not in a more favourable position for health, morals and religion'.⁶¹ The P.O.S. sought families with whom children would learn the precepts of industriousness, which would in turn discipline them for their own working years.

Positive characteristics that endeared potential nurses to the P.O.S. included cleanliness, industriousness, godliness, kindness, honesty and attentiveness. Essentially, middle-class concepts of the feminine ideal provided the basis for the profile of a good nurse. 'She would be innocent, pure, gentle and self-sacrificing. Possessing no ambitious strivings, she would be free of any trace of anger or hostility'.⁶² Clergymen recommended families who appeared to afford their own children kindness in the hope that they would treat

⁶¹ Annual report, 1841 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/1/1).

⁶² Deborah Gorham, *The Victorian girl and the feminine ideal* (London, 1982), pp 4-5.

foster children in the same way. 'This nurse and her husband are most respectable people and the manner in which they are rearing their own children is a good guarantee for the care that will be taken of the orphans'.⁶³ Confirmation of the applicant's strong connections to the church was also important. For instance, the committee approved one nurse in part because her daughters were Sunday school teachers.⁶⁴

Once approved, the committee presented the nurse with a certificate to confirm that the nurse her husband were both Protestant. The number of cows and acres owned by the family which gave a good indication of their wealth was also recorded. It also outlined the nurse's personal appearance, her hair, eyes, stature and height. This was a form of identification introduced to prevent unscrupulous women's attempts to take on a number of orphans and avail of the extra wages. The certificate outlined the age of the nurse's last child to distinguish between women who could and could not act as wet nurses. A nurse who had given birth too recently would have to nurse her own child and therefore would not be in a position to take on an orphan. The mother or wet nurse's milk was imperative to the child's survival. These certificates were a safeguard against abuse of the system and many countries in Europe made them compulsory for government funded boarding-out schemes.

⁶³ Excerpts from inspector reports featured in annual report, 1895 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/1/1).

⁶⁴ Minutes of committee meetings, (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/2/1).

6.5 Inspections

From the time of its establishment, the P.O.S. enlisted the help of local clergymen to inspect all of the children boarded-out in their respective parishes. However, the committee asserted that it was vital to deploy external inspectors to reinforce the existing inspection process and thus reduce cases of mistreatment of orphans in foster homes and in schools. As previously mentioned, a sub-committee was responsible for the selection of nurses. It also managed the location of children, the transferral of children and the investigation of any complaints against nurses'.⁶⁵ An annual report dated 1836 stated:

The system of inspection has been persevered in with the most useful results. Three members of the committee being selected for this important duty, each accompanied by the assistant secretary to the districts respectively assigned to them, examined closely in the condition, health and improvement of the orphans therein located, the character of each school and the state of each nurse's home and family.⁶⁶

The managing committee resolved on 30 January 1835 that inspections of the orphans should take place twice in each year, once in winter and once in summer.⁶⁷ According to inspection reports that date from 1890, the number of visits had increased from twice a year to four times a year.⁶⁸

In 1837, the sub-committee on nurses and education requested 'that the secretaries propose a draft of regulations and instructions for nurses'.⁶⁹ The committee forwarded these general directions on the appropriate care of orphans to all newly approved nurses.

In June 1853, the committee discussed a recent inspection report that stated, 'the orphans

⁶⁵ Minutes of the managing committee, 8 July 1836. (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/2/1).

⁶⁶ Annual report, 1836 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/1/1).

⁶⁷ Minutes of the managing committee, 30 Jan. 1835 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/2/1).

⁶⁸ Register of inspections, 1890 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/5/6/13).

⁶⁹ Minutes of sub-committee, nurses and education, 15 May 1837 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/2/3).

with Mrs. J. were not fed or treated in any respect like her own family, their food consisted of Indian meal stirabout and some milk three times a day'.⁷⁰ The nurse was found to beat the foster children in her care, she also sent them regularly to the village for whiskey, 'she rarely spoke kindly to them, and worked them in the most menial and laborious work from four or five o'clock in the morning until nine or ten o'clock at night'.⁷¹ The children were removed from this family and the sub-committee also recommended that 'the inspectors be instructed to enquire whether the orphans eat with the family and get the same food, whether there food is cold or hot, what time they are obliged to rise in the morning and are they allowed time for recreation'.⁷² The following list of general directions dated October 1854 reflects the recommendations made by the committee members in 1853:

1. No relative shall be allowed to visit the orphans at the nurse's home, without written permission from this office.
2. Nurses are to pay particular attention to train the orphans in habits of personal cleanliness and to report infirmities in any of them which the nurses' care may not be able to correct. Their hair should be kept cut rather short, and the daily use of the comb enforced.
3. The committee require that the orphans be supplied with three comfortable meals each day, that they sit and eat with the family, and the food be freshly made and warm.
4. The committee require that the orphans, after their return from school, be allowed a reasonable time for recreation and preparing their lessons for the next day.
5. The committee expect that the nurse, or some member of her family, will attend church with the orphans so as to have an eye to them and set them a good example; and that will also send her own children in the company of the orphans to Sunday school.
6. In case of any nurse having a complaint to make of the conduct of an orphan, or an orphan having reason for complaint about anything, clergyman of the parish in all cases is to be applied to.

⁷⁰ Minutes of sub-committee, nurses and education, 15 May 1837 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/2/3)..

⁷¹ Ibid., 3 June 1853.

⁷² Ibid.

7. Every nurse shall be responsible, that no orphan shall ever go without shoes, or wear broken ones; and the practice of mending the old shoes too often, when they have become too small for the orphans, cannot be allowed. Any nurse who neglects attending to the above regulations must expect that all the orphans will be immediately removed from under her care.
8. It is expected that the nurse will have family prayer daily at which the orphans should attend.⁷³

The committee insisted that children under its guardianship should receive adequate education, clothing and recreational time when boarded-out. The P.O.S. was very clear that the children should be treated as a family member.

Inspectors recorded the children's health, appearance and education. They completed a parish inspection report form based on their observations on each child's appearance in terms of health and cleanliness: 'The state of the child's general health; if delicate, has medical attention been sought, and with what effect? Has the child any appearance of Scrofula⁷⁴, Ringworm⁷⁵ or other cutaneous⁷⁶ diseases?'⁷⁷ There were four descriptions from which to choose, comprising healthy, delicate, clean or dirty.⁷⁸

Children's clothing and shoes were recorded as good, bad or indifferent.⁷⁹ Inspectors regularly commented on children's shoes, whether they were in the hands of a shoemaker, without shoes or if their shoes were in poor condition.⁸⁰ Badly fitted shoes could cause severe blisters, corns and over time, deformities that might affect mobility.

⁷³ General directions given to nurses by the committee, Oct. 1854 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/5/6/14).

⁷⁴ A disease with glandular swellings.

⁷⁵ A skin disease occurring in small circular itchy patches caused by various fungi.

⁷⁶ Diseases of the skin.

⁷⁷ Parish inspection reports (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/2/3).

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

Walking barefoot meant a greater chance of suffering from all types of infections and severe cold in winter.

On their visits, inspectors were expected to report on the nurses as well as the children:

1. Is she regular at public worship?
2. Is she a fit and proper person to have the care and training of children?
3. Does she send the above-named children, if old enough to church, Sunday school and day school?
4. Has there been any change in her circumstances since the location of these children?⁸¹

The inspectors' own moral superiority meant that they did not withhold their criticisms of the nurses and praised their good work if warranted.⁸² Nevertheless, in some cases inspectors may have returned favourable reports because they overlooked problems in the foster homes. The level of detail recorded in the reports varied from parish to parish.⁸³ To regulate the inspection system, the managing committee resolved that the secretary should accompany the inspectors on their visits.⁸⁴ Any negative inspection reports led the sub-committee and the managing committee to question the suitability of the nurse in question. Swift detection of neglect was made a priority.

⁸¹ Parish inspection reports, 1873 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/2/3).

⁸² Minutes of sub-committee, nurses and education (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/2/3).

⁸³ Parish inspection reports, 1873 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/2/3).

⁸⁴ Minutes of sub-committee, nurses, 3 June 1853 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/2/3).

The P.O.S. committee regularly noted the importance of inspections at their annual meetings:

For it should be remembered that the entire care and support of 340 children together with the superintendence of upwards of 200 apprentices involve an amount of details and require a degree of constant supervision which no cursory view of the society can afford an adequate idea. Especially when it is considered that those children are not together in one establishment.⁸⁵

The purpose of inspections was to confirm whether the children were thriving and in good overall physical health. The committee was also committed to regulating the children's moral welfare. These crucial inspections proved productive mainly because they were unannounced visits. Nurses were therefore more likely to maintain consistently good standards throughout the year.

6.5 Neglect

The minutes of the sub-committee on nurses is incomplete, however, it does illustrate the standards of care for foster children during particular periods. Parish inspection reports that date from the 1870s and the minutes of the managing committee have also been consulted. (as the sub-committee furnished them with summaries of their reports). Additional registers that document the location of nurses and children also contain brief references to the children's care.⁸⁶ These are excellent and relatively reliable sources on which to base broad conclusions.

⁸⁵ Annual report, 1882 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/1/1 p. 10).

⁸⁶ Topographical register of nurses, 1890 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/5/6/13).

Extreme neglect of children usually occurred if the nurse did not value the child emotionally on any level or if the P.O.S. placed children with a family too poor to provide the child with adequate care. Cases of severe and prolonged mistreatment of children were a symptom of ineffective inspections. At the lower end of the scale, some nurses associated foster children with economic value only in terms of the amount of productive work they could extract from them, or the wage received from the P.O.S. or both. Other nurses formed close familial bonds with the orphans in their care.

In the 1830s, nurses received the following payments to accommodate orphans in their home. 'To be by them provided with diet, washing, lodging and education for which they receive £3 10s. per annum for every orphan above the age of two years and the sum of £4 per annum for orphans under the age of two'.⁸⁷ This wage increased gradually throughout the century. The committee supplemented nurse wages with bonuses at economically strained periods, gratuities for the care of sick children, an annual supply of clothing, and a shoe allowance. Three case studies illustrate the sole economic value certain nurses placed on foster children.

The first case concerns a nurse who did not report the disappearance of the child under her guardianship. The committee deployed two inspectors to investigate the case of Charles F. who left his nurse's home and who was reportedly missing. Nurse M. received four months allowance even though the child had run away. In response the committee resolved on 4 March 1834. 'That we conceive the clergymen into whose charge the orphan was entrusted to have been neglectful of the interest of the P.O.S. in

⁸⁷ Annual report, 1831 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/1/1).

not reporting the absence of the child from the nurse that to be forthwith written to on this subject to ascertain how long the child has been absent from the parish'.⁸⁸ This nurse regarded Charles purely in terms of his economic worth and was indifferent to his safety and welfare. His running away was testament to the mistreatment he had suffered while boarded-out.

In a second case, the P.O.S. discovered that a nurse had sent an orphan in her care named John P. aged twelve, to work as a servant for her son in 1836. Rev. S. reported that he had ascertained by personal investigation that orphan, John P. 'had been in Dublin at intervals since the last annual meeting, for several weeks together acting as servant to his nurse's son, who keeps a dairy in Wood Street'.⁸⁹ The committee's response to the nurse's behaviour confirmed their disapproval. They resolved to dismiss Nurse B. and transfer John to another location.

The committee regarded any evidence of intemperance whether on the part of the nurse or a family member as reason enough to remove the children. Two cases confirm this point. In the first case, the committee discovered that a nurse who was caring for a P.O.S. orphan name Mary Anne S. was an alcoholic. 'The nurse who has the care of the orphan Mary Anne S. having been reported by Mr. B. to be a woman addicted to drink'.⁹⁰ The committee removed two children 24 August 1844 from the home of a nurse residing in Redcross, County Wicklow because her son 'had fallen into habits of intemperance

⁸⁸ Minutes of committee meetings, 4 Mar. 1834 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/2/1/1).

⁸⁹ Ibid., 1836.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 7 Jan. 1834.

presenting a very bad example to the children'.⁹¹ While the committee considered the nurse blameless, they removed the children from her care because her son represented an unsuitable role model.

The remoteness of children's location was not always beneficial to the child. Their isolation could easily have put them at greater risk of undetected mistreatment. However, the local congregation represented an informal policing force that also assisted the committee with the detection of neglect. On occasion, concerned neighbours sent anonymous letters, to make claims against foster families who mistreated children. For instance 28 October 1869, they received a note stating, 'The orphans located at Cappa and Shauna are very badly treated'.⁹² There was always the danger that neighbours might have made false claims, however, the committee appeared to have carefully investigated these cases. These complaints served to reinforce any previous allegations of neglect made by the child or observed by inspectors on previous inspections. It was far easier to build up a satisfactory case against a nurse with supporting evidence from other sources.

Visiting kin or surviving parents also detected cases of neglect primarily in terms of appearance and clothing. In some cases, they contacted the P.O.S. office, made complaints to the secretary, and requested that they transfer the children to another nurse. In 1852, inspectors identified neglect black spots in the parishes of Baltinglass and Kiltegan. These cases were particularly severe. Children were found in appalling

⁹¹ Minutes of committee meetings, 24 Aug. 1844 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/2/1/1).

⁹² Register of incoming letters, 1868-9 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/3/1/13).

conditions with inadequate bedding, accommodation and suffering from the 'itch'.⁹³ In contrast, inspectors found no such neglect in other parishes such as Delgany. The committee sent directions on the symptoms and cure of scrofula once the children were reassigned to different nurses:

The ill effect of the disease (in addition to the filth and discomfort it entails) are as follows, a child having the itch cannot thrive. The irritation caused to the skin has such an effect on its constitution that even the best of food does it little good. The child is therefore generally ill and thin looking and may become permanently injured in its health. Now this is a serious matter and the committee have therefore determined upon enforcing such a regard for cleanliness in the nurses families including the orphans as shall effectually prevent a continuance or recurrence of this disease amongst the children.⁹⁴

The committee provided ointment free of charge to the nurses in the hope that they would heed their words of advice on the matter. They also advised the nurses to put the ointment on only when there was a good fire so as not to let the children suffer the cold and to wash them the next morning with soap on a flannel and warm water and let them rest in bed. The committee concluded with words of warning for the nurses regarding their future care of the children:

I am desired to inform you that the committee have determined to remove all the orphans from nurses who do not comply with these instructions, thereby cure the children and thence forward keep them free from this filthy disease. For they cannot think of allowing children to suffer from a disease which can be and ought be prevented by cleanliness and which may be cured by such very simple means⁹⁵.

It is clear that the P.O.S. wholeheartedly condemned the neglect that had caused the outbreak. To secure good homes for the children was more difficult if admissions

⁹³ Minutes of sub-committee, nurses and education (N.A. I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/2/3).

⁹⁴ Miscellaneous papers, Aug. 1852 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/6/1).

⁹⁵ Ibid.

increased and in times of severe hardship. Minutes of the sub-committee on nurses, stated that they transferred twenty-three children to alternative nurses in 1855, twenty-one children in 1856 and nine children in 1857. Transferrals also occurred because of minor and serious neglect, below standard accommodation, inadequate schools, or illness.

The incidence of small pox was noted in the early 1870s.⁹⁶ However, according to a selection of the available reports, the care offered to children from 1870 to 1872 was relatively satisfactory. Inspection reports for Baltinglass, Dunlavin, Carnew, Killiskey, Kiltegan, Inch, Shillelagh, and Tinahely, recorded 6 per cent of cases as unsatisfactory, 56 per cent as satisfactory, 21 per cent as fairly satisfactory and 15 per cent as very satisfactory. During periods of economic decline and famine particularly in the late 1870s, mid 1880s and late 1890s the number of transferrals increased.

Evidence drawn from inspection reports 1890-2, indicates that despite bad harvests in 1890-1, children received a satisfactory standard of care. In 13 per cent of cases, children were found in unsatisfactory situations that led to their removal with a further five per cent of the foster homes in need of improvement. In just over 70 per cent of cases inspectors returned satisfactory reports, and 8 per cent of reports showed very satisfactory homes. In 1894, the secretary of the committee concluded that he had not in seventeen years of service, 'found matters on the whole more generally satisfactory'.⁹⁷ The report of that year stated 'a full and minute inspection of the orphans has been made, and have to express their gratification generally with the appearance, health and cleanliness and

⁹⁶ Annual report, 1872 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/1/1).

⁹⁷ Minutes of sub-committee, nurses and education, 1894 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/2/3).

manners of the orphans and in exceptional cases the nurses were instructed or reprimanded'.⁹⁸ In 1904, the P.O.S. formed a special 'visiting committee', that comprised ten members of the general committee and six ladies.⁹⁹ The lady visitors¹⁰⁰ inspected the schools, foster homes, small children's homes and children nursed by their mother.¹⁰¹

Stricter regulation of nurse selection and more frequent and thorough inspections produced superior nursing practice. In the broader context, as the overall standard of living improved, greater emphasis was placed on education and children became increasingly emotionally valuable. Ongoing changes in attitude were influenced by the introduction of legislation to protect children such as the Children's Dangerous Performances Act¹⁰² 1879, the 1889 Prevention of Cruelty and Protection of Children Act¹⁰³ and the 1908 Children Act.¹⁰⁴

6.6 Runaways

Reports of children running away from their nurses because of alleged mistreatment demonstrates children's willingness to forsake shelter, food and a family to avoid remaining in a home that may have been violent, exploitative or abusive. In general, nineteenth-century parents appeared to have meted out punishments to their children based on an identifiable scale of discipline. This scale corresponded to specific acts of

⁹⁸ Minutes of the sub-committee on nurses, 1894 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/2/3).

⁹⁹ Annual reports, 1904 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/1/1) (55-144).

¹⁰⁰ Visiting committee minutes, (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers MS 1045/2/8).

¹⁰¹ Children's homes and home care are discussed later in the chapter.

¹⁰² 42 & 43 Vict., c. 34.

¹⁰³ 52 & 53 Vict., c. 44.

¹⁰⁴ 8 Edw. VII. c. 67. (21 Dec. 1908).

disobedience. Moreover, parents in many cases believed that if they neglected to apply physical punishment the children would mature into idle and weak adults. However, while the nineteenth century was an age of corporal punishment this does not necessarily mean that all parents or foster parents inflicted physical punishment on children.

For the first act of minor misconduct, a parent may have admonished them verbally. If children persisted in their disobedience, a parent might slap them on their hands or legs. However, if children continued to resist control, parents may have applied harsher punishment with a whip, rod, strap or stick.¹⁰⁵ Moreover, the seriousness of the misconduct also related to the severity of the punishment. Orphans in a foster family may have received harsher levels of punishment. The degree of punishment used to discipline children varied from home to home and greatly depended on the temperament of the parent and the child.¹⁰⁶ In 1861, the P.O.S. committee gave their opinion on the most effective way to discipline children.

As regards the matter of judicious discipline, experience itself will be your best guide, but still I would suggest to you as a general rule, rather to lead than to drive. Different dispositions require different treatment. Some require firmness, and even a degree of severity, while others like the sensitive plant, shrink up and whither at anything like a rude approach. It is clear then, that you will require considerable caution and prudence in the management of children, so as to treat all properly and suitably.¹⁰⁷

The P.O.S. both expected and encouraged foster families to rear children in ‘fear of God’. This religious dimension to the overall application of punishment is highly significant. Moral wrongdoings that threatened the child’s soul such as lying and stealing warranted

¹⁰⁵ Pollock, *Forgotten children*, p. 173.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, pp 143-87.

¹⁰⁷ Annual report, 1861 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/1/1).

strong correction. However, the committee removed children from nurses who threatened or demonstrated undue, unfair, harsh, or excessive punishment.

In 1872, a fourteen-year-old P.O.S. orphan named Frederick J. absconded from his nurse Mrs. W. According to the boy's account of events, he had lost a shilling that his foster father had given him to purchase some items in the shop. For this misconduct, Mr. W. applied corporal punishment and told Frederick to search for the money and not to return without it. In fear of the possible reprisals, Frederick sought out work on a neighbouring farm. Mr. W. reported his disappearance to Rev. Irwin the parish clergyman. Mr. W. when asked if he had beaten Frederick, replied 'Not too often, the night before gave a couple of clouts, slaps, did not knock him down, the cause was I sent him to the shop and he lost the money'.¹⁰⁸ Mr. W. did not believe that his treatment of Frederick was severe. Shortly after this incident, Frederick was reunited with his mother who resided in Belfast.

William G. ran away from his nurse Mrs. G. and alleged that he had been mistreated. The case came to the committee's attention 11 January 1891 and they requested an investigation into the accusations. Initially, the committee requested that William write a letter to apologise for his behaviour:

I feel heartily sorry for what I committed through my own foolishness running off. I will never do such a thing again. I have never been ill-treated since I came to Mrs. G. in any way. I hope the committee will forgive me for what I did and to please leave me with Mrs. G. on account of my little sister Georgie.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁸ Scrapbooks (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, 1045/6/2).

¹⁰⁹ Incoming letters, 1898 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/3/1/2/5).

William may have retracted his initial claims because he was anxious to evade punishment from his nurse or the committee. In addition, he wanted to remain with his sister. The committee later noted that ‘there has been no serious ill treatment, at the same time I think the boy must have been a good deal frightened and expected to be well punished or he would not have stayed out all night’.¹¹⁰ They concluded that his former nurse Mrs. G. was a respectable woman but unsuited to the role of nurse and later moved William ‘to another nurse who is known for having a very good reputation as a kind nurse’.¹¹¹ The letters do not confirm whether the committee also transferred William’s younger sister.

Children whose foster families treated them well became emotionally dependent on them. In 1839, an annual report noted, ‘you may recollect a case in which a child about to be removed from one family to another grieved bitterly, the society did not insist upon the change’.¹¹² On 8 July 1878, the committee arranged for the removal of a young boy from his nurse, ‘William M. to be sent to another parish to a good school’.¹¹³ However, when William was due to be collected, it was reported that ‘he will not come’.¹¹⁴ Children were usually happy to remain with their foster family if properly treated.

¹¹⁰ Incoming letters, 1898 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/3/1/2/5).

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Annual report (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers MS 1045/1/1).

¹¹³ Register of orphans’ movements (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers MS 1045/5/6/7).

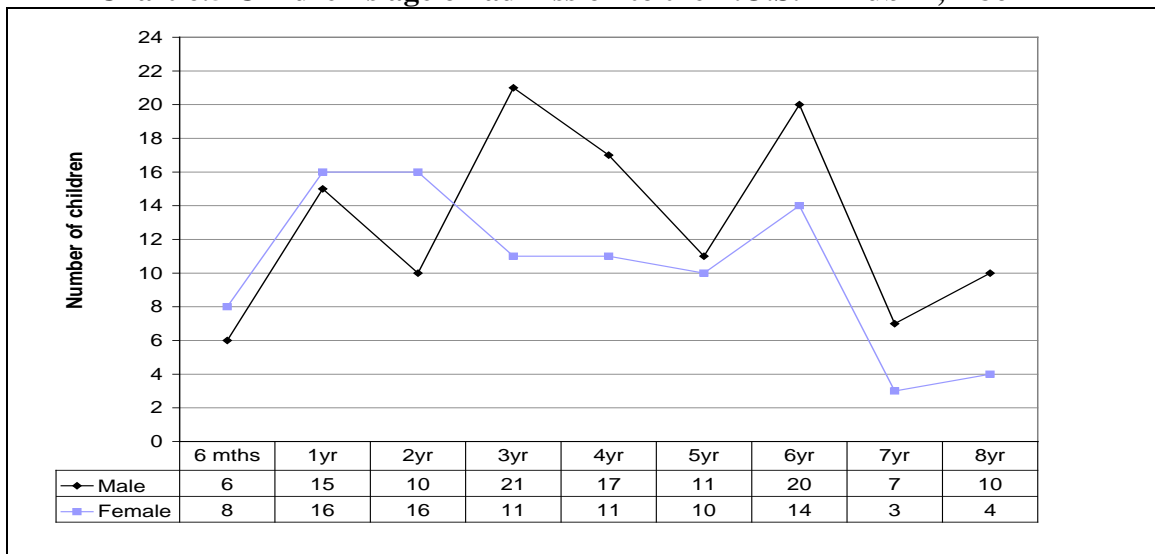
¹¹⁴ Ibid.

6.7 Informal adoption

The length of time the child remained in the care of one as opposed to many foster families determined the likelihood for a stable relationship to form. Analysis of case file registers has shown the number of times the committee transferred children during the period from their admission to their attendance at apprentice class at the age of twelve. Reasons for transferrals included below standard accommodation, neglect by a nurse, unsuitability of nurse, inadequate schooling or religious instruction and illness.

From the sample taken during the period 1829-52, 2 per cent of children moved four times to live with four separate families. In 7 per cent cases, children moved three times before they attended apprentice class. A total of 25 per cent of children transferred to two different nurses. Finally, 65 per cent of children relocated once from their mothers/extended kin to their first nurse remaining there until apprenticed.

Chart 6.5 Children's age on admission to the P.O.S. in Dublin, 1864-77



Source: Annual reports, 1864-77 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/1/1).

The child's age when admitted had a significant effect on the development of an emotional attachment between foster mother/family and foster child. Chart 6.5 shows the ages at which the P.O.S. admitted children over a period of thirteen years. Infants usually remained with their mother until eighteen months old or if their mother was deceased, infants stayed with a wet nurse. From the total number of children admitted, 33.8 per cent of children were aged between six months and two years, 15.2 per cent were aged three, 13.3 per cent were aged four, 10 per cent were aged five, 16.2 per cent were aged six, 4.76 per cent were aged seven, and 6.6 per cent were aged eight. These figures suggest that the majority of children admitted were aged between six months and six years.

Despite cases of neglect, overall the nurses employed by the P.O.S. in Dublin were committed to the care of their foster children and in many cases they became emotionally invested in their welfare. In some cases, the development of a strong attachment between foster parent and child led to informal adoptions. The following three cases concern foster families who requested that their foster children live with them on a permanent basis. In each case, the children had remained with the same family from a young age. The P.O.S. in Dublin seemed only to have approved cases of this kind if both of the children's parents were deceased and if extended kin could not care for them. The examples are drawn from the 1890s at a time when concepts of childhood had gradually begun to change.

In one case, a foster family wrote to the committee, to ask if they could continue to care for two orphans assigned to them since infancy. The foster mother had passed away which caused the eldest daughter and her father to become concerned about the children's future with them. In her initial letter to the committee, Miss T. informed them of her mother's death. 'On account of mother's death would you so kindly leave me the two Smiths? I will take care of them as mother did, they are very good kind little boys'.¹¹⁵ Miss T. and the committee corresponded over a period of weeks. In her second letter she wrote, 'I am willing to keep the two boys for free they are in a comfortable home. Won't be any hunger under my care I won't like to part with them they are good boys'.¹¹⁶ Her unease over the prospect of their removal was clearly evidence of her strong emotional attachment to the children whom she and her father had grown to regard as integral and permanent members of their family.

In a third letter to the committee Miss T. again requested that the children remain with her. She assured them that her family had always treated the two boys as members of the household and that this would not change. In conclusion, Miss T. emphasised the negative effects of relocation for the children. 'They consider this their own home and leave it to go to strangers. These boys we have kept for so long, eight years in a house which they rightly regard as their home and which they say they would be very sorry to leave'.¹¹⁷ In this case, the two boys remained with the foster family with P.O.S. approval. The sincerity expressed in these letters suggests that permanent ties between foster family and child did develop. Moreover, it also confirms that both the child and foster family

¹¹⁵ Incoming letters, 1898 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/3/1/25).

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

invested in each other emotionally.

The committee sent Harry D. to nurse Susan L. where he remained for the greater part of his childhood. Susan applied to informally adopt Harry in 1898. On 14 March, she wrote that Harry D. was so upset at the thought of leaving to commence apprenticeship class that she had decided to keep him with her without payment from the P.O.S. 'He has done no good since the word came that he is to go. I will let the boy attend the school and prepare for the examination, and when he is older, I will get him an apprenticeship. I will do my best for the boy and so will my husband and son'.¹¹⁸ Susan stressed the importance of Harry's education which perhaps suggests developing attitudes toward schooling. Finally, her sentiment again reinforces evidence that some foster parents forged strong emotional and sentimental attachments to foster children. They welcomed them into their home and into their family's affections.

The committee received a letter from foster parents living in Armagh who cared for a P.O.S. orphan. In November 1898, they wrote to the committee to confirm that they were prepared to adopt the young boy they then fostered. 'Our lives are insured and the policies would at our death be value of about £27 which he would inherit. And what ever money we may be able to save from our business we could easily put aside for him after all expenses'.¹¹⁹ This couple most probably regarded the boy as the child they never had. They were eager to invest in him both emotionally and financially.

¹¹⁸ Incoming letters, 1898 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/3/1/25).

¹¹⁹ Register of incoming letters, 1868 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/3/1/13).

Foster families who intended to adopt their foster children informally had many factors to consider. Most notably, their economic circumstances, other members of their family and the relationship shared (if any) between the foster child and their surviving kin. In informal adoption cases,¹²⁰ the law stated that ‘the actual parents may at any time, no matter what agreements may have previously been made and signed, claim their children, even when such claims may be to the manifest injury of the child’.¹²¹ Children were more likely to become close to their foster family if both of their parents were deceased. In these cases, the foster mother/family too might look upon their charge as more than a temporary addition to their home. However, if the child was not asked to stay on a permanent basis this may have led to feelings of rejection. Parents who had no children of their own took a special interest in adoption.

P.O.S. orphans regularly returned to their mother or extended kin if their circumstances had improved as discussed in chapter 5. Children who did not have this option may have welcomed the chance to remain with their foster family. However, the P.O.S. considered requests from foster families to adopt children informally very carefully. Although, there were obvious benefits to having a permanent home this was only the case if the foster family was concerned with the best interests of the child. Foster parents could have viewed children as cheap labour and if P.O.S. supervision ceased they were in danger of exploitation. Nevertheless, foster care unlike institutional care at least provided the potential for genuine relationships to develop gradually. In 1952, legal adoption was

¹²⁰ Legal adoption was introduced in Ireland in 1952.

¹²¹ Rosa Barrett, ‘Legislation on behalf of neglected children in America and elsewhere’ in *Journal of Statistical and Social Inquiry Society of Ireland*, ix, part lxxii (1892), p. 626.

introduced in Ireland. The P.O.S. and additional Protestant homes for children worked with the Protestant Adoption Association established in the same year.

6.8 Care of children

Many nurses employed by the P.O.S. in Dublin provided children with quality care. References were regularly made in the minutes of the committee meetings, annual reports, and inspector's reports as to the nurses' excellent work. The 1836 annual report praised the care given to sick children by their nurses during that year. 'The attention of the nurses in cases of sickness has often called for the approbation of the committee'.¹²² The committee noted in April 1846 that they presented a gratuity of thirty shillings to Nurse R. of Dunganstown, 'in consideration of the great trouble she was subjected to by the ill health of newly elected orphans B.. A gratuity of £1 given to Nurse S. of Wicklow for her care of Emma B. during a very tedious illness'.¹²³ The P.O.S. paid nurses an extra sum, if they had to devote extra time to the care of sick children. This was a difficult task. Nurses had their own children to tend to, chores around the house and in some cases additional, unpaid and laborious work on the farm. A number of children admitted to the P.O.S. were often malnourished and sickly. The P.O.S. expected the nurses to take on the responsibility of building up the children's health.

The sub-committee sent children who were recovering from illness to nurses who lived by the sea. Doctors prescribed sea air and sea bathing as beneficial agents in recovery. 'The two orphans H. be removed from Nurse W. and sent to Nurse D. of Greystones for

¹²² Annual reports, 1836 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/1/1).

¹²³ Minutes of committee meetings (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/2/1/3).

the advantage of bathing'.¹²⁴ In September 1854, the sub-committee on nurses resolved that medical advice be obtained for two brothers who were unwell and that 'if it should be thought advisable to send them to the seaside for a few weeks we recommend that they be sent'.¹²⁵ This was often costly but thought necessary, to ensure the children's good health.

Children with persistent illnesses were given specialist care by carefully chosen nurses. 'Invalid children to be located with Mrs. B. and Mrs. D. residing at Balbriggan as occasion offers at the rate of ten pounds per annum'.¹²⁶ In other cases, children remained with their mother if possible, in 1857 four such children were cared for by their mothers.¹²⁷

Records also show that the P.O.S. provided for children who suffered from serious health problems. In the nineteenth century, epilepsy also known as falling sickness was considered a derogatory term. Limited understanding of the cause and cure of the condition led to serious concerns for children who exhibited any type of fit. In September 1859, the sub-committee noted John H. suffered from fits, 'John H. has had fits since July, three times he has fallen down in fits, bring him to town to seek medical advice'.¹²⁸ In the minds of many, epilepsy equated to weak mindedness, learning disabilities, insanity, and violent disposition. 'Nineteenth century medical and psychiatric research suggested a casual link between epilepsy and violent crime and

¹²⁴ Minutes of committee meetings (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/2/1/3).

¹²⁵ Minutes of sub-committee, nurses and education (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/2/3).

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Ibid., Sept. 1859.

encouraged myths about the relation of epilepsy, violent behaviour and mental illness'.¹²⁹

In 1853, the sub-committee responsible for the management of nurses and orphans discussed a child who suffered from 'falling sickness':

We recommend that orphan T. who is afflicted with falling sickness should be sent to a nurse who has none of our orphans or no young children. That we recommend in the case of fits or falling sickness occurring with any of our children that they be removed as soon as possible to a separate location.¹³⁰

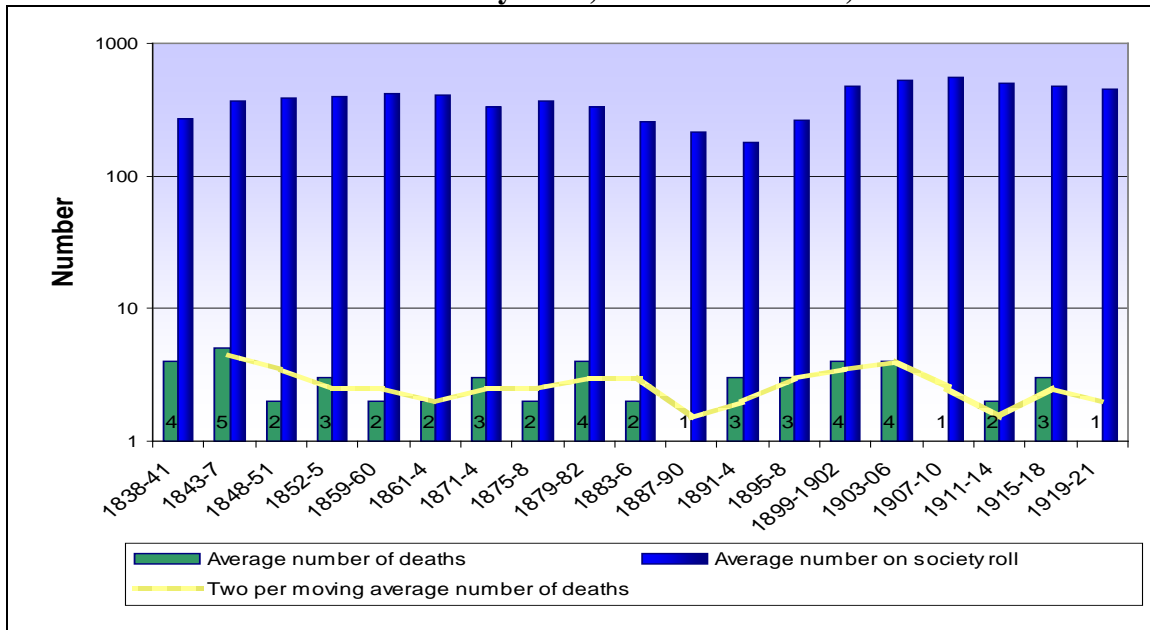
Removal of children was the accepted response to epilepsy. Segregated from other children and stigmatised by their condition, it was a lonely existence for sufferers of the condition. However, their placement with a nurse was substantially more beneficial to them than life in an institution.

The following chart records the number of children who died under the society's care from 1838 to 1921 relative to the number of children on the society roll in each year. Low mortality rates attest to the broad overall standard of physical care provided by nurses. Factors that improved children's life expectancy included vaccination of children on admission against small pox, (if they had not already been vaccinated), and the care of children by their mothers if possible until weaned. The highest number of deaths was recorded during the famine era. In addition, a small number of children succumbed to typhus and other diseases of that nature.

¹²⁹ Joseph Schneider, Peter Conrad, 'Epilepsy, stigma potential and information control' in *Social Problems*, xxviii, no. 1 (Oct. 1980), pp 32-44.

¹³⁰Minutes of sub-committee, nurses and education, 1853 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/2/3).

Chart 6.6 Child mortality rates, the P.O.S. Dublin, 1838-1921



Source: Annual reports, 1839-1922 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/1/1).

Chart 6.6 is based on a logarithmic scale, that shows data in powers of ten to give maximum range. By using this type of scale, the low mortality rates are more visible when set against the higher numbers on the society roll. The figures for this chart were drawn from annual reports. Minutes of committee meetings and case file registers also contain references to the children who died while on the P.O.S. roll.

A record of consistently low mortality rates that fell on average below two percent of the total children on the society's books in a given year, served to reinforce the good reputation built up by the P.O.S. William Neilson Hancock 'favoured the placement of children in foster families rather than the workhouse and noted the virtual zero rate of child deaths in the system of family foster care developed by the Protestant Orphan

Society’.¹³¹ The workhouse housed a large number of children in inadequate conditions. Based on an 1859 report on the workhouse and its inefficient care of destitute children, the Poor Law Commission proposed the benefits of incorporating a nursing-out system. The report included concerns over the ineffectual method of housing infant children in the workhouse. It noted that children under the age of two were at risk and that the workhouse environment compounded these risks. The report indicated that children should remain with their mother for this period of infancy if possible or, if not, they should stay with a nurse. If nursed by their mother at this crucial time they had greater immunity and therefore the best chance of survival.

The P.O.S. had established many years earlier the dangers of separating young infants from their mothers. For instance, on 29 November 1831 the committee discussed Eliza H.’s case. ‘She is too unhealthy to be separated from her mother, resolved that the child remains with the mother Eliza H. until the next election.’¹³² This matter arose again at a committee meeting held on 1 February 1850 at which, members discussed the seriousness of mother child separation asserting that ‘many infants suffer exceedingly by the change and some have died during’.¹³³ Following these discussions, the committee resolved that infants should remain with the mother or applying relative until they reached eighteen months, ‘provided she shall appear to be in every respect a suitable person to have the care of the child during that period’.¹³⁴ The P.O.S. paid an allowance of two shillings per week to the mother or applying relative for the care of their infants. The committee

¹³¹ Thomas E. Jordan, *Ireland’s children, quality of life, stress, and child development in the famine era* (London, 1998), p. 69.

¹³² Minutes of committee meetings, 29 Nov. 1831 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/2/1/1, p.78).

¹³³ Minutes of committee meetings, 1 Feb. 1850 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/2/1/1).

¹³⁴ Minutes of committee meetings (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/2/1/1).

allowed infants to remain with their mother for as long as was considered necessary to ensure their health, prior to their relocation to an assigned nurse in the country, an innovative measure that greatly reduced infant mortality rates.

Table 6.2 Percentage infant and child mortality rates resident in workhouses¹³⁵ of 163 unions in 1859

Province	0-2 yrs	2-15 yrs
	%	%
Leinster	48.0	4.5
Munster	41.3	No figure available from source
Ulster	46.2	6.6
Connaught	23.2	3.6

Source: Thomas E. Jordan, *Ireland's children, quality of life, stress and child development in the famine era* (London, 1998), p. 69.

The statistics for infant and child mortality rates in the workhouse indicate the detrimental effect of mother-child separation and the inadequate workhouse conditions.

Thirty three per cent of children died before the age of two in 1840.¹³⁶

6.9 St. Brigid's

Margaret Aylward set up a boarding-out system in 1856 to protect Catholic children's faith. The first child was admitted on 1 January 1857.¹³⁷ In spite of the religious polarity of the P.O.S. and St. Brigid's, in its most basic form the two systems worked on almost identical lines. St. Brigid's fostered children to nurses who lived in County Dublin,

¹³⁵ Based on Dr. Hancock's report for the Statistical and Social Inquiry Society of Ireland in 1862, see Thomas E. Jordan, *Ireland's children, quality of life, stress and child development in the famine era* (London, 1998), p. 69.

¹³⁶ Helen Buckley, *The people and the poor law* (London, 1987), p. 229.

¹³⁷ Jacinta Prunty, *Margaret Aylward, 1810-89* (Dublin, 1999), p. 58.

County Wicklow and County Kildare. Children were kept together as much as possible and respect was given to kinship ties. Unannounced visits were also a part of St. Brigid's strategy to prevent neglect of its wards. Informal adoptions were a positive outcome for foster children plus low mortality rates. It served all of Ireland and was dedicated to the relief of children in workhouses. Differences between the two organisations included St. Brigid's admission policy, non-payment of salaries to the charities' managers and a committee run by women.

6.10 Presbyterian Orphan Society

Heavily influenced by the P.O.S., the Presbyterian Orphan Society formed in 1866. Presbyterians had subscribed to the P.O.S. in Dublin and children of Presbyterian parentage were regularly admitted. However, Rev. William Johnston, a Presbyterian minister, questioned the scriptural education offered to Presbyterian children. As the P.O.S. taught Presbyterian children the longer rather than the shorter catechism, Presbyterians chose to organise their own society. 'When the Presbyterian Orphan Society was being founded the officials of the Protestant Orphan Society gave every assistance in their power'.¹³⁸ The Presbyterian Orphan Society used the P.O.S. as a model for its own work.

¹³⁸ John M. Barkley, *The Presbyterian Orphan Society* (Belfast, 1966), p. 17.

6.11 Recognition from social reformers

Social reformers in the second half of the nineteenth century referred positively to the work undertaken by Protestant orphan societies, the Presbyterian Orphan Society, and St. Brigid's orphanage. By referring to the work of the P.O.S. in Dublin and their proven record of accomplishment in this area of child welfare, (almost fifty years of experience) reformers could present a solid and feasible argument in favour of foster care based on methods already tried and tested. 'Those who sought the acceptance of boarding-out as the best method of providing for workhouse children had been considerably influenced in their demands by the notable achievements of the Protestant orphan societies'.¹³⁹ At the Social Science congress held in 1861, women attendees visited foster homes maintained by the P.O.S. and duly praised their work. 'They were very impressed by what they saw and the subsequent favourable publicity about the work of the society considerably influenced the introduction of boarding-out arrangements for workhouse children in Ireland and Britain'.¹⁴⁰ An 1871 P.O.S. (Dublin) annual report noted the Statistical Society's acknowledgement and support of their system:

The plan adopted by the society of locating its orphans in respectable families in the country has received the approval of one of our highest statistical authorities and has by the same authority, been pronounced to be greatly superior to the assembling of children together in one building, under the boarding school system.¹⁴¹

In a subsequent report made in December 1875 the P.O.S. welcomed further support. The Vice President of the Statistical and Social Inquiry Society of Ireland, John Kells Ingram recommended the P.O.S. system:

¹³⁹ Robins, *The lost children*, p. 272.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁴¹ Annual report, 1871 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/1/1).

The success of these societies is unquestioned, and is to me the standing and conclusive evidence, that in spite of all allegation to the contrary, the boarding-out system, if properly worked, can be carried out effectively, and made to produce the happiest results.¹⁴²

Isabella Tod referenced the P.O.S. and recommended its methods in a paper read before the British Association for Advancement of Science in Dublin in August 1878:

Warned by the errors of the old charter schools, which had just been closed, the Protestant Orphan Society from the first eschewed large buildings and mechanical arrangements, and placed the children in families in the country. The success of this institution is beyond dispute, and as it deals with hundreds at a time, the scale is sufficiently large to be an excellent test of efficiency.¹⁴³

Tod also praised the work of the Presbyterian Orphan Society, St. Brigid's and St. Joseph's 'who have constantly boarded the children in the care among farmers and others in the country, with the best results'.¹⁴⁴ Another aspect of contemporary reform debates included the inadequacies of inspection policies for boarded-out children by private organisations and by the workhouse. Fifteen boards of guardians had set up ladies committees for the purpose of inspections at the end of the nineteenth century.¹⁴⁵ The P.O.S. in Dublin and other county Protestant orphan societies also appointed women to attend to this duty.

Rev. Sillery a supporter of the P.O.S. in Dublin visited a Protestant orphan institution in France in the 1840s that housed children in one large establishment. He later remarked

¹⁴² John Kells Ingram, Address at the opening of the twenty-ninth session: 'The organisation of charity and education of the children of the state' in *Journal of the Statistical and Social Inquiry Society of Ireland*, xl, part xlvi (1875), pp 449-73, p. 462.

¹⁴³ Isabella Tod, 'Boarding out of pauper children' in *Journal of the British Association for Advancement of Science*, liv (1878), p. 295.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁵ Luddy, *Women & philanthropy*, p. 91.

on his preference for the P.O.S. boarding out system:

The nurse stands in the place of the parents, the bonds of the domestic attachment for which the orphan yearns are formed and the loss of a parent's care compensated. So far as human instrumentality can compensate it and in the very point in which it is so greatly missed, those various little enjoyments and comforts which are summed up in the word *home*.¹⁴⁶

If ineffectively managed the foster care system posed potential dangers for children yet social reformers considered that with regular supervision it could be the most beneficial method of care available to destitute children. Through the efforts of all orphan societies Catholic and Protestant, child welfare policy makers were equipped with evidence that the foster care system could work.

Protestant churches maintained the boarding-out system primarily through orphan societies such as the P.O.S. in Dublin and other counties, the Presbyterian Orphan Society formed in 1866, and the Methodist Orphan Society in 1870. They also managed orphanages. Cottage homes were also introduced, Rosa Barrett founded the Cottage Home for Little Children in 1879, and Miss Carr's Homes were founded in 1887. St. Brigid's continued to operate a well-reputed boarding-out system. A number of Catholic orphanages were in operation up to 1850, and a further thirty were established throughout the country in the twenty-five years that followed.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁶ *Christian Penny Journal*, Aug. 1847, iv, new series, no. xciii., in scrapbooks (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/6/1).

¹⁴⁷ Robins, *The lost children*, p. 293.

6.12 Policy changes

The P.O.S. introduced home care as part of their services in late 1895. Mothers¹⁴⁸ received a weekly payment based in certain cases on their circumstances and on the number of dependent children in their care. Home care involved surviving relatives caring for their own children, in place of a nurse in their own home with an allowance paid to them by the P.O.S. From the 1830s, in many cases, the P.O.S. had paid mothers an allowance to care for their infants up to the age of eighteen months. They also offered an allowance to mothers to care for their sick children and in some cases the P.O.S. provided a grant that enabled children to remain with extended family or their mother prior to the official policy change. Increasing demands for the P.O.S. to pay widows/extended kin an allowance to nurse their own children full time in place of a foster family gradually increased. Nevertheless, various committees throughout the nineteenth-century expressed consistent apprehension about broaching this subject.

The all male managing committee appeared dubious regarding the notion of employing widows as nurses because they believed that women required a male figure to validate the family. A member of the Statistical Society commented in 1856, 'the natural way of rearing children is as members of a family, with a mother to cherish and a father to control'.¹⁴⁹ Widows unless remarried did not have a male figure at hand to enforce discipline. The P.O.S. shared this viewpoint showing an unwillingness to allow children remain in a home without both mother and father. An inspector's report dated 1891, 'Nurse complains that Thompson is unmanageable. I question is she competent to

¹⁴⁸The closeness expressed by the woman and children in this photograph and the children's ages suggests that this woman was the children's mother, see 16(a) p. 413.

¹⁴⁹ Helen Buckley, *The people and the poor law* (London, 1987), p. 230.

manage him – no man in the house’.¹⁵⁰The inspector’s observations reveal the reason why in part the P.O.S. faltered in their decision to allow mothers care for their own children. The P.O.S. believed it unwise to send children to a home without a father as the income provider and disciplinarian when given the choice of placing them in a foster home with both parental figures present.

The P.O.S. also had reservations about home care because the majority of surviving relatives resided in Dublin. The committee feared that if children lived in the city on a permanent basis, it would expose them to religious interference and other moral dangers such as intemperance and gambling. Moreover, they feared that a return to the city would compromise the children’s health.

In addition, the P.O.S. wished to avoid conflict that might arise between the committee and surviving kin, if employed as nurses to their own children. The P.O.S. described the difficulties they had experienced surrounding the relinquishment process in 1883. ‘It happens, however, not unfrequently, that mothers refuse to give up their children to the committee when called upon to do so, and endeavour to make interest, as they suppose they can do, to induce the committee to deviate from their invariable practice. The committee, however, do not allow themselves to be thus influenced’.¹⁵¹ As chapter 5 has clearly shown a considerable number of mothers, found the relinquishment process extremely distressing. Therefore, it does not seem surprising that they continued to agonize over their children’s welfare post-admission. In some cases, widows challenged

¹⁵⁰ Nurse inspection book (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/5/6/13).

¹⁵¹ Annual report, 1883 (N.A.I. P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/1/1).

the committee on various issues, such as the suitability of nurses assigned to care for their children.

From the P.O.S. perspective widows/extended kin who questioned their management of the children, in effect transgressed their expected subordinate role and undermined the committee's authority. Any evidence of the discord that could transpire between the committee and extended kin gave new weight to their argument against employing surviving relatives as nurses, primarily because they posed a threat to the overall influence of the committee. It was far easier to assert control over foster mothers regarding the right way to rear children according to P.O.S. ideologies, than to force their concepts on surviving relatives who felt that they knew best for their own children.

Furthermore, the P.O.S. also feared that the society would receive an influx of applications if they introduced this policy. Consequently, the bulk of Protestant orphan societies shied away from this change in their rules. However, in a letter dated 18 June 1855, a subscriber to the Monkstown P.O.S. named Harriet S. referred to their views and policy on home care, 'It may perhaps be as well to mention that the Monkstown Protestant Orphan Society have consented in several cases, to permit the surviving parent to have charge of the child'.¹⁵² Antrim and Derry Protestant orphan societies also used this policy. The Cork P.O.S. raised the question of mother's rights to care for their own children at an annual general meeting in the 1850s. 'The following subjects will be proposed for consideration whether mothers are proper nurses to be employed for their

¹⁵² Registered application forms (N.A.I., C.P.O.U., MS 1045/11/2) (152-59).

own children?'¹⁵³ The Cork P.O.S. later proceeded with home care. In 1864, at the request of the Kilkenny P.O.S. committee who also showed interest in the policy, the Cork P.O.S. related the advantages and disadvantages of the system.

Amongst the advantages may be better care and at a reduced payment. Amongst the disadvantages may be cited a great increase in the number of orphans as we find applications made for the admission of orphans who would not have been put forward under the former system. We find difficulty in refusing to admit children who are fitting objects unless the committee are most watchful the admission of mothers as nurses may lead to great abuse.¹⁵⁴

Two examples drawn from the Cork P.O.S. papers illustrate concerns over home care in place of foster care and demonstrate the reasons why the Dublin P.O.S. may have resisted change. The Dean of Cloyne visited three homes in which the committee appointed mothers as nurses to their own children. The first report reflects an explicit suspicion regarding home care displayed by the visitor who was of the opinion that the committee should transfer the children elsewhere:

The mother keeps a lodging house in a side street the children are all delicate the boy is extremely so. I doubt much whether it for the advantage of these children that they should live where they do though it is near the sea. But I suppose they cannot be removed it is one of the cases where it would have been better if the orphans had not been left with their mother.¹⁵⁵

The Cork P.O.S. continued to harbour concerns for children placed in unsuitable circumstances whether in a foster family setting or in the home of mothers or extended kin. The issue was difficult to resolve.

¹⁵³ Scrapbooks (R.C.B.L., Cork P.O.S. papers, MS 519.1.1).

¹⁵⁴ Annual report, 11 June 1864, in scrapbooks (R.C.B.L., Cork P.O.S. papers, MS 519.1.1).

¹⁵⁵ Inspection reports (R.C.B.L., Cork P.O.S. papers, MS 519.8.2)

It appears that the Cork P.O.S. approved of surviving kin as nurses to their children provided they matched a specific profile in terms of location, religion, and personal attributes. In contrast to the aforementioned cases, in September 1888, the same inspector visited Sarah H., who owned twenty acres and two cows. Her circumstances typified the preferred profile of nurses employed by the P.O.S. He referred to Sarah as an industrious woman, attentive and protective of her children and suggested that her case was the most deserving of all the society's help. 'She is paying off some debts unfortunately (incurred by her husband) the landlord is considerate towards her. She is making a hand to retain her farm for her boys she has taught her elder child to milk and make butter'.¹⁵⁶ Sarah contacted the office in a subsequent letter, 'the society's help is what kept me on my farm'¹⁵⁷ and she noted her gratitude to them for their assistance.

At the 1880 Dublin P.O.S. annual meeting, discussion on this topic arose and a supporter of the P.O.S. expressed his disapproval that other Protestant orphan societies had adopted a new rule on home care. He regarded the change as unbeneficial to the child, the mother and the society. He contended first, that the child was not certain to receive a good standard of care, if the family was relatively destitute, even with the P.O.S. allowance. He also suggested that it might prevent widows from seeking employment. Three years later in 1883, the question of home care again sparked comment. The committee indicated that they had temporarily relaxed the rule concerning children's removal from their mothers. However, this they noted 'had been found to be productive of many evil

¹⁵⁶ Inspection reports (R.C.B.L., Cork P.O.S. papers, MS 519.8.2)

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

results'.¹⁵⁸ By evil results, the committee may have meant that women continued to claim an allowance from P.O.S. funds despite their remarriage or improvement in their circumstances.

Nevertheless, women's repeated refusal to relinquish their children to the society influenced their decision to modify their policy. Women were more prepared to question male authority once the 'mother's act'¹⁵⁹ (re: custody of children) was passed in 1886 and the later suffrage campaign reinforced a new confidence in their rights as mothers and as women.

A decline in funds, which was probably a result in part of women's objection to their rules, prompted the P.O.S. to change their regulations in an effort to increase the society's popularity and to attract more subscribers. In 1895, the annual report stated the committee's intention to provide widows/extended kin with the opportunity of caring for their children at home:

Hitherto it has been almost invariable custom on the election of orphans to remove them from their mothers and place them with the society's nurses in the country. Within the past year your committee have decided upon dealing with each case on its own merits and where they find after careful enquiry that the mother is a proper person residing in a respectable locality they will appoint her as nurse to her own children. On their election, the committee will allow a weekly sum for their maintenance provided that such an arrangement does not interfere with her earning her bread.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁸ Annual report, 1883 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/1/1).

¹⁵⁹ Guardianship of Infants (Ireland) Act, 49 & 50 Vict., c. 27.

¹⁶⁰ Annual report, 1895 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/1/1).

Following these initiatives, applications to the P.O.S. rose significantly by up to fifty per cent. However, the committee remained cautious. Applications were carefully considered and only approved if the widow/extended kin could prove their ability to provide children with a secure and comfortable home.

In 1914, an inspector's report concluded that a mother should not be approved as nurse to her own children. 'The rector says we ought to leave the children under the mother's care, however, I do not think it is possible that she could keep them, feed them, clothe them, and pay rent. And she has got nothing as yet from her husband's trade society head quarters at Liberty hall'.¹⁶¹ In some of these cases, children were sent to the society's associated children's homes or to foster homes temporarily to allow the mother to work and perhaps improve her situation with a view of having the children returned to her at a later date.

An example of the positive outcomes of the amended policy on home care concerns Jennie S. who married John A. on 11 November 1916, at St. Peter's Rectory in Manhattan in the city of New York. Their son John Marshall was born 21 August 1917. Mrs. A.'s husband died 20 March 1918. He had previously worked as a headwaiter at the Woodstock Hotel, New York earning £4 per week. Jennie's occupation was a chocolate moulder, 'I live with my parents and hope in the near future to get work'.¹⁶² Reporting on the case, the visitor remarked, that he had visited Mrs. A. who lived with her parents in a comfortable little house, well kept and neatly furnished. Her father worked in

¹⁶¹ Inspectors report found in unregistered application files (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/5/4).

¹⁶² Registered application forms (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/5/3/1).

Maguire and Gatchell's for forty-three years as a plumber. Her mother suggested that she would look after the child if required. It is significant that in this case the applicant had additional support from her own family. The P.O.S. enabled Jennie to care for her child in her own home. Apart from the standard allowance, evidence suggests that the P.O.S. provided mothers with supplementary grants towards further education for their children, travelling and clothing expenses.¹⁶³

Home care was devised for the benefit of women although a minor number of widowers applied to the P.O.S. For the most part, the committee sent these children to small children's homes or foster homes because of their fathers' work commitments, incapacitation, or the committee's decision that the children required the presence of a maternal figure. However, if the widower had a sister that could help manage the children the committee made such arrangements. In the case of home care, the committee filled the male father figure role as financial provider and as disciplinarian.

Legislation passed in 1935 to provide widows and their dependents with monetary relief under the terms of the widows and orphans' pension act. Just prior to its enactment Rev. Day referred to the bill at a meeting of the Kilkenny P.O.S: 'the government has made it known that they were about to introduce a scheme of insurance for widows and orphans. That was a very wise and good move'.¹⁶⁴ The P.O.S. in Dublin also responded positively to the act as it lessened its responsibilities. 'Most Rev. Dr. Gregg said in the act the state

¹⁶³ Minutes of executive sub-committee, 1901-30 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/2/7/1).

¹⁶⁴ *Irish Independent*, 18 June 1935.

had now seen the propriety of doing things by way of social service'.¹⁶⁵ Prior to this legislation and in spite of the grants made by the P.O.S. many women could not keep their children at home.

6. 13 Children's homes

The P.O.S. also sent a minor number of children to small children's homes. Contemporary social reformers such as Rosa Barrett recommended cottages homes as well as foster care. The P.O.S. recorded their preference of foster care from its inception and they continued to support its advantages over that of institutional care into the twentieth-century. As applications to the society increased so too did the demand for foster families. The introduction of home care offered an alternative to foster care. However, the ratio of children sent to each foster home decreased to improve the level of care for the children, which again led to additional pressure to find suitable foster families. Protestant emigration and a general decline in the Protestant population reduced the number of available foster homes. The P.O.S. strove to admit all eligible children and small children's homes represented a solution to this problem. Children who had lost both parents stayed in the homes or in foster care.

Moreover, wealthy supporters of the society on occasion offered the P.O.S. premises that had the potential to accommodate orphans. For instance, the landlord of Ballincor House, Rathdrum suggested to the committee 6 June 1898, that he had a vacant small two-storied house, 'it has come into my mind that it might be useful to the Protestant Orphan Society

¹⁶⁵ *Irish Independent*, 18 May 1938.

or other charitable society as an orphanage or home'.¹⁶⁶ It is unclear in this case whether the P.O.S. accepted the offer of these premises.

In 1895, Miss Charlotte Burroughs established Sunnyside Home¹⁶⁷ for girls in Kilternan, County Dublin. Following Miss Burrough's retirement in 1916, it came under the management of a matron and a local committee. Girls admitted to the P.O.S. resided in the home, if they could not live with their mother/extended kin or if the committee could not place them in a foster family. The relatively small home located in the country represented the closest possible family environment in place of foster care or home care. The wider community contributed regularly to the home, for instance they purchased a pony for the sum of £5 on 27 October 1916. The home received fixed rates from the P.O.S. to assist in the children's care. However, Sunnyside held its own collections and other fundraising efforts toward the payment of the children's upkeep. The home closed in 1953.

Premises at Malahide¹⁶⁸ provided additional accommodation for girls. In 1899, the committee received and accepted an offer from the Rev. T. Lindsay that gave them the use of a large house in Malahide to accommodate P.O.S. children. A local sub-committee that answered to the authority of the P.O.S. committee was set up to preside over the home's management. 'Up to present twenty girls have been placed there, and the argument so far has given hope that it will work out satisfactorily. The orphans are regularly inspected and the reports of the inspectors have been placed before the

¹⁶⁶ Register of incoming letters (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/3/1/13).

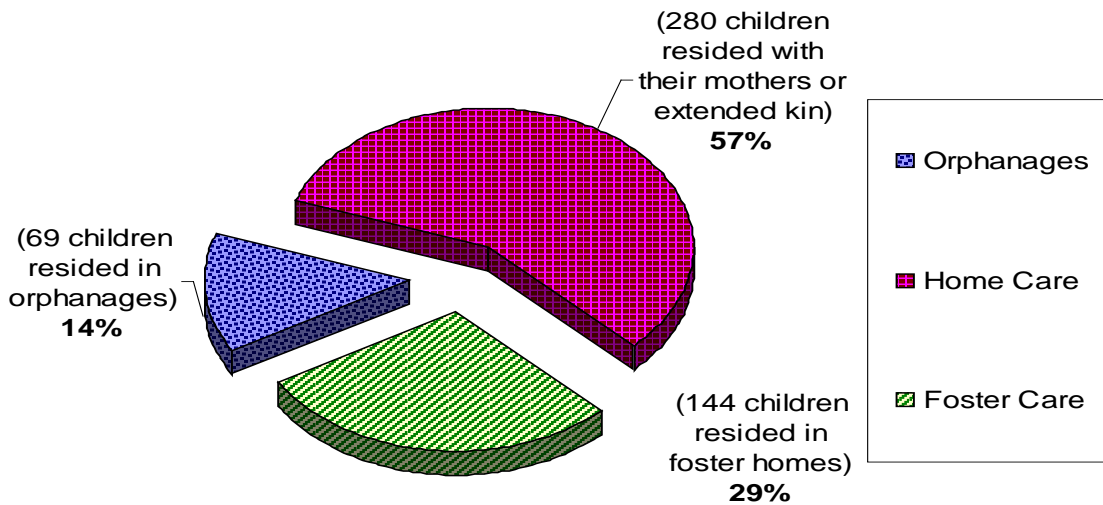
¹⁶⁷ See photographs 14(a) & (b), p. 411.

¹⁶⁸ See photograph, 15(b), p. 412.

committee and everything is done to make the children happy and comfortable'.¹⁶⁹ In 1901 the P.O.S. continued to report positively on the home and it received a great deal of local support. However, in their 1915 annual report, the committee noted the imminent closure of the Malahide Home due to lack of funds.

Fingal Boys' Home¹⁷⁰ located in Swords operated from the early twentieth-century to 1942. Miss Neville, the matron, ran the home and received £10 grant per annum for each child from the P.O.S. The children were educated and fed from these funds, which the local community supplemented through fundraising and donations.

Chart 6.7 Profile of P.O.S. (Dublin) childcare provisions, 1915



Source: Annual Report, 1915 (P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/1/1).

¹⁶⁹ Annual report, 1901 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/1/1) (55-144).

¹⁷⁰ See photograph, 15(a), p. 412.

As chart 6.7 shows, by 1915 the majority of children continued to live with their mother or in a foster family environment as opposed to orphanages. 'When children cannot be sent to their mothers they are sent to carefully chosen nurses living in the country or to Miss Neville's home for boys at Swords or the society home at Kilternan'.¹⁷¹ The three small homes only constituted supplementary care systems rather than a primary method of welfare. Other Protestant orphanages and homes associated with the P.O.S. who when required admitted P.O.S. children to their care included the Female Orphan House, Miss Carr's Homes and the Cottage Home for Little Children. For instance in 1919 the committee 'entered into a working scheme with the Female Orphan House, north circular road by which we are enabled to send certain of our orphans to this home to be trained and educated'.¹⁷² Such a network of Protestant homes ensured the placement of all admitted children whatever their circumstances.

This chapter has identified childhood experience in terms of children's status within their assigned foster families through examination of case file registers, inspectors reports and observations on children's behavioural patterns. Analysis of the P.O.S. nurse selection process has provided a clear profile of whom the P.O.S. considered suitable nurses, namely respectable, religiously committed, industrious Protestant families who resided in rural areas. Changes in the P.O.S. vetting and inspection processes has reflected the influence of the N.S.P.C.C. established in 1889 and consecutive reforms that culminated in the 1908 child protection act. An account of the integration of small homes and home care has documented the diversification of P.O.S. welfare systems to accommodate all

¹⁷¹ Annual report, 1916 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/1/1) (55-144).

¹⁷² Annual report, 1916 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/1/1).

applicants to the P.O.S. Finally, this chapter has presented the foster care system although flawed, as the most beneficial to the child because it eliminated the risk of institutionalisation and offered the possibility of informal adoption.

Chapter 7

Apprenticeship

Most children in the nineteenth century, particularly destitute children, orphans, and children from poor families worked in some capacity from a young age. The aim of this chapter is to analyse the scheme of apprenticeship designed for orphans by the P.O.S. in Dublin. Firstly, the motivations for incorporating apprenticeships into the P.O.S. system, the profile of a suitable master/mistress and indenture terms are discussed. Secondly, an account is given of the crucial measures adopted by the P.O.S. to protect apprentices from exploitation in the workplace. Thirdly, examination of the codes of conduct set by the P.O.S. and employer reflect the strict boundaries of apprentice life. Finally, individual case studies portray the apprentices' positive and negative experiences and the degree of involvement that surviving parents and extended kin had in the apprenticeship system.

7.1 Reasons for apprenticeship

The P.O.S. endeavoured to provide its wards with a solid future and long-term care. Learning a trade was an immense advantage for orphans who in most cases would not otherwise have been able to serve their time due to financial restraints. The P.O.S. paid a fee to the master or mistress to take on their apprentices. The committee resolved the age that orphans should commence an apprenticeship at a meeting dated 22 May 1835, 'no orphan shall be bound as an apprentice from the society until he or she shall have attained

the age of twelve'.¹ However, evidence suggests that the P.O.S. apprenticed a small number of their wards slightly under that age during the nineteenth century. For the most part apprentices ranged in age between twelve and fourteen. The Intermediate Education Act² was passed in 1878. 'It provided parliamentary funds for secondary schools and by 1901 there were 500 'superior schools' with a school-going population of 35,306'.³ As more young people attended these schools, the starting age for an apprenticeship increased to between fifteen and sixteen.

In England, from 1601, children provided for by charity schools were apprenticed out.⁴ The P.O.S. in Dublin aimed to mould their orphans into hardworking adults and at the same time reinvigorate the Protestant artisan class. As Protestant numbers in Ireland depleted through emigration, Protestant employers particularly in the country complained of their not being able to source Protestant workers. 'There is great deficiency in the country especially in my locality of getting religious Protestants as servants'.⁵ The committee envisaged that the orphans would supply the demand for Protestant workers and protect Protestant interests in business life. In the 1830s, Dublin corporation made donations to the P.O.S. in Dublin as long as the society remained purely Protestant.⁶ In the 1740s, corporations contributed to the charter schools in the form of donations to ensure that sufficient numbers were trained in the linen trade.⁷

¹ Minutes of committee meetings, 22 May 1835 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/2/1/2).

² Intermediate Education (Ireland) Act, 1878, 41 & 42 Vict., c.66 (16 Aug. 1878).

³ Susan M. Parkes, 'Higher education, 1793-1908' in W.E. Vaughan (ed.), *A new history of Ireland*, vi (Oxford, 1996), p. 540.

⁴ Milne, *The Irish charter schools*, p. 150.

⁵ Letter from an employer, 1846 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/1/1).

⁶ Minutes of committee meetings (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/2/1).

⁷ Milne, *The Irish charter schools*, p. 41.

The issue of social control also reinforced P.O.S. support of apprenticeships. An annual report dated 1839 noted, 'whilst the orphans are young, their management is comparatively easy, but when they grow up and begin to act and think for themselves they occasion increased trouble, and require peculiar watching'.⁸ At a Downpatrick P.O.S. auxiliary meeting dated 3 November 1866, discussion unfolded as to the benefits of their system as a useful means to prevent children from becoming members of the criminal class:

There were no less than 22,764 vagrants and criminals of the worst character at large in the country in the year 1864. In prisons, there were 5,162 making 27,926 of the most dangerous class of vagrant and criminal. Now they would easily perceive that this was an enormous number of idle, lazy and dangerous characters. He brought forward statistics to show how much they should support an institution such as the Protestant Orphan Society, which takes under its care those children who are otherwise likely to become vagrants and criminals.⁹

Wider society viewed vagrancy as an extensive and increasingly alarming problem that escalated with the onset of economic slumps.

The 1858 reformatory schools act¹⁰ made provisions for young offenders. The industrial schools act¹¹ extended to Ireland in 1868, redefined the possible relocation of orphans and destitute children. 'The proposed schools would be based on the British model – denominational, voluntarily managed institutions supported by state aid'.¹² The P.O.S. referred a minor numbers of applicants to industrial schools. Protestant industrial schools included the Cork Industrial School for Protestant boys established in 1892 and the

⁸ Annual report, 1839 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/1/2).

⁹ Publicity material, 1866 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/6/2).

¹⁰ 21 & 22 Vict., c.103 (2 Aug. 1858).

¹¹ 30 & 31 Vict., c. 25 (May 1868).

¹² Barnes, *Irish industrial schools*, p.32.

Training Home Industrial School for Protestant girls, Union-quay, Cork that opened in 1870 and closed in 1902 and the Meath Industrial School for Protestant boys located in Blackrock, Dublin founded in 1871.¹³ Industrial schools were harsh institutions bereft of family life, an environment that led to the institutionalisation of its inmates.

In spite of the 1903 employment of children act¹⁴ and the 1908 children's act¹⁵, in 1910 reformers remained concerned about the level of juvenile trading in Dublin:

The effect of street trading upon the character of those who engage in it, is only too frequently disastrous. The youthful street trader is exposed to many of the worst of moral risks: he associates with and acquires the habits of the frequenters of the kerbstone and the gutter. If a match seller, he is likely to become a beggar, if a newspaper seller, a gambler.¹⁶

Social reformers continued to underscore the dangers of juvenile delinquency as having the potential to lead destitute children on a path to criminality.

7.2 *Masters and mistresses*

The selection of a suitable master or mistress for their apprentices was a serious duty that required careful consideration by the committee. Orphans apprenticed through the charter schools¹⁷ suffered terribly at the hands of unsuitable masters. The First Report of the Royal Commission on Irish Education dated 1825 recorded that the most poorly regulated charter schools placed children with masters and mistresses who unbeknown to

¹³ Barnes, *Irish industrial schools*, p.154.

¹⁴ 3 Edw. VII, c.45.

¹⁵ 8 Edw. VII, c. 67.

¹⁶ S. Millin, 'Child life as a national asset' in *Journal of Statistical and Social Inquiry Society of Ireland*, xiii, part xevi (1917), p. 310.

¹⁷ Operated in Ireland in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century.

them had no real trade at all. Moreover, it contended as many as ten children were apprenticed to the same master who then turned them out once he had received the first two shillings instalment of the apprentice fee.¹⁸ In another case, a young girl's master left the country and left his apprentice destitute.

The P.O.S. committee hoped to avoid these situations and made efforts to assign apprentices to respectable employers who would offer useful guidance and assume a maternal or paternal role. The P.O.S. asked that the master/mistress be Protestant and proficient in their trade. Anxious to apprentice orphans to masters and mistresses who would impart the same level of religious instruction as they had received as young children, the P.O.S. set out strict terms for masters/mistresses to follow:

He will cause and oblige his said apprentice to read the holy scriptures and repeat the church catechism frequently and duly attend the divine service of the United Church of England and Ireland on every lord's day at least. Without influencing or encouraging him to be present at any other place of public worship whatsoever and also attend the Sunday school or such other means of religious instruction as the clergy of the parish shall direct¹⁹.

In addition, the master or mistress had to prove they were not in the habit of retailing malt or spirituous liquors mainly because the P.O.S. wished to prevent apprentices' exposure to the temptations of alcohol. Catholics and Protestants participated in the temperance movement. The Church of Ireland set up a temperance society in 1879 to combat what they saw as the cause of much of the working classes' poverty and destitution.

¹⁸ *Royal commission on Irish education: first report with appendices*, p. 22, H.C. 1825 (400), xii. (<http://www.eppi.ac.uk>) (25 Jan. 2008).

¹⁹ Miscellaneous papers, 1845 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/6/1).

The process of assigning an apprentice to a master/mistress commenced when the P.O.S. received the completed application form. The committee posed the following questions and requested clergymen to validate the application:

1. Is the applicant a regular attendant at divine worship?
2. Is he so far as you are aware in a position to impart a fair knowledge of his trade or business to an apprentice?
3. Do you recommend that an apprentice be sent to applicant?
4. Are there any members of applicant's family or employees resident in his house who are not Protestant?²⁰

The committee recognised their choice was imperative to the apprentices' welfare. In an annual report dated 1839 they resolved that the character and the circumstances of employers necessitated their utmost vigilance. They also realised that as the society expanded, more apprenticeships would be set, and supervision would become a far more difficult task that would require increased efforts to regulate the system. In some cases, they maintained the orphans for longer than originally expected in the hope of securing an apprenticeship with the most suitable master/mistress.

However, despite the committee's determination to accept applications for apprenticeship with caution, they referred more specifically to the financial circumstances and religious character of the potential master/mistress and assumed their appropriateness through the mechanism of class and religion. In addition, clergymen may not have investigated every applicant's circumstances adequately. Vetting standards may also have dropped with changes in staff and committee membership. Moreover, during periods of economic instability, it became necessary for the committee to approach tradesmen themselves to secure apprenticeships. Therefore, unsuitable employers were bound to slip through the

²⁰ Annual report, 1890 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/1/1, p.20).

net. Even if the committee believed that they had secured a good home, there were no guarantees that the master or mistress would share the same concern for the apprentices' welfare. This vetting process, largely based on trust, was open to abuse. However, it was a crucial preventative measure that greatly reduced cases of exploitation and mistreatment.

Evidence suggests that the master/mistress looked upon apprentices and the apprenticeship system in two distinct ways. At worst they regarded apprentices in purely economic terms and treated them proportionately to their value as workers. The economic value associated with cheap labour largely overshadowed P.O.S. idealism and predetermined adult treatment of apprentices. Mr. S., resident of Kingstown, had employed a P.O.S. apprentice as a children's maid for three years from 28 February 1889 and wrote to Mr. Jepps, the secretary, in 1892 to request a replacement.

The apprentice Bella H. having completed her apprenticeship has left us to go home to her mother we would therefore like to take another girl, but certainly not such a small one as the last. During her time she was comparatively useless being too small to commence any business. And it is for this reason I ask you to have a larger girl and more advanced we have changed residence and are now living at 55 Upper Mount Street and I thank you to have a girl to suit us, my sister will call and see her along with my wife.²¹

Mr. S.'s letter exposes the negative attitudes harboured by employers who equated apprentices only with economic worth and the amount of work they could extract from them.

²¹ Letter located in apprentice indenture files (N.A.I., POS papers, MS 1045/5/7/11)

The notion that young people of bad parentage had a genetic predisposition to turn out the same way, led a master/mistress to question apprentices' backgrounds. Many made assumptions about foster children and children reared in institutions, would they be prone to dishonesty and thievery? The placement of apprentices on trial meant that masters and mistresses had the opportunity to judge the apprentice's character. Brooks and Co. Chemists Druggists and Parfumes, Dublin, requested an apprentice in November 1898. 'If your society has a lad suitable to be apprenticed to the drug business we would be glad to have him on trial and if suitable will apprentice him. He should be fairly educated and of respectable parentage'.²² Employers did not wish to take on any apprentice that might cause disrepute to their business.

A second case stresses this point, an employer wrote to the P.O.S. on 27 October 1898 regarding his servant Christina G. The employer Mr. J. claimed that Christina's work and character were unsatisfactory. 'She is most untruthful and scamps on her work. We fear she would get into trouble and bring discredit on our home'.²³ When sent on errands Christina also stayed out with boys who her employer, deemed inappropriate company.²⁴ Mr. J. paid Christina and asked her to leave his employment by the end of November.

Conversely, other masters and mistresses made concerted efforts to impart valuable knowledge of their trade according to the indenture they had signed. The P.O.S. received an application from a couple who wished to hire two apprentice girls one as a nursery governess to four or five young children and the other as a parlour maid. The employer

²² Incoming letters, 1898 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/3/1/25).

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

and his wife mentioned that an acquaintance had recommended P.O.S. apprentices. Moreover, they asserted that they would retain the fees paid by the P.O.S. and present it to the apprentices when they had served their time. ‘The fees given with them I would place to their savings account in the savings bank and would add to them myself accordingly’.²⁵ They also suggested that they would offer the girls a good home and watch over them as if they were part of their family.

An employer wrote to the P.O.S. in request of a young apprentice on 17 March 1898. ‘Will you kindly inform me if you have at present in your society a nice respectable little girl about fourteen years of age who would go as apprentice to postal and telegraph business and assist in light housework? Needs intelligence. Will have comfortable home and good opportunity for learning the business’.²⁶ The mistress in this case, hoped to impart her knowledge and offer the apprentice guidance in return for enthusiasm and hard work. She offered good training, relatively light chores and the prospect of a home rather than merely a place of work. Post-office work as telegraph operators was a respectable position that offered girls an alternative to domestic service.

7.3 Indentures

Once the P.O.S. had assigned an appropriate candidate to a suitable master/mistress, the next step in the apprenticeship process was to formalise the contract.²⁷ Signing the indenture signalled new responsibilities for all concerned parties, the apprentice, the master/mistress, and the P.O.S., with each committing to uphold their part of the contract.

²⁵ Incoming letters, 1898 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/3/1/25).

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Refer to apprenticeship indenture, 16(b), p. 413.

The P.O.S. allocated a ten pounds fee for each apprentice, which they paid in a lump sum or in annual instalments. This fee added another dimension to the whole process as it meant that the master/mistress was obliged to reimburse the P.O.S. if they had compromised the original agreement. It put pay to P.O.S. control of the system and ensured that the employer had more reason to do right by the apprentice

Indentures are an extremely rich source that record the terms of each apprenticeship set by the P.O.S. Employers and the P.O.S. used indentures,²⁸ to manage apprentice behaviour and to limit broader social interaction while they served their time. Contracts stated that apprentices could not marry until they had served their time. Pressure not to consume alcohol was an additional element of the indenture terms, as was the restriction on any form of gambling. Moreover, conditions of apprenticeship did not allow apprentices to leave their master's premises unless given prior permission to do so. The terms of the indenture did not allow for any misconduct, disloyalty of any kind. The employer was obliged to instruct the apprentice in their trade and to offer diet and lodging or an agreed wage or both.

Employers paid apprentices according to the agreed terms. As part of these arrangements, some apprentices did not receive board, lodging and clothing and therefore collected a higher wage. Apprentices who availed of board and lodging gained less or in some cases only received pocket money but had the advantage of living in a family setting which perhaps prevented them from acting in a reckless manner. The very legality of the contract protected the apprentice against any attempts by their master or mistress to

²⁸ Refer to indenture for precise wording, 16(b), p. 413.

elude his/her responsibilities and facilitated P.O.S. intervention if the master did not make provision for diet and lodging and payment as formerly agreed. 'Formal apprenticeship indentures did more to define their rights than extinguish their liberties'.²⁹

Contracts devised in the twentieth century continued along the same lines.

A brief account of the average wages paid to skilled and semi-skilled workers in 1914 offers a scale on which to compare the wages earned by P.O.S. orphans during their apprenticeship. Printing and binding brought a wage of 33.3 shillings per week. Coach-builders received 35.8 shillings per week, while labourers in coach-building earned fifteen shillings. In various sectors from tobacco to confectionery, female labourers received wages that ranged from nine to twelve shillings.³⁰

What were the terms set out in these contracts? Three cases studies document the stipulations made by the master/mistress regarding pay increments. First, in 1906 Albert B. was bound for five years as a glazier with the Plate Glass and Silicate Marble Company Limited in Dublin. He received 2s. 6d. in his first year and 12s. 6d. in his fifth year.³¹ His wage therefore had risen by ten shillings per week by the end of his term.

In 1912, Frank C. became an apprentice gardener in Kells for three years and received seven shillings per week in his first year which rose to ten shillings in his third year.³²

The terms of his indenture also stated he would not receive meat, drink, and apparel. In

²⁹ Joy Parr, *Labouring children: British immigrant apprentices to Canada, 1869-1924* (London, 1980), p. 84.

³⁰ Cormac Ó'Gráda, *Ireland, a new economic history, 1789-1939* (Oxford, 1994), p. 238.

³¹ Apprentice indentures (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/5/7/11).

³² *Ibid.*

other words, he would have to use a portion of his wage on living expenses. The wages were low without this deduction and apprentices who had no family to see them through the apprenticeship with financial assistance endured hard times to serve their full term.

Albert K. bound 8 September 1912 to a farmer for three years received in his first year, in addition to board, lodging and washing a little pocket money and church money.³³ In his second year clothes, church money and six pence per week pocket money and his third year clothes, church money and one shilling per week pocket money. The terms of this indenture convey that in some cases those apprenticed to farmers received the least yield for the hardest work. In this case Albert received, 'a little pocket money'. This vague arrangement placed Albert in a state of almost complete dependence on his master.

Despite a rise in domestic servant wages, female apprentices received comparatively less pay, based on the assumption that girls were not workers in their own right but rather worked for a short period prior marriage. Margaret M. bound in general shop business for three years from 13 July 1901 received in her first year five shillings weekly which increased to seven shillings in her final year. Alice O. bound as a shop assistant for three years to Meyer's & Sons, Rathgar received four shillings per week during the first year and six shillings in her third year.³⁴

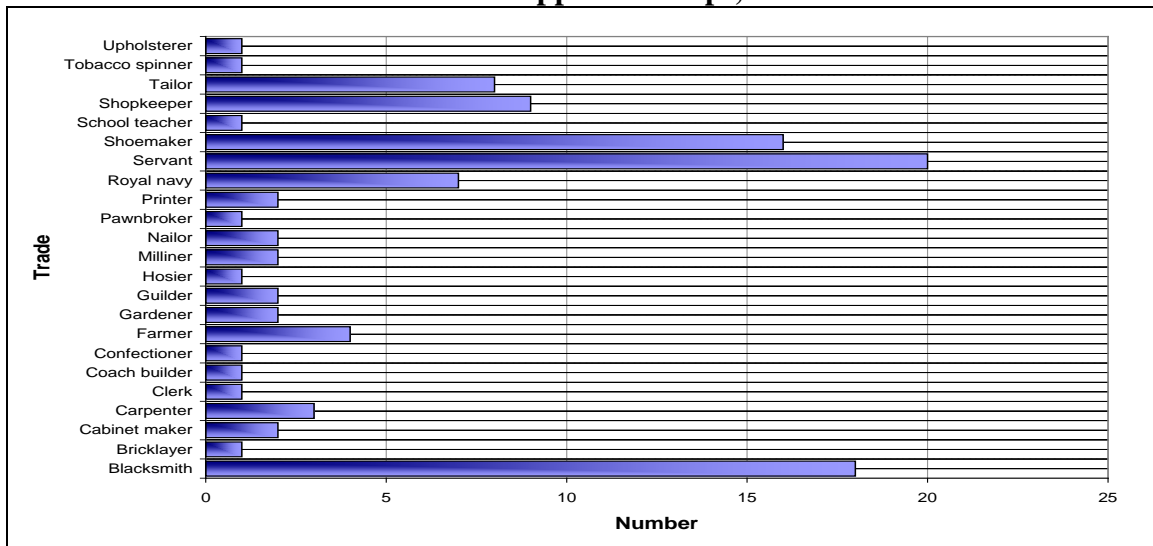
³³ Apprentice indentures (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/5/7/11).

³⁴ Ibid.

7.4 Trades

Chart 7.1 presents the numbers of young male apprentices during the period 1845-60. Blacksmiths, shoemakers and servants were the most frequently recorded apprenticeships for boys. Other traditional male apprenticeships such as carpentry and joinery were not as readily available. Carpentry was a highly skilled trade and therefore more difficult to access in terms of apprenticeship. The Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners' rulebook dated 1 August 1896, set out working rules for the Dublin district. Rule xi stated that every apprentice bound to a carpenter or joiner member of the trade had to have reached the age of fifteen.³⁵

Chart 7.1 Male apprenticeships, 1845-60



Source: Case file registers, 1845-60 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/5/1-3).

³⁵Apprentice indentures (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/5/7/11).

Figure 7.1 P.O.S. orphans William J. and John R.



Source: Album of photographs (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/5/10/1).

Additional occupations included watchmakers, harness makers, plumbers, clock repairers, painters, farmers, nailors, boot and shoemakers, printers and general drapers. Employment in pharmacies, as solicitors, office clerks, and teachers became more widespread at the beginning of the twentieth-century. The P.O.S. began to offer diversified educational opportunities and arranged scholarships to schools such as the endowed Morgan School for Boys located in Dublin. In 1899, the department of agriculture and technical instruction for Ireland was established. Amongst other initiatives, the department directed funds to establish technical instruction institutes.³⁶

³⁶ D. H. Akenson, 'Pre-university education, 1870-1921' in W.E. Vaughan (ed.), *A new history of Ireland*, vi (Oxford, 1996), p. 530.

The University Act³⁷ of 1879 ensured grants for ‘university buildings, exhibitions, scholarships, and fellowships’.³⁸ University gradually became an option for more students than previously possible. A small number of boys reared by the P.O.S. attended Trinity College Dublin.

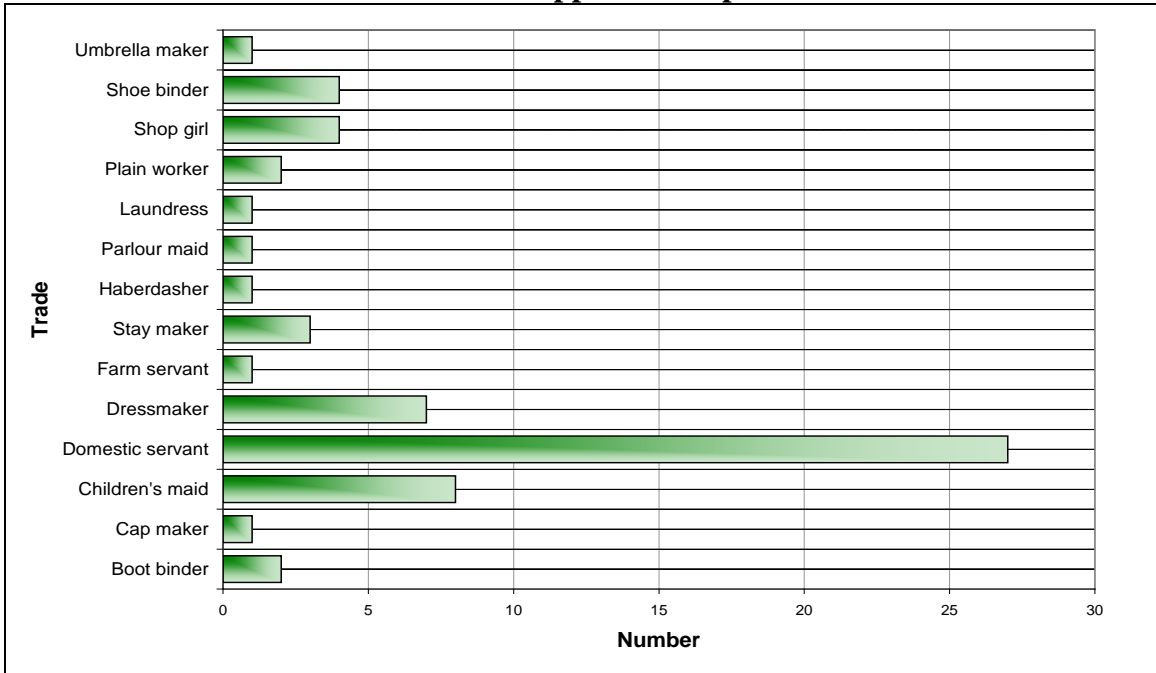
Girls on the other hand, endured nineteenth-century gender assumptions of their capabilities in the work place, which restricted the type of apprenticeships open to them. As discussed in chapter 5 the employment avenues open to women were limited to work that simulated that of the domestic realm, cleaning, washing, sewing, child minding all of which were lowly paid.

Domestic servants, dressmaking and child minding represent the three most frequently secured female trades illustrated in chart 7.2. From 1845 to 1860, 46 per cent of girls were engaged in employment as servants or parlour maids, 20.6 per cent worked as dressmakers or related trades and 12.7 per cent of girls worked as children’s maids. The remaining total of combined trades equalled 20.6 per cent with girls occupying trades such as shop girls, bookbinders, and umbrella makers, positions that were very much in the minority. Therefore, as evidenced by these figures, girls worked primarily in the domestic setting.

³⁷ University Education (Ireland) Act, 1879, 42 & 43 Vict., c. 65 (15 Aug. 1879).

³⁸ Susan M. Parkes, ‘Higher education, 1793-1908’ in W.E. Vaughan (ed.), *A new history of Ireland*, vi (Oxford, 1996), p. 561.

Chart 7.2 Female apprenticeships 1845-60



Source: Case file registers (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/5/1-3).

Figure 7.2 P.O.S. orphans Elizabeth B. and Rebecca S.



Source: Album of photographs (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/10/1).

Domestic service continued to represent the most significant employment avenue for girls. In 1895, Rev. Greer a member of the committee had observed that girls had not achieved sufficiently high educational standards prior to their apprenticeships' commencement. He recommended that the girls should attend a technical school that would teach them cooking and laundry work, which would 'fit them for their calling in life'.³⁹ Many girls from the P.O.S. were sent to the Dublin Providence Home for training. The Church of Ireland regulated the Domestic Training Institute established in 1877. Employers afforded much standing to the training the girls received.

In 1903, the committee reiterated their support of girls' engagement in domestic service. 'After long experience we cannot make better provision for the girls than having them trained for domestic service. They are at present in treaty with a training institute in the city, when they hope in future years to have as many as possible of the girls carefully trained in the different departments of domestic service'.⁴⁰ The committee and wider society viewed the domestic setting as women's natural domain. Moreover, they considered domestic service as beneficial training for girls that would prepare them for marriage and complement the public role assumed by their husband.

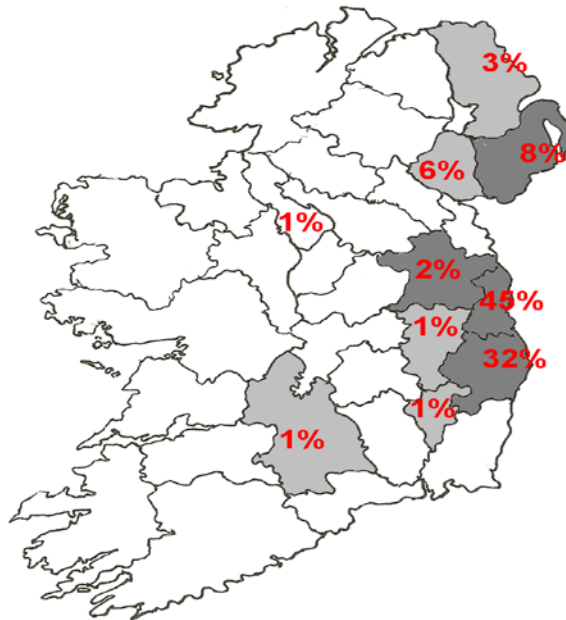
Despite the importance placed on domestic service, in 1894 improved educational opportunities emerged for girls, 'With a view of gratifying them for such positions as teachers, clerks, type writers at present they have sixteen girls in training at schools in the

³⁹ Scrapbooks (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/6/2).

⁴⁰ Annual report, 1903 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/1/1) (55-144).

city'.⁴¹ Office work attracted many women in the early twentieth century. 'The first civil service typist took up her post in the Department of Agriculture in 1901 while the Guinness Brewery held its first examinations for four lady clerks-ships in 1906'.⁴² Some members of the P.O.S. committee kept up to date with educational trends and foresaw the new direction that women could take if provided with the relevant training. Factory work also became another alternative to domestic service. Jacob's biscuit factory employed many P.O.S. orphans. The working conditions in the factory owned by a Quaker family were considered excellent.⁴³

Map 7.1 Location of P.O.S. apprenticeships, 1851-4



Source: Inspectors reports, 1851-4 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/5/7).

⁴¹ Apprentice indenture files (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/5/7/11).

⁴² Myrtle Hill, *Women in Ireland* (Belfast, 2003), p. 47.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 43.

As map 7.1 indicates, the P.O.S. in Dublin sent apprentices to work in a variety of locations that had substantial Protestant populations. It also shows that almost one third of apprentices remained in Wicklow where they had lived as foster children:

Most of the children previously apprenticed having been bound in Dublin, your committee consider that it would be advantageous that they should be apprenticed when practicable in the country where they have been reared, and are known and have formed friendships. Exclusive of the advantage to the apprentices themselves in respect both of health and morals, your committee cannot forbear remarking, as a secondary benefit of this arrangement that thereby a permanent addition will be made to the Protestant population of the country parishes.⁴⁴

For the most part, girls in particular found apprenticeships in Dublin where there was an adequate supply of domestic service and dressmaking situations. As the gentry supported the society, apprentices were frequently sent to work on their estates. Orphans were also apprenticed as servants to clergymen who supported the society.

7.5 Inspections

The P.O.S. committee set the supervision of apprentices as a high priority. They followed the same procedure for apprentices as boarded-out children. ‘The apprentices are afterwards regularly and carefully visited and the poor children thus feel that they are not forgotten and that they have friends to whom they can look for redress if they are ill-treated’.⁴⁵ On the 10 March 1848, members formed an apprentice sub-committee to regulate the process, ‘Such boys to be placed to board and lodge with decent Protestant families under the direction of our general superintendent and not more than four boys

⁴⁴ Annual report, 1838 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers MS 1045/1/1, p. 12).

⁴⁵ Scrapbooks (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/6/2).

shall be placed in the same house'.⁴⁶ Prior to this resolution, clear rules on the number of apprentices assigned to each home were not in place.

Despite the emphasis placed on inspections, the P.O.S. expected apprentices to attend to their trades diligently and to show respect to their master. This led to certain inspectors alluding to the master's grievances against apprentices even if unfounded, in order to prevent a breakdown of the contract. Moreover, the level of dedication displayed by individual clergymen to the inspection process varied from parish to parish. Nevertheless, these inspections constituted a core element of P.O.S. management that reduced rather than eliminated adult mistreatment of apprentices.

The committee instructed clergymen to inspect regularly each apprentice in their parish at their place of work:

To make such inquiries as will enable you to annex answers to the following queries; to which we will thank you to add any remarks or suggestions as your judgement may suggest. Assured of your willingness to co-operate in the cause of the Protestant orphan we need only say that in no way can you render us more effectual assistance than by taking part in the labour, which we now solicit you to undertake.⁴⁷

The P.O.S. formulated questioners for inspectors to complete during their visit. The core questions included the following:

1. Does apprentice seem healthy and well cared?
2. Is apprentice well supplied with suitable clothing?
3. Is apprentice getting on at the trade or business?
4. Do master and apprentice seem satisfied with each other? If not, give particulars?

⁴⁶ Minutes of committee meetings, 10 Mar. 1848 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/2/1/2).

⁴⁷ Apprentice inspection reports (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/6/7/9).

5. Does apprentice attend divine service and Sunday school regularly and at what church?
6. Does apprentice attend prayers regularly with the family; and is attention paid to his moral training and religious improvement?
7. Is apprentice candidate for confirmation?⁴⁸

Committee members relied heavily on clergymen's inspection of apprentices. Although the P.O.S. placed apprentices under the immediate superintendence of parish clergymen, they contended, 'periodic inspection and superintendence from outside is essential and money judiciously spent in this way is for the best interests of the orphans'.⁴⁹ Official inspections took place at least twice a year and in some cases up to six times a year.⁵⁰ Nevertheless, clergymen regularly noted in their reports that they encountered specific apprentices on a daily or weekly as they resided in the same parish.⁵¹ Therefore, clergymen possessed an ideal observational point from which to pinpoint changes in apprentices' appearance or to receive information from other parishioners concerning rumours of abuse or any conflict between apprentice and master. The committee contended that the apprentices were vulnerable to neglect and exploitation unless they maintained constant communication with them and conducted regular inspections. This level of supervision was somewhat of a deterrent.

The inspector's key responsibility was to target masters who breached contract terms, mistreated apprentices or put their chances of securing their trade in jeopardy. In the First Report of the Royal Commission on Irish Education dated 1825, the consequences of ineffectual inspections in the charter schools were remarked upon. The Incorporated

⁴⁸ Apprentice inspection reports (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/6/7/9).

⁴⁹ Annual report, 1894 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/1/1).

⁵⁰ Apprentice inspection reports (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/6/7/9).

⁵¹ Ibid.

Society continued to employ an elderly man to act as an inspector for the schools. During his tenure, he had arranged apprenticeships with unsuitable masters and neglect and severe punishment abounded. ‘The person employed is now above eighty years of age, and the cases above alluded to evince the mischief that may arise from an inefficient performance of so important a duty’.⁵² Inspectors who could not efficiently carry out inspections or were not dedicated to the job, seriously compromised the apprentices’ future prospects and physical well-being.

According to inspector’s reports that date from 1860-7, 45.9 per cent of apprentices (male and female) were considered to be in a good home, a further 34.4 per cent were satisfactory and finally, 19.7 per cent were unsatisfactory. These figures relate only to the inspector’s interpretation of a given situation. A greater number of apprentices may have endured hardship that went unnoticed. P.O.S. inspectors discussed any accusations of mistreatment first with the master and then with the apprentice. They spoke to the apprentice in private so he or she could safely give an honest account of any complaints. John P. bound to Mr. W. as a shoemaker, had an acrimonious relationship with his master. He complained of his ‘severity’, which most probably referred to corporal punishment. The inspector interviewed the master who claimed the apprentice was ‘idle and insolent’ and ‘hard to manage’. Many apprentices were afraid to speak out in front of their master. In this case, the inspector suggested that John ‘talk to him directly’⁵³ with any further problems. The inspector therefore acted as an important mediator between master/mistress and apprentice.

⁵² *Royal commission on Irish education: first report with appendices*, p. 22, H.C. 1825 (400), xii. (<http://www.eppi.ac.uk>) (25 Jan. 2008).

⁵³ Apprentice inspection reports, 1860 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/6/7/9).

Inspectors displayed greater caution for girls, primarily because of their sexual vulnerability, in terms of the high risk of rape and pregnancy, especially if placed in the wrong situation. The committee began to restrict placement of female apprentices because of the inherent dangers of sending young girls to predominantly male environments such as farms where they may have become susceptible to unwanted sexual advances from workers or the master himself. Four cases portray P.O.S. concerns for young female apprentices.

The P.O.S. bound Eliza P. on 24 April 1849 aged fourteen to Mr. B. as a servant for three years. However, less than a year later, in May 1850 the committee cancelled her indentures 'in consequence of ill treatment'.⁵⁴ Overworking, or underfeeding the apprentice, giving inadequate training or applying unfair or severe punishment compromised the terms of the original indenture.

A report made by an inspector, 29 August 1860 based on a visit to a girl named Eliza C. bound as a servant to Mr. W. in Newry stated, 'I was very much dissatisfied by my last visit as regards the girl, she is badly treated by her master'.⁵⁵ The report does not specify the type of ill treatment however; it does express the inspector's strong disapproval. The inspector's anxiety over the girl's situation demonstrates the importance he placed on her welfare.

⁵⁴ Case file register (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/5/1).

⁵⁵ Apprentice inspection reports (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/6/7/9).

The third case refers to Elizabeth D. bound to Mr. R. as a servant in Armagh. An inspector visited Elizabeth in August 1860 and reported her non-attendance at church. 'Mr. R. is a member of the cathedral choir and he wishes his servants to attend service with him. As she ceased Sunday school she is very much withdrawn from the notice of the parochial clerk'.⁵⁶ The inspector commented that the relationship between master and apprentice was only 'tolerable' and that the master 'complained a little of want of cleanliness and uneven temper on the part of the girl'.⁵⁷ The final entry on the report read, 'her master does not seem altogether satisfied with her but it is possible there may be faults on both sides'.⁵⁸ The inspector identified the dangers associated with Elizabeth's increasing alienation from a supervisory standpoint, and was aware that intervention of some kind needed to take place to ensure the girl's safety.

Toward the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth century, the P.O.S. apprenticed girls primarily to a mistress in an attempt to safeguard their moral and physical welfare. Twenty of twenty-eight girls apprenticed from 1880 were bound to mistresses predominantly as dressmakers. The majority were bound to Miss M. of 8 Richmond Avenue for a period of two years. The committee associated the domestic setting as one conducive to girls' safety and hoped that women would act as their maternal protector.

Workhouse guardians had little influence over the welfare of orphan apprentices, 'the decision not to grant powers of apprenticeship to Irish guardians left them in the position of being unable to intervene in any way when workhouse children entered the

⁵⁶ Apprentice inspection reports (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/6/7/9).

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

employment of unsuitable employers'.⁵⁹ There appeared to be little or no protection and supervision. In many cases, boys refused to work for certain farmers who had reputations for badly treating their apprentices. The outcome for workhouse children was severe, with many returning to the workhouses having suffered terrible mistreatment at the hands of their masters.

The children acts of 1889,⁶⁰ 1894, 1904⁶¹ and 1908⁶² gradually regulated the protection of children and young teenagers. 'In a series of wide-ranging and enlightened provisions the act dealt with prevention of cruelty to children, protection of infant life and provision for juvenile offenders and other children of the state'.⁶³ However, despite these laws, enforcement of their provisions was not always undertaken and cruelty against vulnerable adolescents by their employers and by their parents occurred on a wide scale.

7.6 Additional measures to assist apprentices

Indentures were regularly cancelled if an apprentice was found to be unsuitable for the trade or if they had not made sufficient progress. Two cases illustrate this point. An inspector visited Simon W. bound as a shop man to Mr. M. in Carlow on 30 April 1861. He stated that, 'the boy is not fit for the business, I recommend he be removed'.⁶⁴ In June 1863, an inspector visited Agnes B. 'she is unfitted for the situation of servant and

⁵⁹ Robins, *The lost children*, p.241.

⁶⁰ 52 & 53 Vict., c. 44.

⁶¹ 4 Edw. VII, c. 16.

⁶² 8 Edw. VII, c. 67.

⁶³ Barnes, *Irish industrial schools*, p.86.

⁶⁴ Inspection reports (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/6/7/9).

the committee will make an allowance for her support'.⁶⁵ In these cases, the P.O.S. inspectors and the master/mistress usually agreed on the cancellation.

However, the P.O.S. assisted apprentices in cases where they could not fulfil their contract because of poor trade, intolerable working relationships with their employer, because of inadequate training, or in the event that their employer emigrated, essentially, any circumstance that jeopardised the apprenticeship that was out of the apprentices' and the committee's control. The P.O.S. set up the 'Apprentice Relief Fund' in 1843. The fund was designed to compensate apprentices who could not serve their time. 'This plan has been carried into effect, by allocating for this purpose, £50 of the bequest of Captain Jackson'.⁶⁶ The fund was of great benefit to apprentices as it gave them the means to emigrate, gain another apprenticeship or purchase tools themselves. In conjunction with the relief fund, when required the committee intervened on the apprentice's behalf. The committee resolved that 'an official communication be sent to their master stating that the committee are determined to take legal measures to ensure the fulfilment of the covenants of the indenture'.⁶⁷ The committee represented a source of protection for the apprentices.

The second measure taken by the P.O.S. to assist apprentices related to transferrals. The P.O.S. acknowledged apprentices' complaints about their assigned trade and occasionally rather than regularly made transferrals if given justifiable grounds to do so. This did not happen for all apprentices, the employer and the committee had to come to an agreement to avoid having to pay a fee for breaking the contract. Moreover, if apprenticeships were

⁶⁵ Inspection reports (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/6/7/9).

⁶⁶ Annual reports (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/1/1) (0-44).

⁶⁷ Apprentice sub-committee, 1 Dec. 1846 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/2/4/1).

in short supply this course of action would be for the most part impossible. However, the committee recognised the futility of an apprentice labouring in a trade for which he or she had no taste or disposition. In contrast, earlier in the century the charter schools expelled any apprentice who refused an apprenticeship.⁶⁸ The following case study in particular encapsulates the possible success of this provision.

The P.O.S. apprenticed Edward D. to Daniel N. Tullow, County Carlow as a general draper outfitter for five years from 5 February 1894. On the 11 October 1894, the P.O.S. committee received a letter from Mr. N. outlining Edward's aversion to general drapery. Instead, he requested to enter an apprenticeship as a baker. Mr. N. wrote to Mr. Jepps secretary of the P.O.S. 'You may remember me speaking about D's wishes to be a baker and how I could not keep him from the bake house; he is still inclined to stick to this trade and take it in preference to any other'.⁶⁹ Mr. N. remarked that he hoped Edward would receive the committee's consent to 'have him transferred to my brother's care and business in Main Street. I greatly fear now that he has developed a taste for this trade that if compelled it would be with the greatest reluctance he would work at any other business'.⁷⁰ Edward wrote to the committee 16 October 1894 to plead his case in a manner similar to that which a child might ask for permission from their parents, 'I would rather be a baker than serve my time to do anything else'.⁷¹ The committee consented to Edward's transfer of indenture on 25 October 1894.

⁶⁸ Milne, *The Irish charter schools*, p. 161.

⁶⁹ Apprentice inspection reports (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/6/7/9).

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Apprentice indentures (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/5/7/11) (579-1045).

This case reflects a mild mannered and caring master who wished to oblige his young apprentice and was in a position to do so because his brother owned a bakery. He realised his time would be wasted with a boy who showed no interest for his trade. Mr. N. wrote to the P.O.S., 5 July 1898 to inform them ‘I am glad to say Edward turned out a first class baker’.⁷² Edward’s success bears testimony to the existence of excellent apprenticeships and shows the flexibility exercised by the P.O.S. to accommodate the apprentice’s best interests.

For the most part, apprentices did not mention any misgivings that they might have had about serving their time in a trade they disliked. Instead, as in Edward’s case they began the trade and then later expressed their reservations. However, George M. wrote to the P.O.S. 17 February 1898 defiantly rejecting their placement for him as a printer. ‘I have no taste for it whatsoever’.⁷³ He contended that he could waste six years of his life to serve in a trade that he had no inclination for, while instead he could spend a month or two searching for a position at which he would work hard.⁷⁴ George also suggested that the intended master would not take him if he knew that he did not want to take on the trade. This level of confidence shows an educated child who took charge and was able to express clearly his argument against treatment he considered unfair.

⁷² Incoming letters, 1898 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/3/1/25).

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

7.7 *Life as an apprentice*

The process of apprenticeship began when apprentices left their foster family to attend 55 Percy Place⁷⁵ the society house, located near St. Stephen's Church in Dublin. The P.O.S. acquired the home in 1839. Girls attended either St. Catherine's parochial school or Percy Place for their lessons. Apprentices completed examinations in their parish schools and if they reached a reasonable standard, the committee arranged for them to travel to Dublin.⁷⁶ The apprentices attended classes at Percy Place and remained there until they commenced their apprenticeship.

In 1879, William Neilson Hancock secretary of the Statistical and Social Inquiry Society of Ireland referred to this aspect of the P.O.S. system. 'Mrs. O'Connell's⁷⁷ proposition (to combine boarding-out with institutional training) has in favour of it the experience of half of a century of the largest Protestant Orphan Society'.⁷⁸ The P.O.S. recommended further training for their wards in the hope that it would prepare them for their future apprenticeship.

⁷⁵ Percy Place extended from Northumberland Road to Victoria Place in St. Peter's parish, Pettrigrew & Oulton's, *Dublin directory* (Dublin, 1842),p. 407.

⁷⁶ Minutes of the apprentice sub-committee, 1836-55 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/2/4/1).

⁷⁷ Mary Anne Bianconi daughter of Charles Bianconi of Longfield House, Cashel was born 16 Sept. 1840 and died in 1908. She wrote her father's biography and married Morgan John O'Connell, a lawyer and M.P. 21 Feb. 1885. Mrs. Morgan John O'Connell was also associated with the reform of English pauper schools. (<http://www.irish-cottage.net/o'connell>) (2 Apr. 2009).

⁷⁸ William Neilson Hancock, 'Statistics on points raised by Mrs. O'Connell's and Miss Smedley's papers' in *Journal of the Statistical and Social Inquiry Society of Ireland*, viii, part xl (1879), pp 38-41.

Figure 7.3 Percy Place Home



Source: Annual report, 1840 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/1/1).

The transition from foster child to apprentice and the actual term of apprenticeship represented probably the most difficult phase of P.O.S. orphans' lives. It caused substantial upheaval to leave their foster family whether they had shaped lasting and meaningful emotional ties or not. For those who had formed a close relationship with their nurse, the relocation to Percy Place was extremely difficult. In 1857, William H., 'fretted so much for his nurse in Powerscourt he could not be kept in Dublin and was sent back'.⁷⁹ He returned to Dublin one week later, but as he was so distraught, they sent him home to his nurse for a second time.

⁷⁹ Case file register, Mar. 1857 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/5/1-3).

The physical change of environment also altered their former understanding of belonging somewhere. This disruption possibly fractured an already fragile sense of personal identity that was already damaged by the loss of one or both parents. As discussed later in the chapter, orphans made attempts to reunite with their former nurses following the commencement of apprenticeship. This evidence drawn from letters⁸⁰ and case file registers⁸¹ suggests that the children had formed significant bonds with their former nurses that provided them with a strong sense of identity as a family member. Youngsters left behind this family unit and encountered institutional life similar to a small boarding school, where they would receive continued education and the opportunity to gain a trade. Fewer than thirty apprentices resided in the society house at Percy Place during the 1840s. However, this number fluctuated as new apprentices came to the home as others left to serve their time.

Apprentices remained at the society house for periods that ranged from three weeks to one year, depending on the length of time it took to secure an apprenticeship. Extended kin could visit Percy Place and vice versa but the committee resolved in 1840 that such visits required sanction from the main office. Apprentices at the home also made requests to visit their former nurses, for instance brothers James and John B. asked permission to visit with their nurse in Greystones, 17 December 1869, presumably with the hope of spending Christmas with their former foster family.⁸² To allow some form of contact with kin was extremely beneficial to the orphans as it added a sense of stability to their lives.

⁸⁰ Incoming letters, 1898 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/3/1/25).

⁸¹ Case file registers (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/5/1).

⁸² Register of incoming letters, 1868-9 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/3/1/13).

Apprentices were required to wear a uniform. ‘The patterned jacket for Sunday wear for the girls having been exhibited to the committee, it has been resolved that a plain jacket of the same material and shape be supplied without pockets, cuffs or silk edgings but strongly sewed buttons’.⁸³ The committee presented the young people as respectably dressed in the hope that employers would apprentice them. The house ran in a regimented and ordered fashion much like a boarding school. Every boy had a number assigned to him, which was marked on an item of his underclothing.⁸⁴ These numbers referred to a list of the boys’ names and corresponded to the rotation of chores. There was a half-pound meat allowance for each boy’s dinner. In class, they used books such as Thompson’s Arithmetic, Goldsmiths Geography and the Davis edition of Murray’s English Grammar.⁸⁵

Housework and needlework were the major part of girl’s education ‘with a view to making them as proficient as possible in the business of servants to which most of them will be apprenticed’.⁸⁶ They also had daily classes of one and a half hours duration in writing, ciphering and English. The gender imbalance in terms of educational provisions is apparent.

The managers of the home were strict. The apprentice sub-committee noted 21 April 1840, ‘ordered that a strong lock be put on the front door and no boy allowed to go out

⁸³ Minutes of Percy Place Home, 1878 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/16/4).

⁸³ Apprentice sub-committee minutes (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/2/4/1).

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

except on business'.⁸⁷ The sub-committee took these precautions because they were subject to the direction of the main P.O.S. committee. If apprentices ran away or went missing they would be held accountable. In May 1876, two boys ran away from Percy Place. On their return, they were asked why they left. John C. told the committee that the matron had punished him for running instead of walking home from church the previous Sunday evening. John L. told them that he was tired of the place but had no other complaint. As punishment, the boys received three strokes of a birch rod each, in the presence of the sub-committee.⁸⁸ In 1877, a special meeting of the committee was arranged to inquire into an alleged beating of a young female orphan named Arietta K at the home. The girl's mother had made the complaint. 'The committee having fully examined the statements came unanimously to the conclusion that they were without foundation'.⁸⁹ No further entry was made in relation to the case. If pupils excelled in class and behaved well the P.O.S. offered encouragement and praise. In exceptional cases, the committee recommended the most intelligent boys of the apprentice class to receive further training in their own offices.

How did the committee care for pupils who fell ill while resident in the home? The committee sent Frances L. recently discharged from the city of Dublin hospital with a weak leg to the country under medical advice and provided an allowance for the nurse to provide extra nourishment. They also provided her with a crutch. The committee reported on 2 December 1878 that two orphans had been ill for days. They noted that Dr. Harley had diagnosed them with typhoid fever, 'they were by doctor's orders removed to

⁸⁷Apprentice sub-committee minutes, 2 Dec. 1878 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/2/4/1).

⁸⁸Minutes of sub-committee on nurses and education, 1876 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/2/3).

⁸⁹Minutes of Percy Place Home, 1877 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/16/4).

Baggot Street Hospital. He also reported that Mary. R. is now ill with the same disease and that she be removed to hospital without delay'.⁹⁰ The extremely contagious nature of typhoid fever rendered the child's removal urgent. The committee resolved that 'parents of the above named children be at once informed of their state'.⁹¹ In other cases, apprentices with minor illnesses also received appropriate attention. Overall, the managers of the home and the committee appear to have offered good care to any pupils who became ill while at Percy Place. The children were also taken on occasional holiday breaks. In 1878, the committee resolved that the orphans should be given a holiday on Whit Monday and directed the manager of the home to take them to the country.⁹²

Apprenticeship as a phase of supervised training represented a period of semi-dependency. 'Children eleven to fourteen were betwixt and between, not such burdens that their care be paid for, not so useful as worthy of wages'.⁹³ While apprentices did work, they continued to require accommodation, food, clothes and guidance. Young adolescents who entered full time employment without having engaged in an apprenticeship simultaneously consigned themselves to full adult responsibilities at a much younger age.

Inspection reports that date from 1860–75 provide significant insights into the attitudes and responses of adolescents to their employers and to their life as an apprentice. Three cases outline the tendency for apprentices to rebel against their subordinate status.

⁹⁰ Minutes of Percy Place Home, 1877 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/16/4).

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Parr, *Labouring children*, p.85.

William L. bound to Mr. F. Great Ship Street, as a watch case maker received a visit from a P.O.S. inspector in October 1861. The inspector reported that, 'the master's account of the boy is not satisfactory, master complains of the apprentice being lazy and fond of bed'⁹⁴. The inspector noted, 'apprentice needs advice on the subject of obedient attendance to his business'.⁹⁵ While this behaviour is indicative of typical teenage behaviour, it also clearly conveys the boy's complete lack of interest in his trade.

A report dated 12 September 1864 referring to Matthew V. bound to Mr. T. as a blacksmith stated that 'the only thing I would add is that the boy is very much inclined to be wild and give into levity and tricks and sometimes annoys me a good deal in this way both in church and Sunday school however I hope he will improve'.⁹⁶ These minor jokes and tricks again related to typical adolescent behaviour often misinterpreted as the first signs of juvenile delinquency.

Many apprentices became involved in minor scrapes as part of a phase in rebellion that caused the P.O.S. inspectors great concern. For instance, the P.O.S. bound Henry J. to Mr. M. as a bookseller and stationer in Carlow, September 1862. The inspector made a routine visit and found that Henry and two other apprentices from Kilkenny had gone to town without permission. 'Instead of going to church yesterday, they went to a common public house in Graig to drink porter. My fellow curate Mr. S. and myself spoke to him this morning and as it was his first offence, he promises faithfully never to go there again,

⁹⁴ Apprentice inspector reports, 1861(N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/6/7/9).

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 1864.

the others were much older than he was'.⁹⁷ As the boy was younger than the others and as it was his first misdemeanour, the inspector chose only to present him with a warning. The Society for Investigating the Causes of the Alarming Increase of Juvenile Delinquency published a report in 1816. It contended that 'the violation of the Sabbath and habits of gambling in public streets',⁹⁸ led to juvenile delinquency. Controlling the will of teenagers was of paramount importance to the committee and clergymen. The P.O.S. worked in conjunction with clergymen to prevent orphans straying from the Protestant ethos that had heavily influenced their childhoods. They were careful during these years not to loose orphans in whom they had invested so much.

7.8 Codes of conduct and punishment

What level of disobedience exhibited by apprentices warranted the label of a 'bad apprentice'? Jane F.'s mistress escorted her back to the P.O.S. committee because she claimed the girl had stolen many items whilst in her employment. 'Systematic thieving, stealing things up to 30 shillings, stolen items concealed with a dexterity which left on the minds of the members present not a shadow of a doubt of her being a most hardened offender in this respect for the last four years'.⁹⁹ The committee had already relocated Jane to three different foster families prior to her apprenticeship 'in the hope of amendment'.¹⁰⁰ However, their repeated transferral of the girl only served to compound feelings of instability and was most probably the cause of her inclination to act out in this way.

⁹⁷ Apprentice inspector reports, 1862 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/6/7/9).

⁹⁸ Barnes, *Irish industrial schools*, p. 15.

⁹⁹ Apprentice sub-committee minutes (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/2/4/1).

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

The P.O.S. organised an apprenticeship for Edward H. in Tullow in 1898. His master although apologetic deemed Edward impossible to manage and requested his return to Dublin. 'He went to the races nine miles away in the night without getting permission or leave from anyone in the house and when he returned he stopped out in town and has done no good work'.¹⁰¹ Edward later wrote to the committee. 'Will you be so kind as to ask Mr. N. to take me back. I would like very much to learn my trade. I am very sorry for doing wrong and will in future obey my master's commands'.¹⁰² Mr. N. gave him a second chance but Edward absconded again. The local clergyman wrote, 'I judge he is a weak boy rather than positively bad'.¹⁰³ Although the clergyman did not consider Edward as innately bad, he did cross a certain line of trust with his master who eventually turned his back on him.

The committee felt that they had lost control if apprentices challenged their authority. In response, in some cases they moved repeatedly disobedient youngsters elsewhere. However, the P.O.S. punished girls and boys differently. A sign of this gendered punishment was the committee's decision to remove from the society roll any female apprentices who stole, while at Percy Place or while serving their time. Their conduct was reprehensible, considered a bad example to set for the other girls and dented the reputation of the P.O.S. for future employers. The girls' actions also undermined the contemporary concept of the feminine ideal. The male punishers appeared to believe that girls who broke the rules were inherently bad, so strong was the belief that a girl should conform without question and assume the role of the quiet and obedient young woman.

¹⁰¹ Incoming letters, 1898 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/3/1/25).

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

Moreover, in the nineteenth century it was thought that women were likely to steal when in 'menstrus psychoses':

The widespread notion that women were not greatly influenced by socialization but were biologically determined, meant that female criminals were perceived as less receptive to rehabilitation than male criminals whose crimes were perceived, in stark contrast, in terms of social order rather than natural deviance.¹⁰⁴

Therefore, if the bad behaviour was viewed in biological terms, rehabilitation was unlikely.

On the other hand, the committee appeared to tolerate boys' misbehaviour more than girls. Their wrongdoings could be explained through social circumstances rather than their bodies as in the case of girls. Therefore, they could be rehabilitated. This rehabilitation came in a militaristic form. 'The military origins of disciplinary power invests the male body as a productive and obedient citizen/worker'.¹⁰⁵ The P.O.S. committee sent a small number of disobedient apprentices to sea as a form of punishment. Despite moving the boys elsewhere, they unlike the girls remained on the society roll.

Being sent to sea was a traditional form of punishment in England from the seventeenth century.¹⁰⁶ This response to recalcitrant behaviour seemed appropriate to the committee because they linked any signs of bad conduct or disobedience with later criminality. They did not inquire as to the cause of misbehaviour but viewed it as a sign of a lack in

¹⁰⁴ Lois McNay, *Foucault and feminism: power, gender and the self* (Cambridge, 1992), p. 34.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p.35.

¹⁰⁶ Spencer, Millham, *Locking up children: secure provision within the child-care system* (London, 1978), p. 16.

discipline. The P.O.S. committee asserted that boys who repeatedly ran away from foster families or apprenticeships, would benefit from a short spell at sea which would instil in them self-control and strength of character. Edward H. ran away from his original apprenticeship 13 August 1885, by 25 August 1885 the committee had sent him to the Clio training ship, anchored at Menai Strait, Bangor, North Wales. Two years later on 25 August 1887, he left and joined the 'Royal Naval Reserve' in Liverpool. Subsequently, he concluded his time with the reserves and went to sea at the age of fifteen.¹⁰⁷

In the nineteenth century, strict discipline of children was considered imperative to their development. Generally, adults frowned upon the over indulgence of children, as it was supposed to incite weakness and idleness. The committee could not send the children to the Clio training ship without the approval of a surviving parent or relative. Evidence suggests that extended kin for the most part concurred, however, on some occasions, mothers in particular refused, as they were concerned for their children's safety.¹⁰⁸ The P.O.S. also sent boys to the Clio temporarily to recover from illness. 'Boy sent to the Clio, this course being considered necessary by the doctor as well as the committee who are aware that the lad requires to be well looked after'.¹⁰⁹ It was thought that the sea air would assist in the recuperation process.

¹⁰⁷ Case file register (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/2/1).

¹⁰⁸ Minutes of committee meetings (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/2/1).

¹⁰⁹ Minutes of apprentice sub-committee (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/2/3).

Figure 7.4 Hugh M., Brothers Thomas & Charles K. and George C. & William W.



Source: Album of photographs (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/5/10/1).

These photographs, at least two of which were taken in Bangor and may date from the 1870s to the 1890s, depict George C. and William C. at a very young age. They are likely to have been foster children who had absconded from their nurse repeatedly or sick children. As previously mentioned, boys were sent to the Clio for temporary periods due to illness, as a form of punishment, for apprentices who had eloped from their trade or to begin an apprenticeship as a seaman.

The P.O.S. could not easily translate their ordinary modes of inspection to sea life however they managed to report on the nineteen boys aboard the Clio training ship. Inspectors furnished the committee with a detailed report of the ship following their visit on Thursday, 22 August 1889. Having inspected all of the boys, they recorded that they all looked clean, healthy and happy, they had enough food to eat, and that they were orderly and well behaved.¹¹⁰ The inspector recorded that he had spoken to the apprentices by themselves rather than in front of their master leaving them able to speak freely of any possible problems.¹¹¹ They described the ship's captain in the following terms 'he is kind and gentle, but at the same time firm, which is what is essentially necessary where boys are concerned'.¹¹² Although, Captain Moger¹¹³ met with the inspectors' approval, the greater the number of adult staff on board, the greater the risk for apprentices. In addition, apprentices aboard the Clio were open to bullying from other boys.

The inspectors concluded their report by recommending the ship and the trade. However, one must allude to the likelihood that the harmonious atmosphere witnessed that day was not always so, these visits were sporadic, the location being so far from Dublin. Nevertheless, the placement of apprentices on a specific training ship run by a captain with whom the committee were familiar, far surpassed sending them haphazardly to ships and captains of whom they knew little. While many of the Clio boys went on to join the

¹¹⁰ Report on the Clio training ship in annual report, 1890 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/1/1, p. 22).

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ See photograph of Captain Moger, 9(b), p. 407.

navy or gain a berth on merchant ships with the assistance of Captain Moger, in other cases they returned home and commenced an alternative apprenticeship.¹¹⁴

Workhouses also arranged for male apprentices to go to sea. The 1851 Naval Apprentices (Ireland) Act¹¹⁵ enabled guardians to secure places for apprentices in the naval service.¹¹⁶ Apprentice mariners were placed out between the ages of twelve and seventeen years. The indenture was set for a minimum of four years and up to seven years. Apprentices had to prove they were sufficiently healthy. The presiding chairman of the board of guardians, the master and the apprentice, signed the indenture. The board of guardians provided the apprentice with an 'outfit of sea clothing, bedding and similar necessaries, to the value of five pounds'.¹¹⁷ Apprentices were then escorted by a 'constable or other trustworthy person to the port'.¹¹⁸ Supervision of apprentices on board was practically impossible. Therefore, it was only when the ship came to port that inspectors were in a position to make inquiries concerning the apprentice's welfare:

Any justice of the peace residing at or near to any port at which any ship having on board thereof any apprentice to the sea service under this act arrives may inquire into, hear, and determine all claims of any such apprentice upon his master under his indentures. All complaints of hard or ill usage exercised by his master towards him, or of misbehaviour on the part of any such apprentice, may proceed thereupon as justices of the peace are empowered by law to do between masters and apprentices.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁴ Case file registers (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/5/5-9).

¹¹⁵ 14 & 15 Vict., c. 35.

¹¹⁶ *A bill to extend the benefits of certain provisions of the general merchant seamen's act relating to apprentices bound to the sea service by boards of guardians of the poor in Ireland and to enable such guardians to place out boys in the naval service*, p. 3, H.C. 1851 (269), xiv (<http://parlipapers.chadwyck.co.uk>) (2 Jan. 2008).

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

The act protected apprentices by targeting the master's pocket. If the master refused to bring the apprentice on shore, he was fined ten pounds.¹²⁰ This legislation forced masters to rethink the level of punishment they applied. Nevertheless, without independent inspections on board the ship apprentices remained vulnerable to exploitation and abuse.

7.9 Deserters

Deserters or runaways were a common feature of the apprenticeship system. If an apprentice was unhappy, they were none the less bound to their trade. Unless the committee intervened and released them from the contract, they had to fulfil the terms or risk punishment handed down by the P.O.S. if they eloped without due cause, by their master and by the authorities. Running away often signified the apprentice's rejection of his/her subordinate place in their employers' home or prolonged mistreatment. Others left because they received better wages elsewhere. For instance, in 1868 Mr. Turner, a master from Leitrim, wrote to the P.O.S. to request another apprentice as 'George R. has left the place to take a higher salary'.¹²¹ Indentures stipulated that both master and apprentice should comply with the agreed terms.

The P.O.S. distributed a circular to all nurses in 1847 that requested them to turn away apprentice runaways, who if unhappy in their situation had a growing tendency to desert and return to their nurse:

The committee have seen in more than one instance, the evil effects of a nurse allowing orphans to return to her house, after they had been taken from it, for apprenticeship or otherwise. To allow them to do so, makes them think lightly of

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Register of incoming letters, 1868 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/3/1/13).

leaving their places, as they feel that at any time they have only to go off to their nurses and they would be more likely to stay contentedly wherever they are placed if they felt they had no where else to go.¹²²

Many orphans considered their foster families as permanent caregivers and returned to them in search of emotional stability and comfort.¹²³ The committee bound John W. in January 1843 as a shoemaker to Mr. S. for seven years. John's indenture broke down in 1846 because 'Mr. S. could not keep the boy as a consequence of not having enough work for two boys he was rebound to Mr. B. 19 August 1846 to finish his time'.¹²⁴ However, he ran away from Mr. B's and returned to reside with his former nurse in November of that year, a clear indicator of the strong relationship forged between foster parent and child. The committee feared that if apprentices returned to their nurse it would threaten their chances of serving their full term.

Deserters faced various serious penalties that ranged from verbal admonishment to punishment by magistrates. 'Both a master who did not pay on time and an apprentice who deserted before his term was up, knew exactly what rule he transgressed and what consequences he might face in the courts'.¹²⁵ If both the apprentice, master and the P.O.S. agreed on the indenture's cancellation, the involved parties took no further action. For instance, on 24 November 1837, 'Mrs. H has called at the office to state that Martha C. had left her house three days ago without leave and had not since been heard of. Mrs. H expressed her desire that the committee would cancel the indenture as she did not wish to

¹²² Scrapbooks (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, 1045/6/2).

¹²³ Similar evidence in Lerner R. Berlanstein, 'Growing up as workers in nineteenth-century Paris: the case of the orphans of the Prince Imperial', in *French Historical Journal*, xi, no.4 (1980), pp 551-77.

¹²⁴ Case file register (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/5/1).

¹²⁵ Parr, *Labouring children*, p.84.

keep the girl'.¹²⁶ The committee contacted Martha's nurse to inquire of her whereabouts and ordered her return to Dublin without delay.

In 1863, William O. wrote to his sister to inform her of his arrest on charges of desertion. He suggested that she contact the P.O.S. committee for advice:

Mr. C. (William's master) fetched me and I was taken off to Chancery Lane station and then to the head office and tried there for to stand my trial on Monday week next. I think if you would go to Mr. Jepps and ask him his opinion of whether I would stop with Mr. C. until then or not. For I would not stop in the gaol until Monday week, for if I was to serve the remainder of my time with him I think it would be better for me to give him the winter. Write soon and let me know Mr. Jepp's opinion.¹²⁷

William had absconded from his master, a saddler in Wicklow, and found other work. His sister met with him at an earlier date, and provided him with an over coat, and other clothing that Mr. C. had failed to supply. The indenture was cancelled and William averted any further punishment. The parish clergymen later wrote to Mr. Jepp's secretary to the P.O.S. and remarked that he was glad that William was out of Mr. C.'s hands.¹²⁸

Henry C. was bound to Rev. C. in Fermanagh as a servant 20 May 1840. He ran away 23 April 1842 from his master and came to Dublin. Once found and brought before a magistrate he promised to return to his master. On this basis, the magistrate discharged him. However, when the time came and the coach was ready to depart Henry refused to go. Henry came before the magistrate again on 30 April 1842, aged fifteen. The magistrate sentenced him to one month's imprisonment with solitary confinement, an

¹²⁶ Minutes of committee meetings (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/2/1/2).

¹²⁷ Letter in registered application files, 26 Sept. 1863 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/5/1).

¹²⁸ Letter in registered application files, 1863 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/5/1).

extremely severe punishment. A member of the P.O.S. committee saw to Henry's release and subsequently took him into his service. While there was a great deal of successful placements, young apprentices also endured hardship such as severe punishment at the hands of their master/mistress, and the possibility of imprisonment if they chose to desert.

7.10 Positive outcomes of apprenticeship

If an employer treated an apprentice well, they usually responded in kind. The measure of a good apprentice included attributes such as obedience, conscientiousness, honesty, the ability to learn and enthusiasm for the trade. Charles L. began his apprenticeship with Mr. B. in Gorey as a Blacksmith in September 1862. The inspector observed on one visit that Charles was very eager to learn his trade. He even complained that he did not get a fire in the forge (his master would not allow him to work as headman at the fire).¹²⁹ The inspector and his master praised Charles's enthusiasm for the trade and his consistent hard work and ambition.

The following three case studies confirm the possibility for productive working relationships between employer and apprentice. The committee discussed an inspector's report on an apprentice named John C. July 1838. The inspector stated:

‘I found the master had treated C. well in every respect. The boy has all the appearance of being well cared and on examination, I ascertained that he has made a reasonable proficiency in his trade. The boy gave an excellent account of his master he says he is extremely kind to him and gives him the fare of his own table in abundance’.¹³⁰

¹²⁹ Apprentice inspection reports, 1860 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/6/7/9).

¹³⁰ Minutes of committee meetings (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, Ms 1045/2/1/1).

For the majority of families, the dinner table represents the inner sanctum of any home, as at it people talk more freely and openly. The master in this case therefore accepted the young boy as a friend/family member as well as a worker.

An inspector reported 11 October 1859 that Margaret R., bound to Miss N. of Lower Gloucester Street, Dublin, was 'very comfortably clothed, gets on with her mistress very favourably, there are no complaints on either side and the orphan seems cheerful and content'.¹³¹ This case presents the ideal result of an apprenticeship placement in which both apprentice and employer built up a mutually beneficial relationship, which succeeded because there was an emotional link between them.

A report dated 1860 made by John F. Luther curate of Kilrush, read, 'I constantly visit the boys with Mr. P. and consider them very well conducted, attentive to their business and regular attendants at church and Sunday school, happy and contented; I believe Mr. P. treats them as he does his own children'.¹³² For the apprenticeship to work well, the employer needed to include the young apprentice as part of his household. Moreover, two P.O.S. apprentices working together added to the potential for familiarity and therefore contentment in the workplace.

An inspector who reported on Thomas W. September 1862, an apprentice boot and shoemaker, praised the progress that he had made in his trade. He remarked that 'the apprentice is fortunate in being an inmate of a house where kindness and propensity of

¹³¹ Apprentice inspection reports, 1859 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/6/7/9).

¹³² *Ibid.*, 1860.

conduct pervades. He is treated as a relative or friend and in every particular he is watched over with affection'.¹³³ The clergyman who inspected the case noted that he saw Thomas nearly every day and that he had repeatedly observed his general cheerfulness.¹³⁴

7.11 Potential risks for apprentices

Conversely, the following examples demonstrate the negative and potentially harmful situations in which apprentices found themselves despite the committee's efforts to protect them. A report made August 1860 regarding Jeremiah C. bound to Mr. T. Carnew who was a farmer and miller, revealed the master's mistreatment of the boy. The inspector described him as 'healthy enough but not well cared, his clothes were torn and worn, learns nothing whatsoever of the trade of miller having been kept on the farm, only tolerable relationship between master and apprentice'.¹³⁵ The inspector noted, 'I think the lad should be looked after and master compelled to clothe him and give him his trade as miller'.¹³⁶ The master in this case showed no regard for the contract terms and seriously exploited the apprentice by giving him only very hard physical work to do while neglecting to instruct him in his trade.

The Cork P.O.S. also received unfavourable reports from their inspectors, on 2 June 1862, Mr. Clarke reported on the charges against John F. in his conduct towards Edward G., his apprentice. The inspector proved the master's drunkenness and theft of his apprentice's possessions, removed Edward from Mr. F. and cancelled his indentures. In

¹³³ Apprentice inspection reports, 1862 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/6/7/9).

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

Dublin, a comparable complaint of drunkenness against a master concerned an orphan named George S. bound to Mr. B. as a tailor. An inspection dated September 1862 shed light on the boy's situation. The apprentice in this case when interviewed did not complain of mistreatment. However, the inspector posited, 'I think it only right to say that Mr. B has not of late been conducting himself in a very satisfactory manner, he is occasionally given to drink and his business is not in a very wholesome condition in consequence'.¹³⁷ Apprentices sometimes chose to remain in poor circumstances as a means of preserving their place within a family circle. Understandably, orphans who had no other kin considered their employer's home as their only home and some did not wish to give up that sense of belonging even if it meant suffering neglect.

The following case documents the extremely cruel treatment of an apprentice by her mistress. 'Masters commonly assumed the right to administer corporal punishment, but this degenerated all too often into an unnecessary brutality'.¹³⁸ The case involved an apprentice named Mary Anne M. Mrs. M. relinquished her daughter to the P.O.S. following the death of her husband a former shoemaker and sexton of Castleknock Church.¹³⁹ The committee boarded out Mary Anne to Mrs. C., Coolkenno, County Carlow. The P.O.S. later bound her, then aged fourteen to a Mrs. O., Clontarf as a children's maid for three years.

¹³⁷ Apprentice inspector reports (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/6/7/9).

¹³⁸ Lenard R. Berlanstein, 'Growing up as workers in nineteenth-century Paris: the case of the orphans of the Prince Imperial' in *French Historical Journal*, xi, no. 4 (1980), pp 551-77, p. 566.

¹³⁹ Case file register (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/5/1).

The *Irish Times* featured an article based on ‘A serious charge against a mistress, alleged cruelty to a servant’ in an issue dated 12 December 1890. The Coolock petty sessions before Sir Ralph Cusack, Mr. James O’Malley and Captain Stubbs heard a summons against Mrs. O., from Clontarf charged with ‘wilfully ill-treating Mary Anne M. a girl under the age of sixteen years, while in her employment as a servant during the past twelve months’.¹⁴⁰ Mr. Jepps, then secretary to the P.O.S., held an inquiry into Mary Anne’s case as soon as he was informed of her desertion. He cancelled her indentures at this time and later attended the court proceedings.¹⁴¹ Mary Anne’s statement outlines the alleged cruelty that her mistress subjected her to while apprenticed:

Soon after going to Mrs. O.’s service her mistress beat her with a stick and also with a whip. Some time in August last, she made witness lie down in the back parlour and take off her clothes and she then beat the witness with a dog whip. All her clothes were off except her chemise, and she was beaten about the legs and shoulders. The reason given for the beating was that she fell asleep while minding the baby. The beating left many marks upon her legs and back. The defendant beat her previously with a stick and on one occasion ran a needle into her shoulder and broke it. Another girl who was in the place had to take the piece of needle out. Witness stated that Mrs. O. struck her upon the head with a sauce pan and cut her.¹⁴²

Mary Anne stated that Mrs. O. beat her because she had allowed the children to pick flowers in the garden, because she fell asleep when she should have been working and finally because she accidentally let an infant child slip from her arms. Essentially, Mrs. O. gave Mary Anne the tasks and responsibilities of an adult. She lived in this house with Mrs. O. and her family for approximately nine months. She claimed that she asked her mistress if she could write a letter to her mother but she refused. Mary Anne testified that she ran away following another beating the previous night. She stated that she left

¹⁴⁰ *Irish Times*, 12 Dec. 1890, in scrapbooks (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, 1045/6/2).

¹⁴¹ Case file register (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/5/5).

¹⁴² *Ibid.*

the place at three o'clock in the morning after she found the scullery door open. She ran to her mother who brought her to a doctor in Castleknock.

The dispensary officer of the Castleknock district testified, 'that he examined the girl and found the upper part of her body including her head and arms in a frightful state of bruises – actually black and blue. There were either two or three lacerated wounds on the head. The wounds were evidently produced by some round, blunt instrument, probably a stick'.¹⁴³ The medical evidence in the case was strong enough to warrant a trial, however the defence claimed, 'a number of the statements made by the girl were entirely without foundation'.¹⁴⁴ Mary Anne claimed that a doctor examined her at Blanchardstown but a police sergeant present noted that this statement was untrue at which point Mr. B. for defence contended that all of Mary Anne's claims were false. The defence presented Mary Anne as a liar, to discredit both her character and her testimony and to protect Mrs. O. from prosecution. On the other hand, they depicted Mrs. O. as a respectable, middle-class mother and wife. Case file registers indicate that the court convicted Mrs. O. and sentenced her to two months in prison.¹⁴⁵ Mary Anne returned to reside with her mother.¹⁴⁶

Adults regularly resorted to beating young people for making errors in their work whether in school, at home or as apprentices. However, the degree of punishment meted out to them, depended a great deal on the adult's own personal character. In Mary

¹⁴³ *Irish Times*, 12 Dec. 1890, in scrapbooks (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, 1045/6/2).

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁵ Case file register (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/5/5).

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

Anne's case, the severity (and the court referred to it as such) a case of 'cruelty' was a stark reminder of the need for constant and strict supervision of apprentices.

Quite apart from the risks associated with severe punishment from their master or mistress, apprentices faced physical danger directly related to their place of work. Agriculturally based apprenticeships were open to accidents either with livestock or work tools. Farm work was precarious. It could and did lead to many accidents. For instance, on 30 May 1890, the committee received notification of an unfortunate incident at Ballyredmond House, Clonegal, County Carlow:

I am sorry to say we had an accident here, the first in fifteen years, poor little orphan B. crushed one of his fingers so badly in the cogwheel of a turnip machine that two joints had to be taken off. I drove him at once to Newtownbarry and had a consultation with two doctors on the spot. We decided it was absolutely necessary to take off the two joints, in order to save it. I sent nurse Beale with him at once to the county infirmary at Wexford. I hope he was safely housed there before the hand had time to swell.¹⁴⁷

The boy in this case sustained a serious injury, one that emphasises the challenges that some young apprentices had to overcome throughout their apprenticeship.

7.12 Involvement of surviving parents/extended kin in the apprenticeship system

Generally, surviving parents or extended kin viewed apprenticeships as a useful and important opportunity provided by the P.O.S. for their children. However, if they were in a position to do so, they approached the P.O.S. for permission to train their young relatives in their own trade. The P.O.S. approved these requests once they established the family's respectability. Two case studies define the role taken by extended kin.

¹⁴⁷ Incoming letters, 1898 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/3/1/25).

Eliza W. was aged four and a half when admitted to the P.O.S. 28 July 1842 following the death of her father who had worked as a shoemaker. On 30 July 1850, the P.O.S. approved of Eliza's return to her mother on the undertaking 'that she would teach her, her own business as a boot and shoe binder'.¹⁴⁸ John S. was aged five and a half when admitted to the P.O.S. on 29 May 1838 following the death of his parents. The committee sent him to apprentice class Percy Place 1846. In the same year on 25 July, he was bound to his uncle John H. Westmoreland Street, Dublin to learn the trade of copper smith.

Surviving parents, extended kin, or older siblings also sometimes offered their input with regard to the future placement of apprentices. William B. wrote to the committee concerning his younger brother George in 1898. He pointed out in his letter that he and his mother appreciated the committee's assistance in arranging George's admission to the Morgan School to finish his education. The committee had also arranged an apprenticeship for the boy with Messrs Curtis to, 'train him for bookkeeping and to learn shop incidentals'.¹⁴⁹ William highlighted his younger brother's academic achievements in French, arithmetic, and shorthand.¹⁵⁰

William and his mother suggested that, 'we are inclined to think with all due respect to the committee that my brother is more fitted for purely office business such as in land agents stock brokers or solicitors office and my brother says he would be more content

¹⁴⁸ Case file register (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/5/1).

¹⁴⁹ Incoming letters, 1898 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/3/1/25).

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

with such employment'.¹⁵¹ His brother William then arranged for him to commence work with a solicitor. 'My brother likes the place very well and I think he will get on well at it as he seems most fitted for it'.¹⁵² He concluded his letter with a request for the committee's approval on the matter and apologised for any intrusion. He indicated that he had his brother's best interests at heart. To challenge the committee on matters such as apprenticeship showed strong concern for the child's future. It also signalled a decrease in the level of accepted control exercised by the P.O.S. and a rise in the involvement of surviving parents and extended kin.

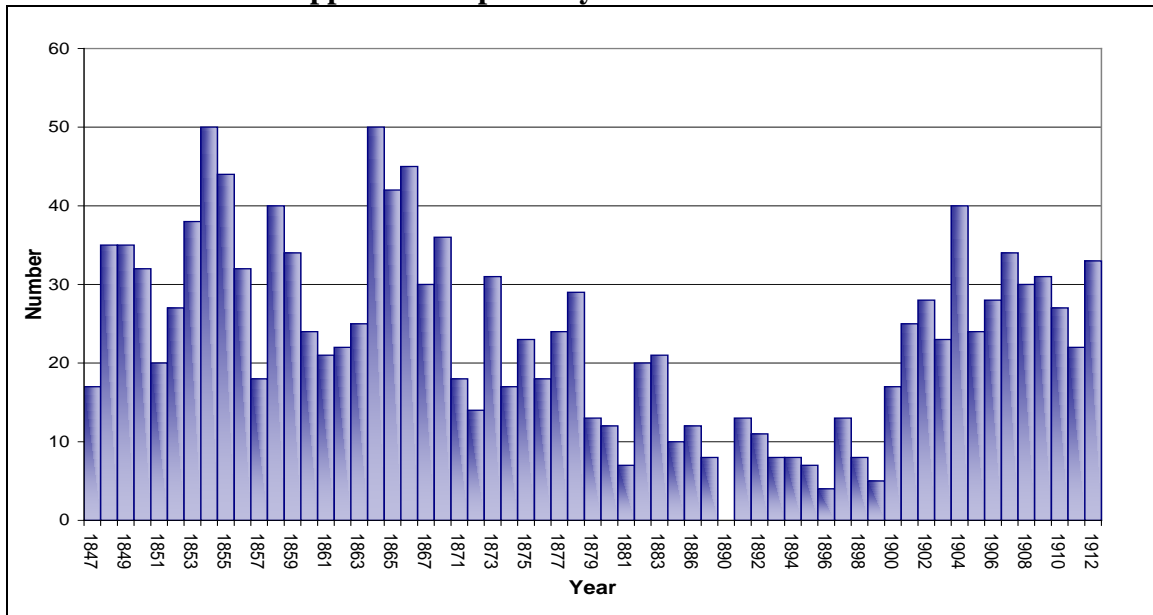
According to annual reports, the total number of orphans apprenticed or otherwise provided for (which meant the children may have returned home, emigrated, been cared for by extended kin, secured employment, or continued education) by all Protestant orphan societies from their establishment to 1895 was in the region of 18,525.¹⁵³ By 1899, the P.O.S. in Dublin recorded that it had apprenticed 1,769 of the 4,122 orphans they had admitted from their foundation. These figures were drawn from annual reports and should be treated with caution. The purpose of the annual report was to present the work of the society in a positive light in order to attract further patronage. Evidence from apprentice indentures and case file registers can partly verify these figures. Cancellation of indentures was relatively common and must also be taken into consideration.

¹⁵¹ Incoming letters, 1898 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/3/1/25).

¹⁵² *Ibid.*

¹⁵³ Refer to breakdown of figures by province, pp 414-15.

Chart 7.3 Apprenticeships set by the P.O.S. in Dublin 1847-1912



Source: Annual report, 1895 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/1/1).

The numbers of apprenticeships set depended on the number of children on the society roll. Decreases in the number of apprenticeships per year also occurred because the number of young people ready to begin their trade in terms of the appropriate age and education varied from year to year. Downturns in agricultural output and associative trade meant fewer openings for apprentices evidenced in the peaks and troughs that correspond with bad harvest years 1859-64, 1879-81 and the 1890s. Emigration and dependency on the workhouse increased dramatically and limited the possible placement of P.O.S. apprentices.

The P.O.S. in Dublin continued to apprentice youngsters, or to provide them with alternative training or employment. The committee reported in 1917 that a number of their wards had taken up full time employment in place of apprenticeship. The following companies offered them a situation or an apprenticeship; the Great Northern Railway,

The Laird Steamer Line, Sir Howard Grubb's Ltd, North British Mercantile Insurance company, Church of Ireland Printing company, Ponsonby & Gibbs, Winstanley & Co., and Arthur Guinness's brewery, Switzers, W & R Jacob's biscuit factory , Easons and Weir's Jewellers.

This chapter has analysed the P.O.S. apprenticeship system and the various experiences of orphans bound to a master or mistress to learn their trade. Examination of individual case studies has illustrated the positive and negative sides to apprenticeship and the strict boundaries set by the master/mistress and the P.O.S. The P.O.S. in Dublin prioritised the regular supervision of apprentices. Their policy yielded many successful placements. However, despite their efforts, in certain cases, apprentices endured exploitation and severe punishment. The 'Apprentice Relief Fund' cushioned the fall for those denied the opportunity of serving their time through no fault of their own. Overall, by means of the P.O.S. apprenticeship scheme, young people, who would not otherwise have had this opportunity, gained an extremely valuable trade that would greatly enhance their prospects in adulthood.

Conclusion

Children in the nineteenth century were to a large degree predisposed to experience the death of one or both of their parents. High mortality rates caused by famines and diseases such as cholera, tuberculosis, typhus simultaneously generated an increase in the number of destitute and orphaned children. Considering the number of children resident in orphanages, orphan societies, workhouses, and reformatories it is clear that a substantial proportion of children in Irish society from 1828 to 1928 shared in a fractured childhood. From the mid-nineteenth century, social debate on the issue of welfare mechanisms for destitute children in Ireland and internationally, underscored the significance of the problem at that juncture. Legislation to protect children was introduced in 1879, 1889, 1894, and most significantly in 1908. Improvements in education and standards of living also gradually defined childhood as a distinct part of life's cycle that in turn altered adult perceptions and treatment of children.

This thesis has endeavoured to piece together the lives of one group of welfare children who suffered displacement because of their parents' death. Fresh insights into the lives of the parents and extended kin who admitted their children to the P.O.S. have also been gained. Furthermore, attention has been drawn to the framework of the P.O.S. in Dublin, the basis for its foundation, its funding and management and the development of county Protestant orphan societies.

The exceptional source material that relates to the P.O.S. in Dublin, with a superb photographic collection and impeccable records kept by successive committees has enabled analysis of the life cycle of children from their childhood through adolescence into adulthood. However, it has been imperative to question the reliability of specific sources. It must be borne in mind that particularly the annual reports produced by the society presents only a positive view of their work. The use of additional material such as the minutes, registers, inspection reports, application files, Kinsey fund application files, and correspondence from clergymen, mothers, extended kin, and orphans combined with the annual reports has produced a more accurate representation of their work.

The collective efforts of the artisan founders, the Church of Ireland clergy, and laity fuelled support for the society in Dublin and the establishment of county societies throughout Ireland. Motivations for backing Protestant orphan societies depended on the individual but included a combination of benevolence in times of hardship and responses to the religious and political milieu. According to the P.O.S. itself and many of its supporters, the society was founded to provide practical aid for less well off Protestant widows and children and to act as a protector of children's faith. Allegations of proselytising were made against the P.O.S. in the 1850s. The prominence of the I.C.M., and the growing influence of Archbishop Cullen brought this contentious issue to the forefront of religious conflict. Orphaned and destitute children represented the most vulnerable group in the quest to save souls that ensued. The legacy of distrust and suspicion that led to inter-denominational disputes concerning proselytising continued into the twentieth century.

Amongst others, women such as Rosa Barrett and Isabella Tod were noteworthy figures in reformatory philanthropy and the social debate on effective measures to protect children in the latter part of the nineteenth century. Women's initial visibility in the political and social arena was possible through their prolific philanthropic work and as part of the suffrage movement. Women's work in the P.O.S. was multifaceted. Responsible for the care of the orphans as nurses, matrons, and later as members of visiting committees, women also engaged in fundraising and collections on behalf of the society. Women's status in the Church of Ireland and the dominance of clergymen in the management of the P.O.S. somewhat restricted their role when compared with other philanthropic organisations in which women took the lead. None the less, women's input although largely informal was an imperative component of the overall management of the P.O.S. in Dublin and other counties.

The P.O.S. in Dublin depended on three main sources of income, legacies, subscriptions and fundraising events. External factors such as economic slowdowns due to disease and famine, unemployment and the outbreak of war contributed to deficits. County Protestant orphan societies managed their own separate accounts. The financial security of each society relied for the most part on the amount raised from legacies and the manner in which these funds were disposed. Legacies were an imperative source of income that enabled the foundation of numerous funds dedicated to the improvement of children's education, practical training, and long-term care.

The death of a spouse commonly meant the breakdown of the family unit sometimes on a permanent basis. Due to women's narrow employment prospects, widows in particular faced a bleak future. Women developed strategies to overcome the challenges they encountered in widowhood and utilised the services provided by the P.O.S. to meet their own needs. Many women had no option but to surrender their children as part of a family survival strategy. Analysis of the relinquishment process has illustrated women's misgivings with regard to reaching this decision and the psychological pain involved in a child leaving their surviving parent. Controlled communication sanctioned by the P.O.S. between the parent/extended kin of the children post-admission somewhat relieved the pain of separation. All means of contact encouraged the successful reunion of family members at a later date, whether older siblings, surviving parents or extended kin.

At the time the P.O.S. in Dublin formed, apart from the Catholic orphan societies that operated a boarding out system, institutions and orphanages were the mainstay of care for destitute and orphaned children. Failed attempts by the foundling hospitals to manage the system adequately were proof of the potential risks. In their attempt to pursue this welfare model, the P.O.S. was presented with extensive problems. Foster care was by the very nature of its structure, open to abuse if ineffectively managed.

Foster children admitted to the P.O.S. in Dublin were sent to reside with Protestant families in County Wicklow. The quality of life for foster children varied and was dependent on the success of their placement. Despite the efforts made by the committee, some children were placed in unsuitable homes. Combating neglect was perhaps their

greatest challenge. Inspectors had to monitor the children vigilantly. Regular unannounced visits were a critical aspect of P.O.S. policy that reduced rather than eliminated cases of neglect. Low mortality rates recorded by the society suggest the good overall standard of care provided. In the 1870s, contemporary social reformers such as Isabella Tod recognised the high standards achieved by the P.O.S. and St. Brigid's Catholic boarding-out system.

Many children in the nineteenth century worked from a young age and were treated much the same as adults. The P.O.S. enabled their wards to learn a trade with Protestant masters and mistresses. Mechanisms in place to assist apprentices included the Apprentice Relief Fund.¹ The fund provided small grants for apprentices whose indentures were cancelled through no fault of their own. The codes of conduct that masters and mistresses set for their apprentices were typically strict as were the corresponding punishments. Apprentices encountered a spectrum of treatment from employers. At the lower end of the scale, apprentices endured exploitation and severe punishment. Regular P.O.S. inspections were fundamental in the detection of such cases. Apprentices who gained their trade successfully were equipped with the practical tools required to advance to the next phase of their lives as independent adults.

¹Corresponds only to the P.O.S. in Dublin.

Analysis of orphans' lives post-apprenticeship has portrayed the obstacles they faced in adulthood. It has also shown the way in which the committee members and staff facilitated their transition into full-time employment and in some cases marriage. The P.O.S. proactively encouraged marriage through the auspices of the 'Kinsey Marriage Portion Fund Charity'. The Kinsey fund and good conduct premiums were an excellent means of inducing youngsters to work conscientiously for their future and remain faithful to both their religious upbringing and their apprenticeship. It offered adolescents with an otherwise grim future something to work for, a goal and direction for their adult lives.

The once dominant role the P.O.S. had assumed as a Church of Ireland affiliated charitable society had somewhat diminished by the early twentieth century, yet the casualties of World War I, losses due to the flu epidemic of 1918-1919 and continued cases of poverty meant that Protestant widows and orphans still required their assistance. In 1919, discussion commenced on the possible amalgamation of some of the smaller scale Protestant orphan societies. However, amalgamation did not occur at this time. A report compiled by the P.O.S. in Dublin concluded that local Protestant orphan societies did not welcome the suggestion to merge with other societies. Each local society had the warm support of loyal subscribers. The report contended that if the community aspect of the society was removed the subscribers would no longer retain the same pride and interest in its work.

From its foundation in 1828 to its centenary year, the P.O.S. in Dublin had assisted 5,495 children. County Protestant orphan societies and local auxiliaries helped in the region of fifteen thousand children by the early years of the twentieth century. The P.O.S. in Dublin paved the way for later county Protestant orphan societies, the Presbyterian Orphan Society established in 1866 and the Methodist Orphan Society founded in 1870. These societies and Catholic run boarding-out systems such as St. Brigid's all contributed to reforms in Irish child care policy.

Ireland introduced legal adoption legislation in 1952. The P.O.S. continued its contributions to child welfare and worked closely with the Protestant Adoption Association also established in 1952. Today, the majority of county Protestant orphan societies continue to operate on some level. The Limerick P.O.S. sought to broaden its scope and extend its services in 2003. It is now known as the Limerick Protestant Orphan and Child Care Society.

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1. Protestant Orphan Society (Dublin) application form dated 1845

PROTESTANT ORPHAN SOCIETY.

OFFICE 16, UPPER SACKVILLE-STREET.

FOUNDED A.D. 1828.

FORM OF APPLICATION FOR THE ADMISSION OF AN ORPHAN.

I ⁽¹⁾ Katherine Guilan being the ⁽³⁾ Mother of ⁽⁹⁾ Katherine Guilan who is now residing at Philipsburgh Avenue Parish of Drumcondra who was born on the 27th day of September 1838 last, humbly solicit that he may be received under the protection of the Protestant Orphan Society; and I do hereby promise, consent, and agree, that if he be elected, he shall be entirely given up to the care and management of the Committee of said Society, to be by them disposed of, and when fit, apprenticed, or otherwise provided for in such place and manner as the Committee shall decide. The Child's Father is ⁽⁴⁾ deceased and a ⁽⁵⁾ Protestant and by occupation a ⁽⁶⁾ Laborer. The Mother is ⁽⁴⁾ Living and a ⁽⁵⁾ Protestant and by occupation a ⁽⁶⁾ Servant and this Orphan has no Brothers and not any Sisters, ⁽⁷⁾ either in Dublin six years of age 27 September 1844

Dated this 21st day of February 1845 ⁽⁸⁾ John Wick residing at Richmond Lunatic Asylum

We, the undersigned Subscribers to the Society, recommend the foregoing Katherine Guilan to the Committee.

Subscribers' Names.	Residence.
1 <u>John Black</u>	<u>46 Mountjoy Street</u>
2 <u>C. St. Michel</u>	<u>8 Sion Hill Place</u>
3 <u>Eliza Hardy</u>	<u>10 Fred. St. D.</u>
4 <u>Harriet Hardy</u>	<u>10 St. Andrew's</u>
5 <u>Edw. J. J. J.</u>	<u>Richmond Avenue</u>
6 <u>Jane Smith</u>	<u>210 St. St.</u>

Persons signing this Certificate are liable to have the Child returned to them, if the Statement should afterwards be found untrue in any particular.

I do hereby certify that, to the best of my belief, the particulars detailed in the above statement are strictly correct.

Dated the twentieth day of March 1845

To be signed by the Minister or Curate of the Parish in which the Child resides. } William } Minister or Curate of Drumcondra

I have seen and examined the Child, named in this form of application, and believe it to be of sound mind, and that it has no bodily infirmity, which is likely to make it incapable of labour, or a burden on the Society. It has not had the small-pox.

Dated the 11th day of March 1845

To be signed by MAURICE COLLIS, Esq. M.D.; JOSHUA SMYLEY, Esq. M.D.; or, HOWARD COOKE, Esq. M.D. if in Dublin; if in the country, by some respectable Medical Practitioner. } William J. J. J. F. O. G. S. J. } 48 Hardwicke Street

DIRECTIONS FOR FILLING THE BLANKS LEFT ABOVE.

(1) Name of nearest Relative or Friend applying. (2) State Relationship. (3) Child's Name and Residence. (4) Living or dead. (5) Religion. (6) Occupation. (7) State Names and Ages. (8) Signature of Applicant and Residence. N.B.—The Marriage Certificate of the Parents, the Baptismal Certificate of the Applicant, and the Burial Certificate of the Child, must accompany this Petition; or if these cannot be procured, such documentary Proof shall be produced on these subjects as to the Committee shall be satisfactory.

2. Second part of P.O.S. application form dated 1844

We are directed to request, that you will have the kindness to return, at your earliest convenience, replies to the following Queries, in reference to the case of the Orphan,

in whose behalf a memorial has been laid before the Committee.

As the funds of the Society enable the Committee to select only a very limited number out of the many Candidates that are presented for admission, and as Country Children are necessarily placed in disadvantageous competition with those who are on the spot, and whose claims have been minutely investigated by Members of the Committee, we are directed to point out to you the importance of your giving, on the other side, the fullest information as to every circumstance (not embraced by the Queries,) that you think renders this Child deserving of the consideration of the Society.

We are Sir,

Your Obedient Servants,

No. IV.

Can you state of your own knowledge that they were both Protestants? What opinion have you formed of their characters respectively?

QUERIES.

No. I.

Do you know the Subscribers to the memorial to be contributors to the Funds of the Society, and that they are not in arrear?

No. V.

Were the Parents, or either of them, Subscribers to the Funds of the Society while able to contribute?

No. II.

Are they resident in the Parish or County in which the child resides, and if not, be good enough to state why Subscribers resident therein have not signed the memorial?

No. VI.

Is it your opinion that the surviving Parent unequal to the charge of providing for the Child? And what are her present circumstances and ulterior prospects?

No. III.

Were you acquainted with the deceased parent? and are you acquainted with the surviving parent?

Registered application files (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/5/3/1).

3. Protestant Orphan Society (Dublin) admission rules

I. The object of this society is to provide diet, lodging, clothing and scriptural education for destitute orphans of Protestant parents and to apprentice them to Protestant masters or mistresses of approved religious principles and conduct.

II. A committee of thirty-one members, including the two honorary secretaries, shall be annually elected to transact the business of the society, with power to fill up whatever vacancies may occur in their body and to make by laws for the regulation of their own proceedings.

III. Every child (whose age does not exceed nine years) whose father is dead, or whose mother is dead, and the father, though living, rendered incapable of supporting his family, by mental or bodily infirmity, shall be considered to be received under the protection of the society. The child of a widow who has married again is inadmissible.

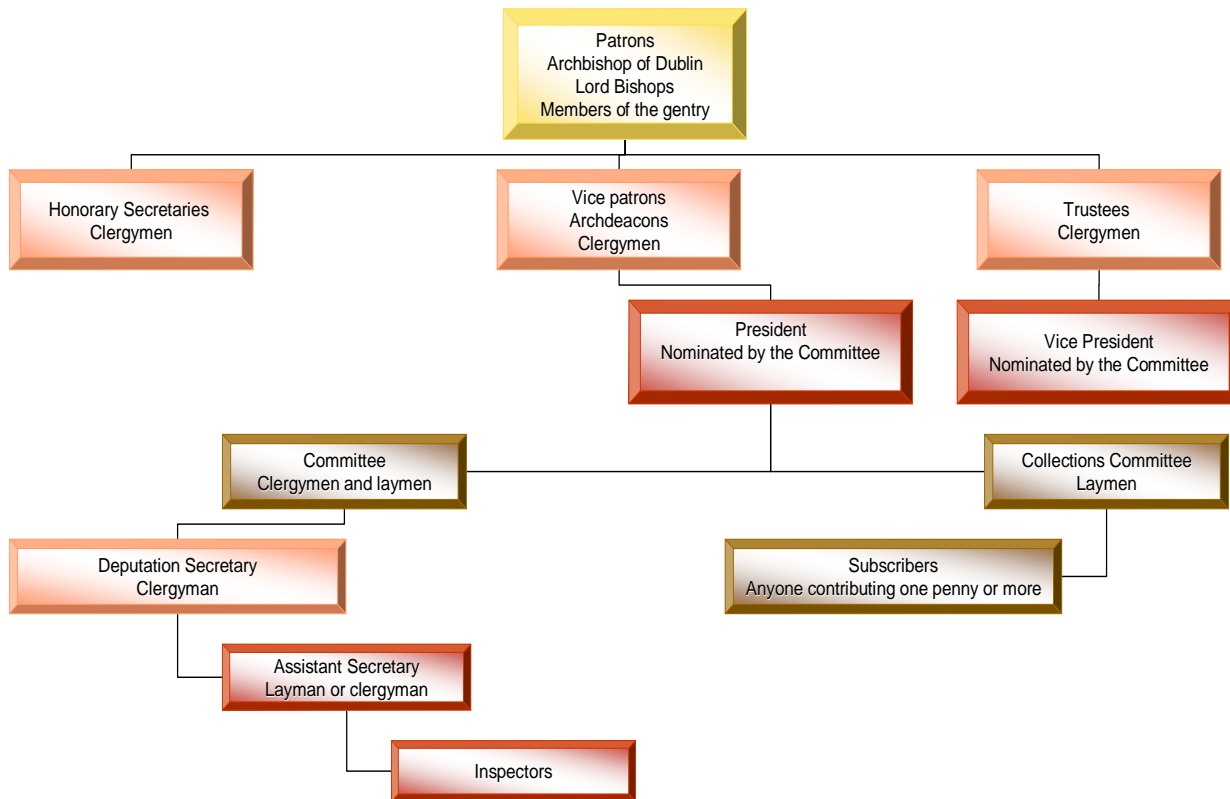
IV. All applications on behalf of orphans must be made by memorial according to such form as the committee may prescribe, signed by six subscribers who have paid at least six months subscription at the rate of at least one penny per week. And who must undertake to be accountable to the society that the claimant is a proper object, and that no imposition is attempted.

V. Every memorial must be accompanied by such guarantees or securities as the committee may require and also by certificates of the marriage of the parents, the baptism of the child, and the burial of the deceased parent or parents. Or in case these cannot be procured, by such documentary or other evidence upon these points as shall prove satisfactory to the committee. A certificate of the child's mental and bodily soundness (signed if the child be in Dublin, by one of the medical inspectors of the society; if in the country, by some respectable medical practitioner) is also indispensable.

VI. Memorials for the admission of orphans must be lodged in the office on or before the second Friday in January, March, May, July and September.

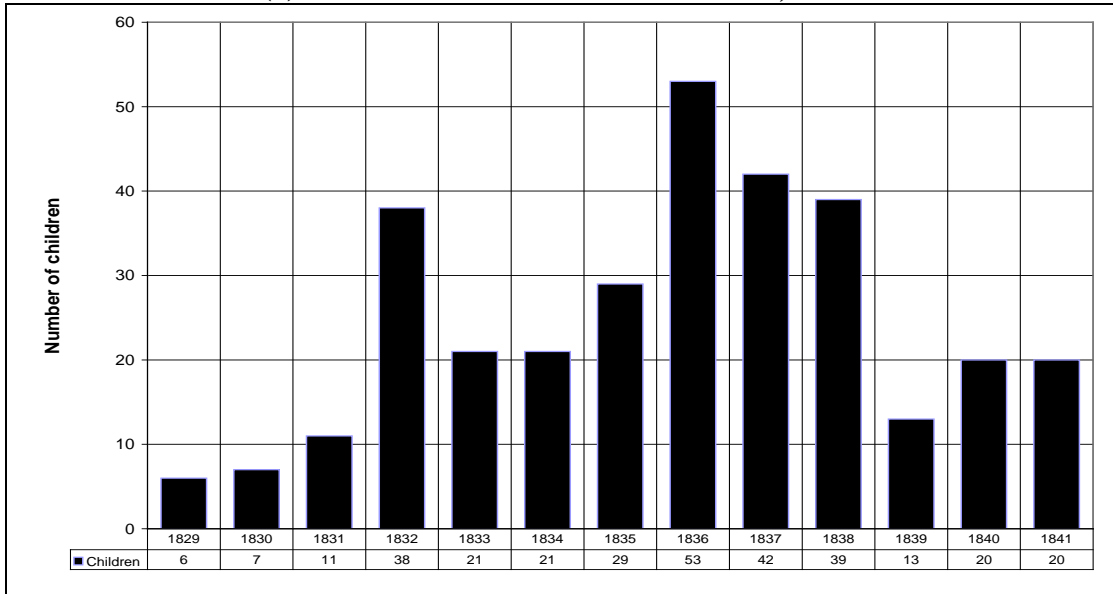
Source: Annual report, 1872 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/1/1).

3. Protestant Orphan Society (Dublin) management structure, 1830



Source: Annual report, 1831 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/1/1).

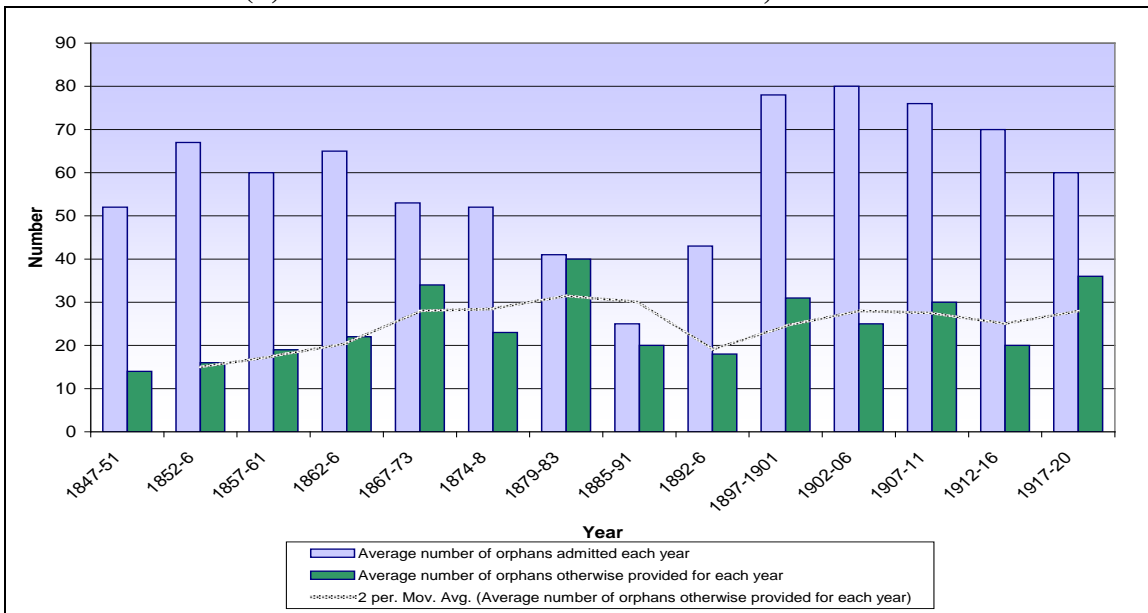
4. (a) Admissions to the P.O.S. in Dublin, 1829-41



Source: Annual reports, 1829-41 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/1/1).

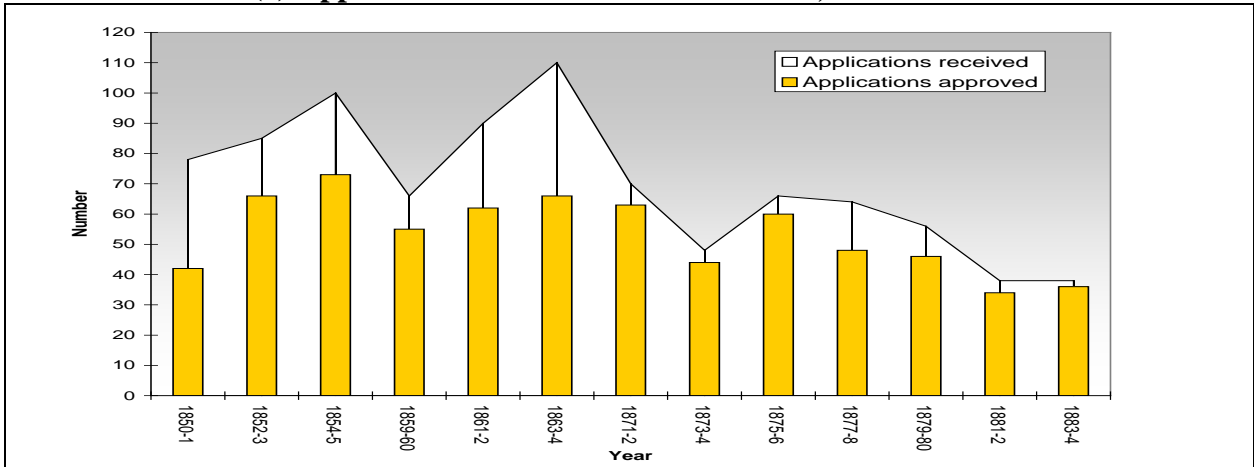
Increases in admission numbers are clear with a sharp peak in 1832 because of the cholera outbreak.

(b) Admissions to the P.O.S. in Dublin, 1847-1920



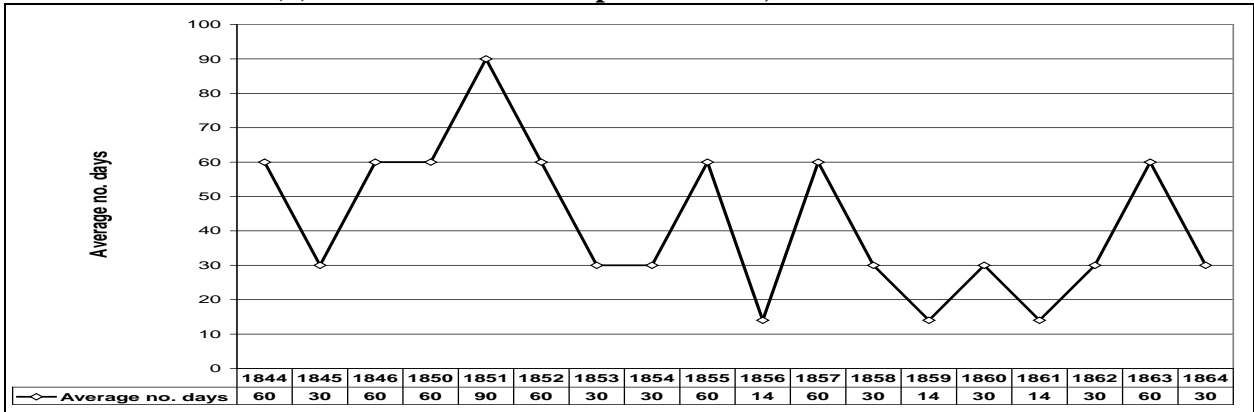
Source: Annual reports, 1847-1920 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/1/1).

5. (a) Applications made to P.O.S. in Dublin, 1850-84



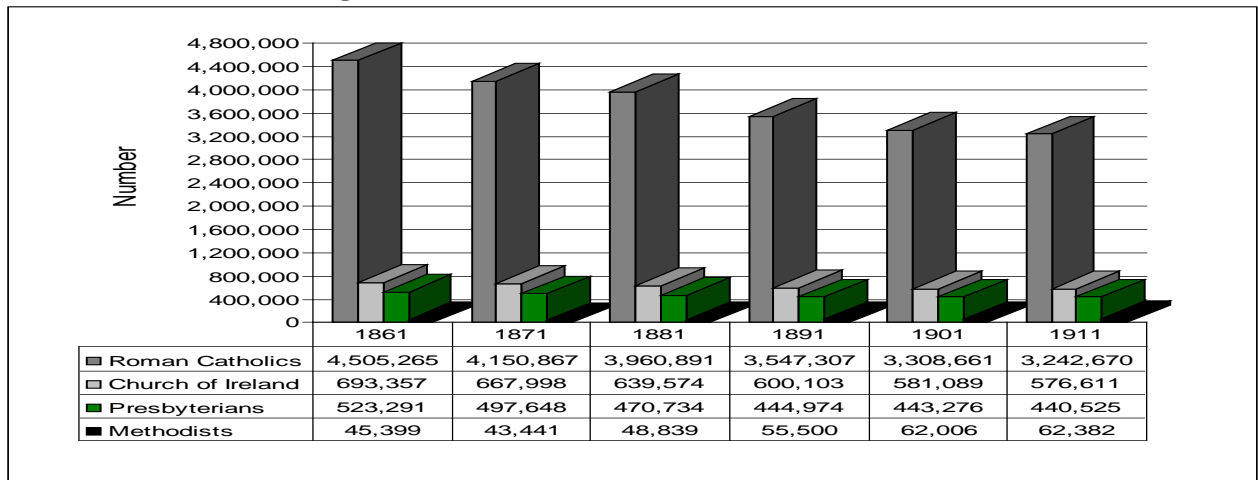
Source: Annual reports 1850-84 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/1/1).

(b) C.P.O.U. admission process time, 1844-64



Source: Registered application forms, (N.A.I., C.P.O.U. papers, MS 1045/11/2).

(c) Religious denominations in Ireland 1861-1911



Source: Vaughan and Fitzpatrick, *Irish historical statistics, population 1821-1971* (Dublin, 1978), p.48.

6. Children on the Monaghan P.O.S. roll 1871-1915

year	no. of children on roll each year
1871	14
1872	15
1873	14
1874	18
1875	13
1876	12
1877	12
1878	20
1879	31
1880	35
1881	38
1882	34
1883	32
1884-5	32
1885-6	42
1887-8	46
1888-9	41
1889-90	32
1890-1	39
1891-2	38
1892-3	37
1893-4	39
1894-5	38
1895-6	39
1896-7	33
1897-8	44
1898-9	41
1899-1900	47
1900-1	44
1901-2	41
1902-3	49
1903-4	33
1904-5	33
1905-6	34
1906-7	42
1907-8	39
1908-9	40
1909-10	49
1910-11	50
1911-12	51
1912-13	57
1913-14	54
1914-15	52

Source: Monaghan annual report, 1916 (R.C.B.L., Monaghan P.O.S. papers, MS 692.6).

7. Number of children supported by individual P.O.S. offices in 1894

P.O.S. office	numbers supported in 1894
ANTRIM AND DOWN	679
ARMAGH	130
C.P.O.U.	61
CARLOW	39
CAVAN	124
CLARE	22
CORK	136
DONEGAL	53
DUBLIN	150
FERMANAGH	48
FERNS DIOCESAN	40
GALWAY	36
KERRY	84
KILKENNY	39
KING'S COUNTY	27
LEITRIM	43
LIMERICK	83
LONDONDERRY	51
LONGFORD	40
LOUTH	39
MAYO	35
MEATH	38
MONAGHAN	39
MONKSTOWN	38
NAAS	40
NEWRY	15
QUEEN'S COUNTY	43
ROSCOMMON	25
SLIGO	98
TIPPERARY	58
TYRONE	151
WATERFORD CITY	19
WATERFORD CO.	17
WESTMEATH	39
TOTAL	2,579

Source: Annual report, 1894 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/1/1).

8. Twentieth century P.O.S. nurse application form

Protestant Orphan Society,

28 MOLESWORTH STREET.

Form of Application for Employment as a Nurse.

I Frances J who am by occupation a Nurse
living at Ballyson in the Parish of Ballyson
and County of Kildare beg leave to offer myself as a Nurse for Children from
the PROTESTANT ORPHAN SOCIETY. I am willing to conform in every respect with the rules and regulations of the
Society. I regularly attend the Parish Church of Ballyson and have living with me 3
Sons, of the respective ages of 21 . 0 . 13 : 5 years; and 3 Daughters, of the respective
ages of 10 . 8 . 5 years. I have no other children under my care from any other
Institution ; nor is there any person residing with me besides my own family, except _____
nor is there any person residing in my house who is not a member of the Irish Church.

Signed, Frances J

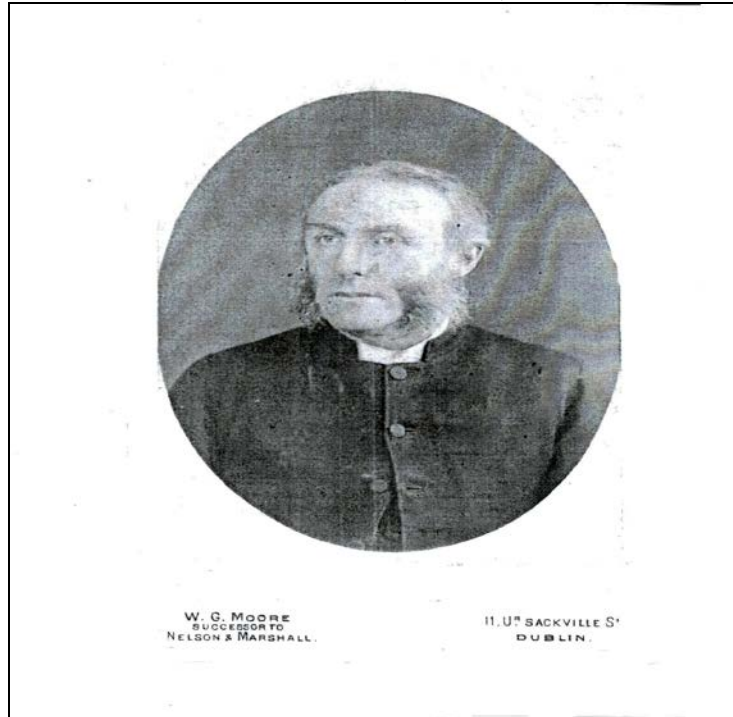
Dated this 14th day of February 1901

I beg to recommend Mrs Frances J for employment as Nurse under the Society.

John Willhousin Incumbent of Ballyson, Curragh Camp

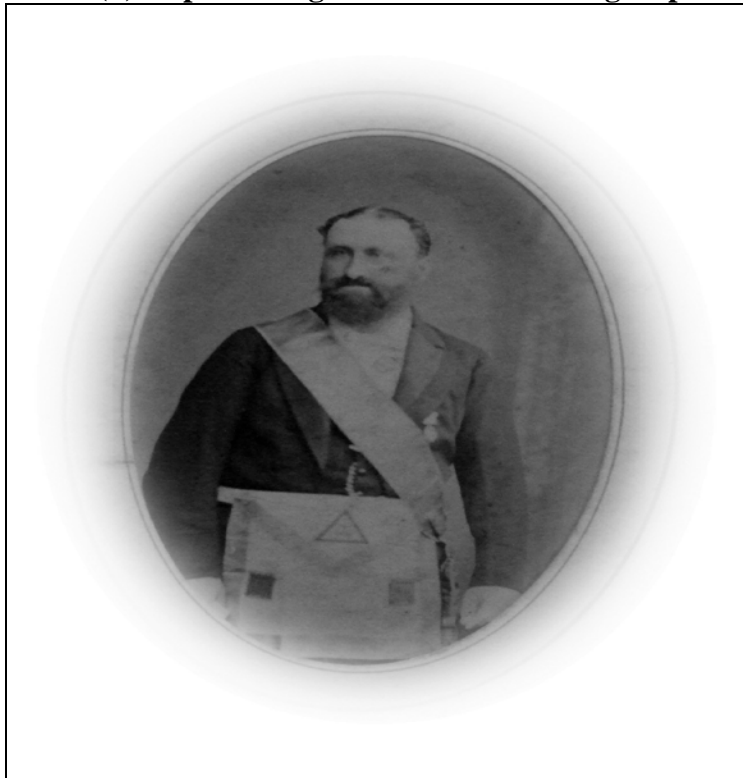
Source: Nurse inspection book (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/3/1).

**9. (a) Reverend James White
Member of the P.O.S. (Dublin) committee**



Source: Album of photographs (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/5/1/25).

9 (b) Captain Moger of the Clio training ship



Source: Album of photographs (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/5/1/25).

10. (a) Protestant Orphan Society centenary, Dublin, 1928



Source: Scrapbooks (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/6/3).

Front row: Rev. Cave, Sir Thomas Robinson, Dr. Graham, the Earl of Wicklow, Dr. Gregg (Archbishop of Dublin), Rev. Archdeacon Stewart, Rev. J. Tobias, Canon Thomson

Behind: Rev. Haythornwhaite, Rev. Proer and Mr. Robinson

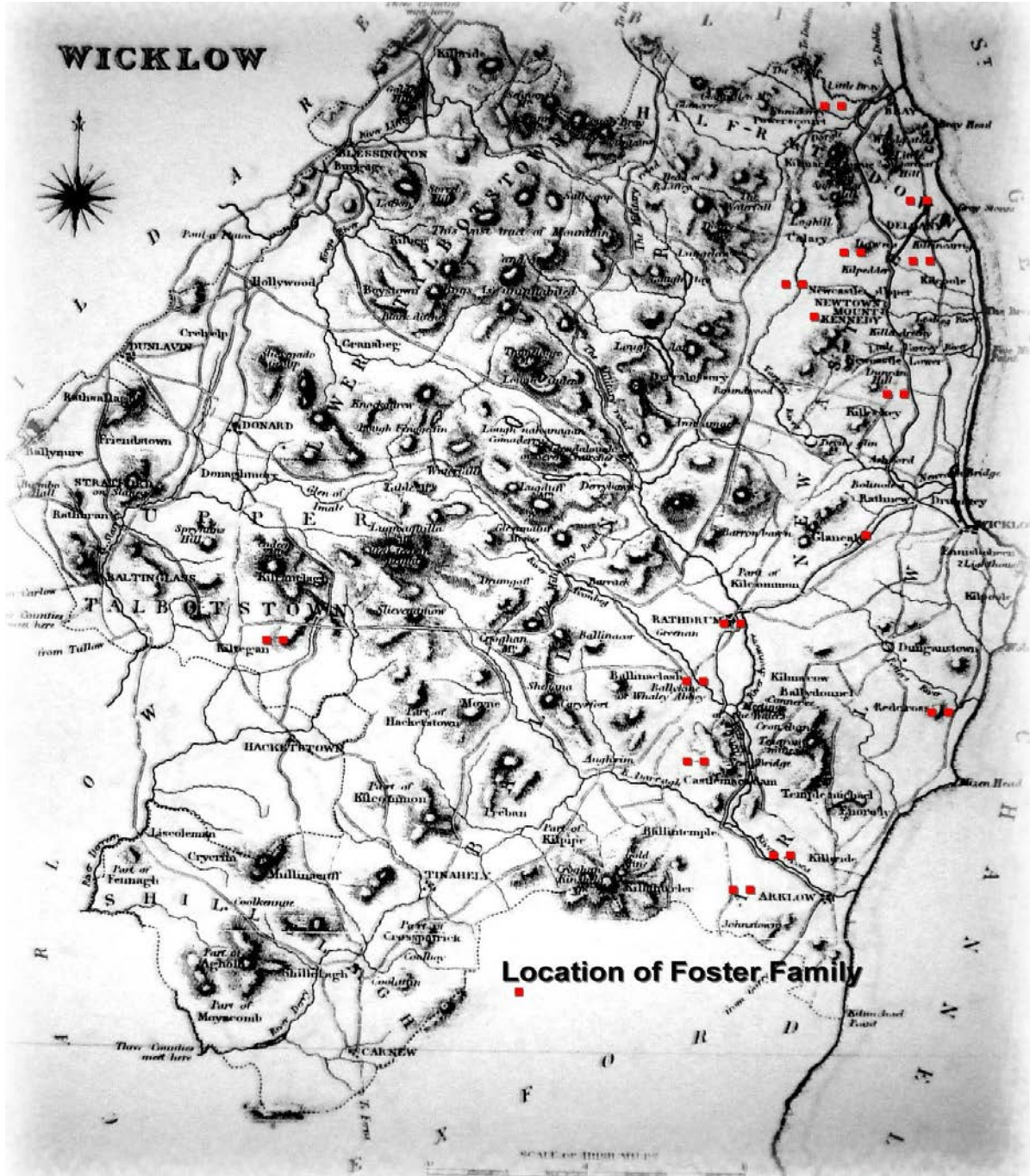
(b) Members of the committee and the Archbishop of Dublin, Rev. Dr. Gregg



THE MOST REV. DR. GREGG, Archbishop of Dublin, speaking at yesterday's meeting of the Protestant Orphan Society at 35 Molesworth street. Also in the picture (from left) are: Mr. Bennett and the Rev. Professor Oulton.

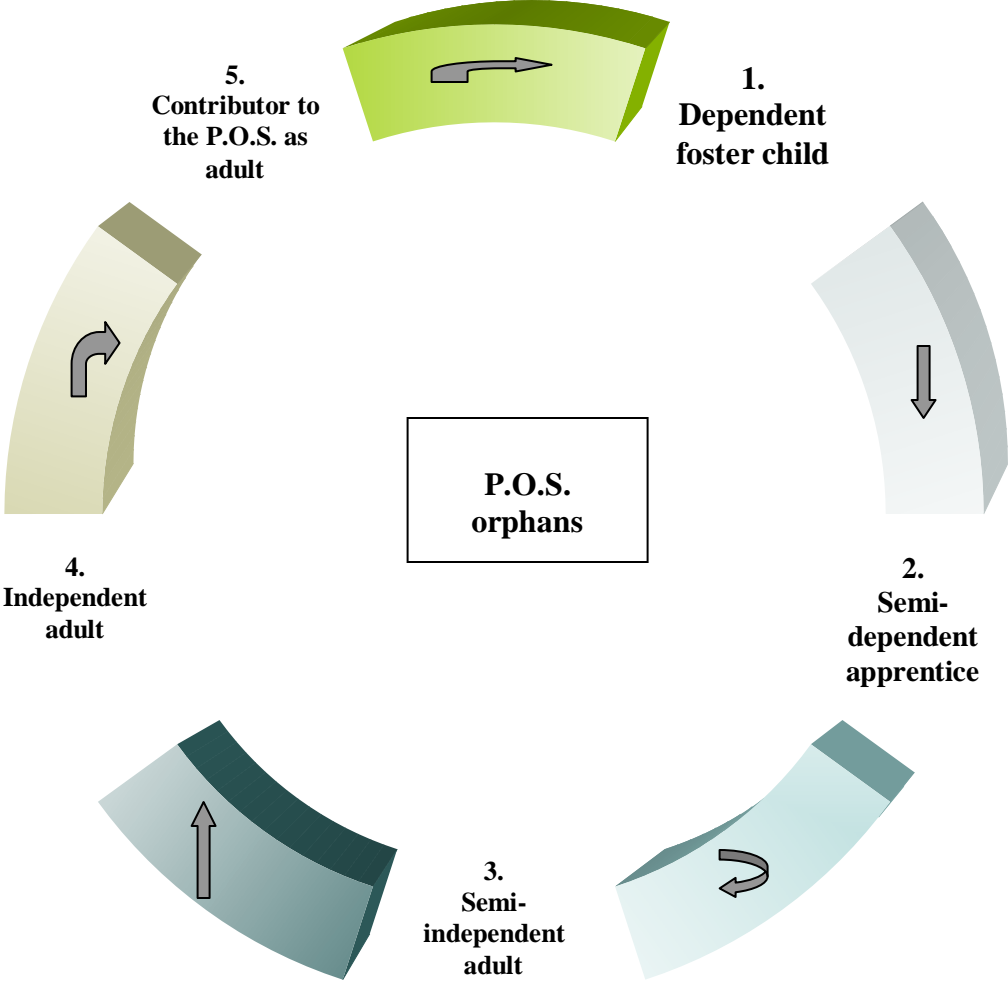
Source: Scrapbooks (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/6/3).

12. Location of P.O.S. foster families in County Wicklow



Source: Atlas of Ireland, A topographical dictionary of Ireland (London, 1837).

13. Stages of dependency for P.O.S. orphans



14. (a) Sunnyside Home, Kiltiernan, County Dublin.



Annual report, 1905 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers MS 1045/1/1).

(b) Girls outside Sunnyside



Annual report, 1905 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers MS 1045/1/1).

15. (a) Swords Boys' Home



Annual report, 1905 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers MS 1045/1/1).

(b) Malahide Home



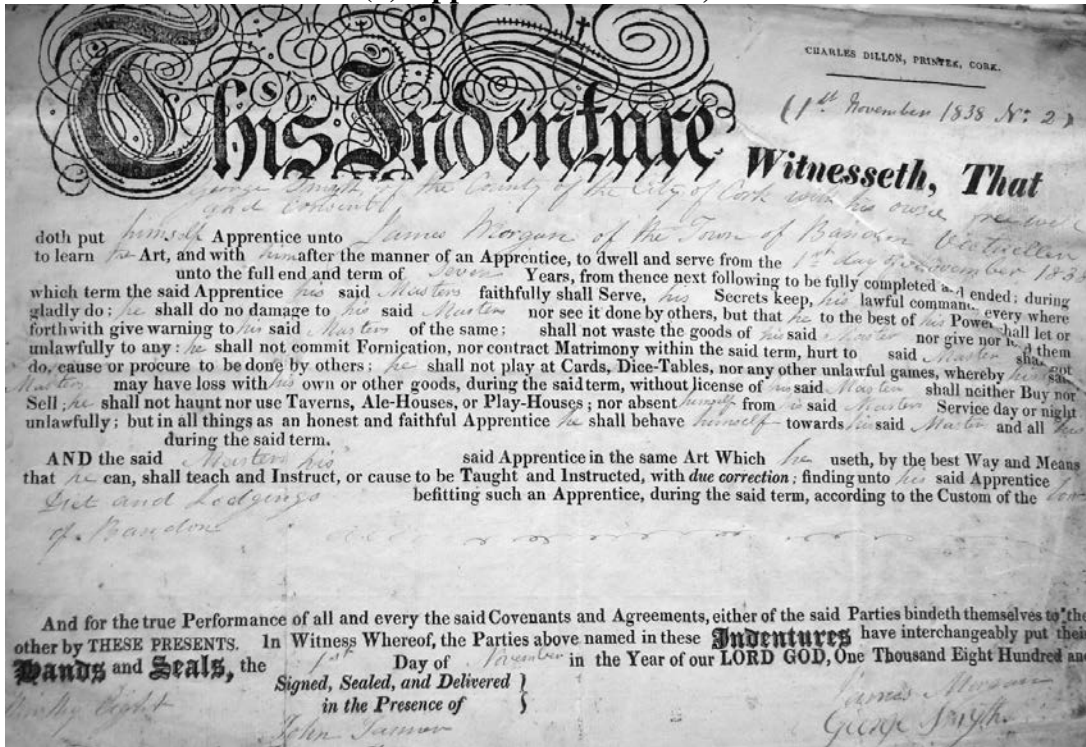
Annual report, 1905 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers MS 1045/1/1).

16. (a) Nurses employed by the P.O.S. in Dublin



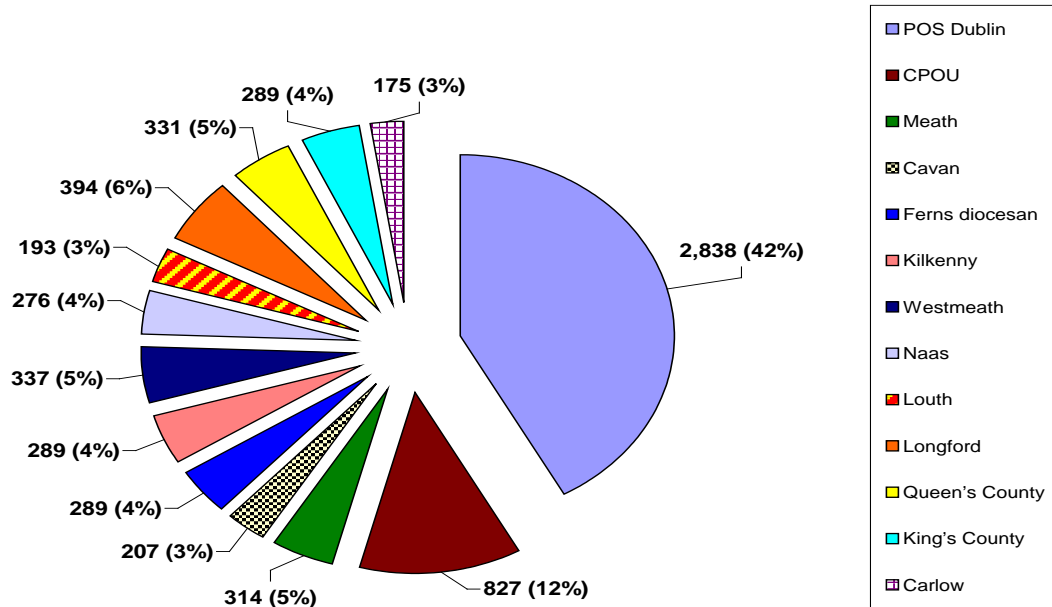
Source: Album of photographs (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045 1045/5/10/1).

16. (b) Apprentice indenture, 1838



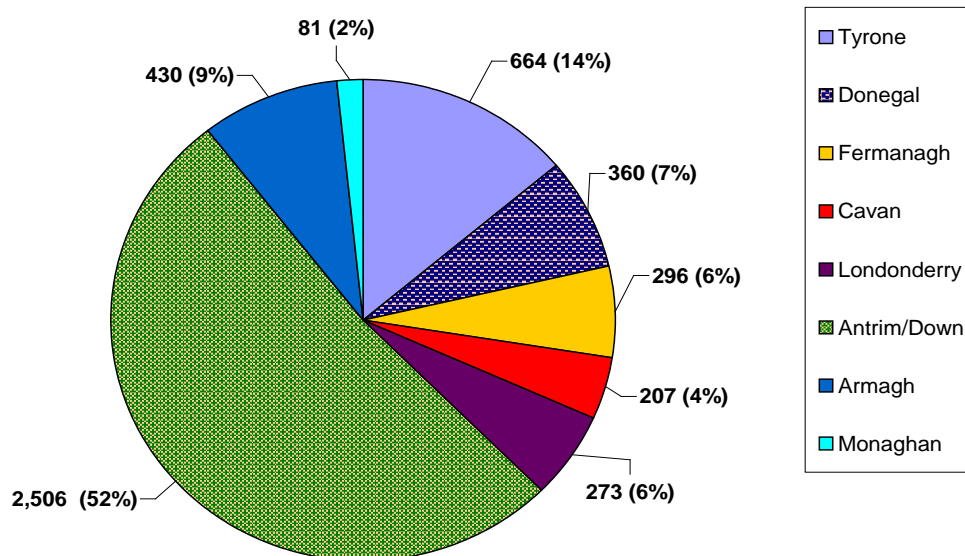
Source: Apprentice indentures, (R.C.B.L., Cork P.O.S. papers MS 519.10.1).

17. (a) Orphans apprenticed or otherwise provided for by Leinster P.O.S. offices from their est. to 1895



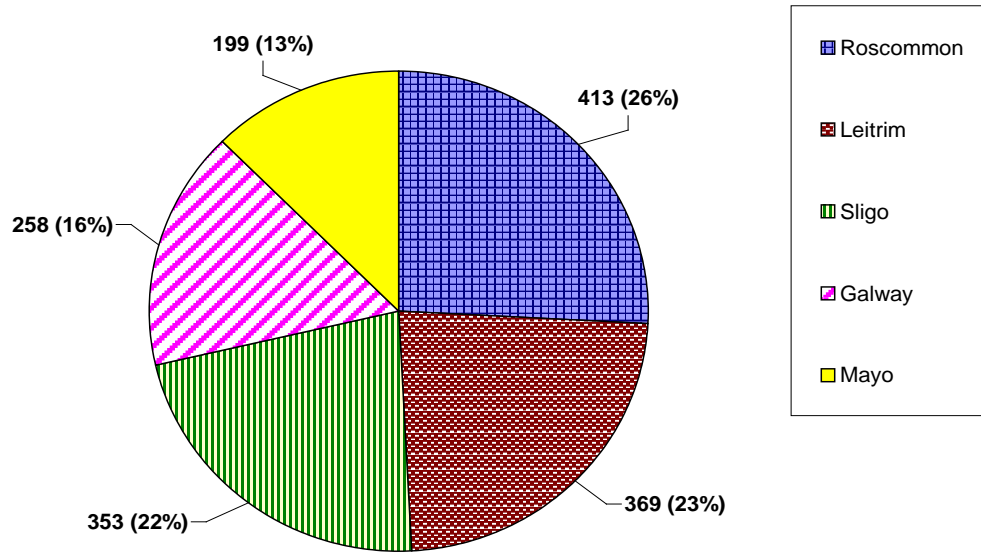
Source: Annual report, 1895 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/1/1).

(b) Orphans apprenticed or otherwise provided for by Ulster P.O.S. offices from their est. to 1895



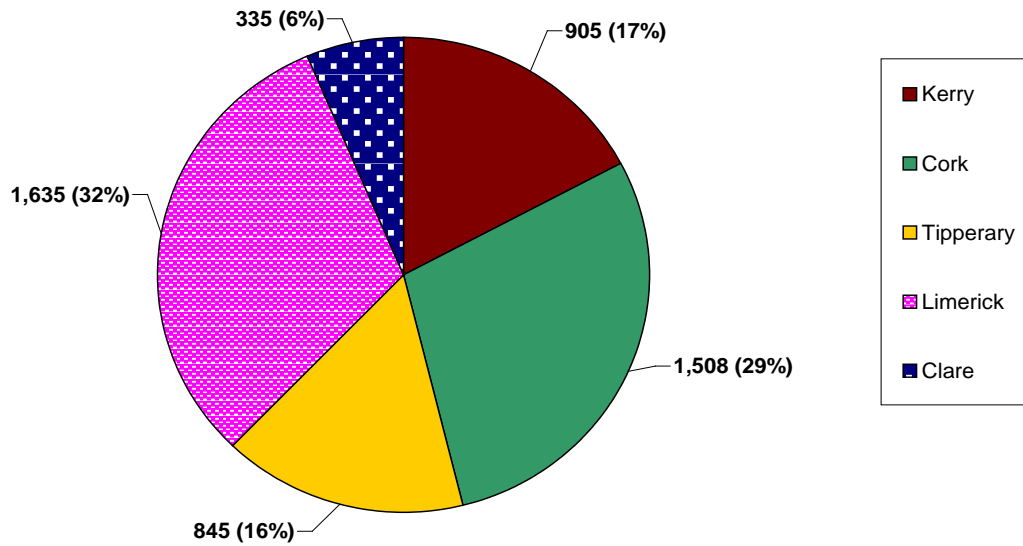
Source: Annual report, 1895 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/1/1).

(c) Orphans apprenticed or otherwise provided for by Connaught P.O.S. offices from their est. to 1895



Source: Annual report, 1895 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/1/1).

(d) Orphans apprenticed or otherwise provided for by Munster P.O.S. offices from their est. to 1895



Source: Annual report, 1895 (N.A.I., P.O.S. papers, MS 1045/1/1).

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