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Cork City's Eighteenth-Century Charity Schools

Origins and Early History

By PEADAR McCANN

The history of elementary education in Cork in the first half of the eighteenth century is largely a chronicle of the city's charity schools, there being little information available about other educational agencies and institutions. We know nothing of the state and extent of private schooling in the city during this period. We remain uncertain as to the local reaction to state legislation to provide for the erection of parish and diocesan schools, but whatever evidence exists seems to indicate that it bore as little fruit in Cork as it had done in the rest of the country.

On March 17, 1679, the Grand Jury for the County of Cork submitted that a free school be built within the diocese of Cork, and that equal amounts be levied on the city and liberties and on that part of the county within the diocese for that purpose.¹ This directive was not complied with, apparently, and a year later, in 1680, another Grand Jury requested the Bishop and the High Sheriff of the County to meet, and to choose a convenient place to build a school, according to the statute.² The statute referred to was probably the Act to establish Diocesan Schools, passed in the reign of Elizabeth, and amended in 1662 to provide for the transfer of schools from inconvenient places.³ This Act had proposed that the cost of erecting a new school be spread over a whole diocese. In spite of the repeated urgings of Grand Juries, it appears that no action was taken. In 1696, the corporation of the city voted that the timbers of the old Bridewell be given to the Bishop, "for the free school at St. Finbarr's."⁴ Whether they were to be used in the building or furnishing is not clear. A contemporary chronicler refers to a free school, "for the education of Youth in the Greek and Latin tongues," on the west side of St. Finbarr's, but does not specify if it was in a house specially built for that purpose.⁵ The fifth Report of the Commissioners of Irish Education Inquiry stated that:

"A Diocesan School appears to have been long kept in this diocese, in a private house provided in the City of Cork from time to time by the Masters. The number of pupils does not appear to have been considerable."⁶

¹ Brady, *Records of Cork, Cloyne and Ross*, Dublin, 1863, vol. i, p. xlvi.

² *Ibid.*

³ Akenson, Donald H., *The Irish Education Experiment*, London, 1970, p. 26.

⁴ Caulfield, *The Council Book of the Corporation of the City of Cork*, Surrey, 1876, p. 254.

⁵ Smith, *Ancient and Present State of the City and County of Cork*, Cork, 1750, Bk. II, p. 398.

⁶ Fifth Report from the Commissioners of Irish Education Inquiry—the Diocesan Schools, H.C. 1826-7 (441) xiii, p.16.

It is not certain when the first diocesan schoolmaster was appointed, though it was probably several years prior to 1780.⁷ All in all, the early years of the diocesan school are obscure, but its nineteenth-century history is reasonably well documented.

It is possible that some parish schools were established in Cork in accordance with Henry's Act of 1537, but it is doubtful whether they lasted very long, if so established. 'Parish schools' of a different type made an appearance in the eighteenth century, and these owed their foundation more to the enthusiasm engendered by the charity-school movement than to Parliamentary legislation or the Established Church, being supported mainly by the bequests and donations of local benefactors. They may be termed parish schools in the sense that their patrons specified that each was to provide instruction for the poor children of a particular parish, but they were, of course, primarily charity-schools, conforming closely to the then accepted model of such schools. Seven parish schools existed in Cork in 1824.⁸ These were: St. Peter's, St. Finbarr's, The Holy Trinity or Christchurch, St. Paul's, St. Ann Shandon, St. Mary Shandon, and St. Nicholas'. No reference will be made to the last three at this point, as they more properly belong to the nineteenth century.

St. Peter's was probably the first of the 'parish schools' to be founded in the city. A contemporary historian described its origins thus:

"On October 15, 1719, the Corporation granted to Capt. Thomas Deane a piece of ground adjacent to St. Peter's Church to erect a school and almshouse thereon. And the house was built accordingly for the education of 40 poor children, 20 of each sex who are clothed and taught gratis to read, write, etc., by a master and mistress, who are lodged in the same building and have £14 Par Annum salary; the sum of £52 yearly is bequeathed by the pious donor for the use of this charity, who further gives a loaf of bread to each poor child every Sunday. The late Rev. Archdeacon Pomeroy, Minister of this Parish, added six boys to this foundation and gave £180 to be put to interest for this use."⁹

A later writer enlarged on this account:

"Sir Matthew Deane, Bart., directed by his will, that six Protestant men and two Protestant women should receive 1s. 6d. each weekly, in the Dean Alms House, adjoining the west end of St. Peter's Church, for which he left £800. Captain Thomas Deane, to fulfil more perfectly his father's intentions, directed by his will that the said house, together with £100 yearly, and £11 yearly, should be given in trust to the Mayor, Sheriffs, and Common Council of the City of Cork, to Support the aforesaid six men and two women, and likewise for the support and maintenance of a Schoolmaster and Mistress, to teach and clothe 20 boys and 20 girls in the House and adjoining said Almshouse for ever, in lieu of the aforesaid £800."¹⁰

The reports of various government commissions on the origins and funding are sometimes contradictory:

"The school is kept in . . . the schoolhouse belonging to Moses Deane's endowment, who, during his lifetime erected it and the almshouse; and by his will, dated in 1734, bequeathed rentcharges for ever, amounting to £216 yearly, for their support."¹¹

⁷ The Rev. St. Leger Chinnery conducted the diocesan school in his home in Brown St. until December, 1780. *The Hibernian Chronicle*, Dec. 10, 1780, Ó Donnabháin, 'The Munster Academy, 1772-1792,' *JCHAS*, lxix (1964), 101-112.

⁸ Accounts and Papers Relative to Schools and Education in Ireland: (1824) Parish Schools.

⁹ Smith, *op. cit.*, pp. 397-8.

¹⁰ Nixon *Gentleman's and Citizen's Almanac*, Cork, 1799, p. 40.

¹¹ Evidence taken before her majesty's commissioners of inquiry into the state of the endowed schools of Ireland, H.C. 1857/8, vol. i, (2336-11) xxii, pt. ii.i, p. 111.

“Thomas Deane, by his will, bearing date 1st October, devised to the Mayor, Sheriffs, and Common Council, a schoolhouse which he erected in St. Peter’s parish, and an annuity of £100 . . . for the purpose of supporting a school for the education of poor children.”¹²

The second report of the commissioners of Public Instruction notes a bequest made by Moses Deane, but does not mention his brother. The report of the Bequests Board of 1848 names Thomas Deane as the donor of £1,021 2s. 10d., “in the three and a quarter per cents.”¹³ No reference is made, in any report, to Archdeacon Pomeroy’s bequest. What does emerge, however, is that the original intentions of the Deane family regarding the future financial support of the school were not being implemented during the latter half of the eighteenth century. The report of the commissioners of the board of education, 1806-12, stated that,

“ . . . the intentions of the Testator, (Moses Deane) . . . have not been carried into effect by his representatives, no rent being paid for the last thirty years, and the estate no longer remains in the family of the founder.”¹⁴

The report of the Commissioners of Municipal Corporations, in referring to the school, noted that,

“ . . . an annuity was paid, for a considerable time, in support of it. For the last twenty years . . . it has been withheld altogether by the owners of the lands out of which it was payable.”¹⁵

The school’s financial difficulties forced it to close c. 1800, but it did eventually reopen, in 1817.¹⁶ Whether corruption or mismanagement was the cause of the closure is impossible to ascertain, but it is noteworthy that the ultimate responsibility for the school was in the hands of the city councillors.

The precise date of the foundation of St. Finbarry’s parish school is difficult to establish. No reference is made to it in Maule’s *Pietas Corcagiensis*, though the charity school founded by Thomas Deane is mentioned.¹⁷ Smith locates the school near the Protestant cathedral.

“On the East side of St. Barr’s Church is a free school and library . . . for the education of such children as the Bishop shall recommend.”¹⁸

The foundation of the school is generally attributed to Archdeacon Pomeroy, who died in early 1725.¹⁹ In his will he left £100 to the Bishop of Cork, “for building and supporting a charity school at St. Finbarry’s.”²⁰ A Mrs Mary Shearman, in her will dated the 6th August, 1728, bequeathed an annual sum of £9 4s 7d.,

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Lewis, *A Topographical Dictionary of Ireland*, London, 1837, vol. I, p. 423.

¹⁷ *Pietas Corcagiensis, or A View of the Green Coat Hospital*, Cork, 1721, p. 68.

¹⁸ Smith, op. cit., p. 398.

¹⁹ Brady, op. cit., vol. I, p. 317.

²⁰ Ibid.

“For founding and maintaining a charity-school in the parish of St. Finbarr’s; schoolmaster to teach gratis the poor of the parish to read, write, and cast accounts, and if convenient, the rudiments of the Latin tongue and grammar.”²¹

It seems unlikely that the school was opened before 1728, considering that Mrs Shearman specified that the bequest was for “founding and maintaining”. We may take it that, even though funds for the erection of the school were probably available sometime in 1725 or 1726, no action was taken until a means of paying a teacher’s salary was secured. How soon the money willed by Mrs Shearman was paid over to the school we do not know.

This charitable lady also bequeathed an annual rent-charge from land, of £13 16s. 11d

“For a charity-school in the Parish of Christchurch, for instruction in reading, writing, and arithmetic; and, if possible, in rudiments of Latin, when required.”²²

Nixon states that this school was erected in Christchurch Lane in 1742, for the purpose “of educating 15 poor of said parish for ever.”²³ Moses Deane had also attempted to make some provision for the education of the poor in this parish, and had instructed that the rents of certain premises should be allowed to accumulate until they reached a total of £1,200, this sum to be then applied to the instruction of poor children. The parish never received any money, however, because the lease of the premises in question expired at an early date.²⁴

The school named St. Paul’s, in 1824, was one and the same as the Protestant Free Schools in Brown Street, opened in 1808.²⁵ There had been attempts, many years previously, to open a parish school in this district. The parish of St. Paul’s was formed in 1726 from the districts of the East Marsh in the parish of St. Mary Shandon, and Dunscombe’s Marsh in the parish of Christchurch. Plans were made to open a charity school in this part of the city before the new parish was created. On February 4, 1722, the corporation granted £200 towards the building of a free school on land it owned in the area, known popularly as the Corporation Yard.²⁶ The erection of the school was to be associated with the opening of the new church of St. Paul, the land for which was granted by the same body.²⁷ News of this project was greeted with enthusiasm by the Rev. Henry Maule, rector of St. Mary Shandon:

“A Publick Free School, so much wanted in that part of the city, will also be of Singular Use for the Education of the Citizens’ Children and therefore deserves all the due encouragement the Corporation propose to give so good a work.”²⁸

His confidence in the Corporation appears to have been misplaced, however, because the school was never built. On May 23, 1732, the part of the Corporation Yard

²¹ Tables of Schools and Endowments accompanying the reports of the Endowed Schools Commission, vol. III, H.C. 1857/8 (2336-IV) xxii, pt. I, p. 282.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ Nixon, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

²⁴ Lewis, *op. cit.*, p. 424.

²⁵ In the reports of the Church Education Society, 1844-1866, the two titles are interchangeable.

²⁶ Caulfield, *op. cit.*, p. 502.

²⁷ Lewis, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 424.

²⁸ *Pietas Corcagiensis*, p. 67.

allocated to the proposed school was ordered to be “set to public cant for the term of 99 years.”²⁹ The lease was not taken up, and the land was eventually conveyed to the Mayor for the use of the parishioners of St. Paul’s.³⁰

Other charity schools, besides those I have designated as parish schools, were established in the city during the eighteenth century. One of these was endowed by both Archdeacon Pomeroy and Mrs Shearman, and like Deane’s charity school was intended for the poor children of St. Peter’s Parish.³¹ Nixon knew the school as Hammond’s Marsh Endowed School, and located it in Peter’s Street.³² According to the commissioners of the board of education, it was in Hammond’s Lane.³³ The Commissioners of Irish Education Inquiry reported that the title of the school was Shearman and Pomeroy’s Endowed School, and placed it in Thomas Street.³⁴ Ó Coindealbháin recounts that, in the early nineteen-forties, traces of the school were revealed when houses in the street behind the present-day Mercy Hospital were demolished, a stone slab being found above the doorway of one of the houses. An inscription on the stone read:

“Mary Shearman’s Charity School, Anno Dom. 1759.”³⁵

An advertisement placed in a Cork newspaper in 1760 would seem to confirm that the school was established in the previous year, though we cannot exclude the possibility that it had existed before this date, in a different location.

“James Carr, parish clerk of St. Peter’s, has opened school on Hammond’s Marsh, in the house lately erected in pursuance of the Will of Mr. Shearman, where he will teach Book-keeping . . . and instruct children in reading, writing, and arithmetic.”³⁶

The two most notable charity schools in eighteenth century Cork were the Blue Coat, or St. Stephen’s Hospital, and the Green Coat Hospital. The latter was prominent among the charity schools erected in Ireland in the early decades of the century, and was established by the leading advocate of charity schooling in the country, the Rev. Henry Maule. The Blue Coat Hospital belongs to an earlier period, and pre-dated, by several years, the Green Coat Hospital, and the other charity schools of the city.

The origins of the Green Coat Hospital are vividly described in Maule’s tract, *Pietas Corcagiensis*. The founders’ motives in establishing the school were “to advance the Glory of God, and the Welfare of their Fellow-Christians”. They attributed the then current “Profaneness and Immorality, Extreme Poverty . . . to a gross Ignorance of the Christian Religion among the poorer classes, and their want of being trained up to Labour and Industry in their early years.”³⁷

²⁹ Caulfield, *op. cit.*, p. 502.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 578/9.

³¹ Tables of Schools and Endowments accompanying the reports of the Endowed Schools Commission, vol. III, H.C. 1857/8, (2336-IV), pt. IV. I, p. 288.

³² Nixon, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

³³ Thirteenth Report . . . English Schools of Private Foundation, H.C. 1812, (219) vol. I, p. 16.

³⁴ Appendix No. 22, Parochial Returns, Munster, p. 1016.

³⁵ Ó Coindealbháin, ‘Schools and Schooling in Cork City, 1700-1831’. *JCHAS*. xlviii (1943). 44-57.

³⁶ *Cork Evening Post*, May 29, 1760.

³⁷ *Pietas Corcagiensis*, p. 22.

The remedy for these various evils was, "an early and proper education of youth." In order to provide this education, the founders agreed,

"... to erect Two Charity Schools, one for Boys and the other for Girls; the Children of both Sexes to be bred up to constant Business, as well as Religion. The Boys to be taught to Read, Write, and Cast Accounts; the Girls (besides learning to read) to Knit, Sow, and Spin; and both to be instructed in the Principles of the Christian Religion, as taught and profess'd in the Church of Ireland, and in such other things as might be suitable to their several Conditions and Caprices, in order to qualifie them for being put out Apprentices, or Servants, as the Governors and Trustees of the Schools shall see most convenient."³⁸

With these objectives in mind, they resolved to take 20 boys and 20 girls into the institution, and laid the foundation of the school on a piece of land belonging to Maule.³⁹ Numerous donations were received, and the building was quickly completed. The school was opened on August 12, 1716. By an Act of Parliament passed in 1717,⁴⁰ a number of individuals were incorporated trustees of the institution. Among these were the Bishop of Cork and his successors, the Mayor of Cork and his successors, the Members of Parliament for the City of Cork, and the Minister and Church-Wardens of St. Mary Shandon, and their successors. Any five of these, meeting in the library of the school, were to have full control of the financial affairs of the foundation, and were given full authority to co-opt other trustees, as they thought fit. The efficiency of these trustees, the inspiring leadership of the Rev. Maule, and the munificence of its supporters, combined to make the Green Coat Hospital an object of admiration for the whole country, and a model to be emulated by other charity schools during the first half of the eighteenth century. Thereafter, however, its fortunes declined, and it was in serious financial difficulty before the end of the century.

The origins of the Blue Coat Hospital are shrouded in antiquity. In medieval times the Corporation possessed lands in the north and south suburbs, the rents of which were applied to the maintenance of a leper hospital. A prior was appointed to govern both the lands and the hospital. This charitable enterprise later fell into disuse, and by the middle of the seventeenth century the existence of the lands had apparently been forgotten. Dr. Edward Worth, Dean of Cork and later Bishop of Killaloe, drew the attention of the councillors to the matter, and his brother-in-law was subsequently appointed prior. On the latter's death, William Worth, Recorder of Cork and the Dean's son, succeeded to the title, and had the rents of the lands paid to himself. He was later made a Baron of the Exchequer, and the influence he derived from his new position enabled him to obtain from the Crown a grant of the lands to himself and his heirs, in 1685.⁴¹

The Corporation disputed the grant, and after several years of legal wrangling,⁴² a settlement was reached. In 1699, the lands were vested forever in the Mayor and Common Council of the City of Cork, on certain conditions:

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

⁴⁰ Statute 4, George I, Chapter 14, Section 10, pp. 53/4.

⁴¹ Evidence taken before her majesty's commissioners of inquiry into the state of the endowed schools in Ireland, H.C. 1857/8, vol. I, (2336-IV) XXII, part II, p. 47.

⁴² Caulfield, *op. cit.*, pp. 252-273.

“That in and upon the Spittle Lands, in some convenient place near the . . . Chapel of St. Stephen, there may be, out of the rents and profits of all and singular the premises, builded and erected one fit and convenient house, building and rooms, for the dwelling of such a competent number of boys of the Protestant religion now by law established, as the Mayor and Common Council of the City of Cork and their successors for the time being shall name, limit, and appoint, to be lodged, remain, and be relieved there; and for the dwelling and necessary use of one schoolmaster, of the same religion, to teach and instruct the poor boys in reading, writing, and arithmetic, and to govern the said poor boys and other persons, of, in, or belonging to the said house; and that the said house so to be built shall and may be called and named St. Stephen’s Hospital, of Cork, founded and erected by William Worth, Esq., at all times hereafter; and that the Mayor of the City of Cork and the Common Council thereof, and their successors for the time being, shall and may be governors and overseers of said hospital at all times hereafter, and of all the goods, lands, revenues, and hereditaments thereof; and shall and may have power, by these presents, from time to time, and at all times hereafter, to name and choose one fit person to be schoolmaster of the said hospital, to teach and instruct the said poor boys to read, write, and understand arithmetic; as also to name and choose such a number of poor boys as they shall think fit, from time to time, be lodged, maintained, and taught in the said St. Stephen’s Hospital of Cork, founded and erected by William Worth, Esq.: which said schoolmaster so to be chosen from time to time shall provide for each of the said poor boys to be chosen at all times hereafter, decent and blue coats and caps upon each St. Stephen’s day for ever hereafter, together with all other convenient clothing, meat, drink, and other necessaries, during the time such schoolmaster and poor boy shall continue in the said hospital.”⁴³

In 1707, Baron Worth executed a deed empowering the Corporation to lease forever the lands in question, at the annual rent of £457 16s per annum. The Commissioners of the Board of Education were extremely critical of this arrangement, and in their report on English schools of private foundation, caustically commented that, “the then Mayor and Corporation of Cork attended more to the advantages of their friends, to whom they let the lands, than to the interests of the foundation for which they were trustees.”⁴⁴

The affairs of the institution throughout the eighteenth century are scantily documented. Henry Maule referred briefly to it in his *Pietas Corcagiensis*, noting that forty poor children attended it. This attendance was not greatly exceeded at any time during the century, and the highest on record was forty-six, in 1786.⁴⁵ Corporation records indicate that, between 1717 and 1720, sixteen boys were admitted to the hospital. Between 1720 and 1730 there was a total of twenty-five.⁴⁶ The original deed of 1699 had stipulated that children under eight years of age were not to be admitted, and that all pupils were to be apprenticed at the age of fourteen or younger.⁴⁷ In 1774, the Corporation directed that no boy over nine years was to be accepted.⁴⁸ Neither ruling was strictly adhered to. Of the one hundred and sixty-six boys who entered the school between 1780 and 1797, thirty-seven were less than eight

⁴³ Extract from the original deed, dated September 2, 1699. Cited in the Report of her majesty’s commissioners appointed to inquire into the endowments, funds, and actual conditions of all schools endowed for the purpose of education in Ireland: Evidence taken before the commissioners, H.C. 1857/8, (2336-II) XXII, pt. II.I, pp. 83/4.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 82. The commissioners estimated that the real value of such rents was between £5,000 and £6,000 per annum.

⁴⁵ Delany, *Gentleman’s and Citizen’s Cork Almanac*, Cork, 1786, p. 33.

⁴⁶ Caulfield, *op. cit.*, pp. 378-501.

⁴⁷ Cited in Brady, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 296/7.

⁴⁸ Caulfield, *op. cit.*, p. 895.

years old, and twenty-two were more than nine.⁴⁹ Though it had been originally planned to restrict admission to Protestants, it is interesting to note that a small number of Catholics were attending the school between 1773 and 1780.⁵⁰ It is probable that these would have received religious instruction from the Protestant chaplain appointed, for that purpose, by the Corporation.⁵¹ Most of the children were apprenticed to local tradesmen and manufacturers, but quite a few went to sea.⁵² Not all completed their schooling, some absconding, and others being summarily ejected for various reasons, the termination of their education being noted in laconic terms on the school register:⁵³

"John Stanton—Run 6 times, last did not return—a wretch."

"Wm. Stanley—Incorrigible. Ran repeatedly, vacated his place."

"Joseph Benn—Incorrigible. Ran often. A thief. Quitted Hospital."

"Geo. Hunter—A pet taken away by his foolish parents."

"Robt. West—Discharged as sickly and unfit."

"Francis Steed alias William—Francis turned out with the Evil and Wm. turned out for dirtiness and being too young."

"John Hayes—Turned out by order of Council 21 Feby., 1792 as illegitimate. Mother a Papist &c."

"Anthony Horan—Ran away with all his new clothes. Kept and secreted by his rascally parents."

The list is by no means exhaustive. About a quarter of the boys who were admitted to the school between 1780 and 1797, subsequently either ran away, were expelled, or were removed by their parents.⁵⁴

The affairs of the school were at their lowest ebb at the end of the century. Such was the ruinous condition of the building that the Corporation was obliged to divert the meagre funds available for its maintenance towards urgent repairs. As a consequence, the pupils were temporarily discharged, and the school remained closed for over two years.⁵⁵ Though it reopened in 1801, the damage was done. Only nine of the forty-two boys who had been discharged returned, and though fourteen more were admitted in 1801-2,⁵⁶ the school enrolment throughout the remainder of its existence was scarcely half what it had been in the eighteenth century.⁵⁷

Other institutions which afforded elementary instruction to the children of

⁴⁹ M. V. Conlon, 'Register of the Boys of St. Stephen's Hospital, Corke', *JCHAS*, LXII (1957), 46-55.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ An entry in the Corporation records dated August, 1758 reads as follows: "That £25 a-year be paid to the Rev. Michael Tisdal, Corporation Chaplain, in consideration thereof he is to visit the Blue Coat Hospital, cause the children to be properly instructed in their Catechism and principles of their Protestant religion, to inspect the cloathing, bedding, and food of the children, and report to the visitors and board from time to time." Caulfield, *op. cit.*, p. 709.

⁵² Conlon, *op. cit.*, pp. 46-55.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ *Flyn's Hibernian Chronicle*, March 5, 1801.

⁵⁶ Conlon, *op. cit.*, pp. 46-55.

⁵⁷ The number of pupils attending the school was 22, according to the Second Report from the Commissioners of Irish Education Inquiry, 1826. (Appendix No. 22, Parochial Returns, Province of Munster, p.1015) The Second Report of the Commissioners of Public Instruction, Ireland, 1835, gives the same figure. (Returns for the Diocese of Cork, p. 115c). The Endowed Schools Commission disclosed that the number in attendance had fallen to 18. (Evidence taken before the Commissioners, Vol. I, H.C. 1857/8, (2336-II) XXII, pt. II. I, p.86).

eighteenth-century Cork were the Foundling Hospital and the House of Industry. The former was opened in 1747, the latter in 1777.⁵⁸ There are few contemporary accounts of their progress during the century in which they were founded. Nixon⁵⁹ commented briefly on both of them in 1799:

“Foundling Hospital, North Liberties It has regularly in the House above 200 children’ besides double that number out with nurses, who are clothed, maintained, and educated.’
 “House of Industry, erected at Morrison’s Place, and opened on the 1st of January, 1777, for the reception of sturdy Beggars and Vagabonds. President, the Lord Bishop of Cork, and in his absence, The Right Worshipful the Mayor.”

A nineteenth-century source describes them in greater detail:⁶⁰

“The Foundling Hospital . . . is governed by an incorporated board, consisting of the diocesan, the mayor, recorder, aldermen, sheriffs, common-councilmen and common speaker, with 26 of the commonality is maintained by a local tax on coal, culm, weigh-house fines, carriage licenses and penalties on car drivers The infants . . . are placed out to nurse till they are six or seven years old when they becomes inmates until of an age to be apprenticed They are educated as Protestants and bound to Protestant masters . . . The building is a small quadrangle, of which the chapel forms one side; the other three are appropriated to school-rooms (two for the boys and two for the girls) . . .”
 “The House of Industry contains . . . three schools for boys and girls, each under a separate teacher.”

It is important to note that these two institutions were well-established before the dramatic expansion in elementary education which characterised the early decades of the nineteenth century, and, though their primary role was not the instruction of the poor, they were probably educating more children than all the charity-schools of the city combined, during the eighteenth century.

All of the schools referred to so far had certain features in common. Firstly, their pupils received an elementary education only, in most cases. Secondly, the city fathers were involved, to some extent, in the affairs of practically all of the schools. Thirdly, they were jointly administered by clergy and laity. Fourthly, the schools purported to educate the children of Protestants, or children as Protestants. Extracts from contemporary sources, and from deeds and wills which provided for the foundation of the schools, amply illustrate the latter point.

According to Captain Thomas Deane’s will, the pupils of St. Peter’s Charity-school were to be taught,

“the principles of Christian religion, more especially the catechism of the Church of Ireland.”⁶¹

His brother, Moses Deane, specified in his will that his endowment was for the purpose of:

“funding and clothing at least twenty poor boys and twenty maids, in parish of St. Peter’s, who are to be taught to read the Bible.”⁶²

⁵⁸ Nixon, *op. cit.*, pp. 40-41.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ Lewis, *op. cit.*, pp. 426-7.

⁶¹ Tables of Schools and Endowments accompanying the reports of the Endowed Schools Commission, H.C. 1857/8, Vol. III, (2336-IV), XXII, pt. iv. i., p. 284.

⁶² *Ibid.*

The pupils of the Green Coat Hospital, both boys and girls, were to be instructed,

“in the Principles of the Christian Religion, as taught and profess'd in the Church of Ireland.”⁶³

The Blue Coat Hospital was built to accommodate,

“such a competent number of boys of the Protestant religion now by law established, as the Mayor and the Common Council of the City of Cork and their successors for the time being shall name, limit, and appoint.”⁶⁴

The children in the Foundling Hospital were,

“educated as Protestants and bound to Protestant masters.”⁶⁵

All of these demonstrate, not so much a desire to convert Catholics, as a concentration on the secular and religious instruction of the Protestant poor, and a general indifference to the educational aspirations of the Catholic majority, during the greater part of the eighteenth century. Proselytism, and the religious tensions and disputes it sparked off, was to come later.

⁶³ *Pietas Corcagiensis*, p. 22.

⁶⁴ Extracts from the original deed.

⁶⁵ Lewis, *op. cit.*, pp. 426/7.