

TREACY'S PACKET & TRIPE SHOP

Mary Kate Irwin



In 1921 I was sixteen and I got a shilling a day wages. The work was feeding fifty pigs at the rear of Treacy's - that was the main business - kept in nine stys. I began in the morning cleaning out the stys, laying down sawdust and feeding them. All along Athlunkard Street there were pigs kept in the back, for fattening. 'Pig Street' it was called. All the families were well known, went on holidays to Kilkeer stayed together in Iona House. The Reids, the Clancys, the McNamaras - and great singers all - whatever way they lived must have been good for the lungs - they were in the choirs and would sing at The Gaff and Theatre Royal, especially during visits of the Joseph O'Mara Opera Company ...

The inside of the cow would be brought in ... you'd go down with your knife, open it up and turn out the dung - then the belly was washed and you'd open up the neck of the belly and it would open up like a book, leaves-like.

The boss was great for the call, 'It's 3 o'clock and not a belly in the house scraped' - there was me, Nanny Mac, Mrs. Sexton, her daughter-in-law, my mother, Mrs. Gould, Mrs. Carty, Mrs. Reddan, Mrs. Doran, Mrs. O'Brien, Biddy Carty, Ellen McInerney.

We wore men's boots with our toes stickin' out and a bag apron. The money would pay for a breakfast and dinner every working day. We would go up like we were to Mrs McCarney's (where Devane's is now) and you'd get a penn'orth of tea and a penn'orth of sugar.

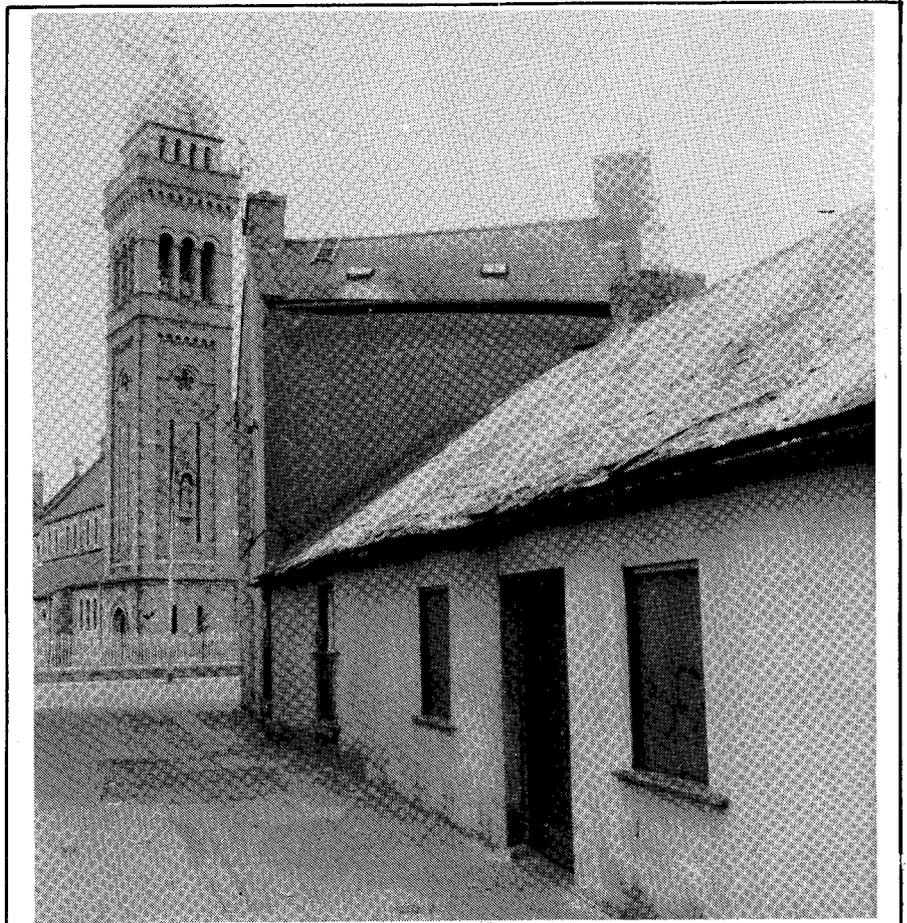
We'd light the fires under the boilers that cooked the tripe. You'd have taken the 'scrios' off it first, a kind of green

layer on top and throw that away for the pigs to eat. The packet came in clods of congealed blood from the slaughterhouses, which you'd have to cut into smaller amounts and put lumps of salt in with it to the boiler, and it came up foaming and frothing. Then you'd ladle it into the skin through a funnel, which filtered it as well and tied it up and that was your

packet!

They came from all over to buy it - the packet and tripe was laid out in dishes in the shop, customers' names on them. Trotters', or lambs' feet, as well, were for sale, all prepared.

It was all in the boiling. That was the secret of it, the way it was prepared and boiled. Thousands were reared on it ...



Treacy's shop with St. Mary's Church in the background.