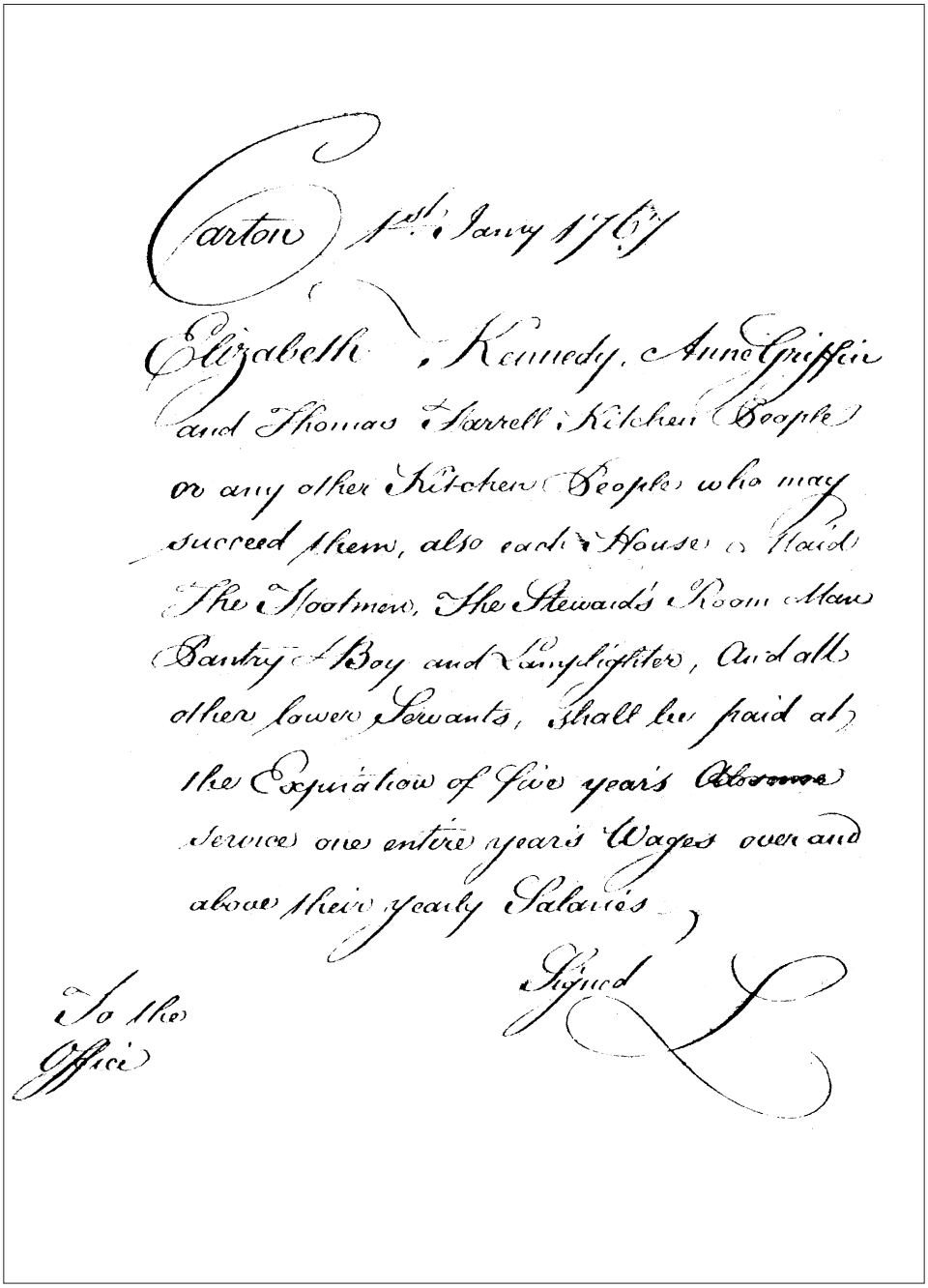
Carton 1st January 1767

Elizabeth Kennedy, Anne Griffin
and Thomas Harrell Kitchen People
or any other Kitchen People who may
succeed them, also each House & Maid
The Footmen, The Steward's Room Man
Pantry Boy and Lamplighter, And all
other lower Servants, shall be paid at
the Expiration of five years
Services one entire year's Wages over and
above their yearly Salaries

Signed

To the
Office

1 – Like many employers, the Duke of Leinster was forced to take measures to retain the services of his domestic staff. Here he offers an incentive of one year's wages to those of his 'lower' servants who complete five years' service in his household (fol. 78).

Vails and travails: how Lord Kildare kept his household in order

PATRICIA McCARTHY

'Not to allow of Cursing and Swearing about the House &c. or any riotous Behaviour but everything done in the most quiet and regular Manner. To see that every Person do their own Business in the proper Manner and times, and if not, to inform Lord or Lady Kildare of it.'

— 'Rules to be observed by the Marquis of Kildare's Steward at Carton'

So little has been written about servants in eighteenth-century Ireland that it is most gratifying to come across a document that gives an insight into the running of a large household in this period. The Marquis of Kildare (later Duke of Leinster) (1722-1773) had what is generally referred to as an 'army' of servants at Carton, county Kildare. He kept a small number of staff in Kildare House (later Leinster House) in Dublin, and a number who moved between the two. The document in question is a fairly sizeable manuscript, 113 pages in length including an index, and is among papers in the archives of Alnwick Castle, seat of the Dukes of Northumberland.[1] It is described as 'Rules for the government of the Marquis of Kildare's (Duke of Leinster's) household 1763-1773', and has a note attached which reads 'For his Grace the Duke of Northumberland with the Archbishop of Cashel's Compliments. 24 January 1795, Stephen's Green, Dublin'. It contains memos, timetables, instructions and orders, varying between 'Rules to be observed by the Marquis of Kildare's Steward at Carton' to 'How Ladders &c are to be painted that they may be known who they belong to'. Most entries are dated and are signed 'K' (Kildare), and from November 1766, 'L' (Leinster). It is probably safe to assume that these directives were given to the steward who dealt with them and retained the docu-

ments. How this document came into the possession of Charles Agar, the Archbishop of Cashel, and why he sent it to the 2nd Duke of Northumberland is not clear, but it may have been nothing more than a wish to compare ducal establishments on both sides of the Irish Sea. It is known that both men knew each other quite well, and Agar was second chaplain to the Duke's father when, as Earl of Northumberland, he came to Ireland as Lord Lieutenant in 1763.[2]

Bearing in mind that the document relates to the sole ducal household in Ireland, in many ways it reflects the responsibilities and the problems that presented themselves to all who employed servants in Ireland about this time. This article will look at how employers in less noble households met similar challenges to those that faced the household at Carton. Despite the detail in this document, such as the meticulously listed duties of the steward and the butler, little is dealt with, apart from diet, that gives an insight into basic aspects of the lives of the many servants who worked there.

FOOD AND DRINK

The document is paternalistic in tone; in common with many employers at the time Kildare refers to his servants as 'family', treating them like children who need a firm hand and to be disciplined when they misbehave. He takes an interest in the diet of his servants, ensuring that they eat well and on time. Among the rules for 'the feeding of the Family' in the absence of Lord and Lady Kildare, little distinction is made between the food in the steward's hall and in the servants' hall, apart from the times of meals. The upper servants (i.e. steward, housekeeper, butler, clerk of the kitchen, personal maids and valets) dined in the steward's hall at 4pm on 'Mutton and Broth, Mutton Chops, Harrico or Hashed, Roast or boiled Pork with Pease Pudding and Garden things or, Stakes, Roast, or boiled Veal with Garden things when Veal is killed at Carton'. Once a week they had mutton or beef pie, and each Sunday, roast beef and plum pudding. Leftover meat from this meal was to be eaten for supper and breakfast, 'adding some Potatoes or any kind of Garden Stuff, Cheese or Eggs'. In the servants' hall they fared almost as well, dining at 1pm on 'boiled Beef, Cabbage and Roots, every Sunday to have a Piece of Beef Roasted and Plumb Pudding, or any other kind of Pudding'. On Thursdays they had boiled mutton or pork with vegetables. The amount of meat consumed by the lower servants alone per annum must have been sizable, taking into account that their meat allowance was one-and-a-half pounds per person per week. For supper they had bread, butter and cheese. Salt fish was eaten once a week, probably Friday in deference to Catholic servants, with potatoes and cheese. If any of the meat was not 'well

and cleanly dressed and good of the Kind, this should be reported' (fol. 18-21).

A pint of ale was given to each person who supped in the servants' hall. In addition, in 1758 the cook was allowed one quart of ale at 11am and another at 2pm, and laundrymaids, labouring like the cook in a hot atmosphere, were allowed one quart on two mornings per week. If there was a wet-nurse in the house (with nineteen children there generally was one) she was allowed one pint of ale at 9pm (fol. 22-3). As time went by, modifications appeared in the 'Rules'. By 1772 the cook was allowed one quart of ale or strong beer between 1pm and 2pm 'if he desires', and two or three quarts of small beer were to be provided for kitchen staff (fol. 91). Interestingly, small beer, which must have been very light, was virtually available to anyone: 'no Person of the Family to be refused ... as much as they shall drink' between breakfast and 6pm (fol. 25). Any malt liquor that remained after the Duke and Duchess dined was allowed to be taken to the second table (steward's room) (fol. 89).

While the family was in residence at Kildare House there was a constant flow of food from Carton. A mule or horse departed from there at 10am each Monday, Wednesday and Friday, carrying 'Rowls, Butter, Eggs, Fowl, Game &c and Sallading', returning the following day (fol. 29). On Tuesday and Saturday mornings a cart and two horses brought meat, garden produce, bread, and anything else that was required from Carton (fol. 27). In October 1769 the Duke was obviously planning a dinner in Dublin, as he instructed the farmer to send two 'good fat' sheep, a dozen or one-and-a-half dozen chickens, a goose or two, a couple of turkeys, and a pair or two of ducks, 'each to be extremely good in their Kinds' (fol. 86). At the same time, worried that fruit might be damaged in the cart during transportation, a note was dispatched to the gardener that in future it should be sent either with 'Joe' (by mule or horseback), or by a man on foot (a footman) on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays (fol. 88).[3] Any letters going to Dublin from Carton were to be left in the farmyard before 10pm for collection next morning by the carter (fol. 46).

DISCIPLINE

While he took good care of his servants, ensuring that those who arrived home from town 'of a very Wet Evening in Winter' were allowed some ale or strong beer, he was also firm. He frequently dismissed staff, but in the case of Thomas Rice, re-employed him twice, the first time at the solicitation of the Duchess, on 3 April 1767. The Duke stipulated that Rice be employed by the planter only, and 'if ever he is seen about my House or any of my Offices at Carton (except on Pay Nights in the Office Yard) he will be immediately discharged ... and whoever employs him in

any shape in or about said House & Offices shall be stopped 10s'. The following year in March he was re-employed, this time in the brew-house, having been forgiven once more by the Duke, but after a further transgression 'his Grace hath turned him away never more to be employed at Carton' (fol. 80). The steward was instructed to be 'over strict at first as it is much easier to relax than to recover an Authority over People' (fol. 14).

Such philosophising over the handling of servants was not for John Scott, 1st Earl of Clonmell (d.1798). In a tirade against country-house living he calls servants 'an absolute band of robbers' explaining that:

> the men thieve and plunder, and sometimes ingratiate themselves dangerously and scandalously into the favour and affections of their superiors in the house, the wife, the sister, or daughter; the women servants ... pilfer and pillage, and constantly debauch the master, the sons, and the relations, and frequently seduce the male children, sometimes even to disgraceful marriages, oftener, disorder them, and at times, by pimping and intrigue, sell the daughters to swindlers, fortune-hunters, and vagabonds.

Incidentally, he rated the guests that are invited to country houses as 'often more dangerous'.[4]

Employers had different ways of punishing their unruly servants. Bishop Edward Synge of Elphin, county Roscommon, had Billy Smith put into the iron coal box for three hours, and when he repeated the misdemeanour he was whipped.[5] This seems surprisingly harsh in view of the fact that Synge looked after his servants or 'family' very well, ensuring that they received medical attention when required, that they were well fed, particularly after journeying from Elphin to Dublin, and were dressed well. He disapproved of his daughter Alicia's maid, and 'rather suffer'd than approv'd of her continuing in any shape in my family...' [6] He told Alicia, 'You know me to be strict and Severe with regard to the Conduct of Servants. This is not the effect of temper, but prudence. Harshness, irksome to my self, I find necessary to keep them in order.' [7] Many employers imposed fines for misbehaviour that were sometimes disproportionate, like Thomas Otway of Castle Otway, county Tipperary, who fined Daniel Mullowney one shilling and a penny in November 1772 'for going into the stables without orders', when his daily pay was five pence.[8] At Doneraile Court, county Cork, in 1734, the coachman, who was earning £8 a year, was ordered to pay £1 7s 6d to replace a broken glass.[9] Jonathan Swift imposed a fine of one shilling out of board wages for every lie told, and if either of his two manservants got drunk, he was fined an English crown.[10] The Kildares fined outdoor staff such as carters 2/6d for taking too long coming from Kildare House to Carton, and shepherds were fined 6d for every sheep or lamb found wandering (fol. 44, 41). For the

most part, verbal warnings from superiors, followed, if needed, by a report to Lord or Lady Kildare, seemed to be the usual sanction, though the kitchen boy was to be immediately fined 2/6d if any 'kitchen garbage or greens' were found in the ash hole rather than the dung hill (fol. 51). In an effort to curb any excess among his staff, the Duke ruled in July 1769 that he would not for the future 'permit any dancing to be in any part of my House without my leave, or the Dutchess [sic] of Leinster's, which Occasions Neglect, Idleness and Drinking and makes the Family Irregular' (fol. 85). A letter that appeared in *Hibernian Magazine* in November 1781 indicates what could happen if discipline was not imposed:

> On Thursday evening last, or rather Friday morning, a scene of 'High life below stairs' was exhibited in the house of a person of distinction near Stephen's Green. Mrs Margery the cook gave a grand route [sic] to several ladies and gentlemen of her acquaintance. But they were all routed about 4 in the morning by the unexpected appearance of the house steward, who had come from his master's country seat on particular business. The butler was instantly discharged, just after having amused the company with the finest exertions of theatric excellence in the soliloquy of Hamlet.

WAGES

Wages in Ireland were low, on average 30% lower than in England, according to Arthur Young in 1780. This accounted for the large number of servants and retainers to be seen in houses. Frequently servants were not paid at all, having board and lodging in lieu, and when they were paid, it was at the end of each year of service. The result of this was that the servant had to borrow on his or her wages, leaving little to collect at the end of the year.

Edward Gore, employed by Lord Doneraile on 17 April 1727 at £7 10s a year borrowed £3 17s 10d from his employer the following November, and £2 19s 4d on 12 April 1728 (five days before his first year was completed), but the small balance due to him was not paid by his employer until 25 August that year, over four months late.[11] In his will made in 1765, Sir Edward O'Brien of Dromoland, county Clare, instructed his son to pay his debts 'in particular my poor servants wages to some of whom I stand indebted for many years'.[12] The Duke of Leinster's system was kinder to his servants. According to the 'Rules', in 1772 his footmen (if not the rest of his staff) were paid on a quarterly basis, receiving £8 a year (fol. 97). Charles Pocklington Domville had been paying his footman the same amount in 1768 at Templeogue House, county Dublin, and at Mount Coote, county Limerick, the foot-

man was receiving ten guineas in 1776.[13] The Kildares, however, were generous when it came to securing the services of a head gardener, offering £30 per annum, plus board wages of seven shillings per week. The housekeeper did quite well – £25 for the first year, and £30 'if we approve of her afterwards' – as well as having her own maid who was to be on the same footing as an upper housemaid, according to Lady Kildare.[14]

In the first half of the eighteenth century it was considered fashionable to have a male cook – French, if possible. They were paid significantly more than their female counterparts. In 1744 at Monivea, county Galway, William Burke was paid £8 a year, plus the grazing of a mare. After he was discharged the same year, Mary Lavoy accepted the job at £6 for the first year and £7 thereafter, with no mention of grazing for her mare, if she had one.[15] This discrepancy in pay, together with the frequent comings and goings of staff, is underlined at Doneraile Court between the years 1787 and 1800 with reference to the cook. During that period seven cooks passed through its doors, two women and five men. The women were paid £20 and £22 15s respectively in 1787 and 1791, while the mens' lowest wage was £34 2s 6d in 1788, rising to £40 in 1790, and forty guineas by 1800.[16] At the other end of the scale, kitchenmaids, parlourmaids and dairymaids earned, on average, in the 1740s £2 10s a year, rising to £6 to £7 by the beginning of the nineteenth century.[17] Looking at servants' wages books throughout the eighteenth century, one is struck by the number of staff either being discharged or leaving their employment, often to get married, and who had to be replaced. In an effort to stem the tide of departures from his employment, in January 1767 the Duke of Leinster offered the following incentive to his servants:

> Elizabeth Kennedy, Anne Griffin and Thomas Farrell Kitchen People or any other Kitchen People who may succeed them, also each House Maid, The Footmen, The Steward's Room Man, Pantry Boy and Lamplighter, And all other lower Servants, shall be paid at the Expiration of five years' service one entire year's Wages over and above their yearly Salaries (fol. 78) (Plate 1).

The scheme was extended and modified from January 1772: each household upper manservant out of livery who remained for five years was entitled to a flat rate of ten guineas; to each livery servant of household or stables, seven guineas; and to each household lower woman servant, five guineas (fol. 100).

Among the Ballyglunin Papers is an agreement drawn up between Walter Blake of Ballyglunin and his servant Peter Hillery, dated 3 February 1774.[18] Hillery seems to have been his farmer. He received £10 a year, plus a '$^1/_4$ acre muck yearly at Ballyglunin, greasing of 6 collops yearly' on any of Blake's land 'most convenient to him'; he can keep one cow to fatten, and also received two stone of 'cast

fleece wooll'.[19] Blake also gave him annually sixty labourers for such work as his servant saw fit. In return Hillery would live with him always and look for 'no more wages whilst I keep him and it is my present intention always to keep him'. Hillery's wife, Cathy Mannin, in a separate agreement, received a house, garden, and 'the greasing of two collops', plus £4 a year in return for her services as cook and housekeeper in town and country.[20]

In addition to wages and board wages, already mentioned, were weekly cash payments to servants in lieu of meals. They were given when employers were away from home or when servants travelled with the family. While their employers were at Kildare House, servants on board wages at Carton were allowed such garden produce as they desired (fol. 88). Married servants were not allowed to live in the house, but were given board wages for living outside the estate. The steward was instructed that they were not to eat or drink in the house 'except now and then, they and their Wives may be asked to Dinner on Sunday to live in Harmony with them so far as to carry on their mutual Business to Lord Kildare's advantage' (fol. 15). Servants managed to find many ways of saving portions of their board wages, one of which was to get themselves invited to eat in the servants' halls of houses where they had friends. It also gave them more free time and more independence than most employers desired.[21]

Working in large houses such as Carton or Castletown where great numbers of servants were employed had advantages. On paper (as in the 'Rules') it would appear that there was a strong demarcation between the duties of each category of servant, unlike that in a smaller house where staff would be expected to do whatever job needed to be done. That stated, frequently outdoor staff, such as postilions, were expected to wait at table as required, even in the most noble houses. The Duke, among his rules for footmen, ordered that they 'and Stable Men, if they should be ordered to attend', must be in wait at the kitchen door ten minutes before the bell for the Duke's dinner was rung, ready to bring in the dinner (fol. 79). The social life of the house brought visiting maids, valets and coachmen, animating the servants' hall with gossip and new faces. For servants, 'a berth within a comfortable house was to be preferred before many more precarious situations', as put by Toby Barnard, quoting Samuel Madden, who criticises the many who 'squeeze into houses for an easy and indolent life where they may feed and lie well'.[22]

Before discussing a number of ways by which servants could increase their earnings, it seems apposite at this point to take a look at what was probably much less important to them, but an aspect of their lives that is of interest to us: where did the servants sleep? In larger Irish households, generally, was the accommodation allocated to servants' sleeping quarters on architectural plans sufficient for the numbers of servants employed?

ACCOMMODATION

Research shows that Barnard's 'berth' and Madden's 'squeeze' appear to be apt descriptions of the sleeping accommodation for servants in many houses, both large and small, in the eighteenth century. The Irish nobility and gentry were well known for the numbers of servants they kept. This excess 'are in the lower sort', said Arthur Young in 1772, 'owing not only to the general laziness but also to the number of attendants everyone of a higher class will have'.[23] The numbers pandered to the employers' desire for status. 'We keep many of them in our houses, as we do our plate on our sideboards', wrote Samuel Madden in 1738, 'more for show than use, and rather to let people see that we have them than that we have any occasion for them.' [24] Lady Caroline Dawson in 1778 remarked on the 'servants without end' at Carton,[25] and, at a dinner in Kilkenny Castle about a decade later, James Dowling Herbert noted 'a servant nearly behind every man'.[26] Taking advantage of the 'open door' hospitality, visitors were frequently coming and going. Invited guests arrived with their servants, like Mrs Delany and her husband, the Dean of Down. When travelling between Delville, their Dublin home, and the Dean's residence in Down, they travelled in the chaise, the cook and housemaid travelled in the coach and four, and another maid in a car for baggage. Including three men to drive the carriages, this meant that their entourage totalled eight people, plus horses, all requiring food and a night's accommodation.[27]

With large numbers of staff and a fairly constant stream of visitors accompanied by servants and horses, one wonders about the servants' sleeping arrangements, and how much thought was invested in the provision of such accommodation for them. On paper, as in architectural drawings, it looks neat and ordered. But whether or not it reflects the numbers of staff in the house is not easy to ascertain. The constant comings and goings of servants makes it difficult to calculate how many were living in a house at any particular time in the eighteenth century. Furthermore, the total numbers of servants mentioned per house do not differentiate between domestic and outdoor staff,[28] the latter, usually in the majority, being accommodated elsewhere. Annotated plans of houses give an indication of where they slept – usually the garret or the basement – but do not tell us whether they slept two or three to a bed, if any slept on the floor, or if, indeed, they actually slept in a bedroom. Nor is it possible in most cases to work out where visiting servants slept. Isaac Ware in 1756 advised that if garrets proved too small, 'a bed for one man, or two maid-servants is contrived to let down in the kitchen'.[29] Accommodation for servants was fairly rough, according to Mahaffy, and some may have slept on straw or on rugs on the floor, particularly in town houses.[30]

Lady Sarah Bunbury gave some thought to the matter when she advised her

sister, the Duchess of Leinster, on the layout of the servants' quarters at Frescati, Blackrock, county Dublin, in 1775. However, one cannot help getting the impression that the thought was directed more towards filling any gaps in the house with servants' quarters, rather than to a consideration of their comfort. She recommended that the servants' hall should be located under the dining room, where the smell of food and the 'riot that goes on at supper wouldn't disturb you there, as it would under your sitting room'. Two rooms could be made into one for 'the men lie there', and another room, which would seem to be a small space, could be used as a 'lock-up' plate room for the butler, 'or that space can be given to the footmen for another bedchamber'. She also suggests that the maids could be 'sent' to 'that long strip up at the top of the house over your bed', presumably an awkward space in the garret.[31]

Pole Cosby, on the other hand, provided new rooms for maidservants and six rooms for manservants at Stradbally, county Leix, after his father's death, when his mother and sister came to live with him in 1729. Together with the furniture from her house, his mother brought a coach and six horses, coachman, postilion, footman and one maid, while his sister brought her maid and a manservant. Cosby was forced to provide more accommodation, building not just for the servants but for his extended family.[32]

Significantly, among the linen listed in an inventory of goods sent from Howth Castle to the Dublin residence of Lord Howth at St Mary's Abbey, is a footman's bed, indicating that this was something that was foldable and portable.[33] Field beds with foldable frames are frequently mentioned in inventories.[34] Christina Hardyment found sufficient references in a 1710 inventory of Dyrham Park, Gloucestershire, to pallet beds in workrooms and in employers' bedrooms to confirm that personal servants slept all over the place, in order to be on call quickly if they were needed.[35] Stable boys frequently slept in the stable, and personal maids sometimes slept in the same bed with their mistress, particularly when travelling.[36]

Often mentioned in architectural plans, diaries and novels are barrack rooms, a name that is probably a throwback to fortified dwellings of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries when soldiers doubled as servants. References to these (similar to dormitories) apply usually to surplus single male guests, but not exclusively, as is clear from Richard Johnston's plans for Castle Coole, county Fermanagh, of 1789, where it applies equally to young lady guests.[37] But the term is used also for male servants. Instead of a number of rooms each accommodating two or three servants, it made more sense and was less expensive to provide a barrack room.[38]

In an interesting plan for servants' quarters by James Playfair of 1792 for Townley Hall, county Louth, four blocks of offices and accommodation range around a court.[39] On the second floor he organised his accommodation for servants in a most orderly fashion. One range of rooms is for women servants, another is for

upper servants, a third for footmen, and the fourth for 'strangers' servants'. Accommodation for the steward, butler, housekeeper, and for 'strangers' upper servants' was located in the four projecting corners of the square. Within the footmens' range is a 'hospital' or sickroom. A 'powdering room', where servants could powder their wigs (or hair), adjoined the servants' hall.

In the kitchen and laundry block in Richard Castle's plans for Kildare House of about 1745, a bedroom for the laundrymaids is located off the wash-house on the ground floor. There too is the clerk of the kitchen's bedroom. On the first floor are the housekeeper's and cook's bedrooms, with adjoining closets, and here the architect has illustrated four beds in the maidservants' lodging room.[40] One pair of beds is larger than the other pair. Might these be double beds? Similarly, listed in a mid-nineteenth-century inventory of the Provost's House at Trinity College Dublin are two 'painted wood press bedsteads with double pallyasses on each' in the maidservants' room in the basement.[41] Valets and ladies' maids slept either in designated servants' bedrooms or frequently in dressing rooms attached to their masters' and mistresses' bedrooms, a practice that all but disappeared in the course of the eighteenth century. Lord and Lady Kildare's bedrooms and dressing rooms were the only sleeping accommodation on the first floor in Kildare House. Their personal servants may have slept in their apartment or in the two rooms in the attic directly over their employers' dressing rooms, both of which had staircases adjoining.[42] In the attic were five bedrooms with closets, as well as the nursery suite, but most of the limited accommodation must have been reserved for the Kildare's numerous children. Apart from a servants' lodging room in the basement of the main block, there were two manservants' lodging rooms on the upper floor of the stable and coach-house block, and also a small gate-lodge at the entrance to the house on Kildare Street. As can be seen, not much space at Kildare House was devoted to bedrooms. Visitors to the house would probably have their own residences in Dublin or would stay in hotels. As in London, visitors expected to be well entertained, but not invited to stay.

It would appear, therefore, that there was a degree of complacency in the provision of sleeping accommodation for servants on the part of the employer, and perhaps on the part of the servant too. In most cases it must have been an improvement on what they experienced in their own family homes. While most servants seem to have slept in rooms – single, shared, or barracks, depending on their status – a study of inventories has shown that press beds and portable beds, even a straw palliass upon the floor, were fairly common. Kitchen maids or boys frequently slept in the kitchen where, on the one hand, it would be warm, but they were prey to unwanted advances from other staff or from employers. An inventory of furniture at Leinster House has not been found, but according to the Knight of Glin, one dated 1805 for

Carton has recently been discovered, and it is hoped that when this becomes available it will shed some light on, among other things, the servants' sleeping quarters.[43]

VAILS

Returning to the subject of servants' earnings, there were a number of ways in which they could supplement their wages. The expectation of visitors to be well entertained by their host was justified in at least one respect: the cost to the guest incurred by the distribution of vails to servants. This was a problem not just for the 'family' at Carton, but for employers throughout the country, and in Scotland and England. The system of vails for servants – 'tipping', as we would call it – appears to have been well established by the eighteenth century. It is not clear how it came into being, but it obviously had the tacit agreement of employers for as long as it suited them. Defined by the *Oxford English Dictionary* as 'a gratuity given by a visitor on his departure to servants of the house',[44] it became a problem in the first half of the century when there was a feeling among employers that it had got out of hand. The customary scene in the hall, as their guest waited for his carriage or horse to be brought to the door, embarrassed many.[45]

Perhaps servants were taking to heart the advice offered to them in Jonathan Swift's ironic *Directions to Servants* (begun 1731). Swift suggested such methods, in the event of a gentleman who often dines with their master and gives no vails, 'to shew him some Marks of your Displeasure & quicken his Memory', and he concludes, 'By these, and the like Expedients, you may probably be a better Man by Half a Crown before he leaves the house.' [46] He further urged those servants who expected vails

> always to stand Rank and File when a Stranger is taking his Leave so that he must of Necessity pass between you; and he must have more Confidence or less Money than usual, if any of you let him escape; and according as he behaves himself, remember to treat him the next Time he comes.[47]

Hosts pretended not to notice guests fumbling in their pockets to find shillings and half-crowns to distribute to servants who had lined themselves up expectantly. Whether the motive for allowing it was to enable the aristocracy to display their wealth or to salve their conscience at paying such low wages is not clear.[48] The giving of vails was not confined to great houses; it was also expected in more modest establishments, though the amounts given were less.[49]

For potential guests it led to a situation where in many cases it became prohibitively expensive to accept invitations either to dine or stay overnight. Richard

Griffith from Bennetsbridge, county Kilkenny, complained in about 1760 in a letter to his wife that:

> an heavy and unprofitable Tax still subsists upon the Hospitality of this Neighbourhood ... In short while this Perquisite continues, a Country Gentleman may be considered but as a generous Kind of Inn-holder, who keeps open House, at his own Expence, for the sole Emolument of his Servants ... this Extravagance is not confined, at present, solely to the Country ... for a Dinner in Dublin, and all the Towns in Ireland, is become ... an expensive Ordinary. Nay, if you have any Sort of Business to transact, even in a Morning, with a Person who keeps his Port, you may levee him fifty Times, without being admitted by his Swiss Porter. So ... I shall consider a great Man as a Monster, who may not be seen, 'till you have fee'd his Keepers.[50]

Griffith was by no means alone in believing that he was being 'punished' by the porter or butler for the paucity of his vails, or perhaps his refusal to 'pay his way'. An unfortunate guest in England in 1754 found his punishment truly humiliating. 'I am a marked man,' he wrote,

> If I ask for beer I am presented with a piece of bread. If I am bold enough to call for wine, after a delay which would take its relish away were it good, I receive a mixture of the whole sideboard in a greasy glass. If I hold up my plate nobody sees me; so that I am forced to eat mutton with fish sauce, and pickles with my apple pie.[51]

For the servants it was a well-established way of increasing their income (often by 50% or more), and something to which they believed they were entitled. In 1750 John Macdonald accepted a position as a postilion in Scotland for £2 a year, clothes, and one-third of the vails, but it should be noted that it was the coachman who offered him the job and mentioned the vails.[52] Such an arrangement would have been most likely understood, but not spelt out, by the employer in Ireland.

However, the custom of vail-giving was the subject of much argument in the printed media in England. The writer Daniel Defoe abhorred the idea, and newspapers ran numerous articles and letters giving both sides of the argument.[53] In the *London Chronicle* a correspondent wrote in 1762 that 'Masters in England seldom pay their servants but in lieu of wages suffer them to prey upon their guests.' [54]

A crusade against the giving of vails began in Scotland in 1760 where seventeen counties issued appeals to abolish them. By 1764 the movement had spread to London, resulting in riots there by footmen – the servants who stood to lose the most.[55] It was probably at about the same time that employers from a number of

counties in Ireland agreed among themselves to abolish vails to servants.[56] It seems likely that among these gentlemen was the Marquis of Kildare. Like a number of other employers, he decided to increase staff wages in an effort to compensate them for loss of earnings. In March 1765 he issued the following directive from Carton to members of his household:

> In Consideration of Vails &c, which I will not permit for the future to be received in any of my Houses upon any Account whatsoever from Company lying there or otherwise I shall give in lieu thereof viz.
>
> | | | |
> |---|---|---|
> | To the House Keeper
Maitre D'Hotel
Cook
Confectioner | }
}
}
} | £5 a year to each |
> | Steward at Carton
Present Butler and
Valet de Chambre
Groom of the Chambers | }
}
}
} | £3 a year to each |
> | Gentn of Horse | | £2 a year |
>
> To Commence the 1st day of April next and I depend upon them that they will not receive Money upon that Account from any Body, -
>
> I shall make no Allowance to either Livery Servants or Under Servants, and any of those who chuse to be discharged may
>
> All Stoppages for the future to be made out of the Wages of the respective Persons where any thing is lost (fol. 56-57).

It is interesting to note that these were all 'upper servants', and the housekeeper is the only female servant (the cook was often male). Perhaps these were the only servants in attendance at Carton or Kildare House as guests departed. However, seven years later, in 1772, the now Duke of Leinster directed that £4 per annum be paid to footmen in lieu of vails 'at the end of a year's service' (fol. 97).

Servants could also add to their income when the family was not at home by showing visitors around the house. With or without letters of introduction, visitors were quite likely to arrive unexpectedly at any large house in the country, and it was the custom for a member of the domestic staff – usually the housekeeper, butler or footman – to show them around the house. The rector of Navan, the Rev Daniel Augustus Beaufort (1739-1821), was a regular country house 'tourist' in the 1780s and the early nineteenth century, but while he left a valuable account of his visits, he

did not disclose his contributions to servants' pockets. In the 1850s Sir Charles Domville of Santry House had special cards printed admitting parties of four or less to view his house on Tuesdays and Fridays between 2pm and 5pm.[57] Visitors generally were permitted to drive or walk about the gardens and grounds, but the Duke of Leinster was forced to erect a notice at Carton with instructions that none were to be admitted into the kitchen garden. It was addressed to anyone 'who comes to see the Improvements at Carton'. (fol. 83).

LIVERY

Vails, however, were not the sole perquisite of the servant at this period. Apart from cast-off clothes from the employer's family – the mainstay of the female servant's wardrobe – many male servants, for example, butlers, footmen, coachmen and postilions, had uniforms or livery made for them or were given an allowance for it. The Duke of Leinster ordered that his footmen, from 1 January 1767, were allowed twenty shillings a year for 'a Pair of black Worsted Shag Breeches, for a fine Felt Hat with a Silver Chain Loop and Button, and a Horse Hair Cockade'. He warned that 'Those who do not chuse to accept of it, to let me know that I may discharge them.' Between 1 April and 1 October they were instructed to wear 'clean Leather Breeches', with the warning that he will stop one shilling for each time he finds them disobeying this order (fol. 69). In 1772 the allowance had increased to thirty shillings a year, this time for leather breeches, shoes, stockings and boots (fol. 97). The Bellew family of Galway, in the 1770s, paid £5 a year, with a suit of clothes, for a butler in charge of plate and furniture 'if he behaves careful and honest'.[58]

There is little evidence of landlords like Robert French of Monivea in Galway issuing written warnings to staff about their dress, but undoubtedly there was a dress code in operation. French paid £24 9s 2d for servants' clothes in the year 1746-47, and £28 15s 5d in 1748-49.[59] Bishop Edward Synge of Elphin's servants were 'so shabby they will not be fit to appear in town', and he ordered, in September 1747, frocks and waistcoats for five liveried servants between his palace at Elphin and his Dublin home at Kevin Street.[60] In 1754 Lord Powerscourt paid a tailor for making livery 'two light colour coats and two scarlet waistcoats, two fustian frocks and four flanell waistcoats lapeld and lined all throw'.[61] At Strokestown House, county Roscommon, in 1844, Major Mahon purchased lengths of fabrics – Super Oxford cloth, drab twilled Silesia, black Silesia, padding, canvas, velvet facing, long cloth, linen, moleskin and calico – for manservants' suits, including livery. It seems likely that a tailor, probably an itinerant tailor, was commissioned to come to the house and make the servants' clothing. Both the kitchen and pantry boys were

provided with moleskin suits, while Danny the kitchen man was given a suit of Barragon 'the time he came to live here'. Suits of clothes were also given to the men as Christmas presents.[62]

The wearing of livery proclaimed the wealth of the family. Pole Cosby of Stradbally was able to boast that having taken a house in 1739 on Dublin's Arran Quay at £55 for six months, he had five servants in complete livery, 'besides my own man'.[63] On the occasion of a visit by the Lord Lieutenant, the Duke of Richmond, to Charleville Forest, county Offaly, in October 1809, the Countess of Charleville wrote to her son, 'Magnificent full dress liveries have been made for the servants & a uniform of Blue and Scarlet for the upper men; in short it ought to go off handsome for money has not been spared.'[64] And at Baronscourt, county Tyrone, in 1844, Lord and Lady Abercorn impressed their guests with 'a house steward who lived with George IV, a most distinguished major-domo excellently got up, a first-rate cook, and remarkable lords-in-waiting dressed in crimson and silver. No livery could look richer.'[65] The fastidious Lord Abercorn, however, insisted that his rooms be fumigated after his liveried servants had removed themselves, and that the chambermaids should wear white kid gloves when making up his bed.[66]

BEQUESTS

Long-standing servants who had given five or more years' service were often left bequests in their employers' wills. These varied between employer's clothes or linen to sums of money. The dowager Viscountess Powerscourt, who died in 1785, was generous to the female servants who were in her service at the time of her death. Those who had been with her one year were given one year's wages, and those with her less than a year, a half-year's wages. But to every manservant she left just one month's wages.[67] However, female servants were not so highly esteemed by Sir Edward O'Brien of Dromoland. He left one year's wages to male servants of five or more year's standing, 'having met [with] not one woman servant worth salt to her pottage since Mrs Barnwell left me'.[68] Lady Powerscourt also bequeathed to every servant the sum of £5, which 'will do them more good' than putting them all in mourning clothes, a custom of the time.[69]

CARD MONEY

> 'If your Lady loves Play, your Fortune is fixed for ever; Moderate Gaming will be a Perquisite of ten Shillings a Week; and in such a Family I would

> rather chuse to be Butler than a Chaplain ... It is all ready Money, and got without Labour.[70]

So said Swift on a rather lucrative perk for the butler, or sometimes the footman, whose job it was to supply cards and candles whenever the lady of the house invited her friends to play cards. The system allowed for greater numbers at these parties than perhaps the hostess's own means would allow, as Marshall has pointed out, and the guests were expected to leave on the table double and treble the amount of the cards' worth. The higher the stakes, the more new decks of cards were called for, and the more money the butler made. Added to that, he was free to sell off the old cards to coffee houses, or to poorer families who liked to play cards.[71] It might be more difficult to cheat on candles, as wax candles would be expected, and those made of tallow were rather odorous.

While servants were undoubtedly paid little, there were possibilities for some of them to supplement their earnings, both with and without their employers' knowledge. The 'servant problem' seemed to come to a head with the controversy over vails in the 1750s and 1760s, at which time the behaviour of servants in general came under close scrutiny. It may have contributed to the gradual separation and distancing of servants from the employer that began in the late eighteenth century. The Duke signed the last 'Rule' in August 1773, the year of his death. Unfortunately, it is not known how his heir dealt with these problems or whether he drew up a new book of rules.

While this document (the 'Rules') is comprehensive in many ways, one also gets the impression that at times there is a knee-jerk reaction to situations as they develop. The fact that many of them are dated at different times seems to reinforce this. Kildare's own decency and humanity are evident in many of these rules, and one is given the strong impression that he was probably disregarded over and over again by his staff. His wishes in this document were conveyed to the steward and to others in charge of staff. It meant that everybody was made aware of the parameters within which they should operate. How well it worked in practice is a moot point. Perhaps the action by Charles Agar in sending such a document to the Duke of Northumberland implied that the Leinster household was looked upon as a model for other establishments. Or is that reading too much into it?

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My thanks to John Cornforth for pointing me in the direction of the document. I would like to thank Dr Toby Barnard for his valued comments and suggestions, and my supervisor Dr Edward McParland for his continued help and guidance. I am also grateful to the Knight of Glin, to the staff of the Irish Architectural Archive, to Clare Baxter, Collections Manager, The Northumberland Estates, and to the Duke of Northumberland and his Trustees for permission to reproduce a page from the manuscript..

ENDNOTES

The following abbreviations are used:

IAA Irish Architectural Archive
NA National Archives, Dublin
NLI National Library of Ireland
PRONI Public Record Office of Northern Ireland, Belfast

1 Northumberland, Alnwick Castle Archives, MS 670, 'Rules for the government of the Marquis of Kildare's (Duke of Leinster's) household 1763-1773'. My thanks to the Knight of Glin for making available his photocopy of the document, and to the Duke of Northumberland and his Trustees for permission to reproduce a page from the manuscript. References to this document are provided in the main body of the text in brackets. Stella Tillyard has made use of similar material in *Aristocrats* (London 1994).

2 A.P.W. Malcomson, *Archbishop Charles Agar: Churchmanship and Politics in Ireland 1760-1810* (Dublin 2002) 138-9.

3 Sometimes referred to as 'running' footmen, a part of whose duties was to run errands, often of great distances, taking shortcuts across the countryside. Part of their employer's equipage, he would run before the carriage to prepare an inn or lodging for the arrival of his master.

4 John Scott, 1st Earl of Clonmell, 'Life in the Irish Country House', *Quarterly Bulletin of the Irish Georgian Society*, vii, Apr-Dec 1964, 68-70.

5 Marie-Louise Legg (ed.), *The Synge Letters 1746-1752* (Dublin 1996) 22-3.

6 *ibid*., 271.

7 *ibid*., 383.

8 M. Hewson, 'Eighteenth century directions to servants in Co. Tipperary', in E. Rynne (ed.), *North Munster Studies* (Limerick 1967) 332-4.

9 NLI, Doneraile Papers, MS 34,112/10.

10 Jonathan Swift, *Directions to Servants* (Berkshire, special ed. 1925) 35.

11 NLI, Doneraile Papers, MS 34,112/10.

12 J. Ainsworth (ed.), *The Inchiquin Manuscripts* (Dublin 1961) 525.

13 NLI, Domville Papers, MS 11,844, Book of Servants; S.C. O'Mahony, 'Gleanings from the Coote Household Accounts 1776-85', *North Munster Antiquarian Journal*, xxiv (1982) 59.

14 B. Fitzgerald, *Correspondence of Emily, Duchess of Leinster (1731-1814)*, i (Dublin 1949) 42, 100, 108.

15 NLI, French of Monivea Papers, MS 4919.

[16] NLI, Doneraile Papers, MS 34,114/2.
[17] NLI, French of Monivea Papers, MSS 4919, 4928; NLI, Domville Papers, MS 11,844; S.C. O'Mahony, 'Gleanings', 59.
[18] NA, Ballyglunin Papers, M 6931, parcel 2, documents 96a and 96b.
[19] *Oxford English Dictionary*, iii (Oxford 1989), defines the Anglo-Irish version of 'collop' as 'a full-grown beast of the horse or cow kind. Six sheep are also called a colpa, as their grass is estimated as the same as that of full-grown cow or horse.' I understand the phrase 'greasing of 6 collops' to mean the grazing of six sheep, as Blake also allows his farmer to keep one cow.
[20] NA, Ballyglunin Papers, M 6931, Parcel 2, documents 96a and 96b.
[21] J.J. Hecht, *The domestic servant class in eighteenth-century England* (London 1956) 155.
[22] T. Barnard, *A New Anatomy of Ireland: The Irish Protestants, 1649-1770* (Yale 2003) 302.
[23] Arthur Young, *A Tour in Ireland in the years 1776, 1777, and 1778*, 2 vols, (Dublin 1780).
[24] S. Madden, *Reflections and Resolutions Proper for the Gentlemen of Ireland* (Dublin 1738), cited in C. Maxwell, *Dublin under the Georges* (Dublin 1997) 104.
[25] G. Clark (ed.), *Gleanings from an old portfolio*, i (Edinburgh 1895) 81.
[26] J.D. Herbert, *Irish Varieties for the last fifty years* (London 1836) 159. No date is given, but it must be between 1786 and 1795.
[27] A. Day (ed.), *Letters from Georgian Ireland* (Belfast 1991) 203.
[28] Barnard, *A New Anatomy of Ireland*, 295.
[29] Isaac Ware, *A Complete Body of Architecture* (London 1756) book iii, section ii, ch. i, 346-7.
[30] J.P. Mahaffy, 'The furnishing of Georgian houses in Dublin in the earlier part of the century', *The Georgian Society Records*, iv (Dublin 1912) 10.
[31] Fitzgerald, *Correspondence of Emily, Duchess of Leinster*, ii, 150.
[32] 'Autobiography of Pole Cosby of Stradbally, Queen's County, 1703-1737', *Kildare Archaeological Society Journal*, v, 1906-8, 184.
[33] J.P. Mahaffy, 'The furnishing of Georgian houses…', 8.
[34] These could be used by people when travelling, or as extra bedding for servants or visitors.
[35] C. Hardyment, *Behind the scenes: domestic arrangements in historic houses* (London 1997) 43.
[36] J. Macdonald, *Memoirs of an eighteenth-century footman* (London 1985) 87; E. Dillon, *Wild Geese* (New York 1980) 49.
[37] Lord Belmore's collection of Castle Coole drawings; photocopies in the IAA.
[38] J.H. Gebbie (ed.), *An introduction to the Abercorn Letters (as relating to Ireland 1736-1816),* 5 November 1808 (Omagh 1972) 388.
[39] IAA, Townley Hall Collection, ref. 85/156.
[40] IAA, Guinness Collection, 96/68.1/1/21 and 96/68.1/1/22.
[41] My thanks to Dr Edward McParland for making available this document.
[42] Collection Patrick Guinness. D.J. Griffin and C. Pegum, *Leinster House* (Dublin 2000) 46.
[43] In conversation with the Knight of Glin, June 2003.
[44] *Oxford English Dictionary*, xix (Oxford 1989, 2nd ed.).
[45] D. Marshall, 'The domestic servants of the eighteenth century', *Economica*, April 1929, 26.
[46] Jonathan Swift, *Directions to Servants* (Dublin 1745) 13.
[47] Swift, 'Rules that concern all Servants in general', *Directions to Servants*, 14.
[48] B. Hill, *Servants: English domestics in the eighteenth century* (Oxford 1996) 77.
[49] Marshall, 'The domestic servants', 24.

[50] R. and E. Griffith, *A series of genuine letters between Henry and Frances*, iv (London 1770, 3rd ed.) letter dxii, 142-3.
[51] Quoted in Marshall, 'The domestic servants', 27.
[52] Macdonald, *Memoirs*, 20.
[53] Hill, *Servants*, 76-92.
[54] *London Chronicle*, 11 (1762) 164; quoted in Hill, *Servants*, 77.
[55] Marshall, 'The domestic servants', 35-7.
[56] Footnote to letter dxii (footnote 50 above): 'An Agreement entered into among the Gentlemen of several Counties in Ireland, not to give Vails to Servants'.
[57] NLI, Domville Papers, MS 9391.
[58] K.J. Harvey, *The Bellews of Mount Bellew* (Dublin 1998) 73.
[59] NLI, French of Monivea Papers, MS 4918.
[60] Legg (ed.), *The Synge Letters*, 83-4.
[61] NLI, Powerscourt Papers, MS 8367/1.
[62] NLI, Pakenham-Mahon Papers, MS 10,136.
[63] 'Autobiography of Pole Cosby of Stradbally', 435.
[64] R.W. Bond, *The Marlay Letters 1778-1820* (London 1937) 127-8.
[65] J.Y. Burges, *Chronicles of Parkanaur 1818-1883*, PRONI, Burges Papers, T.1282/1.
[66] W.H. Dixon (ed.), *Lady Morgan's memoirs: autobiography, diaries and correspondence,* i (London 1862) 391.
[67] NLI, unsorted Powerscourt Papers, box 10, legal advice and wills.
[68] Ainsworth (ed.), *The Inchiquin Manuscripts*, 525.
[69] NLI, unsorted Powerscourt Papers, box 10, legal advice and wills. When a member of the royal family died, prominent families, particularly those connected with the church or the parliament, put their servants into mourning. Three months full mourning meant dressing in matt black, followed by second mourning when the effect could be lightened somewhat; Legg, *The Synge Letters*, 294; L. Taylor, *Mourning Dress: a costume or social history* (London 1983) 104.
[70] Swift, 'Directions to the Butler', *Directions to Servants*, 14.
[71] *ibid*., 14; Marshall, 'The domestic servants', 28.

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