A Visual and Social Analysis of the Child between 1880 and 1939 - The Emergence of the Child as an Individual

by

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Faculty of History of Art and Design
and Complimentary Studies
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Department of Fashion and Textiles

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INTRODUCTION

The idea of Childhood as a time of leisure, fun, and innocence, free from adult duties and economic concerns, was a concept experienced by very few in late Victorian times. The childhood world of our grandparents and great-grandparents would almost be unrecognisable today. The span of years between 1880 and 1939 witnessed the social evolution of the child to a state where adults began to view them as individuals rather than imperfect adults requiring mental and physical restraint. In the year 1880, little girls in infancy were wearing corsets - by 1939, they were in short dresses and bloomers. Boys in the 1880's were put into dresses as well as their sisters until they were five or six years old, but, by the 1930's, styles for the two sexes were radically different.

This thesis will endeavour to explore the changing attitudes towards children and theories of childcare during these years. By covering their social background, family life, education, books and magazines, clothing, games, and pastimes I shall be able to sketch the emergence of the child as an individual. Since 1880, childrens' rights have been pushed forward as a result of economic and psychological interests, campaigns for their protection and revolutionary technological advances in industry. Even cross-cultural influences, such as the 1930's Hollywood child film star, Shirley Temple, have played a part in the gradual emancipation of the child.

Throughout this thesis, I have looked at the childhood worlds of both Great Britain and Ireland and have considered the children of both wealthy and working class families.

Hopefully, by the end of this thesis, the reader will have had a clear and informative journey through the often extraordinary changes that were to alter children's lives forever between 1880 and 1939.

CHAPTER 1.

The Social Background of the Child.
Family Life.
Clothing.

The reign of Queen Victoria in England in the Nineteenth century may have been looked upon as a period of relative peace but, under that peaceful exterior, was a time of change and discontent. The Victorian age saw the birth of industrialisation, reaction and reform, provincialism and worldliness, vice, poverty and gregarious wealth. The Queen's reign firmly put a culture-marked Great Britain on the global map of the world. This era saw the shaping of British society and its huge leap from approximately ten million at the beginning of her reign to a massive forty million at the end of her reign.

The first half of the 19th century saw factories sweeping the countryside, transforming towns and villages into sprawling, smoggy industrial cities. This was the age of 'laissez-faire' philosophies and entrepreneurs who did not hesitate to reap the rewards of rapidly rising industry. The industrial revolution was building up a rapidly expanding and prosperous self-satisfied middle-class, whose self-complacent attitudes were not very beneficient to the less priviledged classes. The landscape reflected a grim 'Hard-Times' image with ugly railroads breaking up picturesque farmlands. Looming factories exhaled soot and smoke that fell on filthy streets, strewn with abominable disease and poverty.

The Victorian age saw the evolution of a new breed of wealthy people, the 'nouveau riche', who held the majority of economic capital. These 'nouveau riches' and most other classes in Victorian society were quite often synonymous with qualities like respectability, strict moral principles, thrift, duty, discipline, industry, and the suppression of physical desires.

The children of Victorian families grew up in an age where there was a gradual growing awareness of childhood as a period distinct from adulthood. They were also growing up in an age when French

philosopher Jean Jaques Rousseau's revolutionary theories of childcare were only clearly beginning to take effect. Rousseau's naturalistic propagation of the mid 18th century encouraged mothers to breastfeed their children and discouraged them from the tradition of infant swaddling. Rousseau voiced his theories on swaddling in his book Emile in 1762:

> 'The infant is bound in swaddling clothes, the corpse is nailed in the coffin.' (27,p.15)

Children had to endure a multitude of enforced parental rules and austere upbringings before these new theories would become evident.

Responsible Victorian parents, indoctrinated their children with God-fearing virtues and regulations, for the formation of character. In Victorian households, where families were quite large, naughtiness was punished and goodness rewarded. Children were instilled with austere christian values but yet wealthy parents clothed their youngsters in the finest expensive fashions.

The Victorian era was not much different in Ireland except that there was a lot more poverty. Dublin's population increase was slower than other major cities like London, Paris and New York where populations rose inexorably. This was because the mortality rate in Dublin was a lot higher. Death rates were equivalent to those found in London fifty years earlier. (5,pp.72,73) 19th century Dublin saw the loss of the city's Parliament, mass poverty, a shortage of adequately paid jobs, and a high proportion of the working-class lived in gruesomely overcrowded tenements. The city's health and sanitary conditions were a major scandal. The wealthy and the working classes lived practically side by side. As Dublin was a comparatively compact and small city, very often down laneways behind many luxurious victorian homes lurked working-class housing.

In George Moore's novel A Drama in Muslin(1886) he describes the Dublin he sees in 1882:

'The Dublin streets stare the vacant and helpless stare of a beggar selling matches on a doorstep.' (13,p.15)

Moore also wrote about the weary and woebegone threadbare streets of Dublin and the broken pavements on the melancholy Merrion Square. He describes how Stephen's Green stood as a beautiful embellishment in the midst of Dublin yet served as a playground for paupers. He also describes the typical working-class attitudes:

'In Dublin there is baptism in tea and communion in cutlet.... Catholic in name, they curse the Pope for not helping them in their affliction....'(13,p.16)

Dublin city also had a substantial number of wealthy business and professional families, whose Victorian homes can still be seen today in places like Rathmines and Pembroke Road. Moore paints a satirical picture of Dublin's socialites when he writes about their daughters being 'herded up like cattle to the husband-hunting' at the Dublin Castle receptions. He also tells us his views on the girls he surveys in Stephen's Green in 1882:

'see the girls! How their London fashions sit upon them. How they strive to strut and lisp like those they saw last year in Hyde park.' (13,p.16)

Victorian Dublin was a city divided along many lines, not only the division between rich and poor but there was an intense political and religious dividing line between Catholics and Protestants which separated Dublin city in two. The strength of this divide had an adverse effect on social work in Dublin which was carried out by the city's elite amongst the slums. This charity work was rather fashionable in England but in Dublin charitable organisations, with the exception of the St. Vincent de Paul, tended to concentrate their efforts on matters of religious concern and therefore were quite sectarian. Protestant charity work quite often tended to be patronising , whilst Catholic organisations concentrated on luring orphans away from Protestant sects, virtually ignoring the needs of

slum families.(5,P.73)

There was not a lot of difference in family life between Irish and English children from the 1880's to the first World War. There was, of course, that common divide of wealth and poverty but, for children of both countries, these three decades would see the rapid decline of the typical Victorian and Edwardian households and the emergence of a fresher, healthier, and less oppressive existence. Children of this era were growing up in a society where attempts were actually being made to alleviate the awful poverty of the Victorian era.

For the prosperous families of this period, there was that staple background of servants, cigars, huge feasts, and comfortable homes. There was an abundance of maids, nannies, governesses, ponies, and hunting. Children of wealthy families usually lead separate lives from their parents, never actually being brought up by their parents but by their 'nannies' or 'nurses'. Very often fathers of these households were abroad in the East or Africa in the British Colonies for long periods of time. Mothers often accompanied their husbands, which created a need for nannies. Some children lived in the colonies with their parents, despite the health risks, until they were approximately six years old and were then backed off to French or English boarding schools.

These upper-class households had a tremendous hierarchy of staff which included butlers, palace-stewards, housekeepers, cooks, ladies maids, valets, gardeners, and parlourmaids. The servants were a necessity in these large homes, especially without electricity or plumbing. Children of these families were almost always kept at a distance from their parents, usually in two rooms at the very top of the house called the nursery. The nursery doors were often covered in baize to muffle nursery sounds and their interiors were usually spartan, often equipped with linoleum flooring. It was often a closed world, rarely frequented by parents but the children's nannies or maids were always in attendance. Nannies were often closer to the children than their parents, and took entire charge of the child from the moment it was weaned. The mother's first duty was to her husband who was usually building the Empire or in the armed forces.

Both nanny and children spent most of their time in the nursery

where everything that concerned the the children was taken care of. This included baths in front of the fire, games, and clothes aired and the children often got their first lesson there. The only time that children were allowed into the parents quarters was after tea in the drawing-room or parlour. They would be dressed up in their uncomfortable best and formally presented one by one to their parents or else they were hauled down to greet visitors as a delightful diversion for their parents. The children were often used as status symbols for their parent's images, their fussy, up-to-date fashions reflecting the families' wealth. (Fig.1,2)

When the children were old enough to attend meals with the adults, they were approximately twelve years old and were often expected to be able to behave and converse as adults. This must have put a lot of mental strain on children, for, if there were visitors, the child would have to talk up and perhaps perform some piano-playing. If younger children were present at a meal, they were often put at a separate table.

In Ireland, one typical Victorian/Edwardian family was the writer Eilis Dillon's grandparents' home. They set up house in 26 Fitzwilliam Street in Dublin in 1885, and reared seven children in typical period fashion. George Nobel Plunkett and Josephine Cranny Plunkett left the task of rearing the seven children, as it was expected, in two nursery rooms at the top of the house, to the nurse and nursery maid. As was the custom, the children were allowed downstairs to visit their parents most evenings at six in their best clothes. Dillon's mother recounted how, because there were so many of them, her father had quite forgotten her name:

> '..and she distinctly remembered when she was five years old that her father surveyed her kindly one evening saying, ''and what is the name of this little one''. ' (5,p.66)

This particular household had heavy nationalist views which rubbed off on the children through their nurse 'Biddy', and their father had links with the Irish Republican Brotherhood (I.R.B.). The Plunkett family eventually became involved in the 1916 Rising. Dillon describes

the nurses involvement in the children's lives at the time, when referring to her mother's childhood days:

> when she was a baby, a nurse named Biddy came and stayed for nine years. During her reign, through three more babies, everything ran smoothly. The nurseries were clean and tidy, the children's clothes were washed, starched and ironed, they had ribbons and stockings, they were taken to play in Fitzwilliam Square, where they had rights, and Biddy sang patriotic songs and played games with them (5,p.66)

Not minutes away from the safe and secure scene of the Plunkett children's walk, was another totally different scene described by Henry Inglis, one of the more realistic reporters of Irish poverty in Victorian times. He contrasted the ragged wretches sitting on the steps of Merrion Square with all the splendour of the carriages waiting alongside. He noted the 'boys with bare heads and feet, lying on the pavement, whose potato had only to be converted into a melon or a bit of wheaten bread to make them fit subjects for Murillo.' (7,pp.136,137)

Family life for working-class families in the Victorian/Edwardian era was very different from that of the wealthy. Often there was abominable overcrowding with usually one large family to one room in tenement buildings. This overcrowding created a need for a large degree of stern, moralistic and violent discipline, which involved canes, belts, or 'the strap'. There also existed the 'seen and not heard' approach to children, based on the evangelical idea of original sin, and the need to break the will of the child. There was a duty to God and a duty to parents which children were never allowed to forget.

Nineteenth Century working-class mothers often sedated their babies with laudanum, a mixture of opium and alcohol, in order to keep them quiet whilst they worked. Laudanum was found to be a poisonous substance, but would quieten babies if mothers were secretly taking them to work. The mother took the role of the most disciplinary figure in the working-class home, where there were no nannies to look after the children. Punishments were very severe due to short-tempers, brought on by overcrowding and, not unlike the wealthy homes, there was often a

lack of parental affection. Jimmy Cooper (b.1906), when interviewed for a book A Century of Childhood by Steve Humphries, Joanna Mack, and

> My mum used to beat me. She kept a strap on the wringing machine but she used to use her fist as often...she used to clip me regular and she wouldn't let anyone be close to her, would my mother. She never kissed us or cuddled us or called us ''love''. (12,p.43)

Robert Perks (1988), described his relationship with his mother:

Fashions amongst the working-class rarely existed at all. Children's clothing was usually defined by their parents financial standing. Respectable working-class families such as artisans or skilled labourers, were often defined by their ability to clothe their children properly. If they were in steady employment, they usually had the means to provide their children with, at least, decent tough-wearing boots and a change of clothes for Sundays. Indigent working-classes, who were in low-paid jobs such as unsteady 'scab labour' on the Dublin Docks or 'sweated' tailoring had to struggle to clothe their children at all. Often the children's underwear or boots were sacrificed at the pawnshops to pay the rent. Children's clothing usually determined the social path their lives would take. Girls or boys starting jobs had to have suitable clothes and this would determine what level of job they would be given.

Free scholarships to grammar schools often went unused because of lack of good clothes and the knowledge that there would be others of a higher social class in attendance, acted as a deterrent. Yesterday and even today, clothing in school, if in anyway unsuitable or inadequate became a cause for social ostracism. In Ireland, where the majority of people were poor, clothing was usually bought from second-hand clothes markets or 'Hawkers'. Hawkers usually bought and traded old cast-offs or imported directly from England and Scotland. A lot of Irish working-class were so poor, they were unable to purchase second-hand clothes and so children were just covered in available rags. One painting by Richard T. Moynan(1856-1906) which depicts a scene in Leixlip village, Co. Dublin in 1891, describes the typical Irish clothing found on youngsters at that time. (Fig.3) The children in Military Manoevres(1891) are aged roughly

between five and ten years of age and are having a mock soldiers parade. They are mostly bare-footed and dressed in dull rags of earthy colouring, browns, greeny-beiges, and reddy-browns, (which suggests the usage of natural dyes). The little boys wear ragged trousers just below their knees and unmatching hip-length jackets. They all wear what look like old cotton undershirts. Almost all the boys wear woollen caps.

The untidy looking girl in the left foreground has a woven shawl draped over her shoulders. She wears a white ragged apron with a red undershirt, underneath a royal blue jacket. Her skirt is brown, threadbare, and has a very uneven hemline.

The scene of these urchins contrasts with the scene to the far right of the painting. One can't help noticing three girls who, although barefooted, are dressed in clean untorn 'pinnies'. The aprons are worn over red and blue kneelength Kate Greenaway style dresses.

Some families were able to make their own clothes at home with fabric bought at fairs. In rural Ireland fabric such as 'rateen' (often called 'Connaught Frieze'), could be bought at a cheap price. Rateen was a thick twilled woollen cloth that was usually friezed with a curled nap. other fabrics such as wool and linen were also available but were usually expensive in comparison to farmers' wages. Sometimes the wool would be woven and spun at home or purchased by bartering farm produce. Childrens' home-made clothes were usually made by the mother but the mens' and the boys' were made by the local tailor. (Fig.4)

Irish children's clothing styles were similar to those worn by English children due to clothing imports from Great Britain into Ireland. It was more so in the upper echelons of English society that children's clothing reflected the attitides and theories of adults towards children. Up until around 1910, girls were put into corsets whether they were wearing closefitting dress styles or not. This was a traditional practice which mirrorred parents' belief that their children were imperfect adults needing physical restraint to direct their development. Parents truly believed that their children needed these restrictive supporting undergarments and girls and young ladies in higher classes would never have been without them. Much misery and suffering were caused by these corsets, as is described

by Gwen Raverat (b.1885) during an interview for S. Humphries', J. Mack's, and R. Perk's book A Century of Childhood (1988):

> 'I had a figure and to me they were instruments of real torture, they prevented me from breathing, and they dug deep holes in my softer parts on every side,' (12,p.124)

Infants wore quilted or corded stay corsets (Fig.5) and gradually were put into steel stayed corsets as they grew older. In 1908, a great break-through for the unfortunate girls in alternative corsets was introduced by Liberty's of London (Fig.6). They became an immediate success. The 'Liberty Bodice' was a new corset made from fleecy-backed cotton jersey that could be washed easily. They had reinforced strips of woven fabric which helped to reinforce their shape. This bodice enjoyed success up until the second World War. Although any corset could not be particularly comfortable, the fact that these new bodices were introduced proved that it was recognized that children required different clothing from adults.

Another break-through in the clothing industry for children was also due to the belief that children, especially young toddlers, needed more outdoor exercise in order to grow up healthily. In 1908, a Leicester-based firm called 'Chilprufe' produced its first range of innovative knitted jersey underwear. Previous to this, children wore coarse calico undergarments or corsets, which were very restrictive and inflexible. These new jersey undergarments had less fastenings because they were stretchy and were also easily washable. The introduction of jersey fabric in the mid 1880's meant that manufacturers could also use it in the production of knitted sports clothing such as knitted jerseys and matching shorts that would expand to accomodate physical exercise.

The 'Norfolk Suit' was another sports outfit but very tailored and worn by boys (Fig.7). It was made from tweeds and wools with turndown collars. They also had stitch-down pleats in the jacket for easy movement. Sports clothing was mostly worn by the wealthier classes only. The 'Sailor Suit'(Fig.8) and 'Little Lord Fauntleroy Suit' (Fig.9) were the

most fashionable for boys well into the first decade of the Twentieth Century. The Sailor Suit, usually worn with collarless vests, was triggered off as far back as 1846 when the young Prince of Wales had his portrait painted whilst wearing one. There were many variations and girls had their variations of Sailor Frocks.

The Fauntleroy suit was popularized by Frances Hodgson Burnett's novel Little Lord Fauntleroy written in 1886. Irish lace was often used for the collar and cuffs.

Girls clothing from the 1880's went through many emancipating changes. In the mid 1880's, it was not unusual for thirteen yards of material to go into a girl's dress. The 'bustle' style dress was also very popular in the 1880's but also very uncomfortable (Fig.10). In the 1890's a freer and enthusiastically greeted style was introduced, this was called the 'yoke' or 'smock' dress (Fig.11), and it stayed in fashion until around 1910. The smock dress's main decoration was concentrated on the yoke, which usually consisted of embroidery tucks or lacey flounces. The sleeves were large and roomy and often decorated with epaulettes. Smock dresses were usually worn with knickerbockers that were clearly visible underneath the new shortened dress style. The fact that they were shortened reflected the conscious moves by adults to recognize that children were different and needed special requirements, and could not play in yards of floor-sweeping fabric.

The smock styled dress changed again in 1908 to accomodate the drastic changes in fashion. (Fig.11) The silhouette of ladies clothing became short enough to reveal the shoes, with narrow hems, raised waistlines, and a new accentuated fullness in a bloused bodice. The Smock dress was then tied at the waist with a sash which then gave a fullnessto the bodice. Children under four years of age still wore the basic smock dresses. Young ladies from the age of twelve usually advanced into more adult styled dresses.

Children's clothing, although well in the throes of emancipation, would see even greater changes after the first World War.

FIG. 1. ‘A Wealthy Middle-class Family in 1907.’

FIG. 2. ‘An Edwardian Nanny with her “charge”.’

FIG. 3. ' ''Military Manoeuvres'' (1891) by Richard T. Moynan, 1856 - 1906.'

FIG. 4. 'Blasket Islanders in typical rural Irish clothing in 1905.'

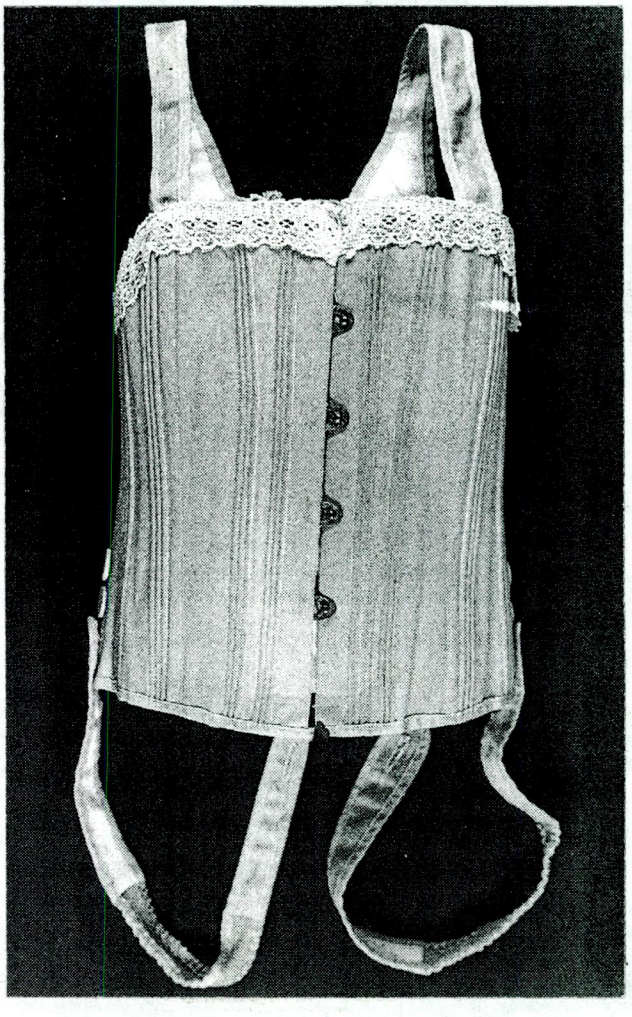

FIG. 5. 'A small girl's corset of cotton sateen, 1900. There are buttons at the side to attach the suspenders. The front and back openings have steel bones.'

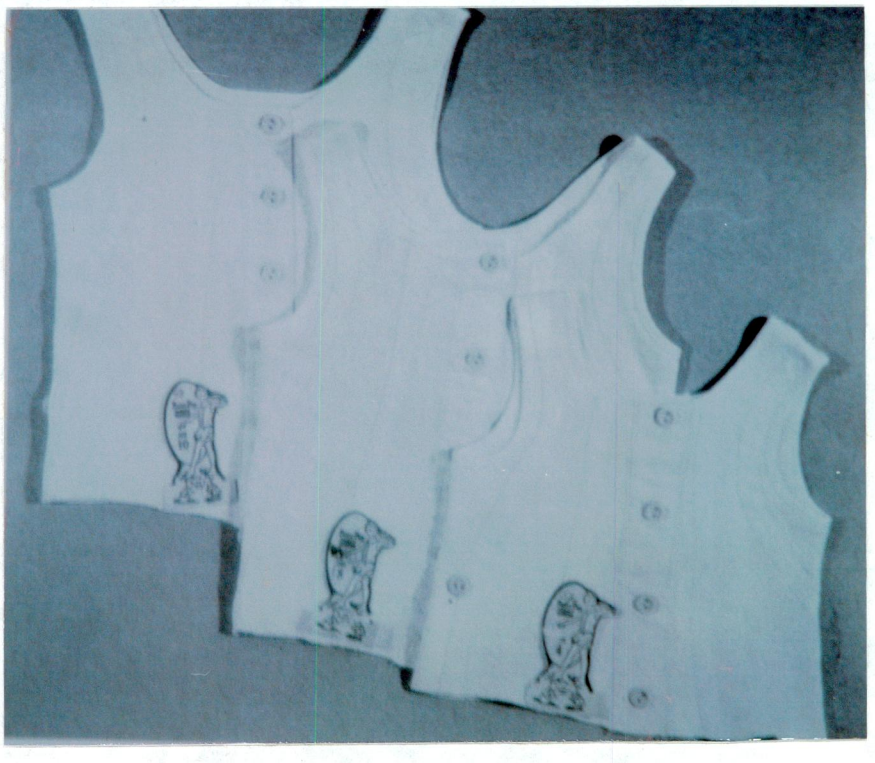

FIG. 6. 'Three ''Liberty'' Bodices from the 1920's with the trademark ''Peter Pan''. Made from fleecy-backed cotton jersey, reinforced with tape.'

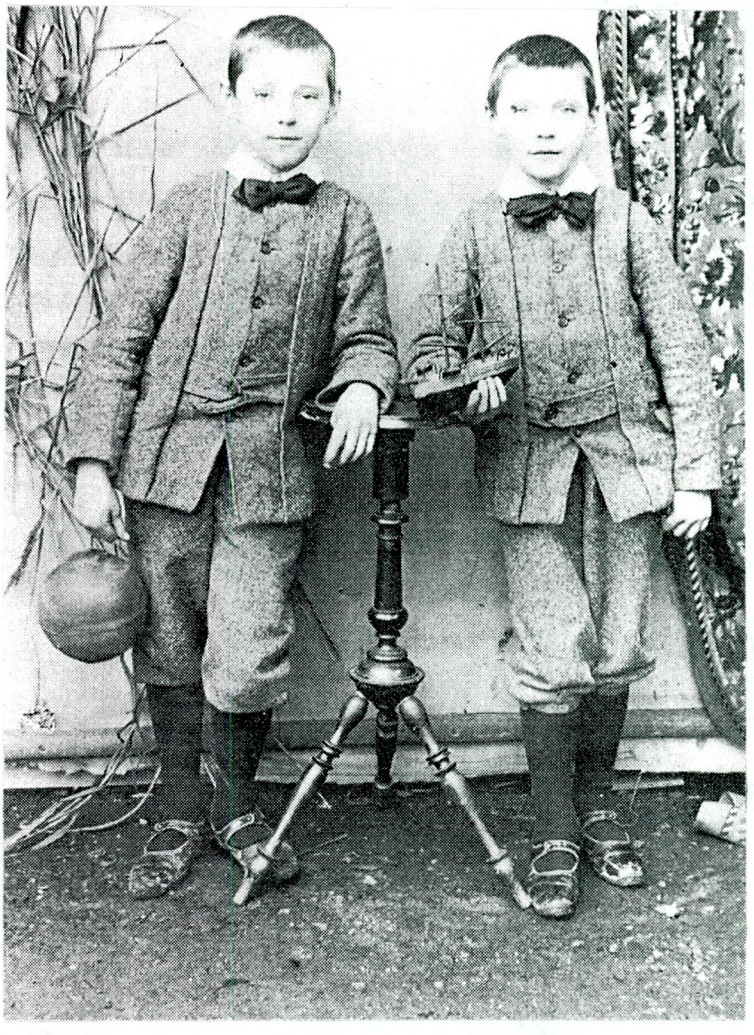

FIG. 7. ‘ ‘‘Barry and Tom’’, Donegal town 1895, both dressed in Norfolk suits of Donegal Tweed.’

FIG. 8. 'Albert Edward, Prince of Wales, in a Sailor Suit, painted by F.X. Winterhalter in 1846.'

FIG. 9. 'Fauntleroy Suit in purple plush worn by a 7 year old in 1887. Collar and cuffs are in Irish Lace.'

FIG. 10 'Bustle Dresses from ''Mrs. Leeche's Children's and Young Ladies' Dressmaker'' (1886).'

FIG. 11. 'Children's clothes from 1900 - 1910. From left to right: Girl's skirt and blouse of blue cotton, older girl's smock dress of blue linen and a boy's summer sailor suit of white cotton.'

CHAPTER TWO

Children's Education
Campaigns for Children's Rights and Protection
Children's Books and Magazines

The span of years between the 1880's and the 1930's saw the whole system of education in Ireland, and particularly in Britain, take a series of drastic but progressive changes. The most noticeable was probably the great increase in children attending school, for, during those economically troubled years, going to school was not a priority; work usually came first.

An investigation into child labour in the 1900's, in England, found approximately a quarter of all school children between five and thirteen years of age had paid jobs outside school, and about half of all schoolboys and girls aged ten and over were engaged in part-time work. Half of these children worked as errand boys and girls and another quarter did domestic work. A minority of them made match-boxes or artificial flowers, but these were paid appallingly low wages. (12,p.16)

Working-class families often relied on an extra income in order to survive, even if the sum was very small. In late Victorian, early Edwardian years, there was a rigid division between employment for girls and boys. Boys were recruited in huge numbers for factory work, and for heavy industrial work like engineering, mining, shipbuilding, and maybe even an apprenticeship. Girls were mostly employed in domestic service, which was the most relied on employment. Just before World War One, 15 million girls in Britain were in domestic service. They often worked in dress-making and sewing, usually with bad lighting, and were found to have developed physical defects such as bad backs and poor eye-sight.(12,p.14)

In rural areas, many boys and girls had been traditionally employed at 'mop-hiring' fairs that were held annually throughout Victorian years right up until the 1930's. The children would pick up jobs on a yearly contract. 'Mop-hiring' fairs offered jobs in the domestic area. There were

similar fairs in Ireland at quarterly intervals in large towns, where available workers carried their bundles of belongings with them to show that they were ready for immediate hire. Jobs, such as the ones obtained at these fairs, would have been on farms and would have paid approximately £10 a year.

In Ireland in the 1880's the working-class children often worked at home in family sewing groups or workshops where work was often brutally hard but endured, as alternative work could be even more poorly paid. This kind of work declined with the economic slump of 1901, but jobs in the transport industry rose five-fold in that year since the 19th century. (5,p.76).

There was a moral outcry about child labour at the turn of the century in both Britain and Ireland. In 1903 the Employment of Children Act was passed in both countries in order to protect the child somewhat and encourage more school attendances. Preceding this Act in 1902, an enquiry was held by the Vice-Regal Commission as to the situation of child street traders in large towns in Ireland. It resulted in licences being issued to certain special case children or to those old enough not to have to attend school.

Child street traders were many in Ireland at the turn of the century and it was believed by the 'respectable' classes that the children were worked too harshly, for long hours, and in all sorts of weather. From past statistics, evidence showed that the children inevitably towards vagrancy or crime in later life. (18,p.489). Mr. John O'Connell, a Dublin philanthropist, reading to the Statistical and Social Inquiry Society of Ireland on the 28th of April 1911, believed that:

> The street trader is exposed to many of the worst moral risks. The child finds that for a few years money is easily earned without discipline or special skill and the occupation is one which sharpens the wits without developing intelligence(18,pp.487-507)

Mr. O'Connell also believed:

> moreover it cannot be too clearly recognised that, although in certain cases, the earnings of the street trader may be needed for the support

> of the family, in the vast majority of cases, this excuse is entirely wanting and it has been proved by witness after witness that the juvenile street trader is only too often the victim of idle, drunken, and vicious parents, who extort all his earnings (18,pp.489,507).

Juvenile street traders in Ireland were a regular feature in public houses, usually singing or performing for money. This often led to an increase of child drunkards. They also earned money on the streets by performing public entertainment. Children on the streets invariably fell foul of the state and either ended up in jail or in a reformatory.(3,p.265). If they were orphaned, neglected by their parents, or consistent truants from school, they went to homes or industrial schools. Children had to grow up fast, for as soon as they were working, they became responsible for themselves legally. They were often put into, prison for petty crimes or tucked away into reformatories out of sight. E. D. Daly wrote, in the July/August edition (1899) of the New Ireland Review, an article called 'The Children of the State'. From this article, we can see how people's attitudes towards children, even troublesome, dirty children, were changing. Daly could see room for improvements in the method of the State's treatment of its young offenders:

> In Ireland, state interference with a child ... other than that of the coroner or a relieving officer, begins by placing him in a police court and usually in the criminal dock, over which his chin is not always visible, whether he has stolen a bun or is merely a candidate for an industrial school, we begin by dipping him in a moral ditch. In some cases it is imperative on the bench to sentence a child under twelve to fourteen days in gaol before he can be sent for rescue to a reformatory.(3,p.265)

Reformatories, schools, orphanages, and industrial schools in the Victorian era were not much different from each other. They were all devised as 'character Factories', to churn out obedient and dutiful citizens for the industrial age. As there was a prevalence of sickness, ill-health, and poverty, a lot of parents were not able to look after their children properly. At birth many mothers died, so most motherless children were put into orphanages or industrial schools. If a child was illegitimate it was

inevitably taken away from the mother. By the turn of the century, in Britain, there were one hundred thousand children in orphanages, reformatories, industrial schools and homes.

The staff of these institutions reigned with absolute power and if the child had parents, they invariably had no say in their child's progress. The authorities believed that the children were in need of reform and therefore the parents would be a bad influence. These institutions had a very strict regime, which usually started with very early rising, and cold baths. Drill was an important part of the day and corporal punishment was believed to be the means to the children's salvation. If a child tried to escape, he would often be the victim of brutal public floggings.

Authorities realised that there was a lack of personal attention in these places and so attempts were made to create a more family atmosphere. Most institutions were equipped with a 'mother' which was not always successful. (12,p.94)(Fig.12) After his real mother's death in 1914, Wilfred Chadwick was put into Firbank Scattered Home in Oldham, England, where there was one of these 'mothers':

> Everything had to be done in a certain way. You couldn't talk, you couldn't run about, you could only read what they wanted you to read. You never laughed, and if you did, she'd want to know why; laughter was something you never heard. We never felt as though we were wanted.(12,p.94)

One famous home for boys in Dublin was the Artane Industrial School, which was founded in 1870 by the Irish Christian Brothers. (Fig.13) Up until twenty years ago, many young boys were threatened by their parents that if they weren't good, they'd be sent off to the 'Artane Boys'. The huge Victorian institution still looms large and grey in my neighbourhood and it now houses several hundred secondary school pupils. After the Industrial Schools Act in Ireland in 1868, Cardinal Cullen, the Superior General of the Christian Brothers, appointed Brother Alphonsus Hoope in 1870 to be head Superior of the Industrial School. Brother Hoope used to work at St. Vincent's Orphanage in Glasnevin, Dublin and Carriglea Industrial School in Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin, and so was seemingly the most suitable man for the job.

The school housed 800 boys at a time and they usually came to the school because of neglectful parents, destitution, no parents, or truancy. The school produced its own food supplies from its farm which the boys tended. The huge institution housed five dormitories which were an awesome one hundred feet long, fifty feet wide, and twenty feet high. Each dormitory had a brother and one member of staff present to keep a watchful eye on the boys during the night. The premises of the institution always had a watchman on duty to make sure none of the boys escaped. [1]

There were eleven classrooms in which the boys, aged ten to fourteen years, could learn their school lessons, and from age fourteen to sixteen the boys would learn a trade. The school gave them the opportunities to learn motor mechanics, woollen and weaving trades, farm, gardening, cabinet-making, house-carpentry, cart and wheel-wrighting, harness making, blacksmith , and many other trades. As time went by, certain trades were abandoned for more modern ones. All craft work, painting and decorating in the institution was done by the boys, even their wire-bed mattresses and woven table clothes. They also decorated the huge concert-hall that is still in use today. (The famous Artane Boys band originated there in 1872 and are still playing at Gaelic matches today.) [2]

Much emphasis was put on physical exercise and sport. Drill was a compulsory activity that was practised from Monday to Friday. Religion, of course, was a huge part of the regime and although the Christian Brothers were known for their cruelty and harsh discipline, they prepared boys for a hard life when they left school, on the day before their 16th birthday, invariably with the knowledge of a trade tucked under their arms. [3]

In the late Victorian era, views of mentally and physically disabled children were changing. Traditionally people believed they were symbols of evil but, by the turn of the century, views were changing and people realised that, with special treatment, many disabled people could be educated and even cured.

Cyril Hayward Jones was born in Shrewsbury in England in 1905 and when he was five years old he attended the Mount School for the

Blind near Stoke-on-Trent for the first time:

> My father took me and as soon as I got there they whisked me off down a maze of corridors into another room. Then a boy told me to undress and he was so impatient, not like my mother at all. I was fumbling a bit uncertainly and he ripped them off. Then I was stood there shivering and half-naked and then he searched my hair and put something cold on my chest and down my throat. (12.p.95)

Schools for the disabled often had daily routines of painful exercises and cruel punishments. Although the first schools were extremely harsh, it was the start of a new humanitarian cause for disabled children.

It was not just the poor unfortunates that were sent away to austere institutions for education - most upper and middle-class boys were sent to boarding-schools from a very early age, where rigid ideas of hierarchy were instilled. Of course, these schools were not as harsh as places like reformatories but they were still very authoritarian. Their training was to make leaders of them. Emphasis was put on the development of 'manliness' and an unbreakable loyalty to King and country, They too had very strict rules enforced upon them. They were ordered what to wear, where to go, and how to speak. Minor infringements resulted in beatings by older boys or masters. Games were the very touchstone of a boy's character and were the criterion of success or failure in life itself, which must have had an incredibly negative effect on boys of an unsporting disposition.

Sunday Schools, prep schools, and public schools were other educational institutions and all were noted for their strict disciplinarian methods. K.L. Montgomery, when writing for the New Ireland Review in 1899, believed that the food handed out to Sunday-school children was often the reason they attended:

> .. though the street-arabs may sometimes derive enjoyment - the amount is usually in inverse ratio to that of the teacher from his class, regarding religious instruction as a vehicle for ''buns''(3,p.265)

In Britain in the late 19th Century, 33% working-class children

went to 'dame' schools. They had a very small negotiable weekly fee, no attendance record, and no punishments, which suited those children who had jobs outside school. 'Dame' schools were closed down, though, at the beginning of the 20th Century as they were regarded by the State as an undisciplined form of education.

There were also State elementary schools that taught the 3 R's but these were a lot stricter and never allowed for individuality or imagination. If a pupil was left-handed he was made to use his right hand. Imperialism and patriotism were at the heart of the syllabus in these schools in Britain. The school classrooms walls were decorated with maps of the British Empire as examples of loyalty and patriotic duty. They were taught about leaders, inferior races, and the importance and rewards of battle. Collecting military medals and badges was encouraged.

Moves to protect the child started quite early in the Victorian era but it took quite a while before any visible signs of improvements for the children actually showed. The London Society in 1884 launched a campaign for the 'proper and legitimate control of the parent over the child'.(18,pp.489-507). In 1889 , the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children organisation was setup instigating new penalties for cruelty to children in families. (18,pp.489-507).

But it was really after the first World War that revolutionary ideas towards children's education began to take effect. After years of criticism of the educational system and the belief that they were actually counter-productive, new progressive ideas stressing the importance of learning through exploration and play, were being voiced aloud. Margaret Mc Millan was the first person in Britain who pioneered major child healthcare improvements such as the first school baths, school meals, and school medical inspection. Mc Millan believed in open-air lessons and even parental involvement.

The 1920's saw many of her ideas materialise in schools that encouraged children to learn by exploring their environment and using their imaginations. Another revolutionary in childcare was Maria Montessori, whose theories became famous. The Montessori Method encouraged imagination, freedom of movement, freedom from punish-

ment, and she also propagated a different kind of learning environment, with bright interiors and large windows. Ergonomics for children suddenly came into existence; illustrated by the introduction of child-size chairs and desks. Teachers were not to be seen as enemies with canes but as helpful guides who were there for the children's benefit. There were even new attitudes towards juvenile delinquents, who were now seen in terms of a poor upbringing rather than in possession of a bad character.

In reformatories, orphanages, and institutions, there was beginning to be less emphasis on physical punishment and more on improving moral fibre and leadership qualities. They were still strict but considerably more mundane. In Ireland, Section 77 of the Child's Act in 1908 provided for the establishment of day industrial schools in which industrial training, elementary education, and one or more meals a day would be provided by the State. This meant that the children would be able to grow up within a family nucleus, when the school day ended, because at the end of each day at the industrial school, they were allowed to go home.

In 1918, the first Sunshine Home for the blind school-children was setup by the National Institute for the Blind in Chorleywood, Hertfordshire. In real Montessori style, the Sunshine Home combined child-sized furniture and open play areas with a friendly atmosphere. Real innovation was seen here by their provision to the needs of the individual child. Dorothy Hadley was one of the first students to attend the blind school as a seven month old orphan:

> But at Chorleywood, they taught you to be self-reliant and look after yourself. We were very advanced, I could dress myself and tie my shoe-laces and read Braille by the time I was four and a half ... There were lots of toys. I remember we had a rocking-horse and pedal-cars. They never punished us. I can't remember ever being smacked. (12,p.108)

Whilst state schools still remained, by and large, spartan forbidding places, there were more and more liberalised schools being setup such as Summer Hill School in Dorset. A.S. Neill set up this progressive school in 1924, where the whole ethos of the school was based on freedom,

love, closeness, and personal responsibility. Neill was accused of anarchy and irresponsibility for his ideas but his theories were more influential in progressive circles. Brian Anscombe was one of the first ten pupils at Summer Hill:

> 'There were no pressures of any kind. There was no compulsion, no fear of authority, no punishment. Freedom was the whole point.' (12,pp.110,111)

Children's education was never just confined to a schoolroom and, in the decades between 1880 and 1939, a good number of children learnt quite a lot from children's literature of the day. Late Victorian times saw the birth of the children's book and magazine market due to improved communications, ever-advancing technology, and changes in the concept of childhood as a period distinct from adulthood. People at the time saw a gap in the market and a need for special children's books that offered pleasurable reading.

For years, it was largely an adult world that was reflected in children's books. It was adults who wrote and bought what they thought their children should read. During mid and late Victorian years, Britain was strongly identifying itself as the apogee of civilisation and its immense pride made public attention turn towards the survival of its people, which naturally put into focus the welfare of its children. The production of children's books into the Victorian market place accelerated at a tremendous rate from the late Victorian period onwards. There prevailed a great enthusiasm for expressing the importance of book-reading, as a lot of the books had an improving and educational element in them, and although they were becoming more entertaining, many still held strong moral tones. To like, or even enjoy book reading is a comparitively recent concept, for in centuries preceding Victorian times it would have been unthinkable that so precious a gift would have been used for pleasure.

Until school attendances had risen in the early twentieth century, poor children rarely read or possessed books. Reading was mostly the

prerogative of the wealthier child. As there was no space or adequate lighting in their homes, and no local libraries, the poor were reduced to reading little or nothing. Upper-class communities wished to remove the working-class children from the streets and do something to relieve widespread illiteracy, and so they set up religious organisations such as the Sunday School, and the 'Band of Hope'. They were closely tied to the Church and often taught lessons about subjects like the evils of alcohol and sometimes had magic lantern slide shows. They were at their peak around the turn of the Century and by 1900 five million children attended Sunday school once a week and three million attended the 'Band of Hope' also once a week.

Some of the most popular books of the years between 1880 and 1939 were classics like Beatrix Potter's Tale of Peter Rabbit, Lewis Carroll's Alice in Wonderland, Hans Christian Andersen's Grimm's Fairytales, Ballantyne's rather gory The Coral Island, J.M. Barrie's Peter Pan, and R.L. Stevenson's Treasure Island. These books were often beautifully illustrated by influential artists such as Arthur Rackham, Kate Greenaway, and Mabel Lucie Attwell. The stories and illustrations were often intended to mirror the world of the 'model' child.

Popular books like Hoffman's Struwwelpeter(1840), often contained subversive and didactic qualities, and were read by children in late Victorian and Edwardian years. Struwwelpeter was a collection of comical parodies and moral fables that were taken seriously by the children who read it:

> Great big scissorman who cuts off Conrad's thumbs. (''Ah!'', said Mama, ''I knew he'd come to naughty little suck-a-thumb''), and at the fate of poor Harriet, who played with matches and was burnt alive.(22,p.78)

Other books like Ballantynes' The Coral Island(1913), were not as didactic in tone but were equally as frightening:

> .. forward they went in ruthless indifference, shouting as they went, while high above their voices rang the dying shrieks of those wretched creatures, as, one after another the ponderous canoe passed over them, burst the eyeballs from their sockets and sent

> the life blood gushing from their mouths. O readers, this is no fiction, I would not for the sake of thrilling you with horror invent so terrible a scene.(22,pp.78,79)

Adventure books like The Coral Island was one of the many quite violent books available in the Edwardian era. Another very popular book was Treasure Island by Robert Louis Stevenson(1882). Books like these struck a chord with children of this era as they possessed a kind of romantic heroism and manliness that was being instilled into young boys at the time. They contained stories of buried treasure, action, blood, pirates, and ferocity that was not only enjoyed by children but by their parents as well.

In Stevenson's Treasure Island, the boy Jim displays a heroic splendour in times of peril, that made any young boy reading about him , automatically want to model himself on him:

> '..the laugh's on my side; I've had the top of this business from the first; I no more fear you than I fear a fly. Kill me if you please or spare me.'(23,p.180)

Children's book historian F.J. Harvey Dartan wrote about attitudes towards another similar book in 1932, namely H. Rider Haggard's King Solomon's Mines(1885):

> '.. carried both fathers and sons clean away and stirred their blood without any qualms.'(4,p.294)

The children's book market became a great booming market industry by World War One, and with the many revolutionary new ideas about child care, new books were emerging for children. Since the founding of the Girl Guide movement in 1910, adventure books for girls were snapped up as soon as they were issued. Literature for children changed as children's interests changed and around the years of the first World War, Angela Brazil wrote her first adventure story. Brazil's stories became immensely popular amongst schoolgirls in the 1920's and 30's, and were full of action, which was a change from the usual romantic tales

girls were used to. These stories depicted girls getting up to daring exploits and wild adventures. Brazil's girl characters were racy, healthy, hearty, rosy, but above all - assertive.

Probably the most influential children's writer of all time was Enid Blyton, who began writing her stories of young adventurers in the late 1930's. Her books captured the imaginations of generations of girls and boys, with her stories of mystery solving in the face of danger. Most significantly, her characters included girls as well as boys but one of her characters - 'George', from the Famous Five series, was a girl, a tomboy and a hero at that - 'George' fitted in with the latest trend for girls to start acting as 'tomboys'.

Between 1880 and 1939, the most popular form of children's literature was the weekly magazine or comic. Magazines for children were among the most important ingredients in the creation of juvenile consumerism and it was Britain which first created them. Magazines and comics were far cheaper to buy than books and were therefore more accessible. They generally contained lively fiction in the form of serials, poetry, the occasional short story or anecdote, and plenty of useful information. There were separate magazines for girls and boys. The most popular boys magazine for adolescents in the 1880's was the Boys Own Paper(1879-1964), whose purpose it was to cater not only for the entertainment of the leisured classes but those of a less high position in society as well.(22,p.81)

The Boys Own Paper was even approved by parents because it appeared to be an instructive paper with a high moral tone, and was published by 'The Religious Tract Society'. As with the books of the day, much emphasis was put on going to war, manliness, open-air life, athletics, strength, and prowess. 'How to Succeed in Life; some Finger-posts for Boys', was written for the Boys Own Paper in 1910:

> 'people say; ''boys will be boys'', but they are wrong - boys will be men, and to prepare for their manhood, not a day is to be lost. The weakling goes to the wall in the great battle of life.'(22,p.81)

The paper also published some of its testimonials in 1910 and these

very much echoed the attitudes of grown-ups to the paper:

> 'Will delight the heart of any healthy minded schoolboy.'(Practical Teacher) (22,p.810))
> 'The boy must be hard to please who is not satisfied with the Boys Own Paper.' (English Churchman(22.p.81))

Boys Own Paper was not just read by boys but by girls too and in 1880, the first edition of the Girls Own magazine went into production. It rapidly became the most popular girls magazine of the day and it sported stories written by writers like E. Nesbit, with unpromising titles like 'The Discipline of Emmeline Hope', and 'A Maiden of Dreams'. Girls Realm(1898-1915) was another very popular magazine for girls that had plenty of stories, poems, home education, and fashion pages. This magazine stressed the practical rather than the extravagant side of homemaking. It often included economical cookery articles, and offered inexpensive ideas on how to alter old dresses to make them re-usable.

In Ireland, magazines, penny weeklies, and comics were also very popular and most of the British publications could be purchased in the local shops. Irish magazines for boys and girls were quite often published by religious organisations, and usually followed in the appearance and form of British magazines. Girls Life was one such magazine - published by the Tabernacle, a religious publishing company in Dublin. It was read in the 1930's and could be purchased for two pence every month. It had hobbies, recipes, hair care, beauty tips, general knowledge, quizzes, and plenty of stories. The stories were often based on board-school antics which seemed to be a popular theme for any school-girl, with weekly serials about the adventurous Doris Wayne of 'Sixth Form at St. Sevilles'. It had other stories like 'The Secret', and each week published a story about a different Irish heroine.

In an article in Volume One of a 1934 edition, one can clearly acknowledge the changing attitudes towards young people that were prevalent during that decade:

> Dancing is widely popular among the young, dancing of the right

sort is innocent and beneficial. Instead of condemning it fruitlessly, let us safeguard it and make it the means of serving a good social purpose amongst our young people.(25,p.24)

The issuing of magazines in England and Ireland that catered for girls and boys, who were not yet adults but not quite children, was one of the first signs of adult recognition that there was such a period in a child's life as 'adolescence. between the years of 1880 and 1939, adults eventually began to regard children in terms of age, rather than gender or class.

FOOTNOTES

1, 2, and 3: Interview with Michael Roche, Headmaster of St. David's Christian Brothers Boys' School, Malahide Road, Dublin 5. January 28, 1992.

Fig.12. 'Firbank Scattered Home for Boys, Oldham, Lancashire, 1915.'

Fig.13. 'Artane Industrial School , 1870 - 1968.'

Fig.14. ‘Struwwelpeter’

Fig.15. 'Ballantyne's The Coral Island, 1913, Bookcover.'

TYPICAL *BOP* COVER

ADVERTISEMENTS IN THE *BOY'S OWN PAPER*

Fig.16. 'The front cover and some advertisements in The Boys Own paper, May 1910.'

CHAPTER THREE

Changes in Childcare
The Effect of Hollywood Films
Toys and Games

Children of the late Edwardian era were to witness, with the outbreak of World War 1, drastic changes in almost all aspects of their lives, education, home life, and even in their games and pastimes. The first World War, although a terrible tragedy, strangely left behind it a mixture of poverty and deprivation but also a revolution in new attitudes and ideas.

The opulence of the Edwardians came gradually to an end as a result of the War and children of the wealthier classes were no longer certain of being in the care of the traditional 'nanny'. There were also a lot fewer domestic servants in existence with the result of widespread social and economic changes. It was the result of the War that gave birth to new attitudes towards women and spurred considerable changes in womens' perception of themselves. If the child's mother was in the midst of a revolution of new ideas and attitudes towards her, then so too were her children.

It was after the War that the seeds of a new commercial culture were sown. Further technological advances brought many changes, including more leisure time, less child-labour, the commercialisation of children's play into a toy market, new methods of communication, more women workers, and many changes in child care. By the 1920's there developed gradual improvements in the standard of living and there were less demands on child-labour, which left more leisure time. Children were also being released from their domestic duties and by the 1920's there were over ninety per cent school attendances. (12,p.29)

With most evenings and week-ends free, children of this new age began to enjoy a freer and more protected world. In the 1920's and 30's there were only a few social groups who still saw their children as extra sources of income and kept them out of school. But overall, the years following the first World War brought improvements in many areas,

including housing conditions and a new enthusiasm for child care. During these years, infant mortality plummeted and by the early 30's, the infant death rate was only sixty-six per thousand.

For the middle and upperclass mother, the dramatic changes in ideas in child care and mothering were more evident. One of the central milestones in this new attitude of parental/child care in the inter-war years was the new closeness between mother and child. For the first time in the wealthier classes mothers were closely involved in bringing up their children. This was made easier by the considerable diminishing of nannies and nursery servants. Expert advice became available to mothers on how to bring up their toddlers.

One of the most popular child care experts was Frederick Truby King, who set up his first 'mothercraft' society in Earl's Court in Britain in 1917. He also published a book entitled Mothercraft, which became a bible for many middle-class mothers. His most popular child care method consisted of highly disciplined watching routines. Its aim was to improve not only the child's physical but also its psychological growth. He expressed the cruciality of the child's tender years as they influenced future intellectual and emotional maturity. Truby King also propagated another milestone in child care in the inter-war years by his insistence that 'breastfed is bestfed'. He brought breastfeeding back into fashion in middle-class homes, whereas in previous years it was only working-class mothers who breastfed their babies and this was considered animal-like and demeaning.

Notably after the war, more informal relationships were formed between the children and their fathers, especially in the better off classes where fathers would have been previously busy in the colonies or reaping the profits of the new industrial age. Perhaps one of the reasons for this new paternal involvement was what was to become a customary treat for children - the Sunday car-ride. Between 1920 and 1939, motor car ownership rose from 500,000 to 3,000,000 in Britain. In those new motor-car years, droves of families motored off on picnics to the seaside or scenic country spots.

During these years, 'holiday pay' was introduced, giving a lot of

families the opportunity to get together for a week's holiday in places like Blackpool seaside resort or many of the new camping facilities scattered around the country. Fathers of all classes now had perfect opportunities to get to know their children and involve themselves in their play activities.

Going on family holidays was only one of the new pastimes of the child in inter-war years. Apart from playing with toys, going to the cinema was another immensely and more frequently partaken of pastime. Hollywood films probably influenced the greatest changes in attitudes towards children and of the children themselves, regarding gender, sexuality and play. Cinema was the beginning of the commercialisation and sexualisation of the world of childhood. Cinemas were attended by all social classes and all ages, and the Hollywood glamour stars became role models on which behaviour and dress were based. Young teenagers idolised stars like Tyrone Power, Margaret Sullivan, Joan Crawford, Loretta Young, and many others. London's 'Electric Palace' at Marble Arch was one of the first picturehouses. It showed the first silent movies that often appeared as jerky figures in a perpetual snowstorm, but never deterred the customers.

As cinemas often had special offer prices, many working-class children attended the films that were in the earlier silent days accompanied by a piano. Usherettes would often spray the audience at the intervals with disinfectant when there were cheaper priced showings.

In Ireland, and particularly in Dublin, there was an abundance of picturehouses and that almost everybody went to the pictures, particularly in the 1920's. The Tivoli cinema on Francis Street, the Metropole on Sackville Street (now O'Connell Street), and Mary Street cinema were but a few. In Dublin, the picturehouses were more like community centres on nights when the 'two-penny rush' was on offer, as droves of people went! If people were unable to pay the two-penny admission fee, the cashiers would often accept jam jars instead. In his book on Dublin life in the 1920's and 30's, when he was a child, Eamonn Mac Thomáis describes one incident:

At one stage, several cinemas took jam jars instead of cash. That

> happened in the two-penny rush days. If you handed in a three-penny bit, you might be stuck with two one pound jam jars for your change. Can you imagine sitting on the woodeners, trying to balance two jam jars, peel your orange, and keep your eye on the chap, the mot, and the crook ...(15,p.11)

Hollywood cinema had a huge impact on the toy trade, notably on the types of dolls and soft toys, being produced around that time. Mary Pickford, one hugely popular Hollywood star, announced in early 1922 her decision to invest 25,000 dollars in the setting up of a factory to create dolls in her own likeness. The Mary Pickford Doll was the first in a long line of promotional dolls and toys inspired by popular silver-screen stars.(8,pp.34,35)(Fig.17) Others produced after the 'Mary Pickford Doll' were 'Felix the Cat', 'Charlie Chaplin', 'Jackie Coogan', 'Buster Brown', 'Shirley Temple', 'Mickey Mouse', and many other Walt Disney creatures.

Toy production from the late Victorian era rapidly expanded due to the industrial revolution and new technological advances. Never before was there seen such a mass production of toys and now more children, not only the very well off, could enjoy the pleasure of dolls, board games, toys for outdoor activities, spinning tops, teddy-bears, locomotives, steam engines, and model theatres.(Fig.18)

For many years childrens' goods were often scaled down versions of their adult counterparts but during the late Victorian and Edwardian years, ergonomics for children were given great consideration; wallpaper, rugs, pictures, and furniture were specially designed and made for nurseries. Wallpaper designs were made by artists such as Kate Greenaway and Mabel Lucy Attwell.(Fig.) In the book on nursery furniture in the Medallion Collectors Series, Edward Gelles comments:

> In this era of psychologists such as Freud, and educationalists such as Montessori, childhood was beginning to be recognised as having a claim to autonomy rather than being a mere preparatory phase for adulthood and so the way was opened for the design of furniture suited to the special psychological as well as the physical needs of children (9,p.31)

Stores in London such as Harrods, Hameleys, or Selfridges were

able to offer under one roof the entire needs of the nursery. Marketing catalogues, produced from 1900 onwards, were of prime importance in the sale of childrens' toys and games. They were lavishly illustrated and comprehensive. They could be purchased from large department stores and then, especially around Christmas time, varieties of toys and games could be picked from the pages and sent for by post. The Christmas market was a crucial time for retailers as well as becoming a most important festival in the eyes of the child. The Christmas toy trade was geared mainly towards the middle and upper classes in the years preceeding the first World War.

Until the 1920's poor children had to make do with penny toys bought from street traders or made in the home. In Ireland, characters called 'rag men' made their livings by recycling old rags. They often swapped small toys with children for rags they had collected for them. Many working-class children got their toys this way.(Fig.20)

England's innovations over the centuries in the toy market have been distinctive, and many of their toys have remained irreplaceable; classics such as the rocking horse, the Dinky and Matchbox toy, the Meccano set, Hornby toys, and a range of ingenious educational games that eventually led to the production of the jigsaw puzzle. Childrens' toys in the 1880's and 1890's saw infamous new arrivals such as Florence K. Upton's 'Golliwog', invented in 1895, and the classic 'Teddybear', named after President Theodore Roosevelt but often called after 'King Teddy' by British children.

The Magic Lantern was another toy for children much seen in Victorian and Edwardian wealthy homes, long before cinema was invented. It was a gas or paraffin fuelled device that used to show slides through a stereoscopic viewer and produced a three dimensional effect. The slides would show a moving picture such as girls skipping, a train running over a bridge , or an ever-changing kaleidescope pattern. The spinning top was another popular toy at that time; they were hollow metal humming tops with spiral push-in activators or separate spring winders from which they could be released. Hoops, marbles, and clockwork bears were also immensely popular in this era. Hoops were made in metal for

boys, and in wood for girls, although in Ireland, it seems that girls were not to be seen playing with hoops. In Eamonn Mac Thomáis' later book on Dublin life in the early decades of the 20th Century, Janey Mack, Me Shirt is Black, he writes:

> 'In fact, in my day, hoops were strictly for boys. Oh! I often gave many's the mot a go on me hoop in exchange for the butt of her apple or the loan of her Film Fun comic.'(14,p.86)

Gender divisions were distinctively strong where toys were concerned during late Victorian and Edwardian times and this has not much changed in modern times. Boys were given toy soldiers and guns whereas girls were given dolls and doll's houses in preparation for future domestic pre-occupations. In the homes that could afford toys like dolls and doll's houses, the actual amount of time spent playing with toys was very little, especially in the case of wax and china dolls. On a recent visit to The Museum of Childhood in Palmerston Park, Dublin, the proprietress informed me that the only reason that she had so many beautifully conditioned dolls in her collection was because they had only been let into the hands of their owners perhaps once every Sunday for fear of their porcelaine and wax parts getting broken. So it was with much relief that Nora Welling's dolls were received in the 1920's in England.(Fig21)

Welling's dolls were just one of many changes in children's toys, that showed that more thought was being executed in the needs and ergonomics of the child. She produced new innovative dolls with felt faces, glass eyes, movable joints, and wigs of real hair. Their adorably cute artistic distinction was influenced by Mabel Lucie Attwell's illustrations. Welling's dolls were technically well made, softer to touch, and more life-like. Her dolls were ideal for small children, cuddly and lovable, and sported velvet bodices.(8,p.38) They could be handled continously without fear of being smashed. They were, above all, affordable to most social classe and were amongst some of the reasons for the relatively new trend of toy-giving. The 1920's saw toys being

mass-produced on a scale never seen before and cheaper priced chain stores such as Woolworths made it easier to buy cheaper versions of new commercial toys.

By 1935 the days of wax and china dolls were long gone and plaster of paris, sawdust, and resin were used to produce doll's heads cheaply and quickly. Rubber, bakelite, and early forms of hard plastic were also put into use and proved more economical. By 1939, the discovery of a new material to make dolls called Bri-plax was invented. It was introduced by Mr. Hilary Page, a distinguished toy designer, in a range of colours, and could be played with safely by both babies and children. It was revolutionary in that the dolls could be washed in soap and water, were highly durable, lightweight, and non-flammable.

By the late 1930's most children in the middle and lower classes started taking part in a relatively new home based indoor play rather than the traditional outdoor games which had dominated the previous years. Traditional outdoor games were mostly the prerogative of the working-class child. Middle and upper class play was somewhat more restrained and usually under parental control. Working-class children, however, usually got under their parent's feet if they played at home, as their homes were often overcrowded without adequate playing space. So the streets became the main play area, witnessing popular games such as chasing, running, ball-bouncing, skipping, hopscotch, British bulldog, relievo, and racing go-carts.

Go-carts were popular in Britain from the 1900's onwards and were inspired by the motor car. In Ireland a go-cart was called a 'gig' and was made of a flat board on wheels with a piece of strong twine for steering tied to the front axle. One child would sit on the gig whilst a pal pushed his back and then the gig would proceed precariously down a hill. It was also inspired by the motor car, which at their introduction at the turn of the Century, was an object of great curiosity for adults and children alike. Children would often try their best to get 'Joyrides' in motor cars if they were lucky enough to see one.

The Irish Motor News journal in 1904 describes a scene in Abbey Street in Dublin:

'The arrival of a new 8 h.p. Swift Motorcar for a member of our staff created quite a commotion in Abbey Street the other day.'(20,p.59)

Out door games in Dublin during the 1920's were much the same as decades before. Mac Thomáis describes some in his book Me Jewel and Darlin' Dublin:

> Whips and wooden tops, taw in the hole(marbles played like golf), kattie combo round towers, hide and seek, tip and tig, blind man's bluff, hurling and football were all played on the road until you heard "L.O.B., L.O.B.," - "Look out boys, it's the cops". Some children called the police, cops, peelers, rawsers, or po-liss. The local sergeant often arrived on his upstairs model of a bicycle with its weak carbide lamp....(15,p.15)

Edwardian years saw the popularisation of the ordinary pushbike, which became a very successful and popular pastime of both children and adults. As there was hardly any traffic in the 1900's it wasn't unusual to witness bicycles such as the old 'Bone-shaker' with hard tyres trundling over the cobblestoned streets. Latest inventions such as the motor-car influenced new games such as 'The Game of Motoring' which was intended to keep children in the knowledge of the modern developments. Another board game in Edwardian times usually confined to the drawing rooms of the middle and upper-classes was the game of 'Aerial Derby'. There were also popular educational games like word making, word taking, and 'Answerit', which was a quiz on cards. In late Victorian and Edwardian years, there was a greater emphasis on 'improving' games. Adults tried to engineer children's games to a great extent, usually for the purpose of character formation.

Another popular board game called 'Scouting' emerged after The Boy Scouts were founded in 1908 by Robert Baden-Powell.(Fig.22) This organisation provided character forming play for poorer children, encouraging discipline and patriotism in boys aged between 8 and 19. Although the forming of the Boy Scouts was a sure sign of children's release from domestic and paid labour and the emergence into a freer world of childhood, the fact that it was 'boys only' emphasised the Victorian segregation attitude. For centuries, the main concerns of parents

among all classes was to postpone sexual identity for as long as possible and so the separation of girls and boys in most school and leisure activities took place.

But with the many new thoughts and ideas about child care in existence at the time, segregation was not to remain a priority for that much longer. Before it was to change, another form of scouts was set up for 'girls only' in 1910 by the sister of Baden-Powell - Agnes Baden-Powell. The setting up of the Girl Guides reflected a new enthusiasm for unladylike activities and outdoor pursuits for girls, which was another revolutionary step forward for them. There was , at the time, a great enthusiasm for energetic and healthy outdoor activity, especially any chance to go on hiking sessions out of the dirty and unhealthy cities and so, as boys were given the opportunity , girls were to follow suit. The Girl Guides became extremely popular and by the inter-war years had 100,000 members. The setting up of the Guides was significant in that it fully reflected the decline of Victorian and Edwardian views that girls should act in a lady-like manner in order to prepare themselves to be the demure and docile housewife. It was becoming more and more acceptable for girls to 'muck about' like boys and with their gradual freedom from traditional house chores; they didn't have to be perpetually dressed in restrictive 'feminine' clothing. The Girl Guides was most certainly the start of a new 'tomboy' period where girls could now even excel at school sports without being rebuked.

Leisure activities in the 1920's and 30's gradually became less sex segregated and various unisex rambling and hiking clubs, which allowed boys and girls to go on trips together, were set up. One of the first in the British Isles was 'Woodcraft Folk' set up in 1925 in England (12,pp.164,165). It was an alternative youth organisation intended specifically for boys and girls whose parents were involved in the Labour Movement. The emphasis was on co-education in an environment devoid of sexual connotations. It was a great success and by the 1930's had 4,000 members. Further developments in outdoor activities for boys and girls were underway around the same time and the 1920's and 30's saw a great boost in the amount of park playgrounds being built. It was also a

modern and successful way of getting children off the streets. It suited the new trend for getting lots of fresh air and sunshine.

In modern times, games like football and cricket are of great national importance in most countries but it was in Victorian times that the 'make-up-the-rules-as-you-go-along' games of football, boxing, and cricket were transformed into organised, competive and character forming sports, with plenty of rules. Sports like these were transformed from their traditional raw state in order to encourage discipline, team-spirit, and manliness, and by the inter-war years, organised competitive sport reached its peak in popularity.

In Ireland, the Gaelic Athletic Association(G.A.A) was set up in 1884 and still exists today, and it was also of great political and nationalist importance at the time. It promoted only Irish games like Gaelic Football and Hurling and was most popular in rural areas, where it was an outlet greatly welcomed by all Catholic children.

Fig.17. 'Mary Pickford.'

Fig.18. 'Popular toys between 1880 and 1939.'

Fig.19. 'Wallpaper design for the Nursery by Kate Greenaway, 1893.'

Fig.20. 'The Dublin Rag-man - photographed by Maurice Curtin in 1937.'

Fig.21. ‘A 1920’s Nora Welling’s Doll.’

Fig.22. 'A Scout troop prepares to leave Waterloo Station for its annual camp, 1923.'

CHAPTER FOUR

Mabel Lucie Atwell
Clothing after 1914
Shirley Temple

I feel I could not complete my thesis without including some discussion on the illustration of Mabel Lucie Attwell (1879-1964). I believe her art-work helped to change society's attitudes towards children and promote a healthier, more natural portrayal of them. Her work appeared in an enormous variety of media such as childrens books, posters, magazines, calenders, and greeting cards (which have recently been reprinted). Her illustrations depicted a sentimental and nostalgic view of daily life during the inter-war period and her cute childish archetypes with their underlying classless messages became universally familiar.

Attwell's illustrations were mostly aimed towards the adult market even though they possessed pictorial images of children. In her pictures, Attwell was able to deliver adult-type messages across to the public without offending the conservative mind. I believe that not only their commentary but also their visual qualities reflected the changing attitudes of those years. It was the portrayal of a comic side of fatherhood that perhaps helped to promote a closer relationship between children and their fathers. One example of this type of picture that may have influenced parental-child relationships is one entitled 'You never finks of all this, when you finks of getting wed'(Fig.23) It depicts a child demonstrating the adult role of fatherhood by calming a tearful baby who is winking at voyeurs over his father's shoulder.

Attwell's first world war postcards helped army recruitment with their strong emotional appeal. One postcard entitled 'Why wasn't I born a man?' uses the image of a tearful but thoroughly cute little girl, pointing to a poster that calls out for '100,000 men' to join the British Army (Fig.24). The child clutches a doll as in many of her other illustrations, and wears a very short dress and coat. Her clothing clearly depicts the changes that were happening around the time of the first world war. In

the picture entitled 'Mother's been to the sales!' (also called 'Mother's got no bedroom curtains now!') we can get an insight into the clothing situation for youngsters in England at the time of World War One (Fig. 25). It depicts five little girls and boys plus the 'Mabel Lucie Attwell Dog' all wearing clothes made from the same set of curtains. Obviously the shortage of luxury goods during the war, like clothing, influenced Attwell to paint this picture. Their clothes are all rather short for this era and the eldest girl is even painted wearing jersey stockings that are visibly held up by suspenders. One can see from even illustrations that children during and after the first world war were really emerging into a totally new society that was very different when one considers the strict victorian attitudes that were prevalent only a few years beforehand . With the help of Attwell's illustrations, children were now being looked upon with a whole new concept of childhood in mind.

The clothing in Attwell's 'Mother's been to the Sales!'(Fig.25), was typical of what was happening in the area of children's wear around the time of the first world war. Children's clothes were becoming more and more practical and less decorative because of rationing of fabric and also because from the 1880's it had always been graduating towards a simpler and freer form. Girls still wore dresses but they tended to be loose tunics, unadorned and unglamorous.

The 'Gymslip' became the most popular girls' garment between the first World War and the 1920's. It was the most appropriate outfit for girls attending school as it was comfortable and durable (Fig.26). It was made out of wool serge and considered particularly 'healthful' because of its long association with seaside clothing (21,p.127).

The gymslip also became popular in Ireland as can be seen from Fig. 27. In this photograph taken by Alexander Hogg of Belfast in 1931, we see that the gymslip was worn for their school gym dancing classes and obviously would have to have been very comfortable to wear.

It was always sleeveless' generally with a square yoke, a square neck, and wide box pleats on the front and back. A sash or belt was worn loosely knotted at the hip. A white tailored blouse was usually worn underneath. Most revoluntionary of all was the gymslip worn over

matching 'regulation knickers' that had elasticated knees which were pulled well down to hide the gap between the stocking top and the regular underwear. Often the skirt was worn short enough so that the knickers would be visible but it usually depended on what the fashion for skirt lengths was at the time. School uniforms became compulsory by the 1920's in most private, convent, and high-schools, of which the gymslip was a major and much welcomed component. Overall, girls clothing after World War One and right up through the 1920's was a lot less fussy than previously, with less emphasis on fine stitching and delicate designs and more on bold patterns made up of groups of simple stitches. (Fig. 28)

Whilst girls in particular were benefitting from the shifting dress styles, boys, too, were to witness some revolutionary changes in their dress. It was after the outbreak of World War One that young boys were no longer dressed in kilts and blouses until they were five or six years old. Instead, they were dressed in low-waisted tunics that were worn over shorts. These tunics were made from masculine mens-wear fabrics such as serge, linen or piqué, which distinguished them from babies' dresses. Boys' sailor suits were also diminishing in popularity, although sailor trimmings were still used on the clothing of smaller boys. (21,p.140).

After World War One, there was a recognition by children's clothing manufacturers that small boys needed play clothes and so knitted jerseys and shorts were introduced. (Fig.29). These jerseys came to be considered by parents as invaluable for they were flexible, comfortable and durable. They sported turn-down collars, buttoned necks and were quite often passed down to sisters who would wear them with a skirt. (Fig.30). From looking at fig.30, we can see that this Irish family from County Galway used the knitted jerseys for both the boy standing on the left of the photo and the girl standing in the centre. The girl, as well as wearing a jersey, also seems to be wearing a rather heavy tweed skirt. The jersey and shorts combination lasted well into the 1950's in both England and Ireland.

Another very practical garment for active boys came on the market in 1917 called the 'Romper Combination Overall'. This was first sold by

Harrods of London and was a larger version of the baby's 'crawling overall', which was introduced at the same time. They were made like small boiler-suits with long sleeves, a yoked bodice, short knickerbocker legs, and a drop seat that was concealed by the waistbelt. (21,p.141) (Fig.31). The 1920's and 30's saw a boom in dressmaking for both adult's and children's wear. The fall in the price of sewing machines meant that 'hire purchase' put them into the ranges of working-class people, although many still bought second-hand clothes at markets.

Probably the greatest influence on children's clothes in every social class in the 1930's was the emergence of the child Hollywood firm star Shirley Temple. She was the 'dream incarnate' the celluloid symbol of a perfectly happy childhood and seemed to possess an enviable endless wardrobe. Shirley Temple reigned over fashions for the young in both England and Ireland with her sweet curly locks of fair hair and red and white polka-dot dresses. In his book Me Jewel and Darlin' Dublin (1972), Eamonn Mac Thomáis describes the impact Shirley Temple had on Dublin people in the 1930's:

> 'Although we hated girls, Shirley Temple was different and we all saw ''The Little Princess'' three times. Dublin had its own Shirley Temple contest...' (15,p.87)

The 1930's was an era where little girls were only just allowed to run around in the streets and fields with their brothers, but at the arrival of the child star, little seven and eight year old girls were not so keen to run about like this, for fear of spoiling their dresses. The 'Shirley Temple style' began with her first screen debut in 1934 and was noted for it's impeccable 'English' look. It consisted of knee-length polka-dot dresses with little white collars and balloon or puffed sleeves. It was also a 'must' to possess a pair of the famous little black patent leather shoes with straps and buckles. Her frilled party dresses set off a trend for more 'feminine' styled dresses which were fast replacing the tailored styles that had been so popular in the 20's. (Figs. 32,33)

With the advent of Hollywood films, girls and boys really began to put meaning into the phrase 'teenager'. Boys and girls began to emulate

their screen idols and girls began wearing make-up at an earlier age. 'Hollywood' and Shirley Temple were just the beginning of the mass media generation, that acted like a catalyst to the genesis of a new age of childhood. With the combination of the birth of this mass media and Freud reaffirming the role of psychoanalysis in discovering the individuality of the child, society was now beginning to realise that a child required not only physical acknowledgement but emotional consideration too.

I shall conclude this thesis, then, with the affirmation that the two generations of children, that grew up between 1880 and 1939, paved well the path to childhood emancipation.

Fig.23. 'Mabel Lucie Attwell's "You Never Finks of all this, when you Finks of Getting Wed.'

Fig.24. 'Attwell's World War One Postcard entitled ''Why wasn't I Born a Man?''.'

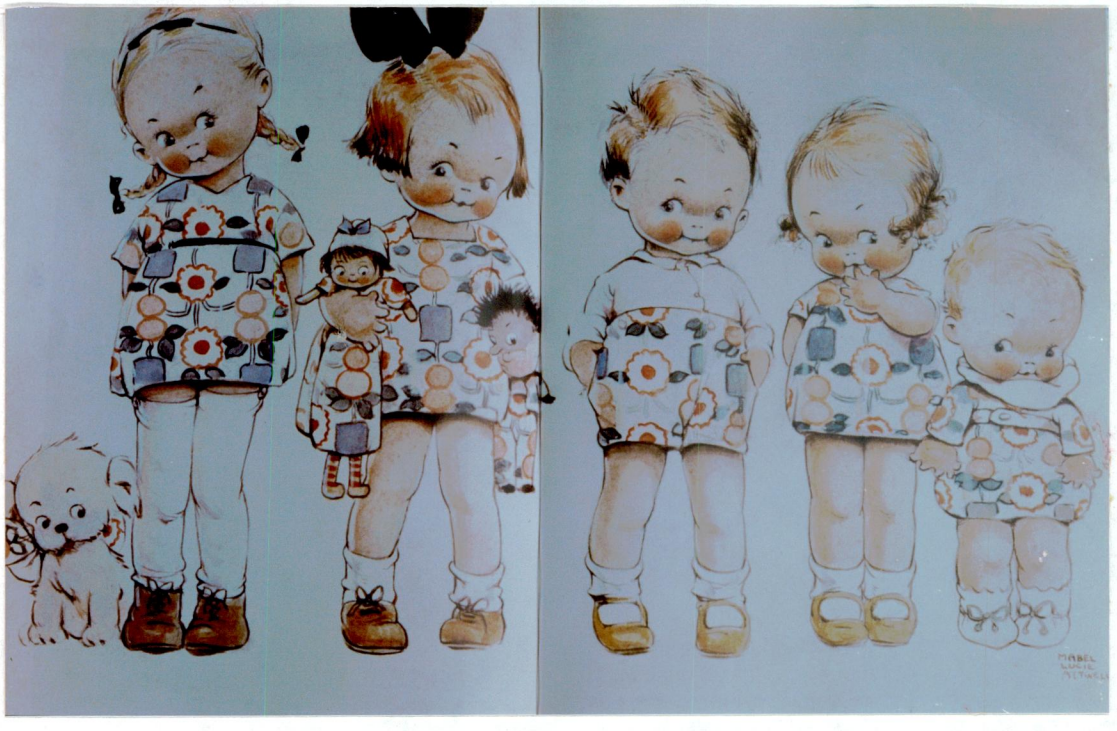

Fig.25. ‘Attwell’s World War One inspired ‘‘Mother’s been to the Sales!’’.’

Fig.26. 'School-girl clothes from Harrods, 1917; two wool dresses and an older girl's skirt and blouse. The gymslip is worn so short that the matching knicker show.'

Fig.27. 'Shankill Road Gym Mission Group dancing in their gymslips in 1931.'

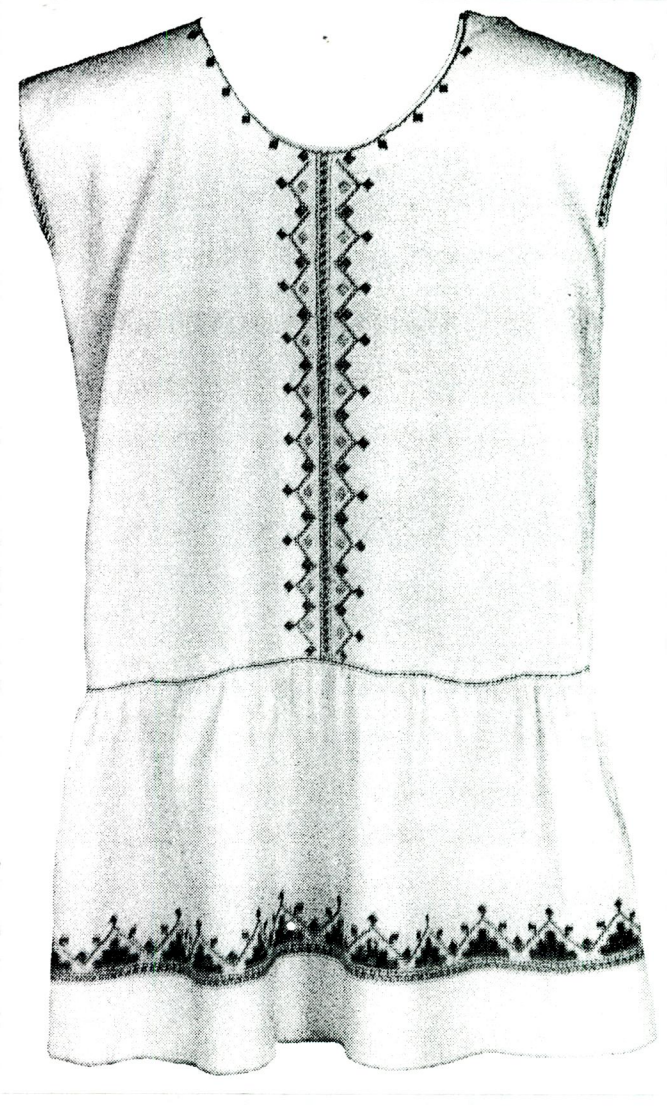

Fig.28. 'Sleeveless,drop-waisted, simple linen dress for a girl aged 9 years, 1926.'

Fig.29. 'Boy wearing a classic button-front jersey and shorts in 1925. Note that lace-up shoes have taken the place of boots.'

Fig.30. 'A Co. Galway Family in the 1930's.'

Fig.31. ‘A Romper Combination Overall in blue linen. Sold by Harrods in 1917.’

Fig.32. 'Shirley Temple'

Fig.33. 'The Author's mother dressed in ''Shirley Temple'' style, sitting third from left, 1938.'

CONCLUSION

This thesis has indicated the many changes to the childhood world between 1880 and 1939, and has established the 1930's has been the decade in which the child truly emerged as an individual.

The breakthrough years were often to behold much suffering and negligence for children, but, even though the child truly became emancipated, we find that old people look back with nostalgia at years that were undeniably innocent. People may argue that there is a lossof innocence amongst children today , that, with gender divisions beginning earlier and earlier, and experiences of sexuality from media indoctrination, children are unable to fully indulge in the pleasures of childhood because of preoccupations about appearances in this fashion conscious age or how they may look to the opposite sex.

True, there have been many risks attached to the liberalisation of adult attitudes, but because of those radical changes in the decades between 1880 and 1939, children, without a doubt, now possess far greater knowedge, the unbridled freedom of choice, and most important of all, the status ofan individual.

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