

Chapter 2

PHILANTHROPIC CARE FOR ADULTS WITHIN THE WOMAN'S SPHERE:

DIVERSITY AND LIMITS

The poor-club exercised her Christian gifts
Of knitted stockings, stitching petticoats,
Because we are of one flesh, after all,
And need one flannel (with a proper sense
Of difference in the quality) ... (1)

(a) Established Patterns of Philanthropy

Philanthropy organised for the care of children was, as argued in the previous chapter, characterised and determined by a belief in the woman's sphere. Philanthropic care for adults was equally affected by the concept of the woman's sphere. The main result of the woman's sphere concept for philanthropy for adults was that women were acknowledged as having a right to influence the philanthropic care of lower class women and the sick.

The variety of philanthropic organisations for adults which involved women in their management by 1870 is set out in Table 2.1. As demonstrated in that Table, the main provision of such women's philanthropy was for the care and control, within institutions, of the effects of women's sexuality and fertility. Two of these institutions, Refuges for former prostitutes, are examined in the next chapter in more detail. The extreme situation within the Refuges starkly reveals many of the assumptions and relationships within woman's sphere philanthropy in the 1870s. Women philanthropists also organised to provide the middle class with servants, to care for the sick and, decreasingly, to provide non-institutional ("out-door") assistance to the poor. All these activities were, however, constrained by the demands of the woman's sphere.

1. Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Aurora Leigh, (16th ed.), London, 1880, p.11.

TABLE 2.1 MAJOR PHILANTHROPIC ORGANISATIONS FOR ADULTS MANAGED WHOLLY OR PARTLY BY WOMEN,
SYDNEY, 1870.

Name, Year Founded	Situated	Category of Adult Inmates	Number of Adult Inmates		Management
			1-1-1870	31-12-1879	
<u>(a) Government Institutions</u>					
Government Asylum for Infirm and Destitute Women, 1862	Hyde Park	Infirm, destitute old women	197	262	Matron
Liverpool Asylum 1862	Liverpool	Infirm, destitute	521	756	Surgeon-Superintendent and Matron
Parramatta Asylum, 1862 (and from 1875, Erysipelas Hospital)	Parramatta	old men	232	254 253	Master and Matron
<u>(b) Private Organisations (1)</u>					
Sydney Dorcas Society, 1830 (incorporated Strangers' Friend Society, 1855)	-	pregnant poor	outdoor relief		Ladies' Committee
Jewish Ladies' Dorcas Society (previously Ladies' Dorcas Society for Jewish Mothers), 1844	-	pregnant poor Jews	outdoor relief (1878, about 8)		Ladies' Committee

TABLE 2.1 continued

Name, Year Founded	Situated	Category of Adult Inmates	Number of Adult Inmates		Management
			1-1-1870	31-12-1879	
Mrs Blake's Refuge 1841/from 1848 House of the Good Shepherd (Catholic Refuge)	Pitt St., city	Prostitutes	93	68	Order of the In- stitute of the Good Samaritan
Sydney Female Refuge, 1848	Pitt St., city	Prostitutes	20	46	Male committee (nominal powers)/ Ladies' Visiting Committee
St. Vincent's Hospital, 1857	Pott's Point/ from 1870 Darlinghurst	Sick	16	40	Sisters of Charity
Sydney Home for Servants, 1858	Elizabeth St./ by 1879 Clar- ence St.,city	Female servants of good charact- er	11	8	Ladies' Committee
Paddington and Wooll- ahra Benevolent Society, 1866	Paddington- Woollahra	local poor	outdoor relief (totals) (indoor only)		Ladies' Committee with male Treasurer
			1,090	1,687	

1. None of the organisations were subsidised.

Despite the diversity of activity summarised in Table 2.1, there are two, initially surprising, omissions from woman's sphere philanthropy. Women offered no organised help to the dispossessed and demoralised Aboriginal women, although individual women in country areas did act as "Ladies Bountiful" towards local tribes. A combination of racism, economic self-interest and sexism ensured that women's philanthropic organisations ignored the Aboriginal tragedy as the conquest of Aboriginal land was completed.¹

Also ignored by organised women's philanthropy were the needs of women in the Asylums for the Insane. These Asylums were not considered by the colonial government as within the orbit of philanthropy.² Nevertheless, colonial women could reasonably be expected to organise on behalf of Lunatic Asylum inmates. Colonial philanthropists were deeply influenced by British example and British women were involved in the reform and care of, respectively, Lunatic Asylums and their inmates.³ Additionally, Maria Rye, English philanthropist and migration activist, is claimed to have publicly agitated in Sydney in the 1860s, on behalf of the mentally ill.⁴ Neither of these examples, however, overrode the colonial belief that care of the mentally ill was either a family concern or a government responsibility, but not a concern of organised philanthropy.⁵

Only marginally increasing the diversity of women's philanthropy were the widespread but scattered efforts of

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1. This theme is explored in my (J.Murray-Prior), *Women Settlers and Aborigines*, B.A.(Hons.), University of New England, 1973 and J.Godden, "A New Look at Pioneer Women", *Hecate*, V:2, 1979, pp.14-9.
 2. The Inspector of Public Charities did not include them within his jurisdiction; they were the province of a separate Lunacy Department.
 3. F.K.Prochaska, *Women and Philanthropy in 19th Century England*, Oxford, 1980, pp.138, 142.
 4. U.Monk, *New Horizons*, London, 1963, p.120.
 5. This attitude has been hypothesised as one of the legacies of convictism, S.Garton, *Insanity in N.S.W. Some Aspects of its Social History 1878-1958*, forthcoming Ph.D., University of N.S.W.

colonial "Ladies Bountiful". Such women mainly acted as "lady visitors" to institutions or the homes of the poor. Alice Stephen, for example, regularly visited Hyde Park Asylum and pious ladies such as Mesdames Collins and Clark assisted their priest or clergyman minister to the parochial poor.¹ Different orders of nuns also visited charitable institutions, hospitals and jails. Thus the Sisters of Charity regularly visited the Liverpool Asylum for old men, the Benevolent Asylum and Darlinghurst Goal.² Nuns also gave outdoor relief to those who applied at their convents, although this tradition of charity was in decline. The Good Samaritan nuns, for example, assisted 1,613 paupers in 1871 but only 317 in 1876.³ The same tradition was evident for the Protestant clergy and their wives⁴ as well as for Synagogue committees.⁵

The oldest women's philanthropic organisations for adults were the two Dorcas Societies. They were also organised on the "Lady Bountiful" model of philanthropy but became increasingly anachronistic during the decade. In many ways these two societies were typical of women's

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1. For information on Stephen see Appendix A; Collins, see H. Johnston, A Seed that Grew, Sydney, 1956, p.114 and Clark, see Infants' Home, Minutes, 29 August 1876, MLMSS 2983.
 2. J. Cullen, The Australian Daughters of Mary Aikenhead, Sydney, 1938, p.223; Benevolent Society of N.S.W. A.R., 1879, p.15 and All Saint's Review, 2:8, September 1878, p.117, held at St. Vincent's Information Centre, Pott's Point, bound as UBI Caritas. The Rectress in charge of the nuns visiting the Liverpool Asylum was Mother M. Joseph Chisholm, claimed to be the widowed daughter-in-law of Caroline Chisholm.
 3. Statistical Register of N.S.W., 1871, p.9 and 1876, p.10.
 4. e.g., J. Jefferis, "Pauperism in N.S.W.", The Sydney University Review, 3, July 1882, p.258, complaint about the "doles of the clergy" and Benevolent Society of N.S.W., Minute Book, 1887-94, loose note by Mrs Garnsey of Christ Church St. Lawrence, Sydney.
 5. e.g., D.J. Benjamin, "The Macquarie Street Synagogue 1859-1877", A.J.H.S.J., 111:1X, 1953, p.405.

philanthropy in the 1870s. Small Dorcas Societies, called by various names and usually organised on a parochial basis, were common throughout Sydney and most Western cities. The work and attitudes of their members are encapsulated in Browning's description heading this chapter. Church Dorcas Societies initiated many women into the public sphere of philanthropy. The crucial importance of such societies to the individual is demonstrated by the career of Helen Fell, the subject of Chapter 6. However, most societies were too small and individually too unimportant for anything but a chance reference to their existence to survive. Only the organisations' titles, such as the Flushcombe Dorcas Society and the Newtown Congregational Church's Ladies' Working Meeting, remain.¹ Just the two largest Dorcas Societies have left a record of their work.

The Sydney and the Jewish Ladies' Dorcas Societies both provided the services of a midwife and clothing for destitute, pregnant, married women. The inspiration was the biblical Dorcas (Acts 9:36-42) who sewed extensively for the poor and in consequence was afterwards "raised from the dead" by the apostle Peter. No other Sydney-wide organisations had provided such help during pregnancy since 1822 when the Benevolent Society of N.S.W. disbanded its Ladies' Committee.² The clothing and linen the Societies provided were particularly needed given the high cost of such articles in Sydney.³

The model on which the Societies were based was that of

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1. Brooks, op.cit., p.8 and Congregational Year Book, Sydney, 1876, p.101.
 2. G.N.Gash, A History of the Benevolent Society of New South Wales, M.A.(Hons.), Sydney University, 1967, p.34.
 3. Statistical Register of N.S.W., 1870, p.12 a print dress, for example, cost from 6/- to 7/-; a blanket 18/- cf., ibid., p.11, servant's wage of 10/- to 11/6 per week.

organised "Lady Bountiful" activity. The rules of the Sydney Dorcas Society allowed for a maximum membership of eight women.¹ They provided help only to destitute women personally known to a subscriber who would also vouch for the applicant's respectability.² The subscribers, as shown in Table 2.2, were overwhelmingly female, as expected of an organisation exclusively concerned with women's needs. The rules ensured that only the most ostentatiously "respectable", willing to divulge all personal details, were eligible for help. It was a method that worked for generations of Ladies Bountiful on British country estates. In a colonial city with a rapidly increasing population, however, personal patronage was an anachronism and unworkable for large scale philanthropy. By 1879 the Society no longer published the number of women assisted and its reserve cash had grown to over £350.³ Even when the Society did intervene, its assistance was tragically inadequate. Descriptions of five deliveries extracted from the midwife's journal indicate that in three of these the baby died.⁴ Clearly, the Society's limited medical and material assistance could in no way compensate for the effects of ante-natal poverty. No mention of the existence of this increasingly ineffective Society has been found after 1879.

The Lady Bountiful model was much more applicable to the aims of the Jewish Ladies' Dorcas Society. This Society restricted its comparatively generous aid to Jewish mothers - about eight a year⁵ - who were willing to be investigated to prove that they were "deserving". However, in a small Jewish community of only 1,137 females in suburban Sydney by 1881,⁶ such investigation was feasible. The Jewish Society

1. Sydney Dorcas Society, A.R., 1878 and 1879, p.6.

2. ibid., pp. 5-7.

3. Sydney Dorcas Society, op.cit., 1878 and 1879, pp.10 and passim cf. ibid. 1866, p.7.

4. ibid., 1878 and 1879, p.8.

5. Brooks, op.cit., p.41.

6. C.Price, "Jewish Settlers in Australia", A.J.H.S.J., V:V111, 1964, Statistical Appendix VI. This figure has been adjusted from the census figure to exclude rural portions of municipalities and shires.

TABLE 2.2

FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR PHILANTHROPY FOR ADULTS, 1870s

Organis- ation	Year	Number of sub- script- ions/don- ations	Subscript- ions/dona- tions by women (No.) (%)	Amount Sub- scribed/don- ated (£. s. d.)	Amount subscrib- ed/donated by women (£. s. d.) (%)	Amount of wom- en's separate fund-raising (£. s. d.)(as % of total income)	Work value/ payments by inmates (£. s. d.)(as % of total income)
Sydney Dorcas Society	1878 and 1879	51	44 86.3	105-15-6	94-12- 6 89.5	- 0	- 0
St.Vin- cent's Hospital ¹	1870 1875 1880	210 252 187	41 19.5 35 13.9 29 15.5	487- 4-6 584- 2-0 446- 8-5	123- 9- 0 25.3 53-10- 6 9.2 74-16- 0 16.8	317- 2- 8 25.4 525- 6- 9 20.4 582-12- 6 21.9	105-11- 4 8.5 845-17-10 32.7 153- 5- 4 43.4
Sydney Female Refuge	1870 1875 1880	214 218 180	55 25.7 37 17.0 30 16.7	583-12-6 621-10-6 622- 1-10	112- 5- 6 19.2 56-17- 6 9.1 45-16- 0 7.4	- 0 - 0 - 0	241- 9- 0 29.0 687-12- 1 52.5 808- 1- 4 56.5
Sydney Ser- vants' ² Home	1873-4	89	86 96.6	101- 7-0	93- 4- 0 92.0	- 0	212- 7- 0 57.6
N.S.W. Benevo- lent Society	1870 1875 1880	390 361 293	27 6.9 15 4.2 11 3.8	621- 8-3 612- 0-0 310- 0-0	54- 9- 0 8.8 25-14- 0 4.2 21- 2- 0 6.8	- 0 - 0 - 0	- 0 - 0 - 0
Sydney City Mission	1869-70 1874-5 1879-80	240 227 170	42 17.5 40 17.6 30 17.6	405- 7-1 556- 3-8 489-13-0	57- 3- 6 14.1 57-10- 6 10.3 59-16- 6 12.2	113-12- 6 18.5 372- 7-10 35.6 494- 0- 0 41.3	n.a. - n.a. - n.a. -
Sydney Female Mission Home	1873-4 1880	184 148	102 55.4 129 87.2	356- 6-7 214-17-0	154- 4- 1 43.3 169-11- 6 78.9	- - - -	9- 2- 0 2.4 42- 8- 6 16.5

TABLE 2.2 continued

Organis- ation	Year	Number of sub- script- ions/don- ations	Subscript- ions/dona- tions by women (No.) (%)	Amount Sub- scribed/don- ated (£. s. d.)	Amount subscrib- ed/donated by women (£. s. d.) (%)	Amount of wom- en's separate fund-raising (£. s. d.)(as % of total income)	Work value/ payments by inmates (£. s. d.) (as % of total income)
Sydney Found- ling Institution/ Hospital/ Infants' Home	1874-5 1879-80	324 104	162 50.0 36 34.6	752-1-8 610-4-0	62-5-0 8.3 176-3-0 28.9	232-19-0 22.2 211- 0-0 14.8	62-5- 0 5.9 426-4-11 29.9

1. More than the usual caution applies to using these statistics other than as guides - an example of the confusion the accounts generate is that in 1880 some items are shown on two accounts, both the general balance sheet and building fund account.
2. The above caution also applies; the accounting abilities of the ladies were limited and conflicting figures are given. The statistics given here are from the body of the report and it is assumed that the previous years' credit balance was added to the subscriptions and donations total on the balance sheet.

accordingly survived where its Protestant counterpart did not.

Both Dorcas Societies were reinforced by biblical example and were firmly within the woman's sphere. The Jewish ladies were additionally supported by a Jewish community struggling to maintain cultural self-sufficiency against a society threatening Jewish viability by the forces of assimilation, as much as by anti-Semitism.¹ Caring for the poor of its own community was a Talmudic ideal² and the separation of the sexes a religious convention. As Jewish women were relegated to the "Ladies Gallery" in the Synagogues, so they were encouraged to undertake their own philanthropic work amongst women. Jewish Ladies' Dorcas Societies were accordingly common in Jewish communities.³ General distress was relieved by male-run societies such as the Sydney Hebrew Philanthropic and Orphan Society.⁴ The application of the woman's sphere concept to Jewish philanthropy by 1870 was firmly entrenched.

The Dorcas Societies' ideal of organising Lady Bountiful type philanthropy was also present in the Paddington and Woollahra Benevolent Society. This Society also distributed clothes sewn by women for the poor and gave short-term monetary aid.⁵ Their recipients too underwent inspection and continued supervision by lady "visitors" bent on preventing "imposture" and "professional mendicancy".⁶

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1. The threat posed by assimilation is examined in P. Medding, From Assimilation to Group Survival, Melbourne, 1968.
 2. M.L. Cohen, "Caroline Chisholm and Jewish Immigration", A.J.H.S.J., 11:11, 1944, p.67 quotes the Talmud:
"By three distinctive signs we trace
The members of the Jewish race:
A tender heart, self-reverence,
And practical benevolence."
 3. I. Porush, "Retrospect of a Century Old Charity", ibid., 11:11, p.78.
 4. Sydney Hebrew Philanthropic [from 1873, and Orphan] Society, A.R., 1868-8.
 5. Paddington and Woollahra Benevolent Society, A.R., 1867, p.10.
 6. ibid., pp.6,8.

The one departure from the Dorcas Society ideal was the inclusion on the committee of a male treasurer; a position thought to require a man's ability and education. The Benevolent Society also proved viable only in a small community; no mention of it has been found after 1873.¹

The most obvious reason for its failure was the rapidly changing nature of the Paddington area. Paddington changed in the 1860s and 1870s from an outlying village to a densely populated commuter suburb.² The Lady Bountiful model was viable in the 1860s but quickly became anachronistic. Another contributory factor to the Society's failure was that its founder and first manager, Miss Douglass (a daughter of the founder of the S.R.D.C.) had left the colony.³ The lack of her drive was possibly crucial. A further problem for the Society was the danger inherent in becoming a vehicle for local political ambitions. The Society's membership suggests that is what happened.⁴ Apart from Elizabeth Barry, wife of the local Anglican clergyman, members carried the names of prominent local politicians. Two Coopers were on the committee, probably of the large family of wealthy gin distiller, Robert Cooper.⁵ Mrs (Randolph) Nott was the wife of an ex-Mayor of Woollahra⁶ and the names of Misses Trickett and Perry suggest that they were daughters of, respectively, the local parliamentarian and chairman of Paddington's first council.⁷ However, the membership's exact identities are

1. S.M.H., 31 January 1873. It is not mentioned in M.Kelly, Paddock Full of Houses, Paddington 1840-1890, Sydney, 1978.

2. ibid., esp. ch. 4.

3. Paddington and Woollahra Benevolent Society, op.cit., 1867, pp.5-6.

4. The membership was published in S.M.H., 31 January 1873.

5. Kelly, op.cit., p.48.

6. Congregational Union of New South Wales, Year Book, 1977, p.150.

7. A.D.B., vol. 6, entry for W.Trickett; and Kelly, op.cit., pp.184,59. Kelly mistakenly refers to W. "Tickett".

largely unknown and therefore so too are their motives and further insight into their work and its failure.

The limitations of women's philanthropy adapted from the traditional Lady Bountiful model precluded, as the above examples indicate, all but small-scale activity. Women's philanthropic organisations which were successful on a larger scale all implemented their aims through institutions rather than personal visiting in a close knit community.

The management of the philanthropic institutions run by women shared the major aims and assumptions evident in philanthropy generally, particularly that of anti-pauperisation. They also reflected women's special interests; primarily the need for well-trained servants. Most women's philanthropic institutions including, as argued previously, those for children, had the production of servants amongst their aims. For the evangelical-run Home for Servants,¹ however, this aim was the primary concern. The Home provided accommodation and employment for "Governesses and Young Females", principally servants.² All its subscribers, as far as known, gave at least £1 per annum, the minimum amount entitling them to employ the Home's residents.³ As such the Home was one of the purest manifestations of the use of philanthropic institutions to make available more and better trained servants.

The control of domestic servants was a woman's responsibility within the home and so was equally a woman's responsibility in philanthropy. The right of the women was reinforced by calling their institution a home; the epitome of the woman's sphere. Consequently the Home for Servants, as shown in Table 2.2, was almost entirely financed by women. It was also entirely run by women and catered exclusively for women servants.

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1. Known by various titles including the Home Institution, The Home, The Sydney Home and the Sydney Governess and Servants' Home.
 2. Sydney Home, A.R., 1873-4, pp.5,8.
 3. ibid., is the only surviving report of subscriptions.

The determination of philanthropic ladies to persuade "females" to become servants was reinforced by several considerations. Firstly, there was the scarcity of alternative work. Factory work was still a recent phenomenon in Sydney and not yet provided extensive employment. By far the largest paid occupation for women in the 1870s was as domestic servants;¹ philanthropists could see no reason to change this situation. A second consideration was that the main alternative to domestic service was believed to be prostitution. Evangelical women with their strongly developed sense of sin particularly clung to the idea that working girls would be lured into prostitution unless placed under the control of middle class women. An employer was ideally placed to exercise such control over her servants. When out of work the Home for Servants would protect working women from the "numerous" temptations of their life-style.² The alternative was sketched as cheap boarding houses and resulting prostitutes being a "misery and burden... both on the community and the Government".³ A final consideration was self and class interest; to ensure a continuing supply of cheap and competent servants.

In terms of classical economic theory, the bargaining power of the servants should have exceeded that of the employers. In 1873-4, for example, demand for the Home's resident domestic servants exceeded supply by ten times (920:87).⁴ Servants depended on their employers for a wage but so too, as argued in the previous chapter, did much of the comfort of middle class life depend on servants. In practice, servants could only minimally exploit these market forces. Isolated in scattered workplaces they had little opportunity to combine to force better wages or conditions. As job applicants, they were at a great disadvantage as they

1. Census of N.S.W., 1881, pp. LXX1-11 and D. McDonald, "Child and Female Labour in Sydney 1876-1898", ANU Historical Journal, 11, 1973-4.

2. D.T., 22 July 1879.

3. Sydney Home, op.cit., p.6.

4. ibid., p.8.

had to travel to homes in response to advertisements which rarely specified wages or conditions.¹ To obtain work, servants were heavily dependent on references from their past employer detailing their morality, honesty, sobriety and competence. Accordingly, all but those servants who had left on the best of terms with their past employer were severely disadvantaged.

Philanthropists, who were also employers of servants, upheld the servants' disadvantages in the market place. Within the Servants' Home a constant attempt was made "to elevate the principles" of servants, presumably above sordid concerns of wages and conditions of work.² The weekly board payable in advance or, in cases of destitution, from the first wage received, was 11/6. This amount was the maximum average weekly wage for cooks, laundresses and general house servants.³ Few could have afforded to stay long or to choose a situation at leisure. In addition, residents were forbidden to accept employment in hotels or public houses and their past employer had to fill in a detailed questionnaire on their servant's character.⁴ Once resident in the Home, they were allowed out only from 4 to 9pm. The rest of the day was spent waiting for job interviews, helping the Matron and one servant with the domestic work and in twice daily religious services.⁵

It is revealing that despite such restrictions, the Home was nearly always fully occupied.⁶ Some of the occupants were newly arrived immigrants welcomed by Rosa O'Reilly, a

1. e.g., S.M.H., Positions Vacant, 1870-80.

2. Brooks, op.cit., p.22.

3. Statistical Register of N.S.W., 1870, p.11.

4. Brooks, op.cit., p.22.

5. loc.cit.

6. loc.cit., the fully occupied claim supposes an average stay of 24.3 days and so may well be an exaggeration although the Statistical Registers, op.cit., 1870-80, indicate a large number of users.

committee member, at the Immigration Depot and thankful for safe accommodation.¹ For others, however, the Home was chosen given a knowledge of alternative accommodation. Such residents shared bourgeois fears of the dangers posed by alternative accommodation. As well, the Home appeared to offer guarantees as to the respectability and piety of prospective employers.

The government institutions (shown in Table 2.1a) which involved women in their management were particularly successful in their demonstration of women's capabilities within philanthropy. The role of women within these institutions was upheld but not urgently championed by the governments of the 1870s and the 1873-4 Royal Commission. The innovations the latter so passionately advocated dealt with philanthropic child-care rather than the care of destitute adults. Nevertheless, both the Royal Commission and the practice within government asylums upheld the concept of the woman's sphere by assuming that only women should be in charge of domestic duties and the care of other women.

All the government institutions for adults housed those who were destitute and old or infirm. Only one, the Hyde Park Asylum, was for women. That asylum was entirely managed by a Matron, Mrs Hicks, who had a salary of £200 plus board and was acknowledged as a professional. Her administration was cheap and accorded with the woman's sphere ideals of the 1873-4 Royal Commissioners. The Commissioners therefore recommended no significant changes and commended Mrs Hicks as "highly efficient and most economical".² It was not until the following decade that the humaneness of the Hicks' administration was questioned. In the 1870s, the Hyde Park Asylum served as a positive example of women acting within their proper sphere in philanthropy despite

1. D.T., 22 July 1879.

2. Royal Commission, Report, op.cit., p.108.

its lack of a Ladies' Committee.

The woman's sphere ideal as applied to the management of the two state asylums for old men was to have a male administrator assisted by a woman with independent powers over the "housekeeping". This ideal occurred at the Liverpool Asylum and the two officials in charge were praised by the Royal Commissioners for their efficiency and harmony.¹ At the Parramatta Asylum, however, the two officials were also husband and wife; Mr and Mrs Dennis. As at the Girls' Industrial School administered by Mr and Mrs Lucas, the Royal Commissioners judged this situation as unsatisfactory.² It was an important element of the woman's sphere concept that women should have real power within their sphere, and it was equally accepted that wives should be submissive to the husbands upon whom they were financially dependent.³ The two roles could not be reconciled in one person. Like Mrs Lucas, Mrs Dennis was judged to be only nominally Matron and her husband, again paralleling the Lucases, was condemned as inefficient and cruel.⁴

The Report of the Royal Commission had little direct effect on the administration of the three asylums. Mr and Mrs Dennis, for example, continued in their posts.⁵ The significance of the Commissioners' findings on the asylums was that they provided additional evidence purporting to prove the validity of the woman's sphere concept as applied to public charity. However, the Commissioners' main interest was to apply that concept to the philanthropic care of

1. ibid., p.113.

2. It had previously been the situation at the Hyde Park Asylum as well, N.S.W. L.A., V. & P., 1873-4, vol.V1, Special appendix, p.73.

3. ibid., 1873-4, vol.V1, Special appendix, p.107. Mrs Dennis received only £50 p.a. for being Matron; her husband as Master received £150.

4. Royal Commission, Report, op.cit., pp.115-6.

5. Report of the Inspector of Public Charities, N.S.W.L.A., V. & P., 1879-80, vol.2, p.4 and ibid., 1877-8, vol.IV, Blue Book for 1877, p.58.

children. In children's institutions, for instance, lady visitors were urged as essential to the children's socialisation. In contrast, no role was advocated for volunteer women philanthropists within the state institutions for adults. Even the lack of a Ladies' Visiting Committee at the Sydney Infirmary and Dispensary passed without comment, although such a committee had previously existed.¹

A further reason for the lack of impact of the Royal Commission upon philanthropy for adults was that so many of these philanthropic organisations were avowedly sectarian. As sectarian agencies they could not receive "public" money and so were not investigated by the Commissioners.

Sectarianism was one of the most potent forces in Australian society in the late nineteenth century. Much of the fierceness of sectarian rivalry was concentrated on the education question, broadly along the lines of Protestant acceptance of, and Catholic hostility towards, state education. However, philanthropy was also deeply affected by sectarianism. In particular, whenever women founded a sectarian philanthropic institution or organisation invariably women of a rival religious affiliation founded a similar one. In such ways the destitute and poor were saved from the clutches of philanthropic heretics and, incidentally, gained more facilities. Eight such rival organisations are given in Table 2.3 below, along with their dominant religious faction and date of foundation.

1. Royal Commission into Public Charities, First Report, N.S.W.L.A., V. & P., 1873-4, vol. 1V cf. Sands' and Kenny's Commercial and General Sydney Directory for 1858-9, Sydney, 1858, p.295.

Table 2.3: Rival Sectarian Organisations/Institutions

Sydney Dorcas Society (evangelical; 1830)	Jewish Ladies' Dorcas Society (Jewish; 1844)
House of the Good Shepherd Refuge (Catholic; 1841-8)	Sydney Female Refuge (evangelical; 1848)
Sydney Home for Servants (Church of England, 1858)	Catholic Female Home and Registry Office (Catholic, 1859, 1877)
Sydney Female Mission Home (evangelical, 1873)	Infants' Home (secular/Protestant, 1874-7)

To the extent that each denomination attempted to provide philanthropic help to their own co-religious, sectarianism was rife. However, it is a recurring theme in this thesis that a broad consensus on philanthropy existed even between bitter sectarian rivals. Thus the aims and methods of the Dorcas Societies, the Servants' Homes and, as demonstrated in the following chapter, the Refuges were very similar. All conformed to the dominant philanthropic values: the concern to prevent pauperisation and the poor law and the determination to give material relief to only the most destitute and the most grateful.

It is the virulence of sectarianism that has been stressed in Australian historiography. Sectarian animosity, particularly in the context of parliamentary debate or electioneering, was generally colourful and highly public. Sectarian co-operation and agreement on basic principles was no less real but more prosaic and less publicised. Neglect of sectarian co-operation in Australian historiography is also the result of the tendency to treat sectarian organisations, especially those run by nuns, as too hallowed to be examined by historians.¹ Such neglect, for example, is a major flaw in the contributions of Dickey to social welfare history. In addition, there is a tendency for sectarian

1. Two exceptions to this convention are S. Willis (ed.), Faith and Fetes, Sydney, 1977, chs. 2, 5, 8 and 10 and M. O'Donoghue, Mother Vincent Whitty, Melbourne, 1972.

concerns examined in specialised histories, such as by Bollen and O'Farrell,¹ not to be integrated into general historiography. The common features of sectarian groups are therefore less obvious.

The sectarian institutions and their personnel examined and compared throughout this thesis, reveal general conformity to the dominant philanthropic aims and to the concept of the woman's sphere. St. Vincent's Hospital is one example of this general conformity to philanthropic practice by a sectarian institution. However, because the women administering the hospital were nuns, their role and achievements have been obscured and neglected.

St. Vincent's Hospital was the most prominent of the philanthropic institutions run by women by 1870. Nursing was an established activity of certain orders of nuns and it was firmly within the woman's sphere.² Ironically, however, the success of the nuns at St. Vincent's only marginally enhanced the reputation of women as philanthropists. The reason for this irony cannot be understood apart from the hospital's complex and contentious history.

St. Vincent's was the second largest general hospital in Sydney and run by the Sisters of Charity. The Sisters of Charity was an Irish Order, established in 1815. In 1838 they became the first nuns to come to Australia.³ They had close links with the first Australian Order of nuns, the Good Samaritans. Members of both Orders devoted themselves to philanthropy, in its most religious sense.

Unlike the Good Samaritan nuns, however, the Sisters

1. J.Bollen, Protestantism and Social Reform, Melbourne, 1972; P.O'Farrell, The Catholic Church and Community in Australia, Melbourne, 1977 and P.O'Farrell, The Catholic Church in Australia, Melbourne, 1968.

2. e.g. Royal Commission, Report, op.cit., p.59.

3. Cullen, op.cit., p.67.

of Charity were an autonomous religious community not directly under the control of the Archbishop. The early years of St. Vincent's Hospital and the Order's fight for autonomy is still the subject of historiographical myths and prejudices. The traditional but debatable view is that St. Vincent's was the result of Irish-Catholic hostility to the Anglo-Benedictine ideal represented by Archbishop Polding and his supporters. This view has St. Vincent's Hospital hastily established before the return of Polding from overseas. Others view St. Vincent's, modelled on the Sisters' Dublin hospital, as a natural extension of the Order's Australian mission.

The controversy that surrounded the foundation of St. Vincent's again surfaced when Sister de Lacy returned, against Polding's orders, to Ireland. De Lacy had been Rectress (Matron) of the Hospital, her training had been paid for by Polding, she was the last of the original band of nuns to come to Sydney and she left behind only three professed nuns to carry on the work.¹ The crisis of 1859 centred on the nuns' autonomy as an Order. Polding believed that the nuns were under his jurisdiction; de Lacy left rather than betray the ideal of an autonomous congregation run by an elected Superior in accordance with the rules of the Order. It appears that a compromise was eventually achieved to prevent the entire disbandment of the order in N.S.W. This outcome is still controversial and the issues clouded.² Clarification can be expected in the forthcoming history of the hospital by Sister O'Carrigan.

1. Cullen, op.cit., pp.136-9.

2. T.L.Suttor, Hierarchy and Democracy in Australia 1788-1870, Melbourne, 1965, pp.158,188-92, gives the traditional view of the two controversies, cf. D.Miller, Earlier Days, Sydney, 1969. For the strength of conflicting views Polding still generates see J.A.C.H.S., 5:1, 1975. The Church archivist, C.J.Duffy, "Reflections on Polding", ibid., p.22, for example, refers to Miller's book as a "vicious sectarian version of de Lacy's indiscretion".

By 1870 the bitterness surrounding St. Vincent's first years was fast dissipating. There were now six Sisters, under the control of Sister Joseph. Sister Joseph appointed all hospital officials including the doctors and honorary secretary and treasurers.¹ All the nurses were Sisters of Charity. The Hospital entered a period of consolidation and growth and patients increased as the poor gradually lost their previously well-grounded "rooted fear of hospitals".² In addition, medical knowledge advanced and, more slowly, was applied. St. Vincent's moved into a larger building in 1870 and catered, as well as the sick poor of all demoninations, for paying patients. As shown in Table 2.2, payments from the latter along with contributions from the former, amounted to almost half of the Hospital's income by 1880; an increase of more than tenfold during the decade. This was not, as has been suggested, simply a result of the nuns' "beady eyes" being particularly effective in coercing payment.³ Rather, as Table 2.3 demonstrates, St. Vincent's conformed to usual philanthropic practice. Particularly in avowedly "sectarian" institutions which were consequently debarred from receiving subsidies, the surplus value of the inmates' labour or their payments for care received was an important source of income. As Dickey has demonstrated, the great concern of philanthropists was to prevent imposition and hence pauperisation. As the "long boom" continued so too did the perceived capacity of the poor to finance their own philanthropic care. "Beady eyes" were not a monopoly of nuns but rather an integral part of philanthropic practice.

St. Vincent's Hospital was one of the most successful

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1. I would like to thank Sister O'Carrigan, pers.comm., 25 June 1980, for confirmation of the powers of the Superior.
 2. (anon.), The Story of the Institute, op.cit., p.69.
 3. B.Dickey, "St.Vincent's Hospital, Sydney", R.A.H.S.J., 64:2, September 1978, pp.132,133n, concedes a similar situation at Lewisham Hospital (incorrectly attributed to the Sisters of Mercy) but did not compare St. Vincent's with non-Catholic institutions.

philanthropic undertakings by women. However, due largely to the highly public intervention of the Archbishop that resulted in the de Lacy affair, the Hospital was not viewed as a woman's work to be supported by women. This attitude is indicated by the pattern of financial support. By the 1870s, as shown in Table 2.2, women comprised less than a quarter of the subscribers. This is not to assert that women were not keen supporters of the Hospital and the Sisters; their special fund-raising events, which provided about a quarter of the income, contradicts this hypothesis. Rather, the Hospital was not seen as a special responsibility of women and so it was inappropriate for women to offer financial support in their own names. To the public it was a general Church undertaking and one which men, more than women, should appropriately support publicly. In essence, the achievements of the Sisters were viewed as achievements of the Church; not of Church women. Similarly, as an Order the nuns fought for and at least partially established their autonomy and rights. These rights, however, had no applicability to other women, including members of different Orders. The achievements of the Sisters of Charity in establishing their rights and expertise within their sphere therefore had only limited value in inspiring other women to similar action.

Woman's sphere philanthropy involving the care of adults was, by 1870, characterised by a diverse range of activities. Yet all these activities involved women caring for other women or the sick and were therefore within the woman's sphere. In addition, all conformed to the dominant philanthropic values. An important contributory factor in the ideological consensus was the nature of the women philanthropists themselves. Despite clear divisions and sectarian hostilities between the different committees, they all considered themselves as ladies undertaking their religious and social duty towards their social and moral inferiors.

There were four different categories of ladies offering philanthropic care for adults by 1870. All were religiously motivated. The ladies of the Paddington and Woollahra Benevolent Society operated under the auspices of St.

Matthias' Church of England and were drawn from the local elite. Little more is known of them. The membership of the Jewish Ladies' Dorcas Society was drawn from a similarly select group. As the name meant literally to indicate, all were Jewish and all were ladies. In addition, as they dealt with pregnancies, propriety demanded that the ladies all be married. Such a convention also operated in the Sydney Dorcas Society. Parturition was not a matter for spinsters, however venerable or old. The women that can be identified came from families of high status within the Jewish community.¹ They appear to be bolstered by family support and their status of old to middle age, but little is positively known of them. The usual anonymity of middle class women is exacerbated by their Jewish identity: they were rarely publicly mentioned in Jewish publications² and all but a few were virtually unknown in gentile society.

A similarly select and largely anonymous group of ladies, all nuns, ran both the Roman Catholic Refuge for prostitutes and St. Vincent's Hospital. The nuns were also constrained by the belief that women philanthropists should be ladies. The nuns' religious convictions, which had led them to embrace a life of poverty, obedience, chastity and charity, did not exempt them from the influence of the woman's sphere concept. The very organisation of the nuns accepted the concept of "lady". The Sisters of Charity, and originally the Sisters of the Good Samaritan (then called the Sisters of the Good Shepherd), were divided into two classes. "Choir" nuns were ladies and only they could be administrators or work outside the convent. The other class

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1. e.g. the wife of the Treasurer and of the Vice-President of the Great Synagogue (Kate Levey and Esther Moss) were both members. Two of the members are profiled in Appendix A: Elizabeth Cohen and Kate Levey.
 2. This policy still applies as a check of the A.J.H.S.J. shows. An exception is a work in progress by Lysbeth Cohen mentioned in S.M.H. 21 January 1980. Unfortunately, she had been overseas and attempts to contact her have failed.

were the domestic or lay-nuns, non-ladies who were specifically admitted to do the convent's domestic work.¹ Much was made of the choir nuns' middle class connections and genteel characteristics, such as the Sisters of Charity Superior, Mother M. Joseph's reputation for being a "perfect type of the courteous Irish lady".² The Sisters of the Good Samaritan, in contrast, were all one class from 1862.³ Selected Refuge inmates performed the Convent's domestic work rather than selected nuns. Great stress was laid on all the Good Samaritan nuns being ladies, with one nun claiming that all those she knew from 1880 were ladies with perfect "poise and bearing", gracious, gentle and cultivated.⁴ The accepted concept of a nun, unless a lay sister, was one who had "moved in polite society and ... [had] private means of her own".⁵

The similarities between lay and professed women philanthropists are revealed by a comparison of other biographical tables in this chapter and Table 2.4.⁶ As the latter shows, the head nuns were middle-aged, indicating again the desirability of aged-related status and experience. Also like their Protestant counterparts, most received essential support from family members. Most importantly as philanthropy involved a relationship between classes, none came from an obviously working class background. Family support, middle age, a middle class background supporting a claim to be a "lady"; all these qualities were as important in producing a leading woman philanthropist in a religious order as in a Protestant or Jewish lay organisation.

1. Cullen, op.cit., p.67.

2. Sr. Gertrude Davis, Short Lives of some of the early Sisters, t/s booklet, n.d., p.63 held at St. Vincent's Information Centre, Pott's Point.

3. (anon.) Annals of the Sisters of the Good Samaritan, op.cit., p.19.

4. (anon.) The Story of the Institute, op.cit., p.69.

5. S.M.Raymond, "Australian Institutes in Polding's Time", J.A.C.H.S., 6:1, 1977, p.5.

6. See also Appendix A.

TABLE 2.4 IDENTIFIED ROMAN CATHOLIC NUNS INVOLVED IN PHILANTHROPY AIDING ADULTS, 1870s.

Title	Order	Religious Name	Secular Name	Age	Family and Friendship Support	Social background
Superior of the Sisters of the Good Samaritan from 1876	Sister of the Good Samaritan	Mother Mary Magdalen	Mary Ann Adamson	<u>1876</u> 44	Protege of Archbishop Polding, a relative	English middle class
Superior of the Sisters of the Good Samaritan until 1876; previously Mother Prioress of the Sisters of Charity	Sister of Charity	Mother Mary Scholastica	Geraldine Gibbons	<u>1870</u> 50	Sister previously Superior of Sisters of Charity	Irish gentry; father merchant.
Superior of the Sisters of Charity 1858-1882 (officially elected 1864)	Sister of Charity	Mother Mary Joseph	Margaret O'Brien	56	Friend of Foundress of Order/sister Rectress of St. Vincent's Hospital	Prominent Irish family; brother judge; known as highly educated and accomplished as above
Rectress of St. Vincent's Hospital, 1858-1884	Sister of Charity	Sister Mary Veronica	Maria Teresa O'Brien	58	Sister Superior of Order	
In charge Catholic Young Women's Association	Sister of Charity	Sister Mary Aloisius	Jane Raymond	39	-	French mother/English father middle class education
Nursing Sister	Sister of Charity	Sister Mary Vincent	Catherine Carroll	37	Brother was Monseigneur Carroll, Vicar General of Sydney Archdiocese	Irish

TABLE 2.4 continued

Title	Order	Religious Name	Secular Name	Age	Family and Friendship Support	Social background
Nursing Sister	Sister of Charity	Sister Mary Xavier	Mary Ann Cunningham	early 30s?	Encouraged by friend who was niece of Arch-deacon McEncroe	orphan of Australian farmers
Visitor Darlington Gaol	Sister of Charity	Sister Mary Gertrude	Mary Davis	22	Godmother Sister of Charity, Mary Teresa Gannon	Australian Catholic family
Nursing Sister	Sister of Charity	Sister Mary Alphonsus	Emily Heydon	18	Brother was a Marist Father	English migrants, a brother was Judge Heydon

The third and major group of women philanthropists shared these characteristics, although Judaism and nuns were anathema to them. This group consisted of the evangelical women who dominated the Sydney Dorcas Society, the Sydney Home for Servants and the Sydney Female Refuge Society. The latter's membership is exemplary of all three organisations and the majority listed in Table 2.5.¹ Evangelical philanthropic women, as demonstrated in the previous chapter, were characteristically the wives and daughters of wealthy professional or businessmen rather than members of the ruling elite. Many were women whose husbands' professions resulted in public pressure to demonstrate their philanthropy and piety. Such women included politicians' and clergymen's wives. Over a quarter of the women identified as members of the three evangelical organisations for adults come into this category. More were the daughters of such men, brought up in the tradition of sharing the duties of such careers. Ada Cambridge, who lived in Australia as a clergyman's wife from 1870, was particularly critical of the expectation that wives would share the responsibility of their husband's ministry.² It can only be guessed how many women joined a philanthropic organisation with a heavy consciousness of duty towards, or ambitions for, their husbands rather than relief in finding a socially congenial, useful occupation. Other women were invited to join a philanthropic committee in order to exploit rather than promote their husbands' careers. Robison, for example, was invited to join the Sydney Female Refuge's Ladies' Committee the year her husband was appointed Inspector of Public Charities.

Other women, perhaps attracted to evangelism as a sign of middle class prosperity and status,³ joined evangelical

1. See also Appendix A.

2. Ada Cambridge, Thirty Years in Australia, London, 1903, p. 87.

3. J. Gusfield, Symbolic Crusade, Urbana, 1963, analyses this concept in relation to the temperance movement in America.

TABLE 2.5 IDENTIFIED MEMBERS OF THE LADIES' COMMITTEE OF THE SYDNEY FEMALE REFUGE SOCIETY
IN THE 1870s.

Name, Membership of Philanthropic Network (N)	Name, Occupation of husband	Kin and other links between Refuge Committees	Age in 1870 or on joining	Religion	Number of Children
Mrs Jane Allen [†] (N)	George, solicitor/M.L.C.	Mother and daughter-in-law and daughter. Latter two's husbands	63	Meth.	14 (4 died in infancy)
Lady Marian Allen [†] (N)	George W. solicitor/politician		35	Meth./C. of E.	10
Mrs Jane Boyce	William, clergyman/administrator		43	Meth.	4 step
Mrs Mary Breillat [†] (N)	Thomas, merchant	-	mid 60s?	C. of E.	7
Mrs ? Caldwell (N)	John, grocer/ex M.L.A.	niece	?	Meth.	? at least 3 step
Mrs Mary Cowper ^{*†} (N)	William, archdeacon	husband	mid 40s?	C. of E.	5 step
Mrs Nora Crane	William, civil servant	husband	?	C. of E.	4 and ? step
Mrs Emma Dawson (N)	John, lawyer	-	?	Meth./Quaker	?
Mrs Ann Goodlet ^{*(N)}	John, merchant	husband	43	Pres.	0
Lady Mary Hay [†] (N)	John, pastoralist/politician	husband	mid 50s?	C. of E.	0
Mrs Annie Mander Jones (N)	David, pastoralist	-	mid 30s?	Congreg.	4
Mrs Helen Kent (N)	John, ?	-	?	C. of E.	at least 1
Mrs Sarah Moore (N)	Charles, merchant/alderman/auctioneer	-	late 30s?	C. of E.	0
Mrs Rosa O'Reilly ^{*†} (N)	Thomas, canon	husband	about 30?	C. of E.	4 and 2 step
Mrs Emily Ross	Joseph, general manager C.S.R.	-	39	Pres.	3

TABLE 2.5 continued

Name, Membership of Philanthropic Net- work (N)	Name, Occupation of husband	Kin and other links between Refuge Committees	Age in 1870 or on join- ing	Religion	Number of Children
Mrs Sarah Thompson* (N)	John, draper/ pastoralist	husband, partner of Giles, whose wife also member/two sisters-in-law	?	Congreg.	3
Lady Ann Deas Thomson* (N)	Edward, ex-Colon- ial Secretary	-	64	C. of E.	7
Mrs ? Threlkeld	Lancelot, auctioneer	-	?	Congreg.	?
Mrs Sarah Wilshire (sometimes misspelt Wiltshire) (N)	James, merchant/ M.L.A.	two sisters-in-law	mid 40s?	Congreg.	6 and 3 step
Mrs (Fanny) Wise (N)	George, immigration agent	-	53	C. of E.	0

* Also member of the Sydney Dorcas Society
1. Also member of Sydney Home for Servants

philanthropic organisations which consolidated their reputations as Christian ladies. Annie O'Reilly, for example, could only gain from the status conferred as a member of the Sydney Dorcas Society. Her husband was a surgeon and that profession was only just beginning its rise from a low public esteem. Women wishing to consolidate their status were reassured by the knowledge that those of irrevocably low status or moral blemish were excluded. Mary Roberts, for example, subscribed the highest single amounts in the 1870s to the Sydney Dorcas Society (£4.4.0) and the Sydney Servant's Home (£5); she was still not a member. Mary Robert's wealth did not overcome the stigma of her birth.¹ Of those women who were members of the three evangelical committees, their wealth varied enormously. Some had command of great wealth. Sarah Moore's husband amassed a fortune after beginning his career as a 12 year old apprentice draper. She joined the Refuge's Ladies' Committee after a two year holiday in Europe. In 1875, Lady Allen's husband was reputed to have a private income of £15,000 pa., at least part of it derived from rent from nauseating hovels condemned by the Health Board.² Other women members were comparatively poor. Rosa O'Reilly, for example, inherited less than £3,080 when her husband left everything to her in 1881. All, however, had sufficient wealth to shield them from the harsher realities of the lives of those they purported to help.

A further aspect of the status of women in evangelical philanthropy was their ages. As argued in the previous chapter, women did not fully share the high status of male adulthood until middle age. The rare exceptions of younger women having sufficient status to join philanthropic committees were generally second wives of high status, older men.

1. See above p.35 and Appendix A.

2. Report and Evidence of the Investigating Committees of the Sydney City and Suburban Sewerage Health Board, op.cit., p.628.

Such women include Mary Barker, Rosa O'Reilly and Marian Jefferis. On the other hand, the number or otherwise of children appears to have had little effect. The tendency for a higher than average proportion of childless women to join was restricted to organisations caring for children: "barren" women could not prove their inherent motherliness by joining organisations caring for adults.

Patterns of family support in these evangelical as well as other women's philanthropic organisations are obscured by a lack of detailed identification of the women. Again, however, there are indications of the importance of the family in providing essential support.¹ Such links when known are given in the Tables. The importance of the family for such women is logical given the family-centred nature of their life and work. It is also evident in other contexts.

Helen Hunter Baillie, for example, was a member of the Sydney Home and, as indicated in Appendix A, of the evangelical philanthropic network. She used her endowment of the Annandale Presbyterian church to promote with despotic ruthlessness the interest of her niece and her niece's irascible husband. In doing so, she completely over-rode the interests of the local congregation and out-manoeuvred the patriarchs of her church.² Few women had the resources of Hunter Baillie but there is little reason to doubt that women philanthropists pursued their family interests as assiduously as their class interests. The family provided essential support for women to exercise power within the woman's sphere by being active philanthropists. The family also provided the means of recruitment to and continuity in philanthropic organisations. Such was the importance of the family that in the Servant's Home committee a third of the members had other family members also on the committee. Such a figure

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1. cf. M.Dunn, "The Family Office as a Coordinating Mechanism within the Ruling Class", The Insurgent Sociologist, 1X:2-3, Fall 1979-Winter 1980, on the power of elite families in modern American capitalism.
 2. A.Roberts and E.Malcolm, Hunter Baillie. A History of the Presbyterian Church in Annandale, Annandale, 1973, pp.18-9.

is even more significant given the anonymity of much of the women's own (cf. their husbands') families. Such links also facilitated co-operation between organisations. Thus the Matron's Journal and Ladies' Committee minutes of the Sydney Female Refuge refers to co-operation with virtually all the other organisations for adults in Sydney.¹

Women's philanthropic organisations for the care of adults as established by 1870 were much more diverse than those for children. Yet they were also contained by the woman's sphere, restricted to caring for and controlling "females" and the sick. The most successful were the women who managed philanthropic institutions. Individual Lady Bountiful activity continued but attempts to organise such philanthropy generally failed in this decade of rapid change. The women philanthropists themselves had much in common, from the pious nun to the evangelical wife. This commonality was due to the demand that women philanthropists be ladies. In meeting this demand the women philanthropists were as strictly controlled as the inmates of their asylums.

1. Sydney Female Refuge Society, Matron's Journal, e.g. 19 August 1870 and 6 September 1870, and Ladies' Visiting Committee, Minute Book, 5 December 1873, 7 April 1874 and 2 October 1874, 5 January 1876 and 5 February 1876 and 5 December 1879. MLMSS A7019 and A7018 respectively.

(b) Philanthropic Innovations during the 1870s.

Women's philanthropic activities for the care of lower class women expanded in the 1870s. Five of the largest women's organisations founded then are summarised in Table 2.6. Evangelicals and nuns continued to dominate and only one of the new organisations was not controlled by either group. The major mobiliser of women philanthropists in this decade was social purity, that is, concern for public morality. Only one of the new organisations tried to move outside the established ideal of women's philanthropy. Its consequent defeat demonstrates the difficulty women had in broadening their sphere.

Sectarianism continued to exercise a complex influence on women's philanthropy. Evidence of hostility is not lacking, as shown by the establishment of rival institutions and such incidents as the refusal of the Mission Home to admit a woman because she had first applied to the Foundling Hospital.¹ Yet sectarian co-operation and agreement was also evident. St. Vincent's Hospital, for example, attracted financial support from Catholics and Protestants. The Hospital subscription lists show regular donations from Catholic church collections (£328.3.3 or 26% of income in 1870) and organisations like the Catholic Young Women's Society.² Equally, however, Protestants such as Thomas Walker (£600 by 1880) and Elizabeth Macleay were regular and generous donors.³ The Catholic Female Home offers a further example of the complex role of sectarianism.

The Female Home was the only new Catholic philanthropic

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1. Foundling Hospital, Minutes, 9 June 1875, MLMSS 2983.
 2. Cullen, op.cit., p.139 and A.M.D.G. /sic7, The Rules and Office of the Australian Catholic Young Women's Society of the Immaculate Conception, Sydney, 15 August 1859. The latter is held in the Dixon Library, Sydney. It was a strict devotional society.
 3. See Appendix A, entry for Eadith Walker and Deas Thomson.

TABLE 2.6 MAJOR PHILANTHROPIC ORGANISATIONS FOR ADULTS MANAGED WHOLLY OR PARTLY BY WOMEN,
SYDNEY, 1870s.

Name, Year Founded	Situated	Category of Adult Inmates	Number of Adult Inmates 31-12-1879	Management, Government Subsidy (S) or Grant (G)
Sydney City Mission, 1862	-	(outdoor only, evangelising to the poor)	n.a.	Male Committee/from 1870, Ladies' Auxiliary
N.S.W. Benevolent Asylum and Lying- in Hospital, 1818	Pitt St., city	Destitute ly- ing-in cases/ sick mothers	92 (2540 received outdoor relief in 1879)	Benevolent Society of N.S.W./from 1879, Ladies' Visiting Committee (pre- viously 1820-2) (S)
Sydney Female Mission Home, 1873	Elizabeth St., city	Destitute, spinster mothers	(Nov 1873-Dec. 1874, 87 admitted)	Ladies' Committee
Catholic Female Home and Registry Office, 1877, (pre- viously 1859-60)	Darling- hurst	Female ser- vants	?	Sisters of Mercy from St. Patrick's Church
Sydney Foundling In- stitution, 1874/Hosp- ital and Home for Destitute Infants/ from 1877, Infants' Home	Darling- hurst/Pad- dington/ from 1876 Ashfield	spinsters with 1st. child/ from 1875, also deserted marr- ied mothers (all destitute)	77	Ladies' Committee (G. 1875, 1879)

institution established in the 1870s. Characteristically, it was run by nuns; the Sisters of Mercy. It was the duty of the laity, Caroline Chisholm notwithstanding, to support the work of the religious rather than to initiate independent activity. The nuns did employ a lay Matron as their numbers were low (the first recruit in Australia was not professed until 1869)¹ and their first priority was education. Additionally, they were a newly established order which only slowly built up support in N.S.W.²

The Female Home is another example of how bitterly opposed organisations offered essentially the same services in their institutions, apart from religious forms. Both the nuns and the evangelical women running the Homes for Servants provided similar services, the former at a slightly lower fee.³ Both saw their function as encouraging servants to be all that their employers thought they should be - "honest, industrious, intelligent, modest and obliging".⁴ The purchase of the Mercy nuns' mother house in North Sydney also demonstrates that sectarianism did not represent a simple conflict. When the Protestant owner refused to sell the house in 1879 because the buyers were nuns, another Protestant intervened and bought it to promptly re-sell at the same price to the Sisters.⁵

The agreement reached by bitter sectarian rivals as to the aims and methods of philanthropy was reinforced by their acceptance of the hierarchical divisions within the woman's sphere. Ladies, women and females were denotations of God-given divisions which specifically designated a woman's combined class and status relationships. Thus the Catholic Female Home and Female Mission Home both catered for women

1. M.Baptista Rankin, The History of Monte Sant' Angelo College, North Sydney, n.d., p.5 (unpag.).

2. ibid., pp.1-6 and Petra, 1:8, 5 August 1923, esp.pp.361-3.

3. Brooks, op.cit., p.22.

4. loc.cit.

5. Rankin, op.cit., p.8. (unpag.).

precisely identified as females. As women were generally oppressed and restricted so females were the most oppressed and restricted of women. The Mission Home's inmates, for example, were destitute and pregnant; working class women with little status or social prestige. At the opposite end of the hierarchy were the ladies. When women included "Ladies" in the title of their organisation they meant to denote exactly that: middle class and elite women of high status and impeccable respectability. Even the bitterest sectarian rivals accepted these divisions without debate in their practice of philanthropy. The group that dominated the woman's organisations established in this decade were the evangelicals. Evangelicals were shocked and passionately stirred by the general spiritual indifference in Australia. Evidence of immorality drove them to action whilst physical suffering drew little response. Prochaska's convincing thesis is that English evangelical women were driven to action to expiate their own sense of sin.¹ He drew upon 400 memoirs and such of women who recorded their feelings and motives.² Such introspective out-pourings were no longer so fashionable by the 1870s and were never very popular in the colonies.³ The clearest expressions of the motivations and social philosophy of evangelical women in Sydney can be found, not in their personal writings, but in their actions and the organisations they supported. The first to recruit women to their cause in the 1870s was the Sydney City Mission, which also provided the most explicit demonstration of Sydney evangelicals in action.

The Sydney City Mission, like its British counterparts, was founded in response to the appalling conditions in the

1. Prochaska, op.cit., esp. ch.1V.

2. ibid., p.13n.

3. A few examples exist, e.g. Rev. A.Perry (ed.), Being the Memorials of the Sarah S. Perry, London, 1857, Preface, offers that life as a "model of amiable [evangelical] piety".

city "slums".¹ The Mission ignored the physical conditions of the "slums" and the greed of the absentee landlords such as angered the Investigating Committees of the Sydney City and Suburban Sewerage Health Board in 1875-6.² The Mission supporters were concerned, not with exploitation, but with the poor's spiritual debasement: the "deepest and darkest recesses of vice and misery"; the poor's "inexpressibly debased and impious condition" and "plague of sin".³ The cause of all the misery was simple - viz., irreligion. The missionaries were quoted as not finding one destitute family who were Christian. Confusing correlation with causation, evangelicals concluded that the families were destitute because they were disbelievers.⁴ For wealthy evangelicals it was an uncomplicated and satisfying belief; a vindication of their own sanctity and what Weber called the Protestant Ethic.

A further motivation for evangelical social action was the miasmatic theory of moral pollution. A contemporary explanation for the spread of disease was that it was inhaled or digested from particles in air or water. The Mission viewed moral and spiritual "disease" in the same light. As disease could spread from the "slums", so could

dens of pollution and vice in one part of the town ... rise, and rise, and swell until it came into their /The Mission supporters/ houses and [sic] their chambers. (5)

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1. (anon.), Presenting Ten Decades, Sydney, 1962, p.9 and B. Short, "Origin of the Sydney City Mission", vol.1, pp.3-7, Ms, held at the Sydney City Mission headquarters.
 2. Investigating Committees....., op.cit.
 3. Sydney City Mission, A.R., 1866-7, p.12 and 1872-3, p.5, cf. Sydney Female Refuge Society, A.R., 1878 in which the evangelical soul and despair for the world was also bared.
 4. Sydney City Mission, op.cit., 1867, p.12 cf., e.g., Rev. T.de W.H.Talmage, Sunday Morning Discourse on the night side of city life, Melbourne, 1879, esp. Series 111, p.184. Examples in the latter include that of sabbatarian shop assistants who leave rather than work on Sunday and become richer than their ex-employers.
 5. J.H.Goodlet quoted in B.Short, "Origin of the Sydney City Mission", op.cit., pp.39-41.

The danger was potentially overwhelming to the whole community unless determined action was taken.

To overcome such dangers evangelical philanthropists typically concentrated on individual moral reform. Their priorities were illustrated by the headings used by the Sydney City Mission to report their work: "Hopeful Deaths"; "The Fallen" (taken to the Sydney Female Refuge); "Destitution"; "Hopeful Conversions" and "Drunkards Reclaimed".¹ For some, the missionaries met their most pressing needs when no other help offered.² On the whole, however, they met with frustrating indifference. What could evangelical zeal do in the face of the cheerful tolerance of the sick Catholic prostitute who allowed the missionary to pray for her because, "she did not think a good prayer would hurt anyone"?³

While the motivation of the evangelicals was partly fearful self-interest, there is no doubt that they were shocked at the conditions revealed by the City Mission's paid missionaries. The worst off in the "slums" were women - "beaten, battered, bruised, tied up like cats,⁴ deserted" - and children - "given over by their parents to vice".⁵ With so many of the "slum" victims being women and children, the work clearly impinged on the woman's sphere. A proviso was that to remain "ladies" the Mission's women supporters had to remain ignorant of the details of the suffering. In one talk, for example, the Mission's treasurer stopped his revelations saying that he dared not "draw back the veil" as women were present.⁶ Such reticence generally

1. Sydney City Mission, A.R., 1866-7, pp.12-6, cf. similar reporting of the Mission's current work in S.M.H., 24 June 1981 with titles such as "Sad Story behind a Drifter" and "Youth on the Drug Circuit".

2. e.g. Sydney City Mission, op.cit., 1866-7, pp.16-7.

3. ibid., 1866-7, p.16.

4. A missionary found a woman tied up in a house; presumably like kittens tied in bags before being dumped or drowned.

5. Short, op.cit., p.39.

6. ibid., p.41.

meant that philanthropic women had little chance of hearing directly or fully of the problems of working class life. Similarly, the women who founded the Mission Home did so in response to reports of immorality - reports that they obtained from newspapers, not observation.¹

Indirect and second-hand knowledge invariably affected the type of philanthropy offered. In the City Mission, for example, it was the paid missionaries, the only ones in direct contact with the slum dwellers, who first realised the need to meet material wants. At first the help offered came from the missionaries' own small incomes.² The Mission only reluctantly offered material relief and then justified it largely in terms of the gratitude of the recipients for the pitifully small help given. Typical was the £5.8.6 spent on a year's poor relief and the "starving" family grateful for 1/-, enough to buy, for example, 6lb of bread or the cheapest salted meat.³

The dilemma of the men running the Mission was to utilise their women supporters without causing them to have direct contact with the work of the Mission. Additionally, as the Mission evangelised to the general population and not just women, their work was not wholly within the woman's sphere. Therefore the Mission executive also aimed to limit the influence of women.

The first response of the Mission was to employ missionaries to do the evangelical work; two women and two men.⁴

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1. Sydney Female Mission Home, A.R., 1874, p.3. The catalyst, according to Brooks, op.cit., p.19, was a letter to the S.M.H. by Dean Cowper.
 2. Sydney City Mission, A.R., 1870-1, p.5.
 3. ibid., 1876-7, p.8; 1870-1, p.4 and 1873-4, p.20 and Statistical Register of N.S.W., 1870, p.12. The total amount spent on poor relief increased sharply in the latter years of the decade.
 4. The two women were Mesdames Thompson and Aspinall. Of the former little is known but the latter was probably the widowed mother of the Rev. Arthur Aspinall, a moderator of the Presbyterian Church and Principal of Scots College from 1893. M.Munro, In Old Aspinall's Day, Sydney, 1961, p.12 provides details which supports this hypothesis.

Soon, however, the Mission was in debt and so all but one man resigned. When the Mission's finances improved it was resolved not to re-employ women missionaries. A source of women's missionary labour had been discovered that did not necessitate payment: the wives of missionaries, like clergymen's wives, were given the responsibility of the women's work, such as mothers' meetings.¹

The major role for women in the Sydney City Mission was as fund raisers. The Mission had wealthy supporters - John Goodlet paid for one Missionary's salary and Mary Roberts was a regular subscriber² - but it continued to experience financial problems. As Tables 2.1 and 2.2 indicate, supporters actually declined in number during the decade and the Mission received no subsidy.³ As a male-run organisation, the subscribers were predominantly men so the solution of the Mission's financial problems was to tap women's purses.

With hindsight the Mission viewed dependence on a women's auxiliary for finance as natural.⁴ In 1870, however, it was a comparatively new idea in Sydney and largely confined to overseas missionary associations such as the British and Foreign Bible Society. Previously the Mission had asked individual women to collect subscriptions (most philanthropic organisations employed collectors) and to organise the increasingly profitable annual tea and public meeting.⁵ By 1870 the financial situation had worsened and the Mission was unable to pay the salaries of its three missionaries. The solution was proposed by the wife of the Mission Secretary, the Rev. James Voller. Mrs Voller and

1. Short, op.cit., pp.131-3.

2. Sydney City Mission, op.cit., 1873-4, p.5 and e.g. ibid., 1878-9, p.6. See also Appendix A.

3. See above, following pp.56,60.

4. (anon.), Presenting Ten Decades, op.cit., p.16.

5. Sydney City Mission, op.cit., 1866-7, pp.16,22.

about 30 others offered to be voluntary collectors in the form of a Ladies' Auxiliary.

This extension of activity by evangelical women was strictly controlled. The women had no right over the distribution of the money and were not able to act independently; the Rev. Mr Webb was given "special charge of the Ladies' Auxiliary".¹ Such control was maintained despite the Mission's growing dependence on the auxiliary to pay the salaries of, by 1877, seven missionaries. By 1880, for example, one auxiliary member, Mrs S.C.Callaghan had collected over £200² and total auxiliary collections amounted to, as shown in Table 2.2, over a third of total income. The controls on the ladies primarily affected the membership of the auxiliary. It does not appear to have had a fixed membership and most of the names have lapsed into historical anonymity. It appears that they were middle class women; it is unlikely that working class women could have spared the time collecting involved. They were not members of Sydney's upper middle class; such women supported the Mission separately. Mrs Macarthur, for example, formed her own Ladies' Working Party which sewed in the manner of a Dorcas Society and also donated money.³ Elite women, used to dominant rights within the woman's sphere, rarely accepted such a dependent role as given the auxiliary women.

Fund raising became acknowledged as a woman's activity as men recognised women's skills and as, in response to their dependence on such skills, they used the rhetoric of service and the woman's sphere. The Mission's Ladies' Auxiliary was cajoled by assurances that they were undertaking "a valuable and easy medium of service", involving

1. ibid., 1870-1, p.4.

2. ibid., 1870-9, subscription lists.

3. e.g., ibid., 1877-8, p.27.

the "simple" task of asking neighbours for money. Women rather than men were needed because "none succeed so well as they".¹ Later the stress on the ease of such work disappeared and it was acknowledged that soliciting money for a sectarian cause was "difficult and discouraging".² Still the men consoled themselves that it was woman's work, needing the social skills and leisure at the command of "ladies".

It is not recorded how whole-heartedly evangelical women threw themselves into fund-raising. Certainly the highly valued example of Englishwomen, from Catherine Gladstone down, provided plenty of precedents for zealous philanthropic fund-raising.³ As the decade progressed, individual Sydney women acquired similar reputations. Significantly, however, these women had either the assurance of high social status denied most evangelical women or were motivated in support of projects they themselves initiated. Thus Mrs Bensusan, the first Secretary of the Foundling Institution;

She will waltz a cheque out of partner
after partner, with the same fatal ease
with which she gabbled a guinea out of
her neighbour at dinner, while in desperate cases she always has in reserve a light battery of flirtation, never known not to bring down man and money ... (4)

The newspaper gleefully claimed that she was duped by the sender of a £150 cheque signed "Watt A. Lark". Hopefully, the report concluded that "she has never 'begged again'".⁵ Mary Windeyer also ruthlessly exploited friendships and her social skills for her pet philanthropies. In one instance she successfully demanded Premier Parkes' support for the Infants' Home receipt of a government grant. She demanded

1. ibid., 1869-70, p.15.

2. ibid., 1869-70, p.15, cf. ibid., 1882, p.7.

3. Prochaska, op.cit., ch.11 and pp.44-5.

4. Julia Bensusan, Papers 1862-1878, pp.44-5, unidentified newspaper clipping, n.d., MLMSS 1698.

5. ibid., p.44. The letter preserved is actually signed "What A Lark". It is hard to believe that Bensusan was taken in by the joke.

that he "take a peep" at the Home and proposed that on his inspection visit that she "would endeavour by talking all the time to get as much said as possible on some matters in which I want you to be interested".¹ The image of the idle, passive Victorian lady has little relevance in the face of such activity. The dilemma for, particularly evangelical, men was that whilst they deplored such methods, they soon became dependent on the financial results.

Fund raising was only one avenue in which evangelical women accepted increased philanthropic responsibility. Evangelical women, driven by a concern for social purity, also agitated for a greater role in institutions which were clearly within the woman's sphere. By the end of the decade, evangelical zeal had resulted in the formation of a Ladies' Visiting Committee in the colony's largest benevolent asylum and the founding of the Sydney Female Mission Home.

The Benevolent Society of N.S.W. was the major source of charitable relief in the colony. Like the Parramatta and Penrith Benevolent Societies, it was administered by men in accordance with conservative ideals of Christian benevolence. By 1870 its functions were restricted to providing outdoor relief and an Asylum. The latter was primarily a "lying in" Hospital where destitute women could give birth. The provision of outdoor relief to both men and women was outside the woman's sphere but not so the Asylum's Lying-in Hospital. Accordingly, pressure was applied to allow women influence over the Hospital management.

Gash argued that the appointment of the second Ladies' Committee was a belated and partial recognition of the recommendations of the 1873-4 Royal Commission.² In some

1. Parkes correspondence, letter from Mary Windeyer, 24 April 1879, ML CYA 930.

2. Gash, op.cit., p.91.

respects, Gash's argument is correct. The Commissioners had severely criticised the Benevolent Society executive. They recommended that the executive be reduced from 28 (plus ex-officio members) to only eight, half of whom should be government appointees and half women.¹ The need for women, predictably for the Commissioners, was justified in terms of the woman's sphere. As men were needed for their "business qualities" so women were needed to "be better able to supervise the work of the ... maternity hospital".² The Benevolent Society found it politic to appoint a Ladies' Committee after the Parkes ministry returned to government in December 1878. The appointment of the ladies to supervise the maternity section of the Asylum and to interview applicants was the only concession made to the findings of the Parkes-appointed Commission. It was a gesture that did not concede any power whilst acknowledging the importance of women in woman's sphere philanthropy.

There were, however, other influences lobbying for an increase in the influence of ladies within the Asylum. In 1878, the long-standing President, Edward Deas-Thomson, gave up active participation. The President-elect, Dr Arthur Renwick was a fervent believer in the woman's sphere. It was Renwick who presided over other changes that year³ and who foreshadowed the motion to appoint the Ladies' Committee.⁴

Most importantly, evangelical women themselves pressured the Society for greater influence. In particular, the women who founded the Sydney Female Mission Home urged this course as one of their objectives.⁵ Consequently they comprised half the Benevolent Society's Ladies' Committee in 1879.

The Ladies' Committee was a concession to belief in the

1. Royal Commission, Report, op.cit., p.110.

2. loc.cit.

3. Dickey, Charity in N.S.W., op.cit., p.32.

4. Benevolent Society of N.S.W., Minutes, 11 March 1879.

5. Sydney Female Mission Home, op.cit., 1873-4, p.4.

woman's sphere but it was insufficient to alter the Benevolent Society's male public image. This image was re-inforced by the all-male executive and the annual reports and meetings. In response, as shown in Table 2.2,¹ the Society continued to be viewed as essentially a government-funded institution whose finances were supplemented by men. To win more than a minority of support from women subscribers a society had to truly, not just nominally, uphold the rights of ladies within the woman's sphere.

The male domination of the Society does not mean that women were excluded from the Asylum before 1879, just that they lacked power. There were always women visitors and from 1879 a forerunner of the many evangelical visiting missions, the Ladies of the Flower Mission, distributed posies and biblical texts to the patients.² A further source of feminine influence within the Asylum was the Matron. She was Mrs Eliza Blundell (later Elric). Blundell had considerable status as a Nightingale nurse and was in charge of the internal management of the Asylum although she only received £100 (with board) in comparison with the male clerk-accountant's £400, both per annum.³ From 1878 her responsibilities increased as the lying-in department became a training school for mid-wives and nurses. Such schools were central to the Nightingale scheme of nursing and it was perhaps due to her influence that the Asylum's school was founded. Eliza Blundell had been a constant source of trouble for Lucy Osburn at the Sydney Infirmary in the 1860s and in 1891 her mental balance was equally doubted by philanthropist Helen Fell.⁴ Nevertheless, her competence satisfied the 1873-4 Royal Commissioners, the Inspector of Public Charities⁵ and her employers. Despite such personal prestige, however, as a salaried officer and a Matron

1. See above, following p.60.

2. Benevolent Society of N.S.W., A.R., 1879, p.15.

3. N.S.W.L.A., V. & P., 1873-4, vol.6, p.108.

4. F.MacDonnell, Miss Nightingale's..., op.cit., pp.66-7 and Helen Fell, Diary, 2 July 1891, MLMSS 1114/2.

5. e.g. Inspector of Public Charities, A.R., 1879-80, p.15.

rather than superintending lady, she remained entirely subordinate to the male executive.

Before initiating philanthropic action, evangelical women needed to combine a belief that the action was within the woman's sphere with a sense of crisis. Such a crisis was believed to exist during 1873-4. Brooks referred to the "dark days" of August 1873¹ and the same concern is evident in the Methodist Christian Advocate.² In response social purity organisations were formed, segregated by sex. Whilst evangelical women founded and largely financed the Mission Home, the men founded and largely financed the N.S.W. Association for the Promotion of Morality.³ The latter lobbied against - invariably working class - immorality and led a men's "crusade against vice".⁴

It is difficult to pinpoint why such a crisis was perceived in 1873-4. There were no sensational crimes of the order of the Mount Rennie outrage in 1886 or the Makin baby murders in 1892.⁵ Nor were there any overseas sensations such as the British Bradhaugh-Besant trial of 1877-8 or the Pall Mall Gazette revelations in 1885.⁶ Nor did the revelations of the Royal Commission into Public Charities support such a crisis mentality. Undoubtedly, poverty combined with the inadequacy of charity forced women into prostitution and infanticide but this was not new in 1873-4. Further, Mayne provides evidence that an awareness by Sydney's middle class of the hard core of poverty existing during this boom decade was virtually non-existent until at least 1875.⁷

1. Brooks, op.cit., p.19.

2. e.g. The Christian Advocate and Weekly Record, 1 September 1873.

3. For the financial support given the two institutions see Table 2.2 and The Empire, 26 September 1874.

4. ibid., 1 September 1873 and Brooks, op.cit., p.19.

5. P.Grobosky, Sydney in Ferment, Canberra, 1977, ch. 7.

6. D.Gorham, "The 'Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon' Re-examined", Victorian Studies, 21:3, Spring 1978.

7. A.Mayne, "City Back-slums in the land of promise", Labour History, 38, May 1980.

There are a number of possible causes which together could have caused evangelical women to respond to a crisis situation. The colony's continuing prosperity encouraged working class independence as it increased their choice of employment. Such independence was invariably interpreted by the middle class as resulting in increased fecklessness and immorality. The Rev. Dr Fullerton, for example, claimed that the reason for the 90 illegitimate children born in the Benevolent Asylum was because females were allowed out after dark.¹ Combined with increased leisure which greater prosperity brought middle class women, the incentive and ability to undertake philanthropy was provided.

Another encouragement was the high female visibility in the British social purity campaign. The campaign led by Josephine Butler to repeal the 1866 Contagious Diseases Act for the compulsory medical inspection of suspected prostitutes had begun. It was a campaign which aroused considerable interest in Australia as similar acts were passed in Queensland in 1868 and then Tasmania in 1879.² Similarly arousing interest in women's social purity campaigns was the English campaign to raise the age of consent, first to 13 years in 1875, then to 16.³ It is unlikely that these campaigns were the direct cause of the Sydney women's actions as they were only too willing to quote British precedent wherever possible,⁴ and in this case no hint of the British campaigns were given. However, they did increase awareness of the issues of sexual morality and provided an example of religiously motivated ladies taking direct social action.

Perhaps the most important cause of a perceived rise in immorality was the changes in the policy of admission to the

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1. Benevolent Society of N.S.W., A.R., 1873-4, p.21.
 2. E.Barclay, "Queensland's Contagious Diseases Act, 1868", Queensland Heritage, 2:10, May 1974 and 3:1, November 1974.
 3. Gorham, op.cit.
 4. e.g., Bensusan, op.cit., pp.42,47, wrote to the London Foundling Hospital before she publicly called for a similar institution in Sydney. The precedent of the New York Foundling Asylum was also given, Foundling Hospital, A.R., 1874-5, p.6.

Benevolent Asylum's Lying-in Department. Many of the supporters and members of the Society became concerned that the majority of women using their maternity facilities were spinsters. The theory was that if such facilities were not available then spinsters would not get pregnant. From 1872 the Society executive reported that it was discouraging the admission of unmarried women, especially those pregnant with a subsequent child.¹ In 1874 the result of this policy was announced; not more than two women had applied to enter the lying-in department for the second time.² Supporters at the Society's annual meeting applauded but the "success" of the Society's policy may have resulted in an increase in infanticide, and therefore "immorality", by such women.

The founders of the Sydney Female Mission Home were evangelical women who were determined to counteract immorality. After several meetings they arrived at four means of appropriate action. All four assumed that immorality was the preserve of working class females, that it involved breaking sexual mores and that the solution was for middle class institutions and families to control female sexuality.³ The material or emotional deprivation of the women simply did not occur to them even when they "fearlessly and without the slightest misgivings" listed the sources of immorality.⁴ As Gorham has pointed out, to see so many women as other than passive, sexually innocent victims would force attention to their limited choices in life and hence to the exploitative economic structure.⁵ So rather than that, the Mission Home women were angered that women were neglected by drunken, dissolute parents and so became the "prey of seducers who lie in wait to betray them". They condemned the music and dancing saloons as corrupting thoughtless and giddy young creatures,

1. Benevolent Society of N.S.W., A.R., 1871-2, p.9 and 1872-3, p.10.

2. ibid., 1873-4, p.21.

3. Brooks, op.cit., p.18.

4. Sydney Female Mission Home, op.cit., 1874, pp.8-9.

5. Gorham, op.cit., p.355.

and Public Houses as teeming with demoralising influences and theatres for rendering vice attractive. Most shocking of all the causes of immorality for the ladies were girls "betrayed" by family members.¹ Their proposed counter-measures matched their conservative and individualistic interpretation of the causes of immorality. The women did not contemplate militant action as taken by American morality crusaders² but stressed that rather than exposing the guilty they merely wished to put the innocent on their guard.

The Home opened in November 1873 in charge of a Matron, Mrs Wood and an assistant. Mrs Wood received free board for herself and husband in lieu of salary.³ The inmates generally stayed for short periods during a time of crisis. As shown in Table 2.2, the Home was overwhelmingly financially supported by women, as befitted a woman's concern. At first the only financial contributions the inmates made were small "tokens of gratitude" but the usual policy of making the recipients of charity pay was soon applied. By 1880, inmates contributed over 16% of the Home's total income. In addition, their conditions were spartan - "economical" in the language of the annual reports - and they did all the Home's domestic work. Despite such financial pressure and conditions, such was the women's need that the Home never experienced a shortage of inmates. The kind of need is demonstrated by the women's destinations on leaving: the pregnant to the Benevolent Asylum; prostitutes to the Female Refuge; the sick to the Sydney Infirmary; older women to Hyde Park Asylum and others to situations as servants. The Home principally became a refuge for women expecting illegitimate children but there was considerable debate before it was agreed to admit such women. It was agreed to, not because of

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1. Sydney Female Mission Home, op.cit., 1874, p.8. Most likely, this "betrayal" referred to encouragement to enter prostitution.
 2. C.Smith Rosenberg, "Beauty, the Beast and the Militant Woman", American Quarterly, XX111:4, October 1971, pp.568-9, 573. Activities included picketing brothels and publishing the names of brothel customers.
 3. Sydney Female Mission Home, op.cit., 1874, p.5.

the women's desperate need, but due to the hope of reforming them and getting the babies' fathers to take financial responsibility. Nothing is available to indicate the success of the former aim and only one success was recorded with the second aim, accomplished despite the man's "very studious effort to escape".¹

The evangelical women who responded to the crisis of morality by founding the Mission Home and who later formed the Ladies' Committee of the Benevolent Society of N.S.W. were drawn from the relatively small circle of philanthropic evangelical ladies. Accordingly, eleven are listed in Table 2.5 identifying the Refuge ladies² and the majority tended to be from middle aged to old and were the wives of wealthy business men or professionals. They were all of at least moderate status and the highest respectability. Again the illegitimate Mary Roberts who regularly donated £5.5.0 to the Benevolent Society was not asked to join its Ladies' Committee. As part of the evangelical philanthropic network they invariably belonged to another such committee. As small committees representative of the evangelical community, ties of kinship were much less evident than usual.

The women of the Foundling Institution also responded to the morality alarm of 1873-4, but unlike the evangelical women they attempted to meet the women's needs without evangelising or policing female morality. They aimed to lessen "if they could not wholly prevent"³ infanticide and infant mortality by opening an institution where mothers could leave their babies. The rules governing the Institution evolved during the first months of operation. The most contentious rule was that infants of married parents were ineligible as

1. *ibid.*, 1874, p.7.

2. See above, following p.76. The ladies were M. and J. Allen, Cowper, Dawson, Goodlet, Hay, Mander Jones, Kent, Moore, Thompson and Wilshire. See also Appendix A.

3. Sydney Foundling Hospital, *A.R.*, 1874-5, p.4.

these babies were at least risk from infanticide.¹ Ironically, the women of the Foundling Institution refused to admit a woman's subsequent illegitimate child despite the correlation noted above between a perceived rise in infanticide and the stricter policy at the Benevolent Asylum.

In establishing the Foundling Institution, the women flew in the face of established philanthropic opinion. Even the innovatory Royal Commission of 1873-4 strongly recommended against such an establishment in Sydney, supported by such people as the Matron of the Benevolent Asylum.² An institution which allowed women to have their babies then leave them to go back to their former life, theoretically unpunished and perhaps passing as "pure", aroused much public opposition. Such philanthropy undermined bourgeois values of a mother's chastity and her prime responsibility for her children. It violated all the unquestioned assumptions that formed the basis of the whole range of philanthropic services offered this decade. The women who began the Foundling Institution were consequently vilified in the press, from the pulpit and in parliament. They were accused of holding out "inducements to mothers to throw off responsibility with regard to their children", for providing "a premium for bastardy" and even for increasing infanticide. The high death rate in Foundlings Institutions was also deplored but was not the main objection.³

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1. Sydney Foundling Institution, Minutes, 26 May 1874, a letter from Lady Robinson, the Governor's wife, asked how the ladies planned to guard against the admittance of babies of poor married people. Legitimate babies were presumably to go to the Orphan Schools or Randwick Asylum although the latter would not admit children deserted by their father, Royal Commission, evidence, op.cit., p.68.
 2. The Empire, 8 August 1874.
 3. Bensusan, op.cit., e.g. the Anglican Bishop Barker's "profound moral objection" to the Foundling Hospital is reported in an unidentified newspaper clipping.

The Institution was dependent for finance on a conservative, moralistic middle class public and by degrees they succumbed to the pressure of such vocal and influential opponents. By the second year the Institution became the Sydney Foundling Hospital and Home for Destitute Infants, but the taint of "foundling" could not be disguised. The Committee appealed for support by inviting inspection of the institution and by yearly claims that infanticide had first decreased and then almost ceased since the institution opened. At the same time the women met one of the strongest objections to the institution by altering the rule that most legitimate babies were ineligible for admission. Legitimate babies were now taken if one parent was dead or had deserted.¹

The defensive measures against vocal public morality were to no avail. After making a "fair trial" of the Foundling Hospital for three years, the women decided that it would be impossible to continue.² They could not claim the protection of being within the woman's sphere and not uphold conventional, repressive morality. The name was changed to the Infants' Home and the constitution was altered to enforce two strict rules. Only first illegitimate babies were admitted and mothers had to stay with their babies in the Home. This latter rule prevented women from leaving their babies and falsely preserving their "respectability".

To be within the woman's sphere, however, the women also had to uphold class and status relationships. Most revealing of the relationship between "ladies" and their "female" charity recipients were the cases where the ladies of the Infants' Home broke their own stated rules and allowed babies to be admitted without the mother. Such cases occurred only

1. Infants' Home, A.R., 1875-6, p.7.

2. Infants' Home, Letterbook, 1874-93, letter from Mrs A. Docker to the Principal Under Secretary, 1 July 1887, MLMSS 2983/43.

when an applicant was middle class. In these cases the mother's class and status outweighed other factors such as the need to develop maternal bonds or to enforce morality. "Females" were presumed to have to pay for their "fall" by enforced responsibility for their baby; "ladies" were deemed to suffer too much by a shattered reputation. Thus a baby of a girl from a "good" New Zealand family was admitted without the usual personal interview of the mother, without the mother's name recorded in the minutes and without the mother - but with a payment of £50.¹ Other cases seen as especially "sad" were admitted anonymously and without the mother, but always on the condition of a large payment in advance.²

The women's failure to practise philanthropy without concomitant enforcement of morality and class interests is even more telling given their high status. Fifteen of the members of the Foundling Hospital/Institution are detailed in Table 2.7a/b. Although many of them were new to organised philanthropy they were recruited from the usual class and status grouping; they were the wives of business and professional men with a preponderance of politicians' wives. For most, their status was reinforced by mature age and their husband's or family's position. Leading Sydney women lent their support and the ultra respectable daughter of an ex-Governor, Lady Anne Deas Thomson, became the Institution's second President in 1875. In fund raising the Institution was able, for example, to hold an amateur concert drawing on the talents of the "more exclusive circles" of society.³ In addition the Institution attracted a wide range of enterprising women. The committee attempted to include spinsters as well as married women,⁴ made a continuing effort to

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1. Infants' Home, Minutes, 11 September 1877.
 2. These cases included a "lady" seduced by a "gentleman in necessitous circumstances" and helped by a personal recommendation from Mary Windeyer, *ibid.*, 5 March 1878.
 3. Bensusan, *op.cit.*, p.40, unidentified newspaper clipping, n.d.
 4. Sydney Foundling Hospital, Minutes, 28 March 1876 and 4 April 1876, Misses Eadith Walker and Waller were asked to join.

TABLE 2.7 IDENTIFIED MEMBERS IN THE 1870s OF (a) SYDNEY FOUNDLING HOSPITAL

Name, Membership of Philanthropic network (N)	Name, Occupation of husband	Kin on Committee and links between members	Age in 1874 or on joining	Religion	Number of Children
Mrs ? Alexander (N)	Frederick, ?	-	?	Jewish	?
Mrs P.F.Fischer (N)	Carl, physician/Institution's honorary medical attendant	-	?	Jewish	1 at least
Mrs Victoria Good-enough (N)	James, Naval Commodore	-	early 30s?	C. of E.	2
Mrs Emily Heron	Henry, solicitor/Institution's honorary legal advisor self - writer/journalist	aunt and sister	30	C. of E.	7
Lady Agnes Murray	Terence, landowner/politician. self - ex-governess	husband a business partner of Thomas Walker, Institution benefactor	mid 30s?	C. of E.	3 and 3 step
(b) SYDNEY FOUNDLING HOSPITAL/INFANTS HOME					
Mrs Julia Bensusan	S.L., navy officer?	-	?	Jewish?	some
Mrs Lucy Darley	Frederick, lawyer/politician	-	about 40?	C. of E.	8
Mrs Sophie Holt (N)	Thomas, landowner/M.L.C.	-	mid 50s?	Congreg.	6 at least
Mrs Jane Laidley	William, businessman/M.L.C.	-	mid 40s?	C. of E.	9
Mrs Elizabeth Moore (N)	Henry, ?	-	?	?	?
Mrs Mary (Minnie) Smith (N)	John, Professor/M.L.C.	-	?	Spiritualist	1 adopted

TABLE 2.7 continued

Name, Membership of Philanthropic network (N)	Name, Occupation of husband	Kin on Committee and links between members	Age in 1874 or on joining	Religion	Number of Children
(b) continued					
Lady Anne Deas Thomson (N)	Edward, ex-Colonial Secretary	-	68	C. of E.	7
Mrs ? Voss	Houlton, lawyer	-	?	?	?
Mrs Emily White	James, pastoralist/ politician	-	?	C. of E.	0?
Mrs Mary Windeyer (N)	William, judge/ politician	-	41	C. of E.	9
Mrs Frances (Fanny) Wise (N)	George, immigration agent	two nieces	57	C. of E.	0
(c) <u>INFANTS' HOME</u>					
Mrs Helen Hunter Baillie (N)	John, banker	-	60	Pres.	0
Mrs Frances Corlette	James, clergyman	aunt/niece	40	C. of E.	4
Mrs Ada Docker	Wilfrid, accountant	recruited after sister-in-law refused	mid 20s?	C. of E.	0

include Jewish women and, less successfully, evangelicals and a "Catholic lady".¹ The committee also included, albeit sometimes briefly, women of initiative and enterprise. Smith was a Spiritualist; Goodenough founded Sydney's first creche; Murray helped found St. Catherine's School; Windeyer was a founder of boarding-out in the colony and Heron was a successful writer and, as "Australie", journalist. Despite such a formidable array of talent and influence, these women failed completely to alter the accepted boundaries of woman's sphere philanthropy. Their failure is a reminder that although the woman's sphere was not a static concept, at any one time its limitations were strictly enforced.

The women also failed to challenge the limitations of the woman's sphere despite their access to considerable wealth. As shown in Table 2.2,² the Foundling Institution/Home was not overwhelmingly supported by women as were women's organisations firmly within the woman's sphere. However, they did attract wealthy supporters and in particular, Thomas Walker. Walker was a prominent patron of the arts and philanthropy and was the institution's chief benefactor. He gave or lent £4,650 to the institution by 1880.³ Such support and wealth could not, however, enable philanthropic women to circumvent the restrictions of the woman's sphere.

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1. Jewish Mrs Alexander resigned due to illness in 1875; it is not clear if she was replaced by a co-religious. Mrs Levy was asked to join, Infants' Home, Minutes, 2 December 1879, but refused. Evangelical women did not join until the institution became the Infants' Home. The first President suggested the inclusion of a Catholic, ibid., 12 May 1875; this did not eventuate although Archbishop Vaughan gave a 10 guinea subscription, ibid., 18 November 1874.
 2. See above, following p.60.
 3. Infants' Home, Minutes, 17 June 1874 and 10 June 1879; Infants' Home, A.R., 1876, pp.5,8 and Mary Windeyer, Correspondence, MLMSS 186/15, letter from Thomas Walker, 8 July 1878. Walker repaid his own loans with further donations cf his similar role as benefactor of St. Vincent's Hospital, p.27 above, and the Sydney Female Refuge Society, A.R., 1879, p.15, to which he gave £625 by 1879.

With the Infants' Home incorporating stronger elements of social control, the women set out anew to win public and parliamentary support. The rhetoric they adopted was very similar to that of the Mission Home but without the strong evangelical overtones. Each institution portrayed its inmates as forlorn creatures who had been seduced, "more sinned against than sinning; innocent victims of woman's weakness and man's faithlessness and cowardice".¹

However, the Infants' Home's origin in attempting to meet the women's needs as well as exercise control was not forgotten. The Home was unusual in that it continued to refer to the need of the women helped rather than merely benefit middle class supporters and employers. Nor was the Home as harshly moralistic or punitive as evangelical institutions although these features were not, as Govan claimed, absent.² The inmates, for example, were dressed in red flannel, effectively branding their sin.³ The Home also met real needs far beyond its immediate object. The committee acted as a general relief board and co-ordinator of charitable help. They recommended applicants to other societies for help⁴ and advertised for work on behalf of unemployed or ill-treated servants.⁵ They took in babies against their judgement if they appeared ill-treated⁶ and in numerous ways acted as compassionate, and frequently the sole, helpers of those in despair and poverty.

Opposition from outraged moralists did not stop immediately or completely but the charge of promoting immorality

1. Infants' Home, A.R., 1877-8, p.5.

2. Govan, op.cit., p.270.

3. This is based on reminiscence; The Farmer and Settler, 8 February 1957 and The Land, 10 December 1954, clippings in Infants' Home, Newspaper Clippings, MLMSS 2983/54.

4. e.g. Infants' Home, Minutes, 14 August 1877.

5. e.g., ibid., 29 April 1879 when a woman was mistreating her servant's child.

6. e.g. ibid., 29 August 1876, they admitted a son of a widower because the father was "a perfect brute" and the infant would otherwise die.

gradually declined.¹ Opposition instead began to express itself as a common accusation against charities; that it was too expensive² and by attacking the characters of the women who ran the Home. The women were accused of being too much "ladies"; too removed from the realities of life and male control. Several, probably apocryphal, stories circulated demonstrating the unsuitability of sheltered ladies running such a Home without male guidance. One story claimed the Foundling Hospital was run by "gossiping old ladies" who spread the name of every "respectable" man whom an applicant named as father of her child. Male fears were not allayed by the changed arrangements of the Infants' Home. It was claimed that one pompous committee woman interrogated her pregnant servant in front of the committee as to the identity of her "seducer" until the servant broke down and named her employer's husband. The story was taken seriously enough to be denied in the S.M.H.³ Another story was spread by M.L.A. John McElhone, a long standing opponent of the institution. He alleged that an inmate protested that she could not breast feed "half a dozen" babies. Upon asking a committee woman if she could do it herself the inmate was allegedly told in reply that ladies were different to common people.⁴ Barely credible, the stories have most value as an indication of the hostility women faced in founding and managing an innovative institution whilst at the same time retaining and reinforcing their own status as ladies.

1. e.g. for opposition, The Maitland Mercury, 29 August 1879 and Bensusan, op.cit., passim. As late as 1903 the committee acknowledged that the Home was still considered by some as an "incentive to vice", Infants' Home, A.R., 1903, p.5.

2. Infants' Home, Newspaper Clippings, op.cit., unidentified clipping, n.d. (1878), "Well, Mesdames, you are doing a noble work, but 10s a week per head! that will never do. The public will certainly look askance at so expensive an institution". The condescending tone indicates the women's problems in being seen as fully adult.

3. S.M.H. 5 September 1879 and Infants' Home, Newspaper Cuttings, op.cit., p.15, item 1.

4. M.Smith, Honorary Secretary, to S.M.H., 23 July (1876?) in Bensusan, op.cit., p.46.

Some of the committee women had resigned from the committee in face of the outrage the Foundling Institution aroused. Heron, for example, resigned "in deference to the wishes of her husband and family" whilst stating her willingness to support "indirectly" the institution.¹ Those women - and their families - who survived the pressure chose new members who would re-inforce the new image of conformity. The membership of the Infants' Home is shown in Table 2.7b and c. Women were co-opted regardless of their inability to attend meetings, such as Hunter Baillie, the wealthy stalwart of evangelical philanthropy, and Corlette, the wife of the local Anglican clergyman. Great care was taken to present an image of conformity; Jefferis and Windeyer were discouraged from using the Home inmates for their Cottage Home and boarding-out experiments² and a benefit public lecture suggested by Minnie Smith was rejected on the grounds that it would be subversive to religion and morality.³

It is evident that both ladies and female inmates benefited from the existence of the Infants' Home. A major significance of philanthropy was that it provided ladies with experiences that broadened their outlook and gave them new skills. There was no other acceptable way to obtain such knowledge. In particular, the details given by applicants revealed a new and shocking aspect of life. Individual life histories emphasised tragedies from which the ladies were previously sheltered. Cases included pregnant women immigrating to hide "their shame and sorrow" and a Lunatic Asylum resident "seduced" by a warder.⁴ As well there were applicants whose lives questioned the effectiveness of philanthropic institutions. One such was an 18 year old

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1. Foundling Hospital, Minutes, 21 July 1875.
 2. Infants' Home, Minutes, 22 July 1879 and Parkes correspondence, letter from Mary Windeyer, 24 April 1879, MLMSS CYA930.
 3. Infants' Home, Minutes, 19 December 1879. The lecture was probably on spiritualism.
 4. Sydney Foundling Hospital, Minutes, 18 September 1874 and Mary Windeyer, letter to Colonial Secretary, 29 July 1878, Infants' Home Letterbook, MLMSS 2983/43.

Aboriginal girl who had been brought up in the School of Industry; apprenticed as a servant when 14; "went wrong"; had her baby at the Benevolent Asylum; was staying at the Sydney Female Mission Home and asked to leave her child at the Foundling Hospital to re-enter domestic service.¹

The typical lady of the decade was ignorant not only of working class life but of her own legal limitations and rights. The example of Dora Montefiore, who was shocked in 1889 to discover that her late husband could have appointed anyone as guardian to their children, is well known.² Operating an institution provided philanthropic ladies with first hand knowledge of the practical difficulties such limitations caused. Thus the committee asked three men to be trustees because, as married women, they had no power to take responsibility for a lease. Similarly when they cancelled the lease they were horrified to discover that the owner threatened to sue, not them or the trustees but the committee women's husbands.³ Perhaps as importantly for the future broadening of the woman's sphere, philanthropic management also provided women with new skills. Philanthropy was excellent training for greater participation in public affairs by women. The benefits to the women are revealed in the slowly improving quality in the minutes and Treasurers' reports of virtually all the women's philanthropic organisations. It was only in the 1870s, for example, that a secretary of the Infants' Home made mistakes such as rendering £3,100 (the cost of the Ashfield site) as £3000,100!⁴ This is not to suggest that the ladies managed to overcome completely the narrowness of a lady's life and training. Their prime failure was in the basis of their judgements. Trained to respect and recognise "respectability" and judge by appearance, they had little other means of

1. *ibid.*, 21 October 1874.

2. D. Montefiore, *From a Victorian to a Modern*, London, 1927, p. 30.

3. Sydney Foundling Hospital, Minutes, 21 November 1874 and 6 January 1875.

4. Infants' Home, Minutes, 7 March 1876.

assessing the truth of applications. Respectability and a demure demeanour was a significant factor in the applicants' success and at least one adoption from the Home was approved on the basis of a clergyman's reference and a neat home.¹

The inmates of the Home also benefited from the services offered. The Infants' Home was typical in the high demand for its services despite rejecting many of the applications for aid.² This demand continued despite, as shown in Table 2.2, the heavy contributions exacted from the inmates. The Infants' Home residents, many of whom were breast-feeding and wet-nursing, were by 1880 earning a quarter of the Home's income by their payments, laundry and needlework. From the first year, the committee was able to ask 5/- a week from mothers for the upkeep of their child; at £13 a year this was much more than subscribed by the wealthy committee members. From the evidence in the Minute Books, 5/- a week generally amounted to half the mother's weekly earnings. Why then was the Home in such demand? The answer was the lack of an alternative. Private women minded children but at least a significant minority were notorious for ill-treating them and charged about 10/- a week.³ Even the daunting interview for admission did not make such private child-minders preferable, although for many they were a first, regretted, choice. For other women, there was even less choice. Many of the babies' fathers were reported at the Queensland gold fields and out of contact while the mothers were destitute and unemployed.

A final feature of woman's philanthropy of which the Infants' Home provides a reminder is the status and meaning attached to the title "lady". The institution employed a series of women with various titles to manage the institution. Most were dismissed when it was proven that the inmates and

1. *ibid.*, 6 March 1877 and e.g. 17 April 1877.

2. e.g. in the first year 35 of 64 applicants were refused, Foundling Hospital, A.R., 1874-5, p.6.

3. e.g. Infants' Home, Minutes, 23 July 1878.

especially wet-nurses¹ were ill-treating or drugging the babies.² In desperation, the ladies increased the salary to £80 (and shortly after, £100) per year and employed a "Lady Superintendent", Miss Emily Trollope, with a sub-matron to assist.

Miss Trollope was a "lady" and it was this status that was publicly announced as the solution to the Home's management problems.³ The committee also assured Trollope privately that the previous trouble

arose from the fact that the present
Matron was not an educated person and
therefore could not command the respect
of women under her control. (4)

The solution was not so simple. Their attitude was not shared by the female inmates and even the ladies themselves forgot that an employee in an era of rapid social change could claim the status her title conferred. Until her death in 1880, Trollope was periodically brought to the brink of resignation in order to, for example, obtain a larger salary and sit on the admission committee.⁵ In 1880 she had her rights defended by the local clergyman, the Rev. Dr Corlette, who accused the committee of not treating her with the consideration due to "a lady".⁶ To claim the right to be treated like a lady had real meaning but the tragedy was that it was such an inadequate solution to the Home's problems.

Emily Trollope's diary reveals the disastrous early years of the institution; her deep affection for the babies in her charge and her frustration at the high (around 50%) death rate⁷ and inability to control the wet-nurses and other staff. Her diary is a poignant document of her

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1. If an infant were breast-fed before entering the institution, it was policy to continue.
 2. Foundling Hospital, Minutes, 9 September 1874 and 4 November 1874.
 3. Bensusan, op.cit., p.46, letter from M.Smith to S.M.H., n.d.
 4. Foundling Hospital, Minutes, 3 March 1875.
 5. e.g. Infants' Home, Minutes, 29 July 1879.
 6. ibid., 20 January 1880.
 7. Foundling Hospital, A.R., 1874-5, p.6; ibid., 1875-6, p.6 and ibid., 1877-8, p.7.

helplessness and despair;

I do not know what to do all the nurses
are so refractory

I have the dirtiest set of people in the
house now ... they are insolent and every-
thing is bad

[the wetnurses are] the most wretched set
that I ever came across - all the little
Babies are doing badly their own are well

[woman dismissed because] She is such a
wretch to the children. (1)

Her compassion encompassed the babies in her charge -

Ethel achieved crawling into my room
to day [sic]. Six of them can get in now

[She decided against resigning because]
I have decided that the Babies want me
more than any one else ... (2)

and the burdens carried by their mothers -

[a mother owed her previous child-minder
£8.14.0.] When will she be able to pay
it on 2/6 per week [the fee paid by the
Home for mothers to wet-nurse]

Poor Lizzie is very much upset about her
Baby [who died]. It was all she had to
care for she said. (3)

Her burden was increased by her inability to help babies ad-
mitted when dying -

very tiresome to lose another so soon -
but what could we expect if they admit
such children. She is thin all discol-
ored [sic] from bruises

I am very miserable [about two sick babies] (4)

- by inadequate help from the honorary doctors -

children worse to night & no Dr [sic] do
not know what to do (5)

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1. Emily Trollope, Diary 1875-6, 12 December 1875, 16 January 1876, 25 January 1876 and 19 February 1876, MLMSS 2983/50.
 2. ibid., 6 December 1875 and 4 February 1876.
 3. ibid., 8 December 1875 and 12 February 1876.
 4. ibid., 11 December 1875, 25 January 1876 and 13-9 February 1876.
 5. ibid., 19 December 1875.

and from being unable to convince the Committee to act -

Wrote to the Committee in the beginning
of the year about all the impossibilities
of this place ... (1)

The care and dedication Miss Trollope brought to her task vindicated to the committee the correctness of their decision to employ a "lady" to superintend the Home. For Trollope and the inmates the solution was inadequate. Trollope died worn down by illness and heartbreaking tension. The committee continued to employ a "lady superintendent" but, as discussed further in Part 11 of this thesis, at the Infants' Home and elsewhere conflict invariably resulted from the contradiction between the very real status conferred by the title of "lady" and the subordination demanded of an employee.

Women's philanthropy in the 1870s, as demonstrated in this and the previous chapter, comprised a diverse range of activities all constrained by the woman's sphere. Philanthropy was the major approved public activity within the woman's sphere and the women studied in these chapters belonged to the most influential and public of the woman's philanthropic organisations. They set the example for women in other, smaller organisations, particularly for those women doubtful about the propriety of any public activity for women. Their influence was not proportional to their numbers. Excluding nuns, whose numbers are difficult to determine, only 200 women have been identified as, between them, managing all the major women's philanthropic organisations in Sydney. Their overall small numbers and a consistent pattern of overlapping membership point to the existence of a women's philanthropic network.²

The existence of a network dominating women's philanthropic organisations is evident when membership overlap is

1. *ibid.*, 11 January 1876.

2. See also above, Table 1.9, p.54.

traced for all women's philanthropic organisations examined in this and the previous chapter. Table 2.8 gives the results (a detailed breakdown is provided in Appendix C). Of the fifteen major organisations for which membership lists can be compiled, nine, or 60%, had at least one half of its members belonging to at least one other of the organisations. With the exception of the elite School of Industry and the comprehensive Foundling Hospital/Infants' Home committee, all were evangelical organisations. As a group, women philanthropists were active in public life and they fulfilled vital social roles. They ran their own organisations and institutions, learnt administrative and financial skills and where necessary, asserted their rights against male intrusions. They were given the status that Grimshaw and Willet attributed to all Australian women;¹ they were the ladies and their right to influence and respect was defended even by a Royal Commission. Yet equally as philanthropic women were powerful, needed and respected so they were restricted. Their restrictions were enforced largely by the concept of the woman's sphere. They were restricted to work with those of equal or less status than themselves; the sick, children and lower class women. In addition, as the women of the Foundling Hospital learnt so harshly, they were restricted to policing a repressive social morality. The irony was that it was the evangelical women, with their multiple memberships of the majority of lay women's philanthropic organisations, who gained the most experience in public affairs. These women were also, however, those most susceptible to exhortations to limit their activity and power to implementing the moral and religious code of the woman's sphere. Thus the women who were theoretically most able to challenge the restrictions and basic concept of the woman's sphere were those with the least reason to do so. Accordingly, as argued in Part II, the concept of the woman's sphere became increasingly accepted and powerful within philanthropy.

1. Grimshaw and Willet, op.cit.

TABLE 2.8 Summary of Cross-Tabulation of Membership Overlap
(Details given in Appendix C)

Name of Organisation	Members belonging to another of the Specified Organisations		Other Organisations to which members of specified organisations also belonged	
	(Number)	(%)	(Number out of 14)	(%)
S.R.D.C., L.C.	16	23.2	11	78.6
I.D.D.B., L.C.	13	52.0	11	78.6
F.S.I.	7	33.3	9	64.3
Lisgar	6	42.9	7	46.7
Hosp.	3	27.3	7	46.7
B.O.S.	2	40.0	3	21.4
C.H.	1	100.0	1	7.1
S.D.S.	8	100.0	8	57.1
J.L.D.S.	2	16.7	2	14.3
S.F.R.S., L.C.	19	55.9	9	64.3
S.H.	15	45.5	10	71.4
P.W.B.S.	3	37.5	3	21.4
B.S., L.C.	9	90.0	9	64.3
S.F.M.H.	13	81.3	8	57.1
F.H./I.H.	10	41.7	10	71.4

Abbreviations:

S.R.D.C.	Society for the Relief of Destitute Children
I.D.D.B.	Institution for the Deaf and Dumb, and Blind
F.S.I.	Female School of Industry
Hosp.	Hospital for Sick Children
B.O.S.	Boarding Out Society
C.H.	Cottage Home
S.D.S.	Sydney Dorcas Society
J.L.D.S.	Jewish Ladies' Dorcas Society
S.F.R.S.	Sydney Female Refuge Society
S.H.	Sydney Home
P.W.B.S.	Paddington and Woollahra Benevolent Society
B.S.	Benevolent Society of N.S.W.
S.F.M.H.	Sydney Female Mission Home
F.H./I.H.	Foundling Hospital/Infants' Home
L.C.	Ladies' Committee

Chapter 3

NUNS AND EVANGELICALS: LADIES AND FEMALES. A CASE STUDY OF TWO REFUGES FOR PROSTITUTES.

Awake thofe, who have not yet a due
Senfe of their Guilt: and perfect a
godly Sorrow, where it is begun.
Renew in us whatfoever hath been
decayed by the fraud and malice of the
Devil, or by our carnel Will and
Frailnefs: Preferve us, after efcaping
the Pollutions of the World, from being
again entangled therein; and keep us in
a State of conftant Watchfulnefs and
Humility. (1)

In demonstrating the nature and effects of the woman's sphere upon philanthropy, this thesis surveys a wide range of philanthropic organisations and institutions. The latter predominate as they were the major means through which reformation and help was to be effected. This chapter focuses on two of these institutions in order to highlight the manner in which the broad concerns and assumptions of the woman's sphere were enforced at the institutional level.

The Refuges for prostitutes which are examined in this chapter were institutions where prostitutes were sheltered for a minimum period of eighteen months (Protestant Refuge) or two years (Catholic Refuge).² Inside the Refuges the prostitutes were to experience reformation and be taught alternative vocational skills. The Refuges have been chosen for closer examination for three main reasons. Firstly, they were managed by the two groups which dominated women's philanthropy during the period covered by this thesis. Evangelical Protestant women and Roman Catholic nuns represented two extremes of Christianity. As the Refuges

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1. Extract from "A Prayer for the Ufe of the Magdalen Chapel", The Hymns Anthems and Tunes with the Ode used at the Magdalen Chapel, London, n.d. An inscription notes that its original owner died in 1863. The booklet is in the possession of the author.
 2. Basic details of both Refuges are given in Table 2.1, following page 56.

demonstrate, however, their bitter theological differences did not result in markedly different philanthropic aims or methods. Secondly, within the Refuges two extremes within the woman's sphere predominated. The philanthropists were represented as the truest of ladies and the prostitutes as the most degraded of females. The interaction between the extremes of lady and female within the Refuges reveal, partly by stark contrast, many of the assumptions made concerning the nature of women and women's philanthropy. Thirdly, prostitution and sexual morality were matters of central concern to women's philanthropy. Women philanthropists aimed to enforce their own standards of sexual morality and to prevent and curtail prostitution. They correctly believed that prostitution was one of the few readily available options for those who were poor and female. In their philanthropy, they aimed to reward poor women who were respectable and therefore "deserving" and to punish and reform those who had "fallen", in a manner appropriate to the degree of the sexual misdemeanour.

The origins of both Refuges are obscure. The story of the Catholic Refuge is that a beautiful actress asked her priest to save her from the consequences of her weak will. He took her, and soon after six other penitent prostitutes, to Mrs Blake, "a good Catholic lady", and so the Refuge, with a laundry to support the women, was begun.¹ However, it was not the accepted role of laity to run Catholic charitable institutions and so in 1848 the Archbishop of Sydney, Dr Polding, established it as The House of the Good Shepherd under the control of three Sisters of Charity. When two of the Sisters died, Polding formed an order of nuns, under his control and consistent with his Benedictine

1. (anon.), Good Samaritan Annals, op.cit., p.1. and (anon.), Story of the Institute, op.cit., p.60.

order, specifically to supervise the Refuge.¹ Accordingly, in 1857 the Sisters of the Good Shepherd of the Order of St. Benedict was founded. In gaining formal approval for the order in 1866-7, the name was changed to the Sisters of the Good Samaritan of the Order of St. Benedict.²

The founder of the Protestant Refuge was an operative mechanic, Philip Chapman, who acted to prevent the reformation of Protestant prostitutes in a Catholic Refuge. Such was the sectarian rivalry that the two groups strongly resisted a government attempt to rationalise their services by amalgamation.³ Instead, evangelical Protestants established their own Refuge next door to the Catholic Refuge, working on the same principles but insisting on a different form of Christianity.

Both Refuges still flourished in the 1870s because of a widespread resolve to repress prostitution. The philanthropists who were so concerned about prostitution were not reacting to imaginary or insignificant evils; they were reacting to a society where prostitution was a major alternative occupation for working women. While attempts to determine exactly the extent of such an illegal and fluctuating trade are futile, the Refuges do provide indications of the widespread nature of prostitution. From the statistics given by the two Refuges, 1,408 women were admitted to the two Refuges over the decade.⁴ This figure amounts to 2.4% of Sydney's female population over fifteen and under

1. ibid., pp.60-4 and Fitz-Walter, op.cit., p.5.

2. (anon.), "Story of the Institute", op.cit., pp.66-7.

3. Brooks, op.cit., p.27 and the Sydney Female Refuge Society, A.R., 1848-9, pp.7-18.

4. Statistical Register of N.S.W., 1870-9, Charitable Institutions returns. The Catholic Refuge did not file a return in 1877, so I have taken an average for the previous six years, ie., 96 inmates.

fifty years of age in 1881.¹ A minority of women included in this figure were admitted twice to the Refuges (they were rarely given a further chance after that) and so are counted twice and others were admitted before commencing prostitution. Even so, the figure represents only a small minority of prostitutes as those over the age of thirty tended not to be admitted to the Refuges as "old offenders" were considered a corrupting influence on other inmates and harder to reform.² Additionally, the figure excludes the majority of prostitutes who were working. While the Refuge statistics cannot measure the exact extent of prostitution, they do indicate that it was rampant in Sydney in the 1870s.

The problem of prostitution was considered firmly within the woman's sphere. Notwithstanding the example of individual Englishmen, including the Prime Minister Gladstone, it was women's work to reform other women.³ It was part of "woman's mission" to hold "out a sister's hand" to prostitutes, especially those women "of social position" who would not themselves be tempted into prostitution.⁴ Prochaska pinpointed the key interest of philanthropic women in prostitution as being the threat it posed to the women's "preserve",⁵ that is, the woman's sphere. Prostitution struck at the purity of the home and family life,

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1. Census of N.S.W., 1881, p.XXIX; the population figure excludes 130 females whose ages were not specified in the returns.
 2. Ladies' Committee of the Sydney Female Refuge Society, Minutes, e.g., 13 September 1870 and Sydney Female Refuge Society, Matron's Journal, e.g., 3 July 1870 and 7 April 1870. The age breakdowns given in the Sydney Female Refuge Society, A.R., e.g. 1879, p.12 indicate a decline in numbers starting from the age cohort 30-40. This corresponds with the argument of H.Golder and J.Allen, "Prostitution in New South Wales 1870-1932", Refractory Girl, 18/19, December 1979, p.18, that only prostitutes over 35 tended to be sent to prison.
 3. Prochaska, op.cit., pp.188-9.
 4. The Empire, 10 June 1873.
 5. Prochaska, op.cit., p.184.

threatened the health of the nation with the spread of venereal disease and shattered the ideal of female purity and sexual timidity. An aspect that Prochaska neglected is that prostitution also benefited middle-class women. By patronising prostitutes, married men limited their sexual demands upon those wives who did not expect nor experience female sexual passion. Prostitutes also provided relief from the fear of continual pregnancies that regular sexual relations brought to most women in this age when contraception was both unreliable and officially discouraged. The solution of the philanthropic ladies both to prostitution and the needs prostitution met, was female repression aided by religious conviction. It was a solution they implemented with vigour in the Refuges.

Both Refuges were founded by men and nominally under their control. As in the English refuges,¹ however, men acquiesced to what they believed to be women's greater fitness to reform other women. In practice, women administered the Refuges. At the Protestant Refuge the founding "zealous, though humble Christian" had been quickly excluded from management by a committee of middle class men.² The men in turn were eased from control by the advisory Ladies' Visiting Committee. Constitutionally, the Ladies' Committee was subordinate to the men but at least from 1852 they were the "main-stay and prop of the whole society".³ The independence of the Ladies' Committee increased after 1868 when the requirement of membership was changed from just

1. *ibid.*, pp.144, 188-9.

2. Sydney Female Refuge Society, *A.R.*, 1848-9, pp.7,4. After the first *A.R.* his name was not mentioned. The middle class composition of the Committee was ensured by the rule that only those subscribers of £1 p.a. or more could vote.

3. *ibid.*, 1852, p.18.

wives of Committee men to all women members of the Society.¹ The women were appointed by the annual general meeting but, as usual for charitable institutions, this did not check the committee's power. The meeting always nominated Committee members en bloc and the committee filled vacancies when they occurred. By 1870 the women were firmly entrenched in power and resisted any encroachment into their sphere. Thus the men's committee twice asked the women to reconsider their resolution to dismiss the Matron but the women, claiming the Matron was neither "physically or mentally strong enough", refused.² The Ladies' Committee also determined and paid the salaries of the employees, principally a Matron, teacher, bible woman (missionary) and laundress; supervised their work; and made all decisions affecting the "domestic economy" of the Refuge including the admission and discharge of inmates. What has misled historians into assuming that women had little power in philanthropy is that while the women demanded their rights within the woman's sphere, it was not appropriate for ladies to demand public acknowledgment of their importance. The Refuge ladies are another example of this characteristic. They privately ran the Refuge but were content to allow men much of the public credit. Thus the annual reports were produced in the name of men, the annual meetings were run by men and subscriptions were made in the husband's rather than wife's or joint names, even if the wife was on the Ladies' Committee. The result of the latter, as shown in Table 2.2, was that women were only a minority of subscribers.

A similar situation of nominal male control and actual female management existed at the Catholic Refuge. Until his death in 1877, ultimate authority lay with the vacillating, paternalistic authoritarian, Archbishop Polding.³

1. ibid., 1868, p.xi cf. 1869, p.vii.

2. Ladies' Visiting Committee, Minute Book, op.cit., 25 January 1870.

3. e.g., O'Farrell, The Catholic Church in Australia, op.cit., p.69, "Even the nuns had difficulty coping with Polding's benevolent paternalism".

It was Polding who had founded the Order to run the Refuge under his authority. The chain of command ran from Polding as Archbishop to the Superior of the Order through to the Sisters. The first Good Samaritan nun to be Superior was, from 1876, Mother Mary Magdalen Adamson. She was a relative of Polding and had been trained by him to be Superior.¹ Through her and the previous Superior, Mother Scholastica Gibbons,² Polding exercised his authority over the Sisters, his "poor little children", as he referred to them.³ For the Sisters, authority lay with their Superior, whom they vowed to obey as God's representative.⁴ Their common allegiance to the Benedictine ideal also served to cement the relationship between Polding, the nuns and Polding's successor, Dr. Vaughan.⁵ It was, however, unquestioned that while the Archbishop exercised authority over the Sisters, the everyday management of the Refuge was under their control. The major problem for the twenty five Sisters at Pitt Street in their control of the Refuge was the increasing pressure upon them, as well as other active orders, to devote themselves to education.⁶ A further sign of this pressure came in 1877 when the nuns opened a High School in their Pitt Street complex and the Refuge was left to the novices to manage.⁷

The nuns, even more so than their Protestant counterparts, carried on their work with little public acknowledgement. Their virtual invisibility is particularly seen in the order's main fund-raising effort of the decade to finance new buildings for the mother house of the Order and Refuge. The major announcement came from the Archbishop in a Pastoral letter appealing for funds⁸ and the main

1. (anon.), "Story of the Institute", op.cit., p.76.

2. Appendix A provides further details of both Superiors.

3. (anon.), "Story of the Institute", op.cit., pp.70,74, the Sisters in turn referred to the laity as children.

4. (anon.), The Wheeling Years, op.cit., p.40.

5. ibid., p.7.

6. (anon.), Good Samaritan Annals, op.cit., p.63.

7. ibid., pp.20,60,63.

8. ibid., pp.31-4.

arrangements were made by a committee of priests and laymen. It was Father Sheridan who co-ordinated the activity and organised the main fund raising event - a bazaar.¹ However, behind the public facade of male activity lay women were also active. Women stocked and sold the goods at the bazaar and they were so successful that the Refuge bazaar became a regular event. Such bazaars were far from minor affairs. They trained women - as schools and governesses did not - in the skills of publicity, organisation and handling money. The bazaars attracted enough women to keep them open, for example, for 12 hours a day for a week.² Even the small Jewish community could generate enough enthusiasm to raise over £4,800 at a bazaar in 1875.³ For the Catholics in 1870, the bazaar and sundry activities raised approximately £8,000.⁴ Although it is unlikely that the nuns publicly worked at the bazaar, they did not leave all the fund-raising to lay supporters. They wrote hundreds of begging letters to potential donors, in Australia and abroad. In addition, they began the Association of the Perpetual Lamp in Honour of St. John; for a fee the sisters guaranteed to keep a flickering light burning for the intentions of all nominated, living or dead.⁵ The work of the nuns and their laywomen supporters in managing and financing the Refuge was largely behind the scenes but vital. Again, it must be stressed that publicity was not a desired result of woman's sphere activities; women's energies and commitments, whether religious or lay, were not proportional to the amount of public acknowledgement received or sought.

By 1870, both groups of women running the Refuges

1. ibid., p.37.

2. Freeman's Journal, 19 October 1872, 9 November 1872 and 30 November 1872.

3. A.Keyson, "The Sydney Hebrew Ladies' Bazaar, 1875", A.J.H.S.J., 111: X, 1953.

4. (anon.), Good Samaritan Annals, op.cit., p.37.

5. ibid., p.39.

belonged to defensive religious minorities.¹ Evangelicals, as argued previously, were never widely popular and the Catholic community had developed a "siege mentality".² This mentality was particularly due to the developments towards state education as represented by the 1866 Education Act and the political manoeuvrings that culminated in the 1880 Education Act.³ Colonial Catholicism was so threatened by the situation where approximately one third of Catholics married non-Catholics that in 1869 the Australian bishops banned such mixed marriages.⁴ Abroad, the church was consolidating and hardening theological doctrine as displayed by the definition and promulgation of the Doctrine of the Immaculate Conception (1854); the Syllabus of Errors (1864) and the Doctrine of Papal Infallibility (1870).

Despite being minorities within the community, the two groups dominated philanthropy and especially, as this thesis demonstrates, women's philanthropy. Theologically, they were bitter enemies but in terms of philanthropic practice they were in essential agreement. This agreement is particularly obvious when the Refuges are compared. Both Refuges subjected their inmates to much the same routines for similar reasons. Sectarianism was both limited in, and limited by, the Refuges. Both Refuges accepted women of the other faith, co-operated when necessary⁵ and the Protestant Refuge at least, took seriously the rule that forbade proselytising. On one occasion, for example, four

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1. Census of N.S.W., 1881, p.XLV1, Catholics were 25.7% of the population of suburban Sydney. No reliable estimation can be made of the numbers of evangelical Protestants.
 2. G.Haines, Lay Catholics and the Education Question, Sydney, 1976, p.56.
 3. ibid., p.81, hostility over the education question was symbolised by the "Pitt Street incident" when state education inspectors were refused access to the Sisters of the Good Samaritan's Pitt Street School in 1867.
 4. O'Farrell, The Catholic Church and Community, op.cit., p.204.
 5. e.g. Matron's Journal, op.cit., 17 August 1870 the Sisters asked the Matron why an inmate had left the Protestant Refuge prior to admitting her.

Catholic inmates of the Protestant Refuge walked out of a religious service given by a Sydney City Missionary. Their actions went unpunished as the missionary had made derogatory remarks about Catholicism.¹ In other ways Catholic-Protestant co-existence was promoted through the Refuges, making the evangelical Protestant-Catholic hostility more isolated and harder to maintain. Non-Catholic women helped in fund raising activities for the Catholic Refuge and, for example, the latter's bazaar in 1872 attracted vice-regal patronage and the help of "many Protestants".² Similarly, the Protestant Refuge and the Catholic St. Vincent's Hospital shared the same honorary physician, Dr Nathan, until his death in 1872.

Both Refuges involved a relationship between the managing ladies, whether lay or religious, and the female inmates. In the case of the Protestant Refuge there were also the women employees who did the everyday work of the Refuge and helped to mediate between the two groups. The basis of the relationship between the ladies and females was an acceptance of the contemporary belief that women were innately weak, capable both of greater purity than men and greater degradation. The role of the ladies in the Refuges was specifically as role models demonstrating an ideal womanhood.³ The lifestyles displayed by such women could not possibly be emulated by the Refuge inmates but they did, as most notably did the Virgin Mary and Queen Victoria, set a standard to which all women were to aspire. Thus the members of the Protestant Ladies' Visiting Committee were

1. ibid., 3 May 1870.

2. The Freeman's Journal, 19 October 1872, 9 November 1872 and 30 November 1872. It was perhaps sectarian pressure that caused the Governor's wife to shortly after visit the Protestant Refuge, The Freeman's Journal, 14 December 1872.

3. Dixon, op.cit., p.236 summarised the meaning and importance of role models.

claimed to unite, "distinguished excellence of character, ... discriminating judgement, and active zeal, combined with prudence".¹ Further, they were engaged in "self-denying labors [sic] requiring ... patience and wisdom".² As religious, the nuns running the Catholic Refuge were even more elevated in the eyes of the Catholic community. For both Protestant and Catholic ladies, however, being a role model was not an empty honour. Both groups took their duties seriously. Membership of the Protestant Ladies' Committee was demanding: two women visited the Refuge twice a week; four met as a sub-committee each week and all met once a month. They were expected to have a direct relationship with the inmates, supervising their progress, "conversing, instructing, and praying ... giving them a word of warning, encouragement, or advice, as the case may be."³ They supervised the Refuge, found employment for women who were often virtually unemployable, and attended regular Dorcas meetings to sew for the inmates.

For the Sisters of the Good Samaritan who had dedicated their lives to religious philanthropy, the standard they were required to represent was even more demanding. Their lives were strictly regulated with few concessions to human frailty. One example was their rule that forbade the nuns to accept refreshment outside their convent. This rule applied even to the nuns who taught in the schools within a ten-mile radius of the convent, walking in voluminous habits more suited to the English climate. It was not uncommon for nuns to faint in the street from exhaustion, heat and lack of food and water.⁴ To a much greater extent than the Protestant ladies, the nuns practised as well as preached a rigid ideal of discipline and bodily denial.

1. Sydney Female Refuge Society, A.R., 1851-2, p.17.

2. ibid., 1875, p.12.

3. ibid., 1851-2, p.18.

4. (anon.), Good Samaritan Annals, op.cit., p.6.

The antithesis of the pure, disciplined philanthropic ladies were the "fallen" Refuge inmates. They were believed to have succumbed to their sex's innate weakness, having violated all the ideals of womanhood that the ladies represented. The Protestant Refuge described them in terms of "the wretchedness connected with female degradation" that was "most painful and perplexing ... in its very nature so revolting".¹ Prostitutes were "unfortunate females"; "the weary, the wandering and depraved"; "the lost" and "an unfortunate and degraded class".² The answer the ladies applied to their own lives was religion to enhance womanhood's natural virtues, and repression to control womanhood's natural weakness and humanity's original sin. This solution they enforced on the lives of the Refuge inmates to a degree commensurate with their perception of the inmates' greater depravity and weakness. "Fallen" women who were judged to be less depraved, such as those at the Mission and Infants' Homes, were consequently subjected to gentler regimes. It was all a matter of degree.³

The Refuge was the traditional means of reformation for prostitutes; a product of colonial needs and decades of English philanthropic experience. The ethos behind such places is summarised in the prayer heading this chapter; to shelter sinners from worldly influences by locks and enforced withdrawal and to prevent relapses by religious conversion and a perpetual sense of guilt.⁴ Women were admitted to the Refuges who were prostitutes or who were judged likely to become so. They were admitted by recommendation of a magistrate or jail-keeper as an alternative

1. Sydney Female Refuge, op.cit., 1851-2, p.12.

2. ibid., 1870, pp.11,14.

3. e.g. (anon.) "Story of the Institute", op.cit., pp.72-3, the pupils at the Sisters' select Rosebank boarding school also experienced a routine of strict discipline.

4. J.Cheetham, "Pregnancy of the Unmarried", in A.H.Halsey (ed.), Traditions of Social Policy, London, 1976 examines the origins of "Magdalen Asylums", as the Refuges were generally known.

to prison; by clergymen and city missionaries; by the Protestant Refuge's biblewoman; or on their own family's or friend's application. For some the Refuge was truly that, as in the case of a woman the Matron admitted to the Protestant Refuge because she, "was looking so miserable, with scarcely a rag upon her, and so stupid with drink that I took her in".¹ For others, the Refuge was an extreme and hated attempt by authorities to control their sexuality and curtail their freedom. This was particularly the situation for the young girls brought in by family and friends as uncontrollable, associating with prostitutes or "beyond her years in the knowledge of sin".²

Once admitted to the Refuges the inmates were taught to overcome weakness and depravity by a regime of austerity and hard work. A veneer of strict routine and new habits was imposed as the inmates were considered, at the Protestant Refuge at least, to be like emotionally unstable children, unreasonably suspicious of strangers, liable to make frivolous complaints when discontented and as "naturally very excitable".³ Inmates were expected to be "born again", shedding their past lives. They were given new names (Catholic) or numbers replacing names (Protestant) and were forbidden to speak of the past.⁴ Inmates at the Catholic Refuge wore uniforms and, at the Protestant Refuge, clothing provided by the ladies. The idea was to forbid

1. Matron's Journal, op.cit., 10 June 1870.

2. ibid., 20 April 1870 and Ladies' Committee, op.cit., 5 January 1876 and 3 January 1877. The latter referred to a twelve year old; the association of young girls with prostitutes was a legal offence.

3. Matron's Journal, op.cit., 6, 8 and 23 April 1870.

4. Regulations for the General Government of the Institution, House of the Good Shepherd, Sydney, n.d., t/s copy held at Good Samaritan Training College, Arncliffe, in Sr. Mary Gregory's Files, (unpag.) and Sydney Female Refuge, op.cit., 1870, pp.vi-x gives the rules of both institutions. The former was drawn up by Dr Polding.

"any peculiarity of dress" so that inmates "could forget and conceal their individuality".¹ Personal vanity was discouraged as a cause of prostitution and so appearance had to conform to the ladies' idea of "simplicity and appropriateness".² Hairstyle was part of this regulation and at the Protestant Refuge three inmates were admonished for styling their hair in a manner expressly forbidden.³ Communication with the world outside the Refuge was permitted "only in cases of necessity" and, reluctantly, in accordance with the inmates' legal rights.⁴ Attempts to suppress peer influence within the Refuges included the rule that silence was to be observed in the dormitories, where the inmates were generally unsupervised. Frivolity was discouraged by the regulation of recreation. The books provided were "good and useful" and supplied by the Religious Tract Society (Protestant) or promoted "general edification and instruction" (Catholic).⁵ Any music was restricted to psalmody. Speech was also regulated, having to be, at the Catholic Refuge, in a "gentle tone of voice", excluding "Coarse, vulgar language, rough and boisterous conduct".⁶ Just as the ladies, especially the nuns, themselves conformed to "outward propriety and the strictest decorum in word and deed" so propriety and decorum was exacted in the strictest measure from the inmates.⁷

A strict code of conduct including mannerisms, voice control and dress regulation was one key to being a lady and so one key to reforming prostitutes. Equally vital to the reformation process was the inculcation of the work

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1. (anon.) Good Samaritan Annals, op.cit., p.8, and House of the Good Shepherd, op.cit., regulation 5.
 2. Sydney Female Refuge, op.cit., 1870, p.vii.
 3. Ladies' Committee, op.cit., 5 March 1875.
 4. House of the Good Shepherd, op.cit., regulation 4 and Sydney Female Refuge, op.cit., 1870, p.viii.
 5. Ladies' Committee, op.cit., 3 August 1877 and 5 May 1876 and House of the Good Shepherd, op.cit., regulation 8.
 6. ibid., regulations 9 and 10.
 7. Sydney Female Refuge, op.cit., 1870, p.vii.

ethic and of religion. The components were integrated so that work was used as means of reformation and a sign of religion; religion was an incentive to work and a means of reformation and reformation the result of both work and religion. The relationship was neatly, if somewhat unconsciously, summarised as

Thus religion, brought to bear on the better feelings of the inmates, made labour lighter and more profitable and better discipline was enforced. The workers were thus kept from temptation and from falling back into their evil course. (1)

The inmates worked in the laundry and at needlework to the extent that, as shown in Table 2.2, the inmates at the Protestant Refuge brought in more than half the Refuge's income. The Catholic Refuge also had as its basic aim that the inmates should earn enough for the Refuge to be as financially self-sufficient as possible.² The inmates accordingly worked long hours without pay - the exception was at the Protestant Refuge where the inmates earned a "small sum" after a period of probation (eighteen months) which they were given, contingent on their "good behaviour", on leaving.³ At the Catholic Refuge they worked in rooms hung with religious pictures "Nearly all day long" while the Sisters recited prayers.⁴ The laundry and sewing provided the inmates with "womanly work" ("womanly attainments" at the Protestant Refuge),⁵ giving them alternative vocational

1. (anon.), Good Samaritan Annals, op.cit., p.17.

2. House of the Good Shepherd, op.cit., regulation 3.

3. Ladies' Committee, op.cit., 1 July 1870 and Sydney Female Refuge, op.cit., 1870, p.vii.

4. (anon.) Good Samaritan Annals, op.cit., p.17.

5. cf., one of the first acts of the Sisters of Charity in Australia was to persuade officials of the Female Factory at Parramatta to change the inmates' work from breaking stones to needlework and laundry, R.Burns (Sr. M.Joachim), those that sowed. The First Religious Sisters in Australia, Sydney, 1968, p.30.

skills. Typically of nineteenth century philanthropy, however, the wider impact of such work was ignored.¹ Charitable laundries by their expensive equipment,² cheap labour and harsh working conditions could undercut commercial laundries and especially the under-capitalised neighbourhood washer woman. The tragic irony for laundresses deprived of a livelihood by the Refuges' and other charitable laundries was that one of their few alternatives was prostitution.

The women running the Refuges saw prostitution, along with most social problems, as the result of personal vanity, lack of discipline and order and the corrupting influence of the city. The first two problems were tackled within the Refuges; the last by encouraging ex-inmates to find employment in the country. Especially for the Protestant ladies, isolated posts in the country far "from these allurements of the city so fatal to so many" were considered a pre-requisite for permanent redemption and applications to employ inmates near the city were sternly refused.³ Such was the blinkered class position of the philanthropists that the temptation from which they strove to keep the inmates away were the temptations of the rich, *viz.*, a life of extravagance, frivolity and idleness. Prostitution was believed to be caused by, *inter alia*, "love of dress, late hours and dancing saloons ... low public houses and immoral theatrical representations".⁴ That a woman or girl would turn to prostitution in despair from a drab, impoverished life was unthinkable because poverty was accepted as the

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1. K.Daniels and M.Murnane, Uphill All the Way, St.Lucia, 1980, p.5.
 2. Both Refuges installed steam laundries as part of their building programs early in the decade.
 3. Ladies' Committee, op.cit., e.g., 5 July 1872, 1 December 1871, 9 September 1873 and Matron's Journal, op.cit., 24 March 1870 and Sydney Female Refuge Society, op.cit., 1870, p.viii.
 4. Sydney Female Refuge, op.cit., 1878, pp.11-2.

appropriate, God-given lot of the working class. For Polding, not only was it divine will that the poor, to the contemporary extent, "you have always with you", but "so, in this case, we have the penitents of the Good Shepherd always with us".¹ It was a view of society shared by both Catholics and evangelicals that precluded social reform to attempt to eliminate poverty or prostitution. Accordingly, the Refuges demanded submission to the deprivations, austerities and unrelenting work routine of working class life and used religious guilt to subdue alternative aspirations.

Despite such attitudes there is an aspect of women's philanthropy, particularly applicable to the Refuges, that should not be forgotten. No matter how self-interested, how repressive philanthropists were, they invariably offered services and help that were in great demand and otherwise unavailable. Refuge life was harsh but neither institution experienced any shortage of inmates. Inmates judged that life outside the Refuge, without the guarantees of food and shelter, was even harsher.² The inmates of both Refuges were subject to pressure to remain - the Protestant ladies frequently noted variants of "She was induced to say she would remain"³ - but most effective was the threat not to re-admit the inmate. That was the fate many of the inmates feared most; as the sad and aged faces in the prison records show,⁴ the life of the failed or aging prostitute allowed for few alternatives. Hence the gratitude of the ex-inmates who did manage to find some degree of happiness and financial security, such as the one who proudly accosted a committee member of the Protestant Refuge in the street to boast of her marriage to a "respectable young man" and to show off her "neat and comfortable" home.⁵

1. J.Polding, Pastoral Letter, 27 October 1870, quoted in (anon.), Good Samaritan Annals, op.cit., p.33.

2. e.g., Matron's Journal, op.cit., 10 June 1870.

3. e.g., Ladies' Committee, op.cit., 5 April 1872.

4. Golder and Allen, op.cit., pp.18,22.

5. Sydney Female Refuge, op.cit., 1873, p.12.

The Refuge ladies also championed the cause of the prostitutes as did few others. To the public and many philanthropists, prostitutes were not considered "deserving" because the commonly accepted theory was that once a woman "fell" she was forever corrupted. To counteract this theory the Refuge constantly reassured the public, as did other organisations dealing with "fallen" women, that the women were reforming, grateful, hard-working, "often more sinned against than sinning"¹ and suffering a social rejection that should equally be their male "betrayers".² As well, however, the public demanded that women who had betrayed the ideals of the woman's sphere should be punished as much as helped. The Protestant ladies could make £20 gifts to their Matron with little or no explanation,³ but were hesitant in revealing softness or generosity towards the inmates. In the case of the latter, lengthy justifications were needed, such as,

they feel assured you will not blame them for endeavouring to make the inmates as comfortable as possible; especially as they work cheerfully, conform readily to the rules of the Institution and evince by their industry a desire to promote its interests and success. (4)

The reason for the supporters of the Refuges providing the main exception to what was justly described as "the cold world, which has no pity"⁵ for prostitutes, was the example of Christ. The Protestant Refuge had as its motto "Go and Sin No More" and both evangelicals and Catholics clearly remembered Christ's special relationship with the penitent prostitute. It was their Christian motivation that made them see "terrible torture ... underneath the gaudy dress,

1. e.g., ibid., 1877, p.14.

2. ibid., 1878, p.12.

3. ibid., 1872, p.12 and Ladies' Committee, op.cit., 5 May 1876.

4. Sydney Female Refuge, op.cit., 1872, p.15.

5. ibid., 1878, p.12.

the gay laugh, and reckless, shameless bravado".¹ For the public on whose support they relied, however, such sympathy was dangerously sentimental. In particular, the evangelicals' vivid sense of women betrayed and souls being continuously lost and tormented had to be contained. Hence the general tone of mild self-congratulations typical of the philanthropic report and so often behind it, the fears and hopes that drove women to exploit all the possibilities allowed within the woman's sphere to cleanse their society spiritually.

The reactions and motivations of the inmates are more obscure. It is clear, however, that the majority of inmates did not accept, or succeed in terms of, the Refuge's aims. By 1870, 22.4% of the ex-inmates of the Catholic Refuge had apparently decamped or been expelled without even attempting to become servants or to return to family or friends.² The Protestant Refuge's acknowledged failure rate was 72% and one ex-inmate staying for three years in her situation as a domestic servant was reported as a rare achievement.³ The failure of those inmates who became servants can be explained in terms additional to the poor working conditions such work entailed.⁴ The inmates went to lonely country homes to work for employers aware of their past and so they were constantly reminded of it. Others had employers as strict guardians, as did one ex-inmate who reported that her employer was "very careful not to let her go out by herself".⁵ She was perhaps, as many inmates appear to have been, alcoholic and so unsuited to

1. loc.cit.

2. (anon.), Good Samaritan Annals, op.cit., p.34. The latter was the other major destination of Refuge inmates.

3. Sydney Female Refuge, op.cit., 1870, p.13 and ibid., 1876, p.12.

4. Kingston, My Wife, My Daughter ..., op.cit., ch.3.

5. Matron's Journal, op.cit., 29 April 1870.

domestic service in all but teetotal homes. Most had no previous training as servants¹ and inmates were commonly employed for only 5/- a week, half the minimum wage for general servants in 1870.²

Inside the Refuge, many of the inmates refused to accept the ideology so cherished by the philanthropists. They commonly rejected the ideal of the lady, rebelled against being "aroused to a sense of their degradation"³ and were not prepared to accept passively further deterioration in their working conditions. The behaviour of some was comparable to that of the female convicts earlier in the century who had so outraged their contemporary God's Police.⁴ Some escaped before their probation was completed, others were expelled because of, for example, "unpleasant and indecent conduct"⁵ and others entertained themselves in forbidden ways. The latter category included singing "indecent" songs, talking to male passers-by and begging tobacco.⁶ On occasions they were all prepared to take industrial action to improve working conditions. Such actions included a refusal to work after 4pm, a threatened "go slow" preventing the abolition of their lunch break and efforts to supplement their rations.⁷ Although records noting such actions have only survived for the Protestant Refuge, there is little reason to suggest that reactions were dramatically different at the Catholic Refuge.

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1. e.g., Sydney Female Refuge, op.cit., 1877, p.14.
 2. e.g., Matron's Journal, op.cit., 16 April 1870 and Ladies' Committee, op.cit., 6 May 1870 cf. Statistical Register, op.cit., 1870, p.11.
 3. Sydney Female Refuge, op.cit., 1874, p.11.
 4. Summers, op.cit., ch.8.
 5. Ladies' Committee, op.cit., 2 August 1872.
 6. Matron's Journal, op.cit., 23 April 1870 and 22 April 1870.
 7. ibid., 3 July 1870, 4 April 1870, 1 April 1870 and 28 June 1870.

The regimes at both the Refuges were harsh, moralistic and punitive. Partly, this was to meet the expectations of the public who demanded that the inmates be reformed - and punished - through unrelenting work and religion. Equally it was due to the conviction that such a regime was necessary to overcome human sinfulness and feminine frailty. Evangelical Protestants and Catholics equally accepted the same simplistic and class-blinkered solutions to a complex social problem. Women of both convictions earnestly and, from the inmates' view largely unsuccessfully, attempted to apply the solutions within the Refuges. In doing so, women philanthropists accepted the responsibilities that accompanied power within the woman's sphere. They were responsibilities, as is argued in Part 11 of this thesis, that were increasingly accepted by women in the following decade.