

Chapter 5

WOMEN'S PHILANTHROPY FOR ADULTS: CONFIDENCE WITHIN THE WOMAN'S SPHERE

advantages ... would accrue from the employment of lady visitors. [In] Many cases ... woman's sympathy and aid would be a more effective vehicle of relief. [In] Many other cases ... sisterly love and entreaty could [be more appropriate]. (1)

(a) Confidence and Expansion

By 1880 women's philanthropy for adults was both justified and encouraged by the concept of the woman's sphere. Women undertaking such activity did so in the knowledge that they were participating in a highly approved activity. As a result, the institutions and organisations examined in Chapter 2 were generally prosperous with their members active and confident. These organisations and institutions, along with the major changes they experienced during the decade, are listed in Table 5.1. In addition, during the decade women were extensively mobilised into new philanthropic organisations. This fervent activity led to the founding of 20 major organisations and institutions, all of which aimed to help adult women. They are summarised in Table 5.2. By the end of the decade women's philanthropy remained bound by the constraints of the woman's sphere. Within those constraints, however, women's philanthropy was marked by confidence, expansion and, increasingly, a reforming zeal to extend the values of the woman's sphere to the rest of society.

The philanthropic activities of the decade were undertaken by women convinced of their role in bettering the lives

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1. Sydney City Mission, A.R., 1886, p.9.

TABLE 5.1 PHILANTHROPIC INSTITUTIONS/ORGANISATIONS FOR ADULTS IN SYDNEY INVOLVING WOMEN,FOUNDED BY 1880: SUMMARY OF CHANGE

Name	Number of Adult Inmates 31-12-1889	Changes
Government Asylums for the Infirm and Destitute	2,348	From 1888 under Director of Government Asylums/1883, George St. Parramatta Asylum for Men opened /1886, Women's Asylum moved to Newington/1889, Cottage Homes for Destitute Married Couples opened
House of the Good Shepherd (Catholic Refuge)	89	Branch at Tempe opened 1887, St. Magdalen's Retreat
Jewish Ladies' Dorcas Society	?	From 1886 known as Sydney Hebrew Ladies' Dorcas and Female Benevolent Institution aiding sick as well as pregnant poor
Sydney Female Refuge Society* (Protestant Refuge)	51	-
St. Vincent's Hospital	99	Branch St. Joseph's Hospital for Consumptives opened 1886 at Auburn (by 1888, Parramatta)
The Home*	?	Previously known as Sydney Home for Servants
Sydney City Mission* (T)	n.a.	From 1887, Ladies' Committee
Sydney Female Mission Home*	?	From 1885 located Darlington
Infants' Home	67 (130 children)	-
Catholic Female Home and Registry Office	?	By 1887 located William St., city
Benevolent Asylum of N.S.W.*	83 (151 children)	-
Sydney Ladies' United Evangelistic Association * (T)	?	(founded 1877 to evangelise and aid primarily to the poor, first examined in this chapter as no records survive for 1870s)

\* Evangelical organisations or institutions

(T) Temperance advocated

TABLE 5.2

## MAJOR PHILANTHROPIC ORGANISATIONS FOR ADULTS, MANAGED WHOLLY OR PARTLY BY WOMEN,

## FOUNDED DURING THE 1880s

Name, Year founded (a) non-evangelical	Location	Category of Inmates/ Persons assisted *	Management, Government Subsidy (S)
St. Joseph's Providence Home, 1880	Cumberland St., city	old, infirm, destitute women	Sisters of St. Joseph of the Sacred Heart
Institute for Ladies' Needlework/Ladies' Dress-making Association, 1884	William St., city	destitute seamstresses	Ladies' Committee
Church Home for the Intemperate and Fallen, 1885 (T)	Darlinghurst/from 1886 Surry Hills	alcoholic and "fallen" women, (46 admitted during 1890)	Mixed sex committee under the Church of England Temperance Society
Balmain Benevolent Society,** 1886	Balmain	local destitute	Mayor and Ladies' Committee (S)
Ashfield Benevolent Society** (previously Ashfield Dorcas Society), 1887	Ashfield	local destitute	Ladies' Committee
The Queen's Jubilee Fund, 1887	-	destitute women	Ladies' council
Ladies' Sanitary Association, 1887	-	working class women	Ladies' Committee
Home for the Aged Poor, "Mount St. Joseph", 1888	Leichhardt/from 1888, Randwick	old, infirm (47 inmates at 31-12-1889)	Little Sisters of the Poor
Servants' Home, 1888	North Sydney	servants	Sisters of St. Joseph of the Sacred Heart (attached to novitiate)
The Dawn Club, 1889	-	women	Louisa Lawson
Leichhardt Benevolent Society,** 1889	Leichhardt	local, destitute	Ladies' Committee (S)

\* Except in the two cases noted, no figures are available as to the number of inmates/members.

\*\* Also known as "Ladies' Benevolent" Societies.

(T) Temperance advocated.

TABLE 5.2 continued

Name, Year founded (b) evangelical	Location	Category of Inmates/ Persons assisted	Number of Adult Inmates 31-12-1889	Management, Government Subsidy (S)
W.C.T.U., 1882 (T)	-	women	(In 1889, 250 members N.S.W./ Sydney branch 89)	Women's Committee
Home of Hope <sup>1</sup> , 1883 (T)	Crown St., city/New- town	women-prostitutes, destitute, alcoholic	(during 1889, 184)*	Blue Ribbon Gospel Army (Ardill)
Sydney Women's Prayer Union, 1883 (T)	-	poor	-	Women's Committee
Open All Night Refuge, 1884 (T)	various city lo- cations	homeless women	(during 1886-7 9,091 beds used)*	Blue Ribbon Gospel Army (Ardill)
Salvation Army Rescued Sisters' Home 1884 (T)	Newtown/ Surry Hills	ex-prisoners/ prostitutes	?	Salvation Army
Home for the Indigent Blind, 1884/from 1887, N.S.W. Industrial Home for Blind Women	various suburban locations	Blind women	14	Ladies' Committee and (from 1885) N.S.W. Home Teaching Society for the Blind (S)
N.S.W. Social Purity Society, 1886 (from 1887, N.S.W. Association for the Promotion of Morality and Social Purity) Ladies' Committee (T)	-	women	n.a.	Ladies' Committee
Jubilee Registry Office and Home, 1888 (T)	Elizabeth St., city	"respectable" young women	?	Blue Ribbon Gospel Army (Ardill)
Central Methodist Mission Ladies' Sectional Commit- tee, 1889 (T)	York St., city	working class women	?	Ladies' Committee

1. Known by a variety of names, e.g., Sands' Sydney Directory, 1888, p. 919, lists it as Home of Hope; Home of Hope for Friendless and Fallen Women and the Blue Ribbon Army Home for Friendless and Fallen Women. (T) See above. \* More than the usual caution applies to Ardill's figures, S.M.H., 4 September 1884 and Dickey, Ph.D., op.cit., pp. 293-4n.

of the poor and, predominantly, in eliminating sin whenever possible. It did not take place due to a widescale conviction as to the needs of the adult poor. On the contrary, colonial society was characterised by the complacent belief that, in marked contrast with the "old world", the colony lacked any serious social problems. In 1888 N.S.W. celebrated a century of what was believed to be a mixture of European and colonial superiority. Commentators complacently pointed out the high levels of "comfort and health"<sup>1</sup> whilst dismissing the minority's poverty as divinely decreed; "the poor ye shall always have with you".<sup>2</sup> Philanthropist Thomas Walker was typical in his donation of a 1,000 guinea statue to the Art Gallery of N.S.W. which depicted the exploited seamstress of Hood's famous "Song of the Shirt". The moral was that the "grumpy" should be cheered because "no such extremity of poverty and misery existed in the colony".<sup>3</sup>

There were dissenting voices amidst the satisfaction. Henry Lawson's powerful "Faces in the Street" (1888) protested

They lie, the men who tell us in a loud decisive  
tone  
That want is here a stranger, and that misery's  
unknown ...  
The city grinds the owners of the faces in the  
street,  
Grinding flesh, grinding bone,  
Yielding scarce enough to eat.

However, such sentiments were far from the prevailing belief.

Highly publicised events in Britain reinforced the belief that, compared to old world depravity and poverty, Australia was a workers' paradise. These events included

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1. D.T., 30 December 1887.

2. This biblical quotation was constantly repeated as an explanation of poverty in the 1880s but was comparatively rarely quoted in the 1870s and 1890s. e.g., all of these quotations in Mayne, Ph.D., op.cit., ch. 8 ("Ye Have the Poor With You Always") originated in the 1880s.

3. The Echo, 23 July 1881. I owe this reference to Deborah Campbell, University of N.S.W.

the publication in 1883 of The Bitter Cry of Outcast London, a pamphlet that resulted in a Royal Commission into Working Class Housing. One of the Commissioners was Lord Carrington, Governor of N.S.W. from 1885-90.<sup>1</sup> The Commissioners' Report shocked many throughout the British Empire. Its impact was only exceeded by William Stead's denunciation in 1885 of child prostitution in his Pall Mall Gazette: "The Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon". Widespread publicity also attended the worst of Britain's depressed years and the riots of 1886. In 1888-9 the London dockers were accordingly supported by an Australian contribution of £37,000 to the strike fund.<sup>2</sup>

Just as there were grounds for the complacency of white colonists, so too did women philanthropists have solid reasons for the confidence with which they undertook philanthropy. Of the organisations and institutions which existed during the decade, only the Servants' Homes were exempt from the general prosperity and expansion. The Home remained small, run by eleven evangelical ladies.<sup>3</sup> It was not listed in Sands' Sydney Directory after 1890. Its Catholic counterpart had only intermittent entries in Sands' to indicate that it continued to operate. It was eventually replaced by the Sisters of St. Joseph's Servants Home. Such Homes were not popular as servants were not generally considered to be in much need of philanthropic help and protection.

On the other hand, hospitals expanded and prospered due to the increasing demand for hospital services. This demand was met partially by women philanthropists and particularly affected St. Vincent's Hospital. St. Vincent's continually enlarged its operations during the 1880s, including extensions costing £30,000 in 1886.<sup>4</sup> St. Vincent's was also able

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1. The Weekly Advocate, 15 May 1886.

2. R.B.Walker, "Media and Money", Labour History, 41, November 1981, esp. p.47.

3. They included J. and M. Allen, H.Baillie, M.Barker, Cowper, Hay and Mackie, for which see Appendix A.

4. St. Vincent's Hospital, A.R., 1880, p.3 and 1886, p.4; Miller, op.cit., p.13 and E.O'Brien, "Cardinal Moran's Part in Public Affairs", J.R.A.H.S., 28, 1942, p.15.

to benefit from the eagerness of middle class girls to earn their own livings without jeopardising their status as ladies. In 1882, lay nurses were admitted and the Nurses' Training School founded. In addition, St. Vincent's took advantage of the discovery of the tubercle bacillus in 1882. This discovery enabled the scientific treatment of tuberculosis and a branch hospital, St. Joseph's, was opened for sufferers of tuberculosis.<sup>1</sup>

Hospital facilities for child-birth were also increasingly demanded although still largely the province of the destitute.<sup>2</sup> Such women were admitted to the Benevolent Asylum's lying-in Hospital after being interviewed by the Ladies' Committee. Those ladies presided over facilities that were clearly within the woman's sphere and which were desperately needed. The same situation existed in Homes which catered, inter alia, for women before or after parturition: the Mission Home, the two Refuges, Infants' Home and the Hebrew Ladies' Dorcas Society and Benevolent Institution. The help offered by the latter to pregnant women in the 1870s had been expanded and the Society now also provided help to the "poor and ailing".<sup>3</sup> The Infants' Home also maintained a steady prosperity after its reorganisation in 1877. Priority was now explicitly directed to the needs of the mothers, without separating mother and child.<sup>4</sup> The days of the public's "active disapprobation"<sup>5</sup> of the Home was ended but not forgotten. A proposal by the Benevolent Society of N.S.W. that the Home again admit foundlings was strongly rejected on the grounds of public opinion against Foundling Institutions.<sup>6</sup>

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1. Australasian Catholic Directory, 1888, p.60. The earliest report available for St. Joseph's is for 1911.
  2. M.Lewis, "Hospitalization for Childbirth in Sydney 1870-1939", J.R.A.H.S., 66:3, December 1980.
  3. Porush, op.cit., p.78 and Sydney Hebrew Philanthropic Society, A.R., 1886, p.1.
  4. Infants' Home, Minutes, 10 April 1888.
  5. Infants' Home, A.R., 1880, p.5.
  6. S.C.R.B., A.R., 1887, p.13; Infants' Home, Letterbook, letters of 1 and 6 July 1887 and Infants' Home, A.R., 1888, pp.7-8.

Despite general disbelief in the existence of widespread or extreme poverty in N.S.W., women did offer philanthropic services which were widely used. In addition, as outlined in Chapter 4,<sup>1</sup> there were increasing numbers of prosperous women to offer such services. As importantly for the expansion and confidence of women's philanthropy, and a factor which had a cumulative effect, was the almost universal acceptance of the validity of the woman's sphere.

A prime assumption of the woman's sphere was that ladies were the natural experts wherever the philanthropic care of women was involved. The most explicit official recognition of such expertise by ladies was the appointment of a Ladies' Board to the Government Asylums Inquiry Board of 1886.

By 1886, there were three (by 1890 five) government asylums for adults, all of which housed the destitute aged. Events preceding the 1886 Inquiry reveal a mixture of official satisfaction and private dissatisfaction with these asylums. The Manager of the Government Asylums was satisfied as the Asylums served as a deterrent to vagrancy and mendicancy.<sup>2</sup> The Inspector of Public Charities similarly praised the Asylums' managements, especially their economy - an achievement particularly appreciated during the government's financial crisis of mid-decade.<sup>3</sup> However, the "strong aversion" of old women going to Newington Asylum was one sign to some individuals that the Asylums were also unduly harsh and repressive.<sup>4</sup> The solution to such qualms about children's institutions, boarding out, was impractical when dealing with aged and infirm adults, although advocated by some

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1. p.132.

2. Report of the Government Asylums for the Infirm and Destitute, N.S.W.L.A., V. & P., 1883, p.2.

3. P.Loveday and A.Martin, Parliament, Factions and Parties, Melbourne, 1966, p.130, the deficit for 1885-6 was over £1m.

4. e.g., S.M.H., 7 August 1886, letter from John Roseby.



enthusiasts.<sup>1</sup> Instead attempts to improve conditions concentrated on relieving the severe over-crowding. Continued criticism, however, resulted in the appointment of a Board of Inquiry and its auxiliary Ladies' Board.

The assumption of the Inquiry Board was that the Asylums housing men could be investigated by men but that the women's asylum at Newington could only be successfully investigated by women. Women did have a role at the men's asylums but only as employees dealing with domestic concerns and as lady visitors who provided comforts to the inmates. The Ladies' Board therefore visited all the asylums but they only reported on the women's asylum.

The investigation of Newington Asylum by the Ladies' Board revealed the confidence and dedication of ladies working within their sphere. The conditions they exposed contributed to the majority Report of the Inquiry that:

the horrors and miseries and ... human suffering ... [is such that] no pen is capable of exaggerating the horrible story ... in a single detail. (2)

Even the minority Report by the Inspector of Public Charities (whose credibility, given his previous laudatory reports, was damaged by the revelations) did not deny the horrendous conditions. Their condemnation of the Newington Asylum was despite the Matron's attempts to improve conditions temporarily whilst the Ladies' Board was visiting and her brutal coercion of inmates and probable forgery of inmates' testimonies.<sup>3</sup> The former was so successful that the death rate fell from an average of eleven a month to three a month during the inquiry.<sup>4</sup>

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1. e.g. Report of Dr Tucker on the Hospitals for the Insane, N.S.W.L.A., V. & P., 1885-6, vol.2, p.12 and Government Asylums Inquiry Board, Report, N.S.W.L.A., V. & P., 1887, vol. 2, p.29.

2. ibid., p.36.

3. ibid., pp.14, 30, 37, 43 and 46.

4. ibid., p.17.

Such a dramatic improvement in the death rate was one indication of the dedication the ladies brought to their work. The evidence they gave to the Inquiry was another. Under the presidency of Lady Martin, the ladies (Bedford, Pottie, Stephen and Townshend)<sup>1</sup> conscientiously and thoroughly inspected the Asylum. Martin gave details of "repulsive" and inappropriate meals, knowledgeably criticised cooking methods and drew attention to the inadequate facilities and medical treatment.<sup>2</sup> Her accusations were supported with particular vehemence by Alice Stephen and Eliza Pottie. Stephen deplored, inter alia, the neglect of the dead, beatings of inmates, the death of consumptives due to neglect and the complete lack of "method, management or discipline".<sup>3</sup> Pottie's accusations were similar. She instanced women with no teeth being unable to masticate the food and so dying of starvation and of finding one woman dying "her eyes and mouth and nose ... filled with flies".<sup>4</sup> The evidence of these two women was particularly damning as they had long experience in visiting the Asylum, both at Hyde Park then Newington.<sup>5</sup> The evidence of the Ladies' Board was supported by two other women who also were lady visitors to the Asylum; Mary Charlton and Euphemia Bowes.<sup>6</sup>

The Ladies' Board inspected the Asylum with confidence in the rights and duties of ladies. Their class bias was unquestioning, as with Bedford's evidence that the hospital ward "was not fit for anyone but the very lowest class of people".<sup>7</sup> The ladies' socio-economic standing, as indicated in Appendix A was far removed from that of the destitute

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1. See Appendix A, except for Townshend about whom little has been discovered.
  2. Government Asylums Inquiry Board, op.cit., evidence, pp.43-4.
  3. ibid., Report, pp.7,15,31 and Evidence, p.45.
  4. ibid., pp.45-6.
  5. ibid., p.79 and Sydney Ladies' Evangelistic Association, A.R., 1886, pp.12-3.
  6. See Appendix A for entry on Bowes; no additional information has been found about Charlton.
  7. Government Asylums Inquiry Board, op.cit., Evidence, p.44.

inmates. With the possible exception of Townshend,<sup>1</sup> they were all influential philanthropists and, combined, represented a diversity of opinion within the ruling class. Between them they had close connections to the colony's highest legal authority, the Chief Justice; were drawn from the upper middle class and represented high church Anglicanism, evangelism and probably, through Townshend, Catholicism.<sup>2</sup> That the ladies rather than their male counterparts, were chosen to represent such interests was another acknowledgement of the validity of the woman's sphere.

Awareness of the woman's sphere also characterised the response of those opposed to the conclusions of the Ladies' Board. The minority Report excused the Matron's cruel regime by giving the most acceptable reason possible; that she was pre-occupied with her family.<sup>3</sup> This excuse was despite the fact that many of her family, as was usual in charitable institutions, were employees under her supervision. The Matron (Lucy Hicks) also used the woman's sphere in her own defence against the Ladies' Board's findings. She complained - as had been said against the Foundling Hospital's committee in the 1870s - that they were too much ladies and had been "imperious and insulting ... treating me as ... the commonest servant".<sup>4</sup> Hicks labelled the horrific scenes described by Pottie as a "tissue of fabrications and misrepresentations" and the purpose of some of the Ladies' Board to "oust me ... at all hazards".<sup>5</sup> Hicks' appeal was to the men of the Inquiry to save her womanhood from being "sullied"

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1. No additional information has been found about Townshend; her address was Hunters Hill but she was not listed in the Sands' Sydney Directory.
  2. The high probability that Townshend was a Catholic is inferred from the effort to include a range of religious views and that the Board was appointed by Catholic Premier Sir Patrick Jennings.
  3. Government Asylums Inquiry Board, Minority Report, op.cit., p.43 and Evidence, p.15.
  4. Report to the Report of the Asylums Board of Inquiry, N.S.W.L.A., V. & P., 1887-8, vol.4, p.12.
  5. op.cit., pp.15-6.

and to preserve her reputation "in the estimation of all honest women".<sup>1</sup> For those women who accepted the precepts of the woman's sphere the opinion of other women mattered more than colleagues or the public.

The Board of Inquiry resulted in diminished powers for the Matrons and a new management under Sydney Maxted as Director of Government Asylums. The minority Report recommended a similar solution to that of the 1873-4 Royal Commission: a visiting committee of ladies to advise on matters relating to their expertise as women.<sup>2</sup> The majority Report advised relying not just on the expertise of ladies but also on increased professionalism of Asylum management and specialisation of facilities.<sup>3</sup> Ironically the latter undermined the role of the former and was a far cry from faith in a Matron's feminine virtues and in ladies spreading sweetness and efficiency. Confidence in the woman's sphere had been strongly confirmed by the Inquiry's Ladies' Board. However, the new faith in professionalism was one intimation of the future demise of the power of untrained ladies in philanthropic management.

Belief in the efficacy of women in philanthropy within their sphere was not only evident on a governmental level but was almost universally accepted. The extent of this belief is illustrated by its common acceptance by the elite Queen's Fund members and the feminist Louisa Lawson.

The Queen's Fund, as Hateley has outlined, was an intercolonial scheme by women to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of Queen Victoria's reign.<sup>4</sup> It did this by raising money to be devoted to helping women and children. As such,

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1. *ibid.*, p.16.

2. Government Asylums Inquiry Board, *Minority Report*, *op.cit.*, p.44.

3. *ibid.*, Report, pp.39,40.

4. S.Hateley, "The Queen's Fund, Melbourne 1887-1900", *Melbourne Historical Journal*, 11, 1972. In N.S.W. it was also inspired by the Temporary Aid Society. This obscure Society aided women in the same way as the Queen's Fund. *The Town and Country Journal*, 9 September 1908.

the Fund was designed to celebrate imperial and ruling class power as personified by the Queen. It was also designed to celebrate the hegemonic ideal of womanhood operating within the woman's sphere, however incongruous the contrast between this ideal and the reality of Victoria as an imperial ruler. The Fund was the official concept of women's philanthropy, designed to offend no-one in power and unifying a broad spectrum of the ruling class. It was a clear indication of the extent to which philanthropy within the woman's sphere was accepted as an ideal activity for women.

The significance of the Queen's Fund was enhanced by its success in enlisting the support of women who represented the major sources of power in the colony. Although men were involved in the foundation of the Fund and remained as trustees and a co-treasurer,<sup>1</sup> women were in control. It was the women who raised money for the Fund by holding the Exhibition of Women's Industries and Centenary Fair and what was reputed to be Sydney's first all-woman public concert.<sup>2</sup> In all, they raised a little over £16,000.<sup>3</sup> No further financial details are available,<sup>4</sup> but as a woman's sphere activity managed by women it was appropriate for it to be largely financed by women. The composition of the Queen's Fund indicates the degree to which this ideal of philanthropy was accepted by the colony's ruling class. As indicated in Table 5.3, it was headed by Lady Carrington and included all the major denominations, rival political factions under Parkes and Dibbs, local politics, mercantile interests, the press and academia. Most significantly, the wife of the President of the Trades and Labour Council (Talbot) was also a member. This was the first time a wife of a trade unionist has been identified as a member of a major philanthropic

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1. Queen's Jubilee Fund, A.R., 1889, pp.15-8.
  2. Exhibition of Women's Industries and Centenary Fair, 1888, leaflets, ML and Sydney Mail, 29 June 1895.
  3. Queen's Jubilee Fund, op.cit., 1889, p.21.
  4. The Bulletin's oft-repeated claim was that details were not given because of the lack of public support, e.g., 27 August 1887.

TABLE 5.3

## IDENTIFIED MEMBERS OF THE QUEEN'S JUBILEE FUND COUNCIL, 1880s

Name, Membership of Philanthropic Network (N)	Name, Occupation of husband or, if unmarried, father	Kin also on committee and other links between members	Age in 1888	Religion	Number of Children
Mrs Fanny Austin (N)	Henry, woolbroker	daughter married Street's step-son	?	Cath.	(large)
Lady Lily Carrington (N Patroness)	Charles, Governor of N.S.W.	-	early 30s?	C. of E.	6
Mrs Rebecca Cohen (N)	George, ?	-	?	Jewish	?
Lady Lucy Darley (N)	Frederick, Chief Justice	niece married Street's step-son	about 50?	C. of E.	8
Misses Ellen and N. Dibbs	George, Premier, 1885, 1889	sister	?	C. of E.	0
Mrs Lucy Fairfax (N)	James, proprietor S.M.H.	-	54	Congreg.	6
Mrs Ann Goodlet (N)	John, merchant	-	61	Pres.	0
Mrs Johanna Gurney (N)	Theodore, professor	-	42	C. of E.	0?
Mrs ? Hoffnung	Abraham, merchant	-	?	Jewish	?
Mrs/Lady Susan Macleay (N)	William, pastoralist/politician	-	49	C. of E.	0
Lady Elizabeth Manning (N)	William M., barrister/politician	-	about 60?	C. of E.	4 and 3 step
Lady Isabella Martin (N)	James (separated), ex-Chief Justice	daughter Mary	56	C. of E.	15
Miss Annie Parkes	Henry, Premier 1887-9, 1889	-	34?	Congreg?/ C. of E.?	0
Mrs Eleanor Riley (N)	Alban, draper, Mayor	-	about 30?	C. of E.	10 at least
Mrs Agnes Slattery	T.M., solicitor, politician	-	?	Cath.	?
Miss Alice Stephen (N)	Alfred, ex-Chief Justice	-	44	C. of E.	0

TABLE 5.3 continued

Name, Membership of Philanthropic Network (N)	Name, Occupation of husband or, if unmarried, father	Kin also on committee and other links between members	Age in 1888	Religion	Number of Children
Mrs Anna Street (N)	John, businessman/pastoralist	see above Austin and Darley	late 20s?	C. of E.	7 step
Mrs Catherine Talbot	John, ironmoulder, President Trades and Labour Council	-	early 50s?	Cath.	4

organisation. Her presence is another indication of the extent of support, not just for the British Empire, but for woman's sphere philanthropy.

Another indication of the degree to which woman's sphere philanthropy was accepted as an appropriate activity for women was the support given to it by Louisa Lawson.<sup>1</sup> Lawson's support was first indicated through her journal for women, The Dawn. Her main interest in the 1880s was the need to expand women's employment opportunities but women's philanthropy was also heavily promoted. Sometimes the two combined as in the case of the Ladies' Dressmaking Association, a philanthropic venture to allow needy middle class women to earn their own living by needlework.<sup>2</sup> Lawson's support for women's philanthropy was also expressed through her Social Reform Club for Women, the Dawn Club. One of the functions of the Club was to promote united action by women to ameliorate the conditions of their lives.<sup>3</sup> It is not known if the Club directly participated in philanthropy. However, the first papers read at the Club meetings were of philanthropic interest, such as Mrs Gent's on social purity and Frances Gillam Holden's on health, temperance and the need to encourage domestic service.<sup>4</sup> Lawson also requested "hints" on organisation from British women philanthropists<sup>5</sup> and invited prominent philanthropists to be members. Membership lists have not survived but of those 8 members positively identified, Mrs Gent conducted the Kent Street Ragged School for 20 years; Miss Edwards the Working and Factory Girls' Club and Frances Holden was the ex-Matron of the Children's Hospital.<sup>6</sup>

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1. See Appendix A, entry for L. Lawson.

2. The Dawn, 15 May 1888. See also The Bulletin, 22 April 1882.

3. Newscuttings, etc., concerning Mrs Louisa Lawson, 1900-1922, (binder's title), MLMSS QA920.7/L, p.32, first circular of the Dawn Club.

4. The Dawn, 1 July 1889.

5. loc.cit.

6. loc.cit., and Lawson, Newscuttings, op.cit., p.32.



The Dawn Club clearly attracted women who were committed and active in women's work. More unusually, the members' status varied widely. Margaret Windeyer, the daughter of a puisne judge, was a member<sup>1</sup> while Lawson herself was the separated wife of a manual labourer. In a society where women were divided according to the standing of their husbands and fathers, and where such considerations were of paramount importance, the Dawn Club was important in providing a range of women activists with mutual support. Such support was particularly needed when the women were supporting an unpopular cause, such as social purity, or when their abilities and characters did not fit in well with the ideal concept of a lady. Margaret Windeyer was an example of the latter. She was described as a woman of exceptional ability and sincerity, somewhat rough in manner, eccentric and "never very popular".<sup>2</sup> The Dawn Club had at least the potential to provide such women with the encouragement and support MacDonald thought so lacking in the colony.<sup>3</sup> However, it was encouragement to utilise the opportunities within the woman's sphere such as Lawson's own venture in providing a paper produced by women for women. As her daughter pointed out, she never suggested that women stray from their "true sphere".<sup>4</sup> As equally as the Queen Fund ladies, Lawson accepted the concept of the woman's sphere, in philanthropy as in other areas of life.

The power of women philanthropists within their sphere in the 1880s can also be seen in the success of George Ardill in building a comprehensive network of philanthropic institutions under his control. Ardill's achievement of this aim within a decade was remarkable for an obscure ex-printer: by

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1. The Dawn, 1 December 1889.

2. MacDonald to "Pixie", op.cit., 21 June 1894 and 7 October 1894. MacDonald was principal of the Woman's College, Sydney University, see Appendix A.

3. ibid., 20 October 1893 and 13 October 1894 and Papers of Margaret Windeyer, 10 September 1893, letter to Margaret Windeyer, MLMSS 186/17.

4. G.O'Conner, Louisa Lawson, Part 2, p.59, MLMSS A1897.

1890 he controlled eight, or 23%, of the privately-run lay philanthropic organisations listed by Sands'.<sup>1</sup> One of the reasons for Ardill's success, as argued in Chapter 4, was his acknowledgement of the expertise of ladies within the woman's sphere and the subsequent support given by evangelical ladies.

In the 1880s, Ardill worked through his Blue Ribbon Army. It was in many ways similar to the Salvation Army - with uniforms, badges and a band<sup>2</sup> - but whereas the latter incurred the hostility of the respectable, Ardill's army gained support and approval.<sup>3</sup> Most of the institutions founded by the Army catered for women and children so for this reason it was desirable to enlist the support of women. In this, Ardill was successful. His Home of Hope was under the patronage of the Sydney Women's Prayer Union<sup>4</sup> and a Ladies' Committee helped in the management. The Home was run along conventionally repressive lines for institutions for "fallen" women, rather than the newer "open door" policy (where inmates could leave during the day) adopted by the Salvation Army.<sup>5</sup> Inmates were usually prostitutes or convicted criminals.<sup>6</sup> They earned money for the Home through laundry and needlework and were expected to become domestic servants - although nearly as many absconded as did so.<sup>7</sup> Ardill ran the institution on a shoe-string budget with a priority to spiritual facilities and, like Barnados' in London, of admitting all eligible applicants.<sup>8</sup> The result, to the Infants' Home ladies at least, was

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1. Sands' Sydney Directory, 1890, p.1078. One organisation was listed twice but in my calculations is only included once.
  2. Blue Ribbon Gospel Army, A.R., 1883-4, p.16.
  3. e.g., J.Jefferis, "Review of the Salvation Army", N.S.W. Congregational Year Book, 1882, pp.69-76 and S.M.H., 4 December 1882 cf. The Weekly Advocate, 11 April 1885.
  4. Blue Ribbon Gospel Army, Half-Yearly Report, 1885, p.1.
  5. Commissioner Coombs, Jewels Gathered [A.R.], 1889, p.35.
  6. Blue Ribbon Gospel Army, Report, 1884-5, p.18 and 1885-6, p.1 and 1886-7, p.2.
  7. e.g., ibid., 1887, p.4, 29% "left" and 34% went to domestic service. Even Ardill, ibid., 1883-4, p.2, admitted a high failure rate.
  8. ibid., 1887, p.1.

less than desirable and they complained of the Home's dirtiness and lack of facilities.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, Ardill continued to receive the support of evangelical women.

The support of influential women was also important to the success of Ardill's Open All Night Refuge. The Refuge was a much needed facility where women and children were given emergency shelter. They were given meals and a bed and in return were sent out to wash and clean. A portion of their earnings was returned to the Refuge.<sup>2</sup> Where possible, inmates were converted (a Gospel Hall was attached to the premises) and re-united with their families.<sup>3</sup> As an institution run by a man, at least 76% of donations and subscriptions were also in the names of men, as shown in Table 5.4b. However, the support of women was crucial. The Refuge's establishment was due to "the unostentatious benevolence of a lady" who remained anonymous.<sup>4</sup> She was probably Margaret Clarke, the wealthy evangelical whose husband opened the Home. The support of women was also indicated at the opening ceremony where the majority who attended were women.<sup>5</sup>

Ardill also gained the support of evangelical women for his third venture: the Jubilee Registry Office and Home. This Home was established under the patronage of the W.C.T.U. and the Women's Prayer Union.<sup>6</sup> Ardill recognised the expertise of such women by also establishing a woman's Committee of Advice, which included his wife and evangelist Elizabeth Ward.<sup>7</sup> The Home was a cheaper version (board was from 10/- to 12/- a week) of those run by the Y.W.C.A. and the G.F.S. and was designed "to provide a means of escape, from the allurement of City life" for virtuous young women coming to Sydney to work as servants.<sup>8</sup>

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1. Infants' Home, Minutes, 4 December, 27 March, 3 July and 6 November 1888.

2. Blue Ribbon Gospel Army, A.R., 1883-4, p.3.

3. ibid., 1883-4, p.2 and 1887, p.2.

4. S.M.H., 4 September 1884.

5. loc.cit. For more on Clarke, see Appendix A.

6. Blue Ribbon Gospel Army, Report, 1887, p.17.

7. See also Appendix A.

8. Blue Ribbon Gospel Army, Report, 1887, p.17.

TABLE 5.4

## FINANCIAL SUPPORT

## (a) Organisations Founded by 1880.

Organis- ation	Year	Number of subscript- ions/dona- tions	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/mem- bers (£. s. d.)(as % of total income)
St. Magdal- en's Retreat	1888 1890	? ?	? ?	106- 7-9 84-14-0	? ?	368-17-10 22.9 181-13- 8 5.9	573-4-2½ 35.6 2466-8-4 81.2
Sydney Female Refuge Society	1885 1890	139 109	23 16.5 20 18.3	259- 8-6 185-15-0	39-7-6 15.2 35-9-0 19.1	- 0 - 0	943-5-11 69.3 1015-3- 8 73.3
St.Vincent's Hospital	1885 1890	245 345	42 17.1 24 7.0	1792-14-11 802-11- 3	207- 7- 6 11.6 85-15- 6 10.7	331-16-11 6.5 428-11- 5 9.5	2925-11- 4 57.9 3235- 5- 6 72.1
Sydney City Mission	1884-5 1889-90	254 411	40 15.7 41 10.0	693-13- 0* 1187- 6- 3	81- 8- 0 11.7 129-18- 6 10.9	517- 9-10 31.0 451- 0- 4 19.4	n.a. - n.a. -
Sydney Female Mission Home	1885 1890	172 152	136 79.1 133 87.5	311-14- 0 211-13- 0	186-15- 0 59.9 <sup>1</sup> 180- 7- 0 85.2	- 0 - 0	52- 8- 0 14.4 40-16- 0 14.3
Infants' Home	1885 1890	150 157	40 26.7 69 44.0	343- 2- 6 567-17- 6*	88-18- 0 25.9 286-10- 6 50.5	- 0 - 0	214- 8- 6 10.6 150- 1- 9 10.7
N.S.W. Benevo- lent Society	1885 1890	327 703	18 5.5 60 8.5	695-18- 4 1040- 6- 4	302-18- 0 43.5 <sup>2</sup> 101-15- 0 9.8	- 0 - 0	- 0 73-10- 0 0.4
Ladies' Evan- gelistic Ass- ociation	1885-6	28	27 96.4	96- 5- 2	95- 5- 2 99.0	- 0	9-16- 6 7.4

1. This percentage would be 78.8% if not for a £50 legacy from Mr M. Levy and £25 donation from Thomas Walker.
  2. The percentage would be 3.2% if not for legacies from two women totalling £280-15-0.
- \* There are discrepancies in the records between the total subscriptions/donations received and the individual amounts noted. The former has been accepted as more accurate.

TABLE 5.4

(b) Organisations founded during the 1880s

Organisation, Year	Number of subscript- ions/dona- tions	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/mem- bers (£. s. d.)(as % of total income)
W.C.T.U. Sydney city 1886-7 branch 1890	2 <sup>1</sup> 11 <sup>1</sup>	1 50.0 8 72.7	1-0-0 6-9-0	10-0 50.0 5-16-0 90.6	4- 1-2½ 31.5 4-18-8 12.5	7-14-6 60.6 11- 3-0 28.4
Blue Ribbon Gos- pel Army 1883-4	400	95 23.8*	1308-18-9	244-10-8 18.7	122- 5-2½ 5.8	99-14-6½ 12.9 (Home of Hope only)
(For "Our Rescue Work" only) 1886-7	490	50 10.2	676-19-9	69-17-7 10.3	32- 2-1 1.5	294- 3-6 13.7
Rescued Sisters' Home 1888-9	331	160 48.3*	292- 5-7	75-15-8 25.9	99-11-0 22.0	61-8-7 13.5
Church 1884-5	90	40 44.4	434- 5-9	289-17-9 66.7	- 0	28-19-8 6.2
Home 1890*	72	37 51.4	146-12-0	50-15-6 34.9	159-18-11 18.0	432-13-8 48.6
N.S.W. Social Purity Society 1885-6	122	7 5.7	104-11-6	6-13-0 6.3	- 0	n.a. -
Central Methodist Mission Ladies' Committee 1889 (9 months)	17	16 <sup>2</sup> 85.7	28-16-0	28- 9-0 98.6	- 0	n.a. -

1. Exclusive of sums of 5/- or less which were not listed.

2. Remaining contribution was "small sums" with donors' names omitted.

\* A large number of donations were anonymous, which could result in a serious under-estimation of women's proportional contribution, as only those positively identified as from women are included.

Strict limitations were placed on the activities of women within philanthropic organisations controlled by men. Generally, where men were involved in the management, women were restricted to advisory roles or given limited public acknowledgement of their work. In the largest institution, the Benevolent Asylum, women could only advise the House Committee on admissions, be employees or distribute comforts and religious texts to inmates through the Home and Pillow or Flower Missions. Yet women utilised their restricted opportunities and the belief in their own fitness for work with women to gain considerable influence: the relinquishing of a public role did not equate with a lack of power. Indeed, ladies took pride in the "quiet way" they undertook philanthropy.<sup>1</sup>

The determined manner in which women could defend their rights whilst relinquishing a public role was demonstrated by the Sisters of Charity. This Order was traditionally firm in defending its autonomy and two incidents in particular illustrate the contrast possible between public and private roles. The first incident occurred when the newly arrived Archbishop Moran attempted to usurp the Superior's (McGuigan's) right to appoint honorary doctors at St. Vincent's. Moran's choice had qualified for his degree only by correspondence and perhaps this made the Sisters more intransigent. The result was that the Superior sought legal advice and had her power of appointments confirmed.<sup>2</sup> The second incident occurred in 1887 when the Hospital Rectress was Mother M. Xavier, "straight-forward almost to a fault", with an ability to deal with "troublesome professionals" trying to overthrow her plans and who was known to give the doctors "a kindly hint as to their behaviour before ladies".<sup>3</sup> She and the Superior found their choice of honorary physician challenged again - this time by the other doctors. Xavier's and McGuigan's response was as nuns and ladies - and totally effective. McGuigan firmly informed the doctors that her

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1. The Weekly Advocate, 24 October 1885.

2. Miller, op.cit., p.24.

3. Davies, op.cit., pp.37-9.

choice should stay as their own appointments proved that her judgement was sound.<sup>1</sup> Faced with such logic, determination and diplomacy the doctors met and "in about ten minutes" capitulated.<sup>2</sup> The Sisters continued to be ladylike, self-effacing in public and dedicated,<sup>3</sup> but in defence of their autonomy they yielded to none. Like their lay counterparts, the Sisters' ideal of the woman's sphere was humility outside their sphere but authority and action within its confines.

Lay women philanthropists could also display considerable determination in utilising the restricted opportunities of the woman's sphere. The clearest such example was at the Protestant Refuge. The ladies there were theoretically subordinate to the men's committee but effectively controlled the Refuge. They rejected in no uncertain terms the men's one attempt to dictate policy.<sup>4</sup> It was the ladies at the Sydney City Mission, however, who provided the clearest demonstration of the restrictions upon women and the extent to which limited opportunities were utilised.

The Sydney City Mission expanded both its work and its reliance upon women in the 1880s. The financial pressure to utilise women as fund-raisers remained. The Mission's primary aim was evangelism to the "very poor, the sick and the fallen".<sup>5</sup> However, the poor's expectation

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1. McGuigan to Honorary Medical Staff, 8 July 1887, St. Vincent's Archives.
  2. St. Vincent's Hospital, Minutes, 8 July 1887. I owe this and the previous reference to Sr. Catherine O'Carrigan, St. Vincent's Hospital historian.
  3. There were good grounds for Xavier to stress that a Hospital sister needed, along with a good heart and head, good health in order to endure the laborious work, Davies, op.cit., p.39.
  4. Sydney Female Refuge Society, Minutes, 1 August 1884. The men wished to turn the Refuge into a Night Refuge and transfer the inmates to the country.
  5. Sydney City Mission, A.R., 1881, pp.5-6.

of material aid<sup>1</sup> as well as their appalling needs caused the number of people relieved to rise from 353 in 1880 to over 1,000 in 1887.<sup>2</sup> This aid was given despite the Mission's belief that conversion made such help unnecessary; "spiritual renovation is always followed by temporal and social improvement".<sup>3</sup> The aid was also supplemented by the Mission's expanding evangelical activity: by 1887, 10 missionaries were employed. To accommodate these two increasing functions the Mission utilised women both as money-raisers and evangelists.

The Mission's Ladies' Auxiliary, comprising some 30 women, continued collecting money for the Mission. Perhaps the most dedicated was Miss Sarah Threlkeld who was a collector from 1871 until her death in 1906.<sup>4</sup> Such effort was insufficient; in 1889 and in debt the Mission re-appointed a paid collector and the role of the Ladies' Auxiliary became even more peripheral. To utilise women more effectively, especially women of higher status, the Mission founded a separate Ladies' Committee. The work of the Ladies' Committee was to hold Dorcas meetings to make clothes for the poor, conduct Mothers' Meetings and to hold rescue services to entice prostitutes to enter the Protestant Refuge. It was the Ladies' Committee which enabled the Mission to expand by undertaking more work with poor women. The Ladies' Committee's rescue work was sanctioned by the woman's sphere - in the words of the quotation heading this chapter - and by demands of evangelism. Nevertheless, it had radical implications.

The Rescue work involved the ladies, accompanied by missionaries, walking the streets at night armed with cards

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1. E.Ward, Out of Weakness Made Strong, Sydney, 1903, p.39; this was the reverse of the London working class belief that to attend church was a brand of servility in order to receive charity, G.Stedman Jones, "Working-Class Culture and Working-Class Politics", Journal of Social History, 7:4, Summer 1974, pp.471-2.
  2. Sydney City Mission, A.R., 1880, p.8 and 1887, p.13.
  3. ibid., 1885, p.5.
  4. Short, op.cit., vol.2, p.115.



inviting all likely prostitutes to midnight supper. The cards also promised advice and sympathy from Elizabeth Ward<sup>1</sup> and Mrs Hargrave (a Surry Hills Anglican clergyman's wife) any time it was needed. At the supper the ladies fed and preached to the prostitutes.<sup>2</sup> The implications of such work were perhaps not fully appreciated at first. In 1889 the Women's Literary Society was considered daring as its members met in the evenings;<sup>3</sup> ladies unescorted by male family members were not generally seen in city streets at night. In addition, the ladies were meeting with prostitutes on their own ground and were likely to encounter much less respectful behaviour than, for example, from an applicant wanting to enter the Refuge. There was also the danger that the ladies would meet the prostitutes' customers. Such encounters with "respectable" men had the potential for considerable embarrassment and the arousing of intense hostility against the Mission. They would also upset the Mission's easy assumption that vice was the prerogative of the poor. These risks were not long tolerated and in the same year as they began the work, the Ladies' Committee instead engaged a "Biblewoman" to invite the prostitutes and also visit poor women in their own homes.<sup>4</sup> The expansion of women's work within their sphere was encouraged but, as the ladies of the Foundling Hospital had discovered, attempts to enlarge the sphere involved the risk of public disapprobation. Like those ladies, the Mission ladies soon stepped back within the permitted boundaries of their sphere.

Ladies were restricted, but they did not relinquish their work. The Foundling Hospital ladies went on to found the Infants' Home and the City Mission ladies demonstrated their

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1. See Appendix A.

2. Ward, op.cit., p.36 and Sydney City Mission, untitled, n.d., (1880s) t/s copy of pamphlet describing rescue procedures, in the possession of the Ladies' Committee.

3. F.Eldershaw (ed.), The Peaceful Army, Sydney, 1938, p.39 and Windeyer Family Records and Papers, p.279, ML \*D159.

4. Sydney City Mission, untitled pamphlet, op.cit.

determination by ensuring that the Biblewoman was employed, even though it was against Mission policy. Two of the wealthier members (Marks and Clarke<sup>1</sup>) guaranteed the salary.<sup>2</sup> The Biblewoman, Miss Lucy Craven, was 57 years old and so had enough maturity for a woman to be accorded full adult status, was dedicated and willing to live in the area she worked. Conflict was avoided by ensuring that her authority as well as pay was inferior to the male missionaries. Within these limitations the Ladies' Committee was successful in ensuring that a woman was employed in the name of the Mission to work within the woman's sphere.

One of the indications of the strength of the woman's sphere in philanthropy has been the pattern of subscriptions. Organisations run even nominally by men were financed predominantly by men; organisations run by women were financed predominantly by women. As indicated in Table 5.4, details of the financial support of many organisations are scarce. However, the information available points to the same trend continuing during the 1880s. Greatest female support was for the all-woman Mission Home, Ladies' Sectional Committee and, through membership fees, W.C.T.U. An exception was the Infants' Home which had a smaller proportion of women supporters largely due to its successful appeal to businesses. Smallest proportional support by women were those which were male run, particularly the N.S.W. Benevolent and Social Purity Societies. The Church Rescue and Rescued Sisters' Home achieved equal support from both sexes, a reflection of their joint-sex management. The dominant role of Moran as official spokesman for St. Vincent's, that hospital's image as an institution of the church rather than the nuns and its use by a wide section of the community led to its low proportional support by women. St. Vincent's and the Protestant Refuge are illustrations that it was not the actual management which

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1. See Appendix A.

2. Sydney City Mission, A.R., 1887, p.11 and 1888, p.3. This was in addition to Clarke's usual £150 per annum to pay a missionary's salary.

determined women's support but rather its public reputation. In all cases it was the perception whether the work was within the woman's sphere and run by women which determined the nature of support received. The woman's sphere continued to have a major impact upon philanthropic finance.

Perhaps the most telling evidence for the strength of belief in the woman's sphere was that a small but influential group of women attempted to impose woman's sphere values upon men as well as women. They were never very successful but that the task was contemplated at all indicates their confidence in the acceptance of the values of the woman's sphere. The hope by women philanthropists that woman's sphere values would predominate was primarily expressed in the temperance<sup>1</sup> movement and in a concern for "social purity".

The temperance movement, particularly the W.C.T.U., has been comprehensively researched<sup>2</sup> and it is not proposed to duplicate these findings. However, it should be noted that through temperance radical change was advocated which did not challenge the basic class structure. Excessive drinking was the vice, par excellence, of the colonial male<sup>3</sup> while religious indifference was the vice, again par excellence, of the working class.<sup>4</sup> In advocating Christian temperance, middle class women were attacking a cultural attribute associated particularly with working class men, defending the values of their own sex and class and attempting to impose those values on a male dominated society. They were also seeking to alleviate the misery of the victims of the intemperate: primarily women and children. The work of the W.C.T.U., for instance,

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1. In the 1880s, "temperance" generally meant abstinence from alcohol.

2. e.g., B.Harrison, Drink and the Victorians, London, 1971; Windschuttle, "Women, Class and Temperance", op.cit.; D.Wiles, "As High As Heaven", Ph.D., Adelaide University, 1978; A.Mitchell, "Temperance and the Liquor Question", M.A., University of Melbourne, 1966 and A.Hyslop, "Temperance, Christianity and Feminism", Historical Studies, 27, April 1976.

3. P.Grimshaw, "Women and the Family in Australian History", Historical Studies, 72, April 1979, p.419.

4. Phillips, op.cit., p.v.

included the distribution of material relief, visiting the inmates of institutions, "rescue" work with prostitutes, the employment of a Bible-woman and negotiations with Mrs Paling on opening an Inebriates' Home on land donated by her husband.<sup>1</sup> Women's work for temperance was zealous and dedicated through individual action and the indicated organisations in Tables 5.1 and 5.2. However, temperance women were always a beleaguered minority, fighting against the gains of secularisation and alcohol as gauged by the failures of the sabbatarian movement, the 1885 defeat of Local Option, declining church attendance, increased per capita alcohol consumption and number of liquor licences issued and the revelations of the 1887 Intoxicating Drink Inquiry which showed scant enforcement of the 1881 Licensing Act.<sup>2</sup> Even the very organisation of women for temperance was due as much to visiting crusaders such as Margaret Hampson, Eli Johnston and Mary Leavitt<sup>3</sup>, as to local initiative. The women's vision of the ideal colonial society had an influence disproportionate to their numbers but was far from reality.

Gusfield's argument about the American temperance movement was that temperance was a symbol of respectability and of one's rise to the middle class.<sup>4</sup> Hyslop's description of the typical W.C.T.U. member supports his theory<sup>5</sup> and so does evidence for the type of women which predominated in the N.S.W. W.C.T.U. The majority of the executive of the W.C.T.U. in N.S.W., listed in Table 5.5, were wives of

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1. W.C.T.U., Minutes, 11 and 25 October 1882, 30 September 1885, 8 and 11 August 1889, 6 February 1889 and 6 March 1889.
  2. W. Phillips, "The Churches and the Sunday Question in Sydney in the 1880s", Journal of Religious History, 1, June 1970; J. Bollen, Ph.D., op.cit., p.185; A. Dingle, "A Truly Magnificent Thirst", Historical Studies, 19:75, October 1980; G. Caldwell, "From Pub to Club", A.N.U. Historical Journal, 9, December 1972 and Intoxicating Drink Inquiry, Report, N.S.W.L.A., V. & P., 1887-8, vol.7.
  3. Phillips, The Churches and the Sunday Question, op.cit., p.51 and W.C.T.U. Minutes, 21 August 1882 and 8 October 1885.
  4. Gusfield, op.cit.
  5. A. Hyslop, "Christian Temperance and Social Reform" in Willis, (ed.), op.cit., p.47.

TABLE 5.5      IDENTIFIED MEMBERS OF THE W.C.T.U.: EXECUTIVE MEMBERS AND THOSE WHO ACTED IN AN  
OFFICIAL CAPACITY, 1880s

Name, Membership of Philanthropic Network (N)	Name, Occupation of husband or, if unmarried, father	Age in 1882 or on joining	Religion	Number of Children
Mrs Louisa Ardill (N)	George, philanthropist/evangelist	22	Baptist	2
Mrs Euphemia Bowes (N)*(1)	John, retired clergyman (self, school mistress)	67	Meth.	11 (3 died in infancy)
Mrs Henrietta Catts	John, carpenter-joiner	?	Meth.	1 at least
Mrs Elizabeth Chambers	Thomas, gynaecologist	mid 40s?	C. of E.	8
Mrs ? Henson (N) *	William, private means	?	Meth.	?
Miss Laura Hogg (N)	?	?	C. of E.	0
Mrs Mary Lucas	George, philanthropist (with wife, ex-Bileola Schools)	?	Congreg.	?
Mrs Sara Nolan	James, clergyman	?	Meth.	(large)
Mrs Mary Paterson (N)*(1)	R.S., retired missionary	?	Pres.	?
Mrs Eliza Pottie (N)*(1)	John, veterinary surgeon	46	Quaker/ Pres.	6
Mrs Ann Roseby (N)	John, politician/mason	44	Meth.	12
Mrs Sarah Roseby (2)	Thomas, clergyman	about 40?	Congreg.	9 at least
Mrs Margaret Courtenay Smith (N)	?, philanthropist/evangelist	?	C. of E.	0?
Mrs Elizabeth Ward (N) (1)	Charles, ?	47	C. of E.	7

1. Also member of the Sydney Ladies' United Evangelistic Association.

2. The Rosebys, with Mrs M.J.Roseby, were the only office holders who appear to have had relatives on the committee.

\* Also member of the Ladies' Committee of the N.S.W. Social Purity Society.

professionals whose status was middling rather than high. The W.C.T.U., as a "woman's" organisation, was open to those who could not support the lifestyle of a "lady" and enough working class women joined to sustain branches at Waterloo and Macdonaldtown. However, "respectability" was one criterion for membership.<sup>1</sup> Gusfield's argument does not deny, on the level of the individual, sincere zeal and conscious disinterest, but does stress the role of class and status interests in the determination of philanthropic activity. His arguments are also generally applicable to the evangelical movement in N.S.W. as the two movements worked conjointly. The W.C.T.U. meetings, for example, were curtailed to allow members to attend the meetings of the Ladies' Evangelistic Association and the two organisations jointly ran a soup kitchen.<sup>2</sup>

Evangelism and temperance were both believed to be long-term solutions, not in eliminating poverty ("the poor ye shall always have with you") but in preventing socially disruptive levels of poverty.<sup>3</sup> Philanthropic activity to cope with the remaining poverty was an essential part of their vision of a Christian temperance world. Also part of this vision was the implementation of "social purity". Social purity meant the imposition on men of the moral code as it applied to women: the elimination of the sexual "double standard", pre-marital chastity and marital monogamy. In the shorter term, it also meant philanthropy to rescue "females" from "the ways of vice".<sup>4</sup> Like temperance and evangelism, social purity was a world-wide movement. The White Cross Army, for example, spread throughout the British Empire<sup>5</sup> and the Contagious Diseases Acts spawned moralistic objectors wherever they were passed. In America, the social purity movement organised a

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1. W.C.T.U., Minutes, 8 November 1882.

2. ibid., 6 July 1887. Women who were members of both societies are noted in Table 5.5. See also Appendix A.

3. e.g., Ward, op.cit., p.75, "so much misery and degradation was caused by the sin of intemperance".

4. N.S.W. Association for the Promotion of Morality and Social Purity, A.R., 1887, p.6. See also above, Ch. 2, pp.92-6.

5. D.Pivar, Purity Crusade, London, 1973, p.111 and The Weekly Advocate, 13 June 1885.

highly successful campaign to raise the age of consent.<sup>1</sup> In Australia, the movement was less successful. Even Christian newspapers assumed that those who raised such issues "cannot be respectable persons".<sup>2</sup> "Fallen" men, such as the Premier Henry Parkes, continued to "strut unbranded in the world's highway"<sup>3</sup> attracting little moral censure whilst "fallen" women, such as Parkes' mistress then wife, Eleanor Dixon, were socially ostracised.<sup>4</sup> The age of consent in N.S.W. remained at fourteen and extensions of grounds for divorce were passed in 1881 and 1892.

Philanthropy, evangelism, temperance and social purity were causes that were inextricably linked. They were all means whereby the hope was expressed that the values of the woman's sphere would dominate and the requirement that ladies should be pious, sober and sexually pure would be applied to all. The women and their male supporters were generally unsuccessful in their aims, but that they organised so widely was yet another indication of the strength of their commitment to the beliefs and values of the woman's sphere. The women's influence, even excluding their work for woman's suffrage in the next decade, was disproportionate to their small numbers. They were highly visible role models who dominated lay women's philanthropy. In addition, their influence on children had far-reaching effects. W.C.T.U. member, Henrietta Catts, for example, ensured that a religious service was held each morning in her home and that "The curse of strong drink and the beauty of temperance were constant topics of conversation".<sup>5</sup> Her schoolboy grandson lived with her and held to her beliefs throughout his life. James Howard Catts promoted these beliefs as a Labor Party parliamentarian, trade unionist and, with his wife Dorothy, entrepreneur and journalist. The high level of commitment demanded of the evangelically motivated women also meant that organisations

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1. Pivar, op.cit., p.146.

2. The Australian Christian World, 21 June 1888. See also The Weekly Advocate, 13 June 1885.

3. Sydney Female Refuge Society, A.R., 1887, p.xi.

4. A.Martin, Henry Parkes, Melbourne, 1980, pp.379,419.

5. D.Catts, James Howard Catts, Sydney, 1953, pp.1-3.

like the W.C.T.U. and Ladies' Sanitary Association were excellent training grounds for middle class women in public affairs. They acquired skills in organisation and finance, knowledge of legislative affairs and practice in public speaking.<sup>1</sup> For some the demands were too taxing, due to the competing demands of home duties and the difficulty in attending meetings regularly.<sup>2</sup> Others used their newly acquired skills to further their influence within the woman's sphere.

During the 1880s the work of women's philanthropic organisations for adults was widely recognised and valued. Such an attitude was evident on a governmental, organisational and individual level. It was held by those as varied as the elite ladies of the Queen's Fund, journalist and reformer Louisa Lawson and the evangelical George Ardill. The impact of the woman's sphere also continued to determine the pattern of subscriptions to philanthropic organisations. Women were confident of their right to engage in philanthropic activity and were active in maintaining and founding philanthropic organisations. However, the rationale behind such activity, the woman's sphere, justified but also restricted women's activities. The restrictions upon the confidence and expansion of women's philanthropy are examined in the following section.

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1. Greatly helped by the W.C.T.U. policy for different ladies to conduct monthly meetings and, by 1889, of women presiding at the annual meetings, W.C.T.U., Minutes, 6 February 1884, 1 October 1884 and unidentified newspaper clipping, n.d. in ibid., September 1884.
  2. W.C.T.U., Minutes, 4 March 1884, 1 July 1885 and 4 September 1889.



(b) Restrictions of the Woman's Sphere

The concept of the woman's sphere was used to justify and urge ladies to undertake philanthropic work. However, strict limits were placed on the type of philanthropic activities permitted women and on the type of women encouraged to be philanthropists.

A major limitation increasingly placed on the type of philanthropic action permitted women was that, in order to prevent pauperisation, they should not engage in individual "Lady Bountiful" activity. Sydney was still a city where "the poor" were banqueted on public occasions and where individuals asked for and dispensed charity.<sup>1</sup> However, the era of women philanthropists working independently of any organisation was drawing to a close. District visiting by women was increasingly under the direction of the local clergy and parochial relief and dorcas societies.<sup>2</sup> Most significantly, individual Ladies' Bountiful were being grouped into organisations on a local level.

The commercial slum of 1886-7 was the immediate impetus to organise ladies so as to cater more effectively for the local poor. The result was the three suburban benevolent societies, predominantly comprised of women, listed in Table 5.2a. Such a development was in keeping with concessions in allowing women an advisory role made by the Benevolent Society of N.S.W. in 1879 and the Parramatta Benevolent Society by 1890.<sup>3</sup> The Balmain and Leichhardt Societies were both semi-government organisations with the Mayor presiding

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1. S.M.H., 6 and 9 January 1888, The Bulletin, 31 January 1880 and Ward, op.cit., esp. ch. V11.
  2. e.g., even the Congregational Church with just 8,303 females in Sydney in 1891, including nominal members, had at least 5 dorcas societies, Congregational Year Book, 1884, p.103, 1885, p.127 and 1889, p.162.
  3. Parramatta Benevolent Society, A.R.s, 1873-9, 1883-1900. For the sake of consistency, the city of Parramatta has not been included as within the definition of Sydney in this thesis.

over a committee of ladies. The Ashfield Society lacked this official function - and thus subsidies - but was consequently a more autonomous women's organisation. It had developed from a local Dorcas Society.<sup>1</sup> All distributed relief to the local poor, predominantly women and children. As some relief was probably offered to destitute men,<sup>2</sup> they represented a small extension of woman's sphere philanthropy. Most importantly, however, they pointed to the demise of the local Lady Bountiful and the increasing organisation of women's philanthropy.

The type of philanthropy practiced by women for adults within the woman's sphere was further restricted in two main ways. Women were generally confined to helping their own sex and also were expected to promote ruling class interests and particularly anti-pauperisation. The strength of these beliefs was made especially explicit by the Home for Indigent Blind Women, the Queen's Fund and the Infants' Home.

The former Home originated with a legacy of £5,000 left by Mr J.R.Wood in memory of his blind mother to found an institution for the adult blind of both sexes.<sup>3</sup> The latter stipulation was found unacceptable and so a committee of men founded the Industrial Blind Institution for men. The logical development, given adherence to the woman's sphere, soon followed: another institution was founded by women for women. The women who founded and ran the Home were staunch evangelicals and firm believers in their rights and duties within the woman's sphere.<sup>4</sup> The strength of their conviction was

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1. Ashfield Benevolent Society, A.R., 1911-2, p.2 (unpag.).
  2. It is presumed that help was offered to the destitute of both sexes but the majority of the destitute were always women and children.
  3. Inspector of Public Charities, A.R., 1881, p.23 and Government Asylums for the Infirm and Destitute, A.R., 1883, pp.33-4.
  4. They included E.Bowes, C.Burdekin, K.Fletcher, B.Hutchinson, A.Pemell and C. Stuart for which, see Appendix A.

tested when they acceded to a request from the male-run N.S.W. Mission for Teaching the Blind to amalgamate. Their amalgamation was on the condition that the women continued to have sole control over the "domestic" arrangements of the Home, including admissions and discharges.<sup>1</sup> As well, the two committees continued to meet separately. At times the male committee attempted to treat the women as an auxiliary, but this was resisted. Thus when the men recommended a number of women to be on the women's committee, the latter rejected some and passed a rule that new members must be known to at least one of their members.<sup>2</sup>

The strength of the anti-pauperisation drive is most explicit in the reasoning behind the change of the Home's title whereby "Indigent" was dropped for "Industrial". It was believed that the public would not support the Home because they thought the blind women were kept in "idleness"; the work "Industrial" was designed to re-assure potential supporters that blind working class women were not exempt from the work ethic.<sup>3</sup>

The Queen's Fund demonstrates how the dominant concept of philanthropy logically excluded from help those who were most desperately in need. The women managing the Fund were all ladies, somewhat inaccurately summed up as a "little clique of female K.C.M.G.'s".<sup>4</sup> They therefore had the most understanding of, and sympathy for, those of their own class - the "poor governesses" and "indigent ladies".<sup>5</sup> As well, the requirement that all applications had to be written and supported by a "prominent local person"<sup>6</sup> even more than

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1. N.S.W. Mission to the Blind, Minutes, 2 February 1885. The Minute Book is untitled and with the Royal Blind Society records, uncatalogued MLMSS 2748, Box 21618.
  2. Home for the Indigent Blind, Minutes, 3 March 1887. Titled "Women's Auxiliary Minutes", uncatalogued MLMSS 2748, Box 21618.
  3. ibid., 6 September 1887.
  4. The Bulletin, 7 May 1887. See also ibid., 30 April 1887 and 27 August 1887 and Table 5.3, following p.192.
  5. Queen's Jubilee Fund, Rules and By-Laws, 1892, p.14.
  6. ibid., p.13.

usually favoured the most articulate, middle class applicant. The fear of pauperisation also excluded the most needy. Relief was only given in cases where, as a result, the applicant could earn her own living.<sup>1</sup> The sums dispersed therefore went principally to those who needed extra help to set themselves up in small businesses; the destitute needing large or regular sums were disqualified from help. Also disqualified were those judged "undeserving" and those who were not prepared to accept supervision by the "prominent local" through whom the money was paid.<sup>2</sup>

The members of the Fund, under the leadership of the Governor's wife, were far removed from direct experience of poverty and their contact with the poor was generally limited to that with servants or supplicants for aid. As usual, this lack of knowledge resulted in a romanticisation and sentimentalisation of the effects of poverty and the role of the philanthropist. The women wrote of hard and almost unbearable lives, of bowed spirits and inward anguish and of soothing broken hearts and brightening lives<sup>3</sup> but they showed little awareness of the reality behind this romantic vision of themselves as ministering angels.

The tragedies behind the need for philanthropy and the inadequacies of the philanthropic help provided is clear from the cases recorded in the Infants' Home's Minutes. The vulnerability of women domestic servants was particularly evident. They made up most of the applicants and the situation McNeil recalled as common - that of young servants left to the mercy of the sons of the house then dismissed when pregnant<sup>4</sup> - occurred frequently in applicants' stories. It was so common that one inmate was strongly reprimanded for obtaining work in a house with adult sons in it.<sup>5</sup> Officially,

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1. loc.cit.

2. Queen's Jubilee Fund, A.R., 1889-90, p.6. Charity Organisation inspectors also helped the Fund to detect "imposture".

3. Queen's Jubilee Fund, A.R., 1889-90, p.8.

4. E.McNeil, A Bunyip Close Behind Me, Melbourne, 1972, p.33.

5. Infants' Home, Minutes, 1 December 1885.

however, such occurrences were ignored, with one exception,<sup>1</sup> by philanthropic institutions eager to increase the supply of servants. Along with the desirability of domestic service was the unquestioning faith in the virtues of country life. The Home followed the usual practice of encouraging inmates to work in the country, where the isolation, from family and friends as well as physically, made the women even more vulnerable. Cases of gross exploitation such as the illiterate nineteen year old applicant who had been a servant "in the bush" since she was seven,<sup>2</sup> caused no doubts as to the country's superiority.

Equally vulnerable were the men and women attempting to raise a family on their own. Marriage or a stable de facto relationship was an economic necessity in so far as it guaranteed a breadwinner and housekeeper-mother. The death of a spouse was not only a personal tragedy but an economic disaster. Even in extreme cases, however, the Home restricted its aid. Thus the crippled widower earning 30/- a week had to support his three children, children of the widow he had lived with, and the baby from whose birth the widow had died. The baby's grandmother had six dependent children of her own so could not care for it. The father applied for the baby to be admitted to the Home without payment; this was only temporarily allowed to discourage pauperisation.<sup>3</sup>

In this as in many other cases, applicants first attempted to avoid charity by relying on their families for help but it is unwise to accept without question the romantic myth of unshakeable working class solidarity. It was not uncommon for unmarried pregnant daughters to be thrown out of their homes by their fathers and although female relatives were

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1. Sydney Female Mission Home, A.R., 1885, p.3.

2. Infants' Home, Minutes, 5 November 1889.

3. ibid., 7 June 1881.

often sympathetic, they could rarely help financially.<sup>1</sup> In other cases the family offered no protection, as with incest.<sup>2</sup>

To attract public money, most philanthropic institutions stressed the success with which their aims were met. There is ample evidence, however, that institutionalised charity generally failed to assist the poor to dignified independence and to prevent pauperisation. Applicants to the Infants' Home frequently had histories of prolonged institutionalisation. One applicant's mother was in the House of the Good Shepherd, she and her siblings were raised in the Randwick Asylum and her baby was born in the Benevolent Asylum.<sup>3</sup> As no woman who "fell" twice was re-admitted to the Home there is no evidence of their ability to maintain themselves without further aid. From the sad case histories in the Minutes, however, it is unlikely that the problems of poverty and exploitation were so easily overcome.

While family support systems and institutional philanthropy frequently failed, so too did the other alternative to the Infants' Home: paid child care. In the 1880s, the usual cost of child-minding was 10/- a week, often the mother's entire wage, and the babies were frequently mistreated. The applicant whose baby was well-treated and whose care cost 10/- out of her 15/- wage was considered so fortunate that she was denied admission.<sup>4</sup> Other alternatives included businesses such as Mrs Baker's, who took in mothers and babies but charged £1 a week, made the mothers "slave" for her and generally mistreated them all.<sup>5</sup> Private child-minders could also turn out to be "baby farmers" such as the "notorious Kate de Laurie" who charged to have babies adopted but then abandoned them.<sup>6</sup> If a parent could not rely on the

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1. ibid., e.g. 10 May 1881, 21 June 1881, 11 October 1881 and 3 January 1882.

2. ibid., e.g. 31 January 1882; another case involved Catholic first cousins whose church still regarded their relationship as incest, ibid., 22 November 1881.

3. ibid., 13 April 1886.

4. ibid., 2 June 1885.

5. ibid., 4 October 1887.

6. ibid., 5 March 1889 and Infants' Home, A.R., 1889, p.7. The latter referred to Mrs Batts, possibly the same woman.

informal processes of child-minding and adoption then prevalent amongst the working class,<sup>1</sup> then admission to the Infants' Home was one of the less hazardous procedures to adopt.

The Infants' Home records also make clear the extent to which philanthropy was restricted by the class context in which it operated. They do so because the Home attracted not just working class but also middle class applicants. The organisation which specifically helped the middle class, the Home Visiting and Relief Society, was characterised by a unique sensitivity and a lack of concern about 'pauperising' its clients.<sup>2</sup> The Infants' Home's attitude towards its middle class applicants was similar and contrasted sharply with that towards the majority of inmates.

The Infants' Home was more compassionate than most institutions - to the extent that one committee member complained it was "too luxurious"<sup>3</sup> - but the help offered was shaped by the class consciousness of the committee. The committee, as in the 1870s,<sup>4</sup> represented Sydney's wealthy mercantile and professional interests, usually through particular families. They had only limited perceptions of the reality of working class life. Even in the most harrowing cases of need they were reluctant to allow a mother to "shirk her duty"<sup>5</sup> in caring for her own child. They defended the waiting time for applicants (even urgent cases had to get the approval of three committee members) on the grounds that it "sifted out cases".<sup>6</sup> The applicants' immediate alternatives

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1. e.g. McInerney, op.cit., pp.xii, 258, in Chidley's immediate family there were eight unofficial adoptions and an offer of a further adoption.
  2. The Home Visiting and Relief Society, A.R.s, 1862-88 (selected issues) and Dickey, Ph.D., op.cit., pp.84, 285. Little is known about other organisations catering for the needy of the middle class such as the Australian Benevolent Society of Blues. None involved women philanthropists.
  3. Infants' Home, Minutes, 17 December 1889.
  4. See above, Table 2.7, following p.99, and Appendix A.
  5. ibid., 20 March 1883.
  6. ibid., 18 December 1888.

for survival were ignored. On the other hand, a combination of ignorance and compassion made them susceptible to appeals to emotion. Applicants who maintained their dignity were unlikely to be offered any leeway from the strict rules. In contrast, the applicant who appealed "with tears in his eyes" for more time to pay his debt to the Home met with a sympathetic response.<sup>1</sup> Likewise the degree of gratitude shown was a key factor in determining the help given: the ladies expected the outward show of gratitude from the inmates,<sup>2</sup> each other<sup>3</sup> and, from the reiteration of biblical promises of gratitude, from God.<sup>4</sup> The ladies also viewed a "respectable" appearance, so important in maintaining their own status, as an attribute of character divorced from factors such as laundry facilities. Therefore, the success of applicants depended much on their appearance and humble demeanour. Such criteria were also used in determining adoptions from the Home, a procedure which caused the Boarding-out Officer of the S.C.R.B. to protest strongly. Yet the same day the committee received his criticisms they agreed to an adoption on the basis of a clergyman's reference and because they "were much taken with her appearance she had such a sweet sad countenance".<sup>5</sup>

The most important factor, however, was the applicant's class and status. The decision to give favourable treatment to applicants "of a certain standard of respectability" was formalised in 1880.<sup>6</sup> This resolution was "warmly debated" in 1884 but supported 6:2.<sup>7</sup> The next meeting clarified that in cases "which for the sake of relatives and friends great secrecy is considered expedient", no personal application was needed, three members only would hear the details, including

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1. ibid., 25 August 1885. See also 15 March 1881 cf. 15 May 1883.

2. e.g. ibid., 11 August 1885.

3. ibid., 2 June 1885.

4. Infants' Home, A.R., 1886, pp.6-7. Such expectation was common, see e.g., Sydney Ladies' United Evangelistic Association, A.R., 1886-7, p.13.

5. Infants' Home, Minutes, 31 July 1888.

6. ibid., 21 June 1880.

7. ibid., 19 August 1884.



relevant names, and just the baby admitted.<sup>1</sup> This resolution was put in the front of each current Minute book as a reminder of its over-riding importance.

It is in adhering to this resolution that the Infants' Home ladies showed most clearly the effect of class consciousness on philanthropy. On the same day, a baby was admitted anonymously without the mother from a "respectable family" while in the next case involving a working class applicant they "never deem[ed] it wise or kind to separate Mother & child".<sup>2</sup> There is no evidence that any contradiction was perceived. Again and again, the Minutes record differences in action based on class. A baby was admitted (with a payment of £26) whose parentage it was of the "utmost importance" to withhold; another applicant was refused because she would not name the baby's father.<sup>3</sup> In addition, working class applicants were expected to rise to the challenges of poverty; middle class ones were expected to maintain standards based on wealth even at the expense of morality. Thus at consecutive meetings two cases where mothers wished to leave their babies were considered. One, a tailoress heavily in debt, was refused as it was "so desirable for a mother to take care of her own children". The other, from a "highly respectable family" was successful. The baby's father would pay maintenance but he was not well-off enough to marry.<sup>4</sup> Some degree of personal hypocrisy was involved, especially as it was constantly reiterated that mothers must enter the Home with their child. However, the unselfconscious juxtaposition of contradictory decisions indicate the degree to which different treatment on the basis of class was taken for granted.

A further restriction on the type of philanthropy women

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1. ibid., 2 September 1884.

2. loc.cit.

3. ibid., 21 June 1880 and 15 March 1881.

4. ibid., 18 March and 1 April 1884.

practiced, particularly through Homes for "fallen" women, derived from the hegemonic concept of female character outlined in Chapter 3. Those in charge of such Homes shared the belief that women "fell" through weakness and could only be redeemed by hard work, rigid discipline and religious conversion. Moran, for example, explained prostitution as the result of behaviour such as improper dances, especially the waltz.<sup>1</sup> The reality of the wretchedness of poverty and relative deprivation was ignored. Moran instead pictured the inmates coming from homes "of innocence and sinless peace", led astray by "guilty delights".<sup>2</sup> Given that the Refuge inmates were forbidden to speak of their past it is unlikely that the women running them would have a more realistic picture. Such romanticism avoided the wider questions of social and economic oppression and was the norm for philanthropists. The evangelical women of the Mission Home were equally eloquent. Women "fell" because they victims of a "fiend's lust", as "miserable, weak women" who had mistaken "the lust of the libertine" for "true men's love".<sup>3</sup> Women in this view were passive victims, always "seduced" or "beguiled" then abandoned.

Women's "weakness" was seen as a cause of all their problems. Once their "weakness" was prolonged, then a harsher view was taken. The inmates of the Protestant Refuge were described as having sensual and debasing habits, blunted feelings and hard hearts.<sup>4</sup> All behaviour could be ascribed to these characteristics. The Benevolent Asylum assessed its inmates as "naturally thoughtless and improvident", as evidenced by their reluctance to appear before the Ladies' Committee until absolutely necessary.<sup>5</sup> It was not even considered that they might be trying to avoid the ordeal of appearing before the ladies or of having their babies in the Asylum

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1. O'Farrell, *The Catholic Church and the Community*, op.cit., p.252.
  2. Sisters of the Good Samaritan, *Annals*, op.cit., p.118 and *The Bulletin*, 22 October 1887.
  3. Sydney Female Mission Home, *A.R.*, 1885, p.3 and 1883, p.3.
  4. Sydney Female Refuge Society, *A.R.*, 1880, p.11.
  5. Benevolent Society of N.S.W., *A.R.*, 1887, p.13.

where it was judged inadequate nutrition caused all babies to be in a "bad state of neglect".<sup>1</sup>

The solution to women's problems was therefore the instilling of discipline and the imposition of middle class standards. Thus the Benevolent Asylum only gave relief to occupants of clean, tidy homes whose children left school as soon as legally possible to earn money. The mothers' fear that they would otherwise have to place their children in orphanages was reported as a highly satisfactory means of control.<sup>2</sup> Evangelical women engaged in preventative work by giving to the poor potted roots which, amidst the misery of the slums, were to be "preachers of order, cleanliness, and beauty of other types".<sup>3</sup> For the members of the Ladies' Evangelistic Association, plants supplemented their Bible-woman's distribution of eggs, custard, medicine and other material aid.<sup>4</sup> For their counterparts at the Protestant Refuge, "prevention" of the problems of poverty meant Gospel Tent Missions and the hope that a second missionary could be employed.<sup>5</sup> "Slum" conditions, the "wretched hovels, filth and misery" were only relevant in that they harboured immorality.<sup>6</sup>

With the inmates of the institutions, therefore, strict discipline and unremitting work were the counterpart to women's "weakness". Even when, as at the Protestant Refuge, the ideal was to re-create a home in its "best and kindest sense",<sup>7</sup> a harsh regime prevailed to the extent that inmates

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1. Infants' Home, Minutes, 6 November 1888.

2. Benevolent Society of N.S.W., The Outdoor Relief Department, Sydney, 1888, pp.10-1, ML pamphlet.

3. The Weekly Advocate, 24 October 1885. The roots were presumably of flowers.

4. Sydney Ladies' United Evangelistic Association, A.R., 1886-7, p.5.

5. Sydney Female Refuge Society, A.R., 1883, pp.xiv-xv.

6. ibid., 1880, p.11.

7. ibid., 1887, p.xi.

were still called by numbers rather than names.<sup>1</sup> Such a philosophy ensured that the inmates' work made a substantial contribution to the finances of their institutions - as shown in Table 5.4(a), up to 81% of income. Even at the Infants' Home where women were required, if possible, to breast feed and wet-nurse, their work and payments totalled 10% of the Home's income. The Benevolent Society with a reserve fund of £34,000 in 1882 also ensured the inmates' contribution by a £2 midwifery fee<sup>2</sup> and the Catholic Refuge was able to make a profit of £900 in 1890.<sup>3</sup>

In contrast to the "weak" inmates, were the ladies in charge. They were women who upheld the standards of female virtue. In a different way they applied equally rigid standards of conduct to their own lives. Hard work was not necessary, so Sarah Wilshire could honourably resign from the Refuge because it was too fatiguing.<sup>4</sup> Ladies, however, did have to live up to a strict code of behaviour. This expectation was particularly strict for nuns. Nuns had to be saintly ladies: "instinct with piety ... radiant with the golden seal of religion ... with more than human love and joy" and "holy Sisters ... angels of charity - the holiest, purest and grandest of people".<sup>5</sup> The ideal for lay ladies was less exalted but no less demanding.<sup>6</sup> The ideal was one

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1. The Penitentiary Register, Pitt Street, 1879-1901, indicates that names could also be insensitive: Refuge inmates were called names such as "Hope", "Charity" and "Magdalene". Held at Good Samaritan Training College, Arncliffe.
  2. Government Asylums for the Infirm and Destitute, A.R., 1882, p.4 and Benevolent Society of N.S.W., A.R., 1886, p.12.
  3. St. Magdalen's Retreat, Financial Records, 17 October 1887 -January 1890, balance for 1890, held at Good Samaritan Training College, Arncliffe.
  4. Sydney Female Refuge Society, Minutes, 3 March 1882. See also Appendix A.
  5. St. Vincent's Hospital, A.R., 1886, p.5 and Sisters of the Good Samaritan, Annals, op.cit., pp.116-8, both quoting Moran.
  6. cf. Rebecca West's definition of a lady as "simply the well-repressed woman" comparable to "monks and nuns", quoted in The National Times, 11-17 July 1982.

of wisdom, tact, delicacy, firmness and discrimination.<sup>1</sup> Similarly the employees of the institutions were to display innate ladyhood and "womanly sympathy".<sup>2</sup> The Lady Superintendents were particularly expected to rule with sympathetic majesty even where conditions were brutalising or, as at the Infants' Home, heartbreaking with an average infant death rate of 30.9% over the decade.<sup>3</sup> Impatience, undue frankness or anything suggestive of vulgarity or lack of support for class interests was strictly repressed. Whilst the harshness of the lot of a lady could not approach that of the poor or an inmate of a philanthropic institution, the ideological constraints on behaviour were as strong.

The assumption that each sex was best suited to work with their own sex was at the heart of the woman's sphere concept and accounted for much of the encouragement of, and also restrictions upon, women's philanthropy. Associated with this assumption was the belief that different types of work were appropriate to each sex. This belief did not mean, as has been argued about the English Ladies' Sanitary Association, that the "responsibility of organisation and decision-making"<sup>4</sup> was left to men. In Sydney the equivalent Association was one response to the unplanned development and lack of public sanitation.<sup>5</sup> As in England, the problem was attacked on two fronts.<sup>6</sup> Men worked through organisations such as the N.S.W. Health Society to improve and extend public facilities. The second front was led by women who, lacking expertise in public policy and town planning, fell back on philanthropic and educational solutions. They aimed to teach the rules of household hygiene and child-care to women by lectures (mostly to church groups) and

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1. e.g. Sydney Female Refuge Society, A.R., 1888, p.xi and Benevolent Society of N.S.W., A.R., 1885, pp.16-7 and 1886, p.24.
  2. Sydney Female Refuge Society, A.R., 1888, p.xiii.
  3. Infants' Home, A.R., 1888, p.12.
  4. A.Deacon and M.Hill, "The Problem of 'Surplus Women'" in M.Hill, A Sociological Year Book of Religion in Britain, London, 1972, p.98.
  5. Clark and Kelly in Kelly, (ed.), op.cit.
  6. Deacon and Hill, op.cit., p.98.

tracts.<sup>1</sup> The distinction arose because the two sexes organised separately, not because the women shrank from organisation or decision-making. Certainly the committee of the Ladies' Sanitary Association in Sydney, which included Allen, Kent, Mullens, Pottier, Renwick and Sly,<sup>2</sup> did not lack women with organisational ability and experience. The problem was rather the reverse, as women attempted to use the Association to further their own causes. Thus Amelia Allen attempted, with Mrs Lomas Smith, to get the Association to campaign for chairs to be provided for shop assistants.<sup>3</sup> She also tried to involve the Association in home nursing schemes for the sick poor.<sup>4</sup>

An argument which contradicts the assumption of the lack of responsibility by women sanitary reformers has been made by Morantz.<sup>5</sup> She has argued that in America such reformers displayed and promoted active responsibility rather than traditional passivity over women's health and autonomy. Morantz argued that women were encouraged to subsume family and personal health as their responsibility within the woman's sphere. The female health reformer in Morantz's view was given a new sense of purpose and direction by the belief in the efficacy of individual action and an increased control over personal health. As middle class women applied the new laws of hygiene to their own lives, Morantz's arguments are valid. However, the Sydney Ladies' Sanitary Association was philanthropic; comprised of middle class ladies anxious to teach the laws of hygiene to lower-class women. As at least seven of the eighteen members also lived in the more salubrious parts of Balmain and Glebe, basically working class suburbs, they were also anxious to prevent the spread of infectious diseases from their poorer neighbours. They lectured

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1. Ladies' Sanitary Association, Minutes, 1 December 1887, outlining objects of the Association.
  2. See Appendix A.
  3. *ibid.*, (November) 1888, March 1889 and December 1890.
  4. *ibid.*, April 1890.
  5. R. Morantz, "Making Women Modern", Journal of Social History, 10:4, Summer 1974.

to women whom they considered to be "deserving" but inexperienced in sound household management.<sup>1</sup> These women were given added purpose within the woman's sphere only to the degree to which they could implement the new sanitary laws. The "slum" householder lacking power to change her environment had little chance of increased autonomy through a sense of personal responsibility for family hygiene. The members of the Sanitary Association displayed their own strong sense of autonomy and responsibility within the woman's sphere but their activities could be more oppressive than liberating for their audience.

The assumption that each sex had differing work of equal importance was also evident in the Social Purity campaigns. Again, men were most active urging legislative change whilst women's work was predominantly individually and philanthropically orientated. Male supporters of social purity were most active in lobbying for legislative change, in lecturing to their own sex and persecuting the morally suspect.<sup>2</sup> The women concentrated on philanthropic work with other women, including running the Female Mission Home.

The W.C.T.U. was the only organisation in the 1880s which encouraged women to lobby for legislative change rather than leave such activity to their male counterparts (the Local Option League). However, the W.C.T.U. combined its political work (at first mainly petitioning) with the usual women's philanthropic and educative activities. In addition, most of the first petitions were signed only by women and so were presented as a particularly female concern and thus within the woman's sphere. The petitions had three main effects upon the restrictions placed upon women. Firstly they suggested that legislation urged by women on behalf

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1. This attitude was most explicit in The Sydney Ladies' Sanitary Association, A.R., 1897-8, pp.3-4.

2. The Bulletin, 9 June 1888 and, e.g., Chas. Olden, Immorality: its fascinating temptations, its awful consequences and the way to avoid it, Sydney, N.S.W. Social Purity Society Lecture, 8 October 1883. ML pamphlet.

of their sex was possible, particularly as the bill to ban barmaids was lost by only one vote.<sup>1</sup> Secondly, presenting women's petitions to a parliament where women had no vote logically led to the demand for women's suffrage and this demand became part of W.C.T.U. policy in 1889.<sup>2</sup> Thirdly, the W.C.T.U., like the Y.W.C.A., was part of a world-wide woman's organisation and so encouraged consciousness of an internationally valid woman's sphere. This consciousness was particularly promoted by the 1888 world temperance petition which was eventually signed by 7½ million women.<sup>3</sup>

One organisation, the Salvation Army, combined evangelism, philanthropy and temperance advocacy and had a reputation which would suggest that the restrictions of the woman's sphere was disregarded.<sup>4</sup>

There are special difficulties in analysing the Army which obscures its position. The Army's high repute in the twentieth century has resulted in a tendency for commentators to disregard all critical analysis.<sup>5</sup> All secondary sources have been published under Army auspices,<sup>6</sup> internal criticism has never been tolerated and the primary sources favour celebratory generalisation over detail.<sup>7</sup> In addition, married women members were usually dismissed by an "and wife".<sup>8</sup>

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1. W.C.T.U., Minutes, 8 September 1884.
  2. ibid., 19 February 1889.
  3. ibid., 4 April 1888 and M.Williams and J.Holliday, Golden Records, Sydney, 1972, p.69.
  4. e.g. E.Showalter, "Florence Nightingale's Feminist Complaint", Signs, 6:3, 1981, p.403, is a typical reference to the Army's insistence on "sex equality".
  5. A.Gill, "On the Beat", S.M.H., 13 September 1980 makes this point.
  6. B.Bolton, Booth's Drum, Sydney, 1980; L.Tarling, Thank God for the Salvos, Sydney, 1980 and Col. P.Dale, Salvation Chariot, Melbourne, 1952. Dale was a pseudonym for Mrs E.S.Haviland.
  7. Coombs, op.cit., and Major J.Barker, Lost and Found:Being a History of Our Homes of Hope and Love, Melbourne, 1886. Attempts to use sources held by the Army failed; those who answered my telephone calls were willing to help but could not locate the correct department and a written request for access remains unanswered. On the evidence of these sources in the ML, however, additional sources may not reveal much more detailed evidence.
  8. Dale, op.cit., p.69.



Despite such problems, the basic attitude of the Army towards women was clear.

The Salvation Army came to Australia in 1880 and to Sydney in 1882. Soon after, with the help of its marches, the opposing "Skeleton Army" and larrikin pushes,<sup>1</sup> it made a distinctive impact. It attracted lower middle and working class converts<sup>2</sup> and had 2,580 adherents in Sydney by 1891.<sup>3</sup>

The widespread disapproval of Army methods was tempered by support for its philanthropic efforts, despite some officers' disregard of anti-pauperisation.<sup>4</sup> As in the Sydney City Mission, there was internal opposition to engaging in philanthropy.<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless, by 1890 the Army in N.S.W. ran a Prison Gate Brigade and Home, Samaritan Brigade, Inquiry Department and Rescued Sisters' Home. All were under the command of Brigadier G.A.Kilbey, Superintendent of N.S.W. Rescue Work. Only the Rescued Sisters' Home, catering for prostitutes, "fallen" women and female ex-prisoners,<sup>6</sup> was within the woman's sphere. Accordingly, Mrs Kilbey was in charge, helped, as far as can be ascertained, by women officers.<sup>7</sup>

The role of women within the Army owed much to the influence of Catherine Booth, wife of the founder. Like Quaker women, Catherine Booth affirmed the right of women to

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1. Bolton, op.cit., pp.14,74, more than 100 Salvationists in Australia were jailed or fined for street marches and meetings in 1881-1907.

2. The Bulletin, 20 January 1883, the paper also referred to the "nigger" element although the Army's attitude towards non-whites was quite conventional and racist, e.g., Barker, op.cit., pp.12,27.

3. Census of N.S.W., 1891, p.377, adherents in N.S.W. totalled over 10,000.

4. Bolton, op.cit., p.148.

5. e.g., M.Pearson, The Age of Consent, Devon, 1972, p.95 and Bolton, op.cit., p.227.

6. ibid., p.22.

7. ibid., p.7.

preach and to take an active public role in evangelical activity.<sup>1</sup> However, such rights were reconciled with a belief in the woman's sphere and in woman's destiny as wife and mother and submission to husbands. Thus Army women were given public work but tended, on marriage, to be their husbands' assistants and to be in charge only of work with women. Such an arrangement was not evidence of anomalies in the Army's concept of sexual equality as suggested by Bolton,<sup>2</sup> so much as the application of the woman's sphere concept to religious activism. The Army ideal remained that of Catherine Booth, actively working but under the command of her husband. It cannot be assumed either, that evangelical zeal conflicted with the expectations of a middle class life-style. The Booths, for example, employed three servants and Catherine Booth conducted a mission five weeks after the birth of one of her daughters to earn enough money to employ a governess.<sup>3</sup>

The Army women in N.S.W. were less privileged than Catherine Booth and even further from being "ladies" or what Catherine scorned as "selfish, refined, reading home birds".<sup>4</sup> The Army's inaugural meeting in Sydney, for example, was conducted by Mrs Adelaide "Hot Milner" Sutherland.<sup>5</sup> Sutherland had earned her nickname because of her zeal and propensity to literally haul potential converts to the penitent form in front of meetings.<sup>6</sup> The Bulletin criticised her syntax and grammar (suggestive of lowly origins), the emotionalism of her story of her baby's death and for her "very small mind and very long tongue".<sup>7</sup> Jefferis agreed that Army women

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1. C.Bramwell-Booth, Catherine Booth, London, 1970, esp. pp. 118-22 and J.Gaden, "Reclaiming their Freedom: Women and the Church" in Grieve and Grimshaw, op.cit.
  2. Bolton, op.cit., p.153.
  3. Bramwell-Booth, op.cit., pp.194-5.
  4. Bolton, op.cit., p.155.
  5. ibid., p.14. Sutherland took over the task from her husband, who was unwell.
  6. Dale, op.cit., p.147.
  7. The Bulletin, 20 January 1883.

were vulgarised by their sensational methods, processions and displays.<sup>1</sup> Such objections were largely irrelevant to the Army women. They were given a role which incorporated evangelical fervour with the "unquestioning obedience"<sup>2</sup> and discipline which marked the life of a nun. In addition, they gained secure employment along with an otherwise unattainable life of colour, drama, excitement and a sense of mission. Only the Army allowed Sister Mary Ann Cox the drama of saving the Army flag from the Skeleton Army by "wrapping it around her body and defying the roughs to take it".<sup>3</sup> The officer in charge of the Army in Australia during 1882-5 could write of "frail womanhood"<sup>4</sup> but the women under his charge gave him little evidence of it. The Army accordingly attracted women recruits for whom the notion of ladyhood was a repressive, unattainable ideal. Thus the Army Home for "rescued" women was not run by "ladies" for "females", but by "Sisters", as its title indicated. Another result of the Army's distinctive appeal was that its supporters were rarely wealthy. Of the subscriptions listed in Table 5.4(b), for example, the commonest gift was for 5/- while the largest was for only £2. The consolation for the Army was that

In the soldiers' home on high  
We'll be wealthy by and by. (5)

Bolton has aptly summarised the Army as "puritan in ethics, fundamental in theology and innovative in its methods".<sup>6</sup> The same divisions apply to the Army's use of women. The Army aimed to impose a puritan, fundamentalist ethic on the lives of all its followers. It accepted the restrictions

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1. J. Jefferis, "Review of the Salvation Army", op.cit., pp. 69-76; he was also concerned about the moral danger arising from all-night prayer meetings.
  2. Tarling, op.cit., p. 120.
  3. Dale, op.cit., p. 35.
  4. Barker, op.cit., p. 12.
  5. Salvation Army song in Dale, op.cit., frontispiece.
  6. Bolton, op.cit., p. 29.

of the woman's sphere but was innovative in the unladylike methods used by its women within their sphere. The Army women themselves showed no signs of discontent with the notion that women had natural expertise in working with other women and children,<sup>1</sup> of the submission of wives to husbands and the priority given to male officers. The latter was revealed in the opening of the Men's Training Centre in 1883; the equivalent for women was called a Home and was not founded until 1889, despite the women's greater enthusiasm.<sup>2</sup> As for the "vulgar" methods used within the woman's sphere, the women utilised these with uninhibited enthusiasm.

Religion, particularly its evangelical variety, continued as a major mobiliser of women into philanthropy. This was despite the appeal of secular solutions such as those offered by the City Improvement Board and Henry George, the indifference to religion in N.S.W. and that the evangelical movement was in overall decline from about 1870.<sup>3</sup> The majority of organisations listed in Tables 5.1 and 5.2, had a strong religious motivation and over half were evangelical. Yet while religion generally encouraged women's philanthropy, the older churches were more cautious. Denominational women's groups were generally restricted to parochial doxas societies, prayer meetings, bible study groups and Sunday School teaching. For many churchmen the ideal woman was like Miss Isabella Black, whose "very humble" self-opinion prevented her from doing "prominent" church work.<sup>4</sup> More demanding forms of women's philanthropy were disapproved for the same reason as was tertiary education for women: because it drew women "from their firesides and families".<sup>5</sup> When

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1. From 1888, a systematic approach was adopted to recruit and retain children in the Army, Tarling, op.cit., p.46.
  2. Bolton, op.cit., pp.48,153 cf. the men's Industrial Blind Institution and the women's Home for Indigent Blind Women.
  3. W.Phillips, Christianity and its Defence in New South Wales, Ph.D., A.N.U., 1969, esp. pp.v, 432-3; K.Inglis, "Colonial Religion", Quadrant, XX1:12, December 1977 and J.Barrett, That Better Country, Melbourne, 1966, p.6.
  4. The Weekly Advocate, 27 June 1886.
  5. ibid., 13 March 1885.

churchwomen achieved distinction outside their homes, approval was grudging and qualified<sup>1</sup> and even the progressive Congregational Church deplored the "modern tendency" to "unsex" women.<sup>2</sup> However, women were the majority in church congregations and the temptation to use such willing workers proved irresistible. The three largest churches, Anglican, Catholic and Methodist, were the most willing and able to allow women additional philanthropic work - but always within the boundaries of the woman's sphere.

The Church of England cautiously looked to its women members to extend its social agency amongst working class women. Deaconesses were appointed to spread the gospel among inner-city working class women and the Church Home was founded. The latter was for women "fallen from the paths of sobriety and virtue"<sup>3</sup> and run on conventional lines such as operated in the Refuges for Prostitutes.<sup>4</sup> Under the logic of the woman's sphere, executive control belonged to sober, virtuous ladies with everyday management by a Matron. Care was taken, however, that the Church did not sponsor another School of Industry, where male control was absent. The executive was comprised of ten "influential" Anglican women<sup>5</sup> and also of five men with, ex-officio, the secretaries and treasurer of the Church of England Temperance Society. Thus the validity of the woman's sphere was acknowledged and women utilised in philanthropy for other women but the Home remained under the ultimate control of the all-male Church of England Temperance Society. Florence Nightingale's complaint that the Church gave women no work<sup>6</sup> was no longer so valid for N.S.W. but autonomy over the work offered was firmly withheld.

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1. e.g., ibid., 28 March 1885, regarding the first two women, both Methodists, to graduate from Sydney University.
  2. G.Campbell, Annual Address of the Chairman of the Union, The New Congregational Year Book and Calender, 1885, p.57.
  3. Church Home, A.R., 1886, p.3.
  4. ibid., Rules, p.5.
  5. They included Barry, Heron, Laidley, Macleay, M. and K.Mort and Wilkinson, for which see Appendix A.
  6. Showalter, op.cit., p.405.

The major role in philanthropy aiding adults for Catholic women was still as a nun, with lay women restricted to supportive roles. The nuns included Adamson, the O'Briens, Cunningham, McGuigan, McKillop (see Tables 2.4 and 4.8) and Byrne.<sup>1</sup> The nuns no longer shouldered the entire burden of organised Catholic philanthropy in Sydney since the St. Vincent de Paul Society started work in 1881. The Society, however, generally worked outside the woman's sphere, with destitute boys, seamen and the poor of both sexes.<sup>2</sup> The nuns continued to respond to Catholic ambition for a more self-sufficient community. The Sisters of St. Joseph, although primarily a teaching Order, founded a Home for children and old, infirm destitute women and a Servants' Home. The former provided an alternative to Newington Asylum; the latter to hotels, boarding houses and Protestant-run Servants' Homes. A French Order, the Little Sisters of the Poor, also opened a Home for the Aged Poor to provide a Catholic alternative to the state asylums for the aged. Their Home was small as the Order only had eleven nuns by 1889 but inasmuch as the nuns professed to be ready to take in both sexes, they expanded the boundaries of the woman's sphere.<sup>3</sup> St. Joseph's Hospital also furthered the goal of Catholic self-sufficiency by providing an alternative to the Homes for consumptives run by the evangelicals, Ewan and the Goodlets or from 1888, the Carrington Convalescent Hospital.

The Methodist Church utilised women in philanthropy through the Sydney Central Methodist Mission, the "voice and the hands of the social conscience of Methodists".<sup>4</sup> The

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1. See above, pp.75, 177, and Appendix A.

2. St. Vincent de Paul Records, uncatalogued MLMSS 2984 and St. Vincent's Boy's Home, Jubilee Report, 1896-1946, 1946.

3. Australasian Catholic Directory, 1888, p.63 and 1889, p.74 and The Illustrated Sydney News, 10 May 1890.

4. K. Whitby and E. Clancy (ed.), Great the Heritage, Sydney, 1975, p.13.

Mission was founded in 1882 by the Rev. W.C.Taylor in order to attract the inner-city working class to Methodism.<sup>1</sup> At a time when the precepts of the woman's sphere were so widely accepted, the Mission almost inevitably used women to attract and evangelise to other women. Given the needs of such women, philanthropic aid was one means by which they were attracted. By 1886 the Mission used "lady district visitors" to invite women to the Mission and by 1889, one of its nine agencies was the Ladies' Sectional Committee.<sup>2</sup> The latter organised work with women by women along conventional lines for evangelical philanthropists. The ladies of the committee were seen as "elect", both in the Calvinistic and social sense and they worked through "Mothers' Meetings".<sup>3</sup> These meetings attracted about 50 working class women a week and included lessons in baby care, dressmaking and the occasional free tea.<sup>4</sup> The success of the Ladies' Sectional Committee vindicated the use of women within the woman's sphere but they remained under the direction of Taylor and the (male) church hierarchy. For the ladies themselves, their success emboldened them to plan more ambitious action, such as the foundation of a Home for Friendless and Fallen Women.<sup>5</sup> This plan was not implemented until 1902,<sup>6</sup> but it was the women's success in the Mission work with their own sex that first sowed the seeds of such philanthropic ambition.

Sectarianism was undoubtedly a virulent force in the 1880s. However, as in the 1870s, sectarianism extended the

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1. Central Methodist Mission, Twenty Ninth Anniversary Souvenir, 1913, p.39.

2. The Weekly Advocate, 22 May 1886 and 20 July 1889; Central Methodist Mission, A.R., 1889, pp.3-5 (unpag.) and W.Wilson, The Central Methodist Mission, vol.1, p.2. t/s held in the Uniting Church Library, Sydney. Wilson refers to the minutes of the Ladies' Sectional Committee but these could not be located.

3. Central Methodist Mission, A.R., 1889, p.5.

4. Wilson, op.cit., p.29 and The Weekly Advocate, 20 July 1889.

5. Central Methodist Mission, A.R., 1889, p.18.

6. The Alexandra Home for Friendless and Fallen Girls; the delay was partly due to the support Methodists gave to Ardill's Home of Hope for Friendless and Fallen Women from 1884.

numbers of philanthropic organisations whilst maintaining agreement as to the nature of the help offered. The Catholic Church was both militant and defensive in its stand against Protestantism and secularism. Signs of this militancy included the refusal to give Michael Fitzpatrick a Catholic burial because his son was at a non-Catholic school.<sup>1</sup> Catholic defensiveness increased with the O'Gorman scandal. O'Gorman was an ex-nun who toured the colonies giving vivid lectures on her mistreatment whilst a nun and her "escape" from the convent. At one lecture alone in Melbourne, 2,000 women attended and 1,000 more were turned away.<sup>2</sup> Any escape by inmates from Catholic institutions revived rumours of decamping nuns and the Catholic Refuge, unlike its Protestant counterpart, had to constantly deny charges of forcibly detaining inmates.<sup>3</sup> Much of the militancy of anti-Protestantism was fuelled by Cardinal Moran such as when he alleged that the Infants' Home's policies were anti-Catholic. Moran's charges were largely refuted but the sectarian hostility remained.<sup>4</sup> Evangelicals were equally determined to defend their beliefs. They also objected to the Infants' Home - this time its refusal to guarantee that all inmates received religious instruction.<sup>5</sup> Evangelicals as devout as Sarah Fox accordingly hesitated to join the Home's committee because of "religious scruples".<sup>6</sup>

Despite such sentiments, co-operation and consensus across sectarian lines was also evident. One of the most

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1. M.Lyons, *Aspects of Sectarianism in New South Wales*, Ph.D., A.N.U., 1972, p.398.
  2. The Sydney Mail, 27 November 1886 and The Weekly Advocate, 24 April 1886.
  3. Newspaper Cuttings Book 1, untitled clippings, n.d. (1885-7), held at St. Scholastica's Convent, Glebe.
  4. Infants' Home, Newspaper Cuttings and Miscellane, 1877-1966, MLMSS 2983/54 Item 1, pp.42-3, (S.M.H., 12,13 and 14 June 1889); Report of the Department of Charitable Institutions, 1890, pp.48-9 and Infants' Home, Minutes, 11 and 25 June 1889.
  5. ibid., 20 September 1887.
  6. ibid., 21 March 1882, see also Appendix A, entry for Fox.



striking examples occurred after the 1885 Plenary Council of Catholic Bishops decreed against some forms of Catholic fundraising. St. Vincent's Hospital, long reliant on non-Catholic financial support, reacted by appointing Protestant women to organise such occasions.<sup>1</sup> Strongest evidence for sectarian agreement on philanthropic aims, however, continued to be seen in the two Refuges. The Refuges' methods continued with little change from the 1870s and remained similar. A laudatory letter about St. Magdalen's was descriptive of both; the predominantly young inmates, the constant work and supervision, lack of recreation and all prevailing religiosity.<sup>2</sup> Within the woman's sphere at least, sectarianism did little to challenge the restricted nature of philanthropy.

Philanthropy within the woman's sphere was still an activity largely restricted to ladies although one trend evident from the organisations examined in this chapter was the extension of philanthropic activity from "ladies" to "women" as well: with the disreputable "females" still only the objects of philanthropy. Organisations like the W.C.T.U. and the Ladies' Sanitary Association kept executive control with ladies but also aimed to attract a wide membership of "women". The most significant crossing of class barriers was by the Salvation Army where working and lower middle class women worked for their class and spiritual "sisters". Yet this was a trend which began in the 1880s; it was not a dominant characteristic of women's philanthropy. The known membership of the philanthropic organisations involving women in the 1880s indicates that they were still dominated by a relatively small number of high status, upper middle class women. These women were predominantly middle aged to old and the wives and daughters of professional or business men. The majority were from five Protestant denominations. A range of maternal experience was evident, suggesting that

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1. St. Vincent's Hospital, A.R., e.g. 1889, p.7.  
2. The Freeman's Journal, 25 January 1890.

maternity was irrelevant in determining recruitment. Wealth was normally a pre-requisite as it enabled the members to display the attributes of ladyhood and have sufficient leisure. High status women were valued even as nominal members.<sup>1</sup> Table 5.6 and Appendices D and E provide evidence as to the extent to, and manner in, which these women maintained their control.

Table 5.6 and Appendix D show the degree to which the organisations considered in this and the previous chapter were dominated by women with multiple memberships. Of the organisations listed (those whose membership lists have survived to some degree) only two organisations, both denominational ones, had no members in common with the others, while three had all their members also belonging to other listed organisations. Outside these extremes, on average over half (55.5%) of the members also belonged to another listed organisation. In addition, twelve of the listed organisations had a membership which was represented on at least half of the other organisations. The majority of women's philanthropic organisations in the 1880s were clearly not operating in isolation from each other and were drawing their memberships from a relatively narrow range of women, most of whom were already engaged in philanthropy.

The restricted type of woman recruited into philanthropic committees is indicated by Appendix E, which shows the organisations to which the female kin of one woman picked at random,<sup>2</sup> Rebecca Stephen, belonged. There are other

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1. e.g., Sydney Female Refuge Society, L.C., Minutes, 5 March 1881.

2. The random choice was only constrained by the need to select a woman whose kinship group could be identified.

**TABLE 5.6**      **Summary of Cross-Tabulation of Membership Overlap**  
(Details given in Appendix D)

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 26)	(%)
S.R.D.C., L.C.	16	34.9	18	69.2
I.D.D.B., L.C.	12	54.5	14	53.8
F.S.I.	19	57.6	16	61.5
C.H.	3	60.0	3	11.5
S.C.R.B.	8	80.0	14	53.8
Hosp.	19	33.9	16	61.5
Y.W.C.A.	29	65.9	22	84.6
G.F.S.	5	20.8	9	34.6
W.F.G.C.	7	100.0	8	30.8
J.L.D.S.	0	0	0	0
S.F.R.S., L.C.	23	67.6	13	50.0
S.H.	10	100.0	11	42.3
B.S., L.C.	10	83.4	12	46.2
S.L.U.E.A.	9	69.2	12	46.2
S.F.M.H.	21	75.0	21	80.8
I.H.	16	57.1	15	57.7
W.C.T.U.	14	45.2	12	46.2
B.R.G.A.	8	53.4	9	34.6
H.I.B.	9	40.9	8	30.8
C.H.	14	82.4	14	53.8
S.P.S., L.C.	5	100.0	8	30.8
N.A.I., L.B.	4	80.0	12	46.2
S.C.M., L.C.	20	50.0	17	65.4
L.S.A.	6	33.4	11	42.3
Q.F.	13	52.0	15	57.7
D.C.	2	25.0	2	7.7
C.M.M., L.C.	0	0	0	0

**Abbreviations**

See key for Table 2.8 (following p.109) and :

W.F.G.C.	Working and Factory Girls' Club
S.L.U.E.A.	Sydney Ladies' United Evangelistic Association
B.R.G.A.	Blue Ribbon Gospel Army (Home of Hope and Jubilee Home's L.C.)
H.I.B.	Home for the Indigent Blind
C.H.	Church Home
S.L.S., L.C.	Social Purity Society, L.C.
N.A.I., L.B.	Newington Asylum Inquiry Ladies' Board
S.C.M., L.C.	Sydney City Mission, L.C.
L.S.A.	Ladies' Sanitary Association
Q.F.	Queen's Fund
D.C.	Dawn Club
C.M.M., L.C.	Central Methodist Mission, L.C.

interests which promoted cohesion and predisposed consensus but kinship was one of the most evident and, along with social ties, a relationship which women were considered to have a particular duty to cement. In addition, kinship ties have been shown, in this study and that of Windschuttle<sup>1</sup>, to be of importance to women in their recruitment to philanthropic committees. Appendix E shows that, from Stephen, there radiated an extensive and intricately interlinked network of kinship groups whose women members belonged to 26 of the major philanthropic organisations between 1870-90. In addition, other links and common interests are evident which also promoted philanthropic unity and class cohesion.<sup>2</sup> Thus the groups represented also included leading representatives of the major sources of power and control in the colony. There are representatives of grazing (Dangar, Suttor and Cox) and merchantile (Mort, Tooth) interests, of educational (Manning) and religious (Boyce, Selwyn) institutions and the proprietors of the colony's foremost newspaper (Fairfax). As well, the majority of Chief Justices of N.S.W. (Forbes, Dowling, Stephen, Darley and the Streets) are included in Appendix E. Philanthropy and the role of individual women must be understood in the context of it being one of the activities by which the ruling class exercised control: philanthropic organisations did not recruit women with widely disparate interests nor simply because of a woman's zeal. Despite the large increases in the number and influence of women's philanthropic organisations during the 1880s, it was still an activity dominated by a small, closely linked group of elite women.

The concept of the woman's sphere in the 1880s was a key determinant of the nature of women's philanthropy. The diverse and hegemonic acknowledgements of women's rights and abilities within the woman's sphere ensured that women's

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1. Windschuttle, B.A., op.cit., esp. p.32 and Appendix 11.

2. cf. D.Denholm, The Colonial Australians, Harmondsworth, 1979, p.149, "colonial gentlefolk constituted a very small group of people". This is not to imply an absence of intra-class conflict.

efficacy in philanthropy was increasingly acknowledged. Just as belief in the woman's sphere encouraged women's philanthropy, however, it also restricted it. The boundaries of the woman's sphere were not immutable but they generally restricted women to less publicised work with their own sex. Such work helped meet great needs but was dominated by the need to enforce anti-pauperisation among the working class. In addition, the woman's sphere concept ensured that a relatively small network of ladies continued to dominate women's philanthropy. There seemed little reason why the woman's sphere would not remain a dominant concept in philanthropy, both encouraging and restricting women, in the 1890s and beyond.

Chapter 6

A LADY AND A PHILANTHROPIST: HELEN FELL, 1882-92.

Ladyhood implies a spirituality made manifest in poetic grace. From a lady there exhales a subtle magnetism .... Within her influence the diffident grow self-possessed, the impudent are checked, the inconsiderate are admonished; even the rude are constrained to be mannerly, and the refined are perfected. (1)

This thesis concentrates upon the larger, more important philanthropic organisations which have left documentation of their work. However, when tracing the overall development of women's philanthropy there is a danger of losing sight of the individuals who contributed to those developments. This chapter is one reminder of the individual experiences behind the organisations examined in this thesis.

Each woman's life outlined in Appendix A offers insight into the meaning of being a woman philanthropist whose activities were both sanctioned and restricted by the woman's sphere. The women include Euphemia Bowes, of "magnificent power" who was first a servant, clergyman's wife then mistress of a "lady's college". By 1880 she had over 40 years experience in evangelical organisations, carried a bible ever at the ready and had raised a family of seven. Her children carried on her influence as a parliamentarian, clergymen, W.C.T.U. activist and the wife of Peter Board, N.S.W. Director of Education (1905-22).<sup>2</sup> A woman of similar commitment and impact was Elizabeth Ward, whose autobiography revealed the grounds for her belief that she, a "weak" woman,

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1. (anon.), Australian Etiquette, (1885), Melbourne, 1980, p.28.  
2. J.Burnswood and J.Fletcher, Sydney and the Bush, Sydney, 1980, p.139 and A.D.B., vol.3, entry for E.Bowes.

had been "made strong". She too combined relentless philanthropic activity with raising seven children. Another such woman was Eliza Pottie, motivated by the Quaker as well as evangelical tradition of philanthropy. She supplemented her extensive organised philanthropy with letters to newspapers agitating for prison reform and against the Contagious Diseases Acts.<sup>1</sup> She also engaged in individual philanthropy:

she would walk or drive round Surry Hills  
... under her arm she would have a tin of  
bulls eyes which she would distribute  
freely along with her tracts of religious  
import. (2)

Her six children also carried on her work, particularly one daughter who with other family members was prominent in the N.S.W. Peace Society.<sup>3</sup>

From the array of women's lives which offer themselves as a means of a more intimate understanding of philanthropy, that of Helen Fell stands out. Fell was as highly motivated and active as the women who dominated the major philanthropic organisations. However, in the 1880s she was not a member of any major organisation examined in this thesis. Her life has many similarities with the women of the larger organisations but also discloses more about the process of becoming a philanthropist and about the small church-based organisations which have left few records, yet were many women's introduction to philanthropy.

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1. e.g., S.M.H., 3 December 1887 and Brisbane Courier, 10 March 1884. The latter is quoted in Barclay, op.cit., part 2, p.22.
  2. H.A.Harding, letter to author, 6 August 1977.
  3. Peace Society (London) N.S.W. Branch, Papers, National Library, Canberra, MS 2980, Box 4, especially clipping of The Sun, 21 October 1930 and Minute Books, 1908-12.

Helen Fell's background was typical of the women philanthropists so far studied in that it provided her with a secure income, middling to high status and a strong Christian commitment. She was the daughter of the Rev. Dr Adam Thomson, the first Moderator of the united Presbyterian Church in N.S.W.<sup>1</sup> In 1870 she married a fellow Scot, James Walter Fell, owner-manager of the North Shore Gas Company with family interests in shale oil works. In later life Fell was a member of, inter alia, the board of the Crown Street Women's Hospital, the Kindergarten Union of N.S.W., the National Council of Women, Y.W.C.A. and the Women's Auxiliary of the Association for the Protection of Native Races. She was prominent in such Presbyterian organisations as the Dunmore Hostel for Girls, St. Andrew's Settlement House, Social Services Committee, Burnside Homes and the Presbyterian Women's Missionary Association. She was also on the executive of the Women's Liberal League.

In 1882 Helen Fell, her husband and three young children set out to visit Scotland, "home" for the two adults. It was a trip often made by the wealthier middle class<sup>2</sup> but for the Fells it ended in tragedy; James Fell died in London. Fell and her children remained in Scotland for at least a year then returned to Sydney to live. The financial basis for their lifestyle was James Fell's estate, sworn for probate at £18,920.<sup>3</sup> With conditions, Fell received an income of at least £1,000 per annum.<sup>4</sup>

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1. A.D.B., vol.6, entry for A.Thomson.

2. Such as the committee members of the S.C.R.B., Y.W.C.A. and the School of Industry.

3. James Fell, Last Will and Testament, 11 July 1882, Probate no.7474. W.D.Rubenstein, "The Distribution of Personal Wealth in Victoria, 1860-1974", Australian Economic History Review, X1X:1, March 1979, p.38 states that only 3% of men in Victoria left estates of £2,000 or more in 1880. He does not give similar figures in his "Top Wealth-Holders of New South Wales", ibid., XX:2, September 1980.

4. James Anderson, letter to Helen Fell, 15 December 1882, t/s copy in the possession of Prof. J.Wood, Hunters Hill.



After her husband's death, Helen Fell resumed her adolescent habit of writing a diary, recording her life in Edinburgh then Sydney. With a break between July 1883 to January 1885, she wrote her diary between 1882 and 1892 sending copies first to her sisters in Sydney then to relatives in Scotland.<sup>1</sup> They were meant to be read by others but only within the family circle. They thus retain the honesty of a diary and the detail of a letter. It is one indication of the warm relationship between the women of Fell's family that such detailed journals were both written and read so regularly for so long. Indications of the importance and strength of kinship ties are also evident for other women philanthropists studied, particularly the extent to which they ensured their kin were also on the philanthropic committees they joined.<sup>2</sup>

Three general features stand out in Fell's diaries. The first feature was her growth in self-confidence and assurance. As an unmarried 19 year old and a 33 year old widow her assessment of her life was similar; consisting of "little nothings" and "uninteresting trifles".<sup>3</sup> Such comments were, in part, routine for many women<sup>4</sup> but were also intelligent appraisals of unsatisfying lifestyles. After 1885 such comments by Fell ceased as she changed from a dependent wife to the family decision maker.<sup>5</sup> Concomitant with, and at least partially a cause of, her growth in personal autonomy was her increasing involvement in her local church and charitable organisations. It is an open question whether she could have made the transition as a wife rather than as a widow. Another causal factor relates to

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1. These diaries are all deposited in ML (MSS1114); further diaries are in the possession of Prof. J. Wood, Hunters Hill.
  2. This feature is shown in the biographical tables throughout this thesis.
  3. Helen Fell, Diary, 1 February 1868 and 28 November 1882.
  4. e.g., M. Mowle, Diary, entry for 2 June 1851, quoted in G. Wilson, Murray of Yarralumla, Melbourne, 1968, p. 216.
  5. No longer did she lament, wondering what "dear Jim" would have wished her to do, Fell, op.cit., 24 September 1882.

her age: she began the diaries as a 33 year old, ending as a 43 year old. Women philanthropists in Sydney, as demonstrated in this thesis, were predominantly at least in their forties whether they were mothers, spinsters or childless wives. Fell is a further indication that women acquired status with middle age and so only then had the confidence to engage in public activities.

The second general feature of Fell's diaries was the degree to which her world was a feminine one. She recorded very little contact with men other than her local clergyman and those of her family. The segregation of the sexes and the mutual support of women is a dominant theme in Fell's diary and indicates the practical impact of the woman's sphere. On an individual level there was her friend lamenting that she had three sons but no daughter to be a companion to her.<sup>1</sup> It was also evident in the women's social network. Fell recorded that at a sewing meeting of church women, "A case came to our notice and we arranged to provide medicine for the poor woman". Two days later she

got a letter from the doctor's wife saying  
that ~~[the]~~ poor woman needed a nurse so off  
I went with Miss Anderson to the Manse to  
tell Mrs McKinnon ~~[the chergyman's wife]~~ (2)

Throughout the whole incident, the woman was cared for by other women, and male authority figures by-passed in favour of their female counterparts.

The third striking feature of Fell's diaries is the similarity of her activities in Edinburgh and in Sydney. As colonial philanthropy was almost totally imitative of European models, so Fell's life involved a fixed and trans-national culture. Her life in both cities revolved around her family, church and philanthropy. Only one activity usually considered part of a lady's life, viz. elaborate entertaining, was missing. It may be that the larger-scale

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1. ibid., 8 September 1891.

2. ibid., 12 November 1886.

entertaining of many of Fell's contemporaries<sup>1</sup> were carried on by women on behalf of their husbands or fathers. For a widow such entertaining may have been both unnecessary and inappropriate. The vicarious nature of women's entertaining also helps explain the ennui their social activities induced in so many Victorian ladies and the relief and energy with which they embraced purposeful philanthropy.

Fell can be partially identified as a lady in terms of the woman's sphere hierarchy by her financial position and the prominent positions she held in high status women's organisations. Her self-identification was that of a lady and she expressed her sense of the obligations of ladyhood by philanthropic work with women or females. As was typical, she used the terms lady, woman and female to accurately denote relationships of class and status. Thus she described a church

Mothers meeting, about 40 poor women sewing garments for themselves from material supplied by the ladies at wholesale prices. Mr Miller the minister was reading to them .... After the women were gone [we spoke to]... the ladies ... (2)

The status of lady was never quite secure as it was an achieved rather than an ascribed status.<sup>3</sup> "Ladylike" behaviour was required at all times although what constituted that behaviour changed with the boundaries of the woman's sphere. Fell considered it daring for some "ladies" to attend a public dinner arranged by the Presbyterian Church. She "politely declined" to attend but accepted the women's attendance as being within the bounds of a newer definition of ladylike behaviour.<sup>4</sup> Similarly the concept of lady

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1. e.g., E.Stephen, Diaries, 1838-86, MLMSS 777/3.

2. Fell, op.cit., 26 August 1892.

3. An ascribed status is constantly under review so is never quite secure, cf. G.Fox, "Nice Girl: Social Control of Women through a Value Construct", Signs, 2:4, Summer 1977.

4. Fell, op.cit., 14 July 1886.

expanded to allow for the increasing tendency of unmarried middle class girls to enter paid employment: "It seems quite the fashion for young ladies to become nurses ... it is a grand idea if they have no duties to keep them at home".<sup>1</sup> A lady no longer had to be idle but her family obligations had to remain her chief priority. Fell slowly incorporated politics into her concept of the woman's sphere. Although in 1882 she could only lament her ignorance about such matters, within a decade she insisted on voting in municipal elections and canvassed votes when family business interests were threatened.<sup>2</sup> She justified these changes by emphasising her composed, ladylike manner. In such ways, boundaries of the woman's sphere were broadened without challenging the basic ideal of the lady as expressed in the quotation heading this chapter.

Perhaps highest on the list of taboos for a lady was drunkenness. Fell, as was typical of evangelical philanthropists of this period, was a teetotaler.<sup>3</sup> Gusfield has described in the American context how attitudes to alcohol were related to class and status and Windschuttle's research for the 1830s-1850s in eastern Australia suggests a similar correlation.<sup>4</sup> For Fell, however, the conscious impulse towards teetotalism was fear: "It is so awful to read those words No drunkard can inherit the Kingdom of God".<sup>5</sup> As long as this biblical warning was believed literally, the temperance movement was secure in its support. Fell does not appear to have belonged to the W.C.T.U. or kindred organisations, but their beliefs coincided. She also shared their attitude of compassion and determined

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1. Fell, op.cit., 9 July 1886, 7 January 1891 and 8 August 1891.

2. ibid., 11 August 1882.

3. ibid., 3 October 1882 and 25 September 1887.

4. Gusfield, op.cit. and Windschuttle, "Women, Class and Temperance", op.cit.

5. Fell, op.cit., 25 April 1883.

reformism rather than censure towards drunken women. One incident particularly illustrates Fell's attitude. Late one night she heard screams from a woman who had "taken a little too much". Fell investigated "and oh how glad I was we had gone". The woman's husband, who had just completed a night shift, had left the children to stay with her until she could walk home. One child was sent to inform her father and Fell took the woman to her nearest - and best - bedroom. The woman's daughter was nervous about being alone with her mother so Fell slept on a sofa in the room with them. In the morning the woman apologised, had tea and left. Fell later visited "our friend of last night ... I must get her daughter to join our YWCA".<sup>1</sup> As was typical of philanthropy, Fell's solution was inadequate but the help she offered was generally unforthcoming from any other source.

The main outlets allowed a lady within the woman's sphere were her family, church and philanthropy. Helen Fell was one of the many women who utilised these restricted opportunities so that they allowed her an active and fulfilling life. The family and family values were central to women's lives and so continually promoted by women philanthropists such as through boarding out. The importance and strength of the family was evident for many women philanthropists including those of the Allen, Ewan, Fairfax, Goodlet, Jones, Mackie, Mort and Pottie families. In this sense Fell was again typical. However, it is important to note that these were extended rather than nuclear families. Fell, for example, offered help to and gained love and support from, not only her family and her step-mother's but her husband's family and sister's (and neighbour) husband's family.<sup>2</sup> It was this type of family philanthropists had in

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1. *ibid.*, 24 and 25 October 1892.

2. e.g., she took in her four nieces and nephews on the death of her sister for about six months, *ibid.*, pp.91,97-8 (n.d. May?) and 17 November 1886.

mind, not the isolated nuclear family which only occurs in Fell's diary when in times of trouble they have little other recourse than that of charity. Fell's diaries also suggest that the stereotype of the aloof Victorian patriarch was applicable in her family as she noted that her children did not miss their father.<sup>1</sup> In her case and perhaps others, the close and happy family relationships were the result of the mother's, rather than both parent's, influence. This role would also help cement the strong identification of women with the family and family values.

Religion provided the main reason, or excuse, for a lady to go outside her home and family. Throughout the Western world, the practice of religion in the nineteenth century was increasingly identified with feminine virtues and values. Welter argued that this process of "feminization" had a profound, and on the whole, beneficial effect on the women's movement.<sup>2</sup> Helen Fell's sister Annie would have agreed. The church, Annie Thomson believed, "is a wonderful Training ground and women may in their own church, set a standard for Public Service".<sup>3</sup> Welter's argument and Thomson's belief are both upheld by the individual case of Helen Fell.

The Presbyterian church was the focus of Fell's ideology and of much of her social life. She rarely missed going to church twice on Sunday, was a strict sabbatarian,<sup>4</sup> taught Sunday School, attended weekly choir practice and prayer meetings, collected subscriptions for the Bible Society and Church Sustention Fund, learnt French from her local clergyman's wife and with her visited the neighbourhood sick. She also read the Bible to patients at the

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1. ibid., 11 October 1882.

2. B.Welter, "The Feminization of American Religion: 1800-1860", in M.Hartman and L.Banner (eds.), Clio's Consciousness Raised, New York, 1974.

3. The N.S.W. Presbyterian, 20 September 1928.

4. Fell, op.cit., 25 October 1887 and 15 June 1889.

North Shore Cottage Hospital and was founding treasurer of the Presbyterian Women's Missionary Association.<sup>1</sup> In such ways, one seemingly limited outlet for women's energies - the church - could provide a wide range of satisfying activities.

The church also formed the basis of Fell's social and political philosophy. She maintained that the answer to all social and economic ills could be found in Christianity.<sup>2</sup> The church also, however, encouraged acceptance of the grossly unequal allocation of economic ills as divine will. This acceptance was characteristic of churches and philanthropic organisations. It can be seen in the provision by Fell's local church of the destitute and poor with bread or tea and sugar compared with the presentation to Annie Thomson, off to a holiday in Scotland, with a purse of £111.<sup>3</sup> Similarly the N.S.W. Institution for the Deaf and Dumb, and Blind continued to stress economy and anti-pauperisation for the inmates but in 1884 presented the Honorary Secretary with a "very valuable" gold watch and silver service.<sup>4</sup> These attitudes were still strong in 1914 when the congregation of St. James' Church of England presented Annie Duncan, N.S.W.'s first female factory inspector, with a necklace of rubies, diamonds and platinum.<sup>5</sup>

Two Presbyterian organisations in particular, both run from her local (North Sydney) church St. Peter's, provided the basis for many of Fell's activities. The St. Peter's Literary Society and St. Peter's Relief Society provided Fell with a stepping stone between leading a privatised life and becoming a public force in philanthropy and politics.

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1. ibid., e.g., 26 April 1885, 6 February 1886, 25 October 1885, 16 April 1885, 25 June 1885, 10 April 1889 and 31 October 1889.

2. ibid., 26 October 1892.

3. ibid., 11 July 1889 and 10 April 1890.

4. N.S.W. Institution for the Deaf and Dumb, and Blind, A.R., 1911, p.25.

5. A.Duncan, Reminiscences, vol.2, p.278, South Australian Archives, Acc. no.1337. See also Appendix A.

St. Peter's Literary Society met regularly to hold "good improving debates".<sup>1</sup> At a time when women had few political rights and little encouragement to discuss public events, it enabled Fell to develop her opinions on such topics as tariff policy, Chinese immigration, socialism and women's suffrage (Fell supported the latter on the grounds that as a ratepayer she voted in the municipal elections).<sup>2</sup> Her participation in the Literary Society reveal the extreme diffidence felt by women to whom the experience of speaking in public was a new and alarming broadening of the woman's sphere. Later Fell was a practised and proficient public speaker but it was a long and painful process. She first participated by sending a letter to the Society's Manuscript Journal.<sup>3</sup> It was commended and the next time she wrote a paper to be presented to the meeting. However, she was too diffident to read it herself so stayed at home when it was read and thankfully noted in her diary the next day that it too had been well received.<sup>4</sup> Even though the Society's members were people she knew well, such was her fear of public expression that it took years before she found the courage to be present when her paper was read, let alone present it herself. In this she was not alone. When Fell had been a member for at least four years, the Society arranged for its women members to write essays on education and it was with

fear and trembling that I consented  
.... The ladies got a member to read  
the essays for them ... I am sure we  
would not have had the courage to do  
it ourselves. (5)

Organisations such as St. Peter's Literary Society and the Women's Literary Society<sup>6</sup> played an important role in

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1. Fell, op.cit., 10 April 1885.

2. ibid., 11 April 1889.

3. ibid., 25 March 1885.

4. ibid., 15 April 1887.

5. ibid., 26 July 1889.

6. Women's Literary Society, A.R.s., 1892-6, and Rules and Regulations, 1892. The Society was founded in 1889 and many of the leading members of the woman's movement were members.



supporting and training middle class women wishing to take a public role in philanthropy or any other community activity. Certainly for Fell, it is difficult to imagine her being able to take on her later activities without this alternative socialisation to the older concept of a "lady" as a strictly private individual.

St. Peter's Relief Society also broadened the scope of Fell's life. The Relief Society was a parochial organisation of women to help the "deserving poor", mainly by the distribution of food coupons.<sup>1</sup> It served as a local benevolent society similar to the secular, suburban societies that dotted Melbourne<sup>2</sup> and, after the 1890s depression, Sydney. Fell and her children had engaged in philanthropy in Edinburgh<sup>3</sup> and in Sydney she participated in similar activities through the Society. Active involvement in organised philanthropy was largely the preserve of women without the responsibilities of being a wife or having young children. Fell only took an executive position in the Society after she was widowed and the other most active member was Miss Anderson. The exceptions to this general rule were those women who were involved ex officio, as a result of their husbands' positions. In St. Peter's Relief Society, the minister's wife was automatically a leading member. Mothers of numerous young children, such as Bella Anderson, Fell's sister were particularly restricted. An old woman came to Fell's house and explained to the sisters that her sole support was an alcoholic son and that "often she was in want through his evil ways". She was selling her knitting "to be able to get ready a meal 'gainst he comes home my dear".<sup>4</sup> Both women bought knitting but it was only Fell

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1. No records of the Society have been located in the Presbyterian (now Uniting) Church archives. Attempts to check their existence with St. Peter's Church have been unsuccessful.

2. Charity Organisation Society of Melbourne, A Guide to Charity and to the Philanthropic work of Victoria, Melbourne, 1912, pp.61-71.

3. Fell, op.cit., e.g., 27 November 1882 and 23 December 1882.

4. ibid., 1 January 1892.

who was able to follow up the case by visiting the old woman and providing her with comforts and company.

Philanthropy was regarded by Fell and her associates as a serious and important undertaking. The members of the Relief Society sewed clothes for the poor but on one occasion Fell and others left early to attend another function. Even though they had arrived early to make up for the lost time, their attitude was poorly regarded and they were sternly accused of dereliction of duty.<sup>1</sup> It is evident from Fell's diaries that the ladies were correct in their assessment of the importance of their work; she recorded many cases where St. Peter's Relief Society stood between individuals and complete destitution. This role was heightened by the fact that travel across the Harbour to the offices of the Benevolent Society was both expensive and time-consuming and that North Sydney did not have its own Benevolent Society until 1894. Cases recorded by Fell that the Relief Society helped virtually all involved women without male breadwinners. They included women whose husbands were too old to earn a living: "an old lady ... laid up with rheumatic [sic] gout for eleven years and now [that] her husband is too old for work".<sup>2</sup> There were women trying to earn their own living: "Got a telegram from Mrs Stuart asking advice She was caretaker ... and very unjustly dismissed ... so Miss Anderson and I went over at once to see her".<sup>3</sup> Some had breadwinners in jail:

Poor woman her husband is in prison  
for forgery and she keeps up her Income  
by taking in sewing. She had  
twin babies about a year old and has  
a struggle to maintain herself. (4)

There were also women risking all to keep their breadwinners

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1. ibid., 1 May 1890.

2. ibid., 2 September 1887.

3. ibid., 20 April 1889.

4. ibid., 13 December 1888.

out of jail: Mrs Reeves, a widow supported by her son, gave the deeds of her house to a lawyer in return for his defence of her son when he was accused of stealing. Fell noted that she was

determined to collect enough money ...  
so as to get the deeds back at once  
for she may lose her house through it  
if the lawyer is an unprincipled man.  
I tried to comfort Mrs Reeves as well  
as I could .... (1)

Fell wrote to members of the congregation for money to pay the lawyer's fees and at Mrs Reeves' request, accompanied her on her first traumatic visit to jail to see her son.<sup>2</sup> In such ways the women of St. Peter's Relief Society provided help and support for other women and displayed their sense of obligation to those within the woman's sphere.

Fell and other women of St. Peter's church worked long hours and diligently to raise money for the Relief Society and other organisations they supported. They did this by direct collections or by sale of works or bazaars; means of raising money that were within the woman's sphere and far from minor sources of income for churches and charities. Three specifically mentioned by Fell all raised £300.<sup>3</sup> Even in 1895 when Sydney was recovering from the worst of the depression, Fell helped organise an Exhibition and Sale of Work that made a profit of £1,183.<sup>4</sup> No wonder that contemporaries argued that "Women are excellent and most successful beggars, and such ways of raising money as sales of work, bazaars, etc. naturally belong to their department of life".<sup>5</sup>

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1. ibid., 12 October 1892.

2. ibid., 26 October 1892 and 11 November 1892.

3. ibid., 11 November 1891, 9 July 1886 and 17 April 1889.

4. H.Fell, Jottings from the Reports of the Presbyterian Women's Missionary Association of N.S.W., Part 1, Sydney, 1941, p.7.

5. Mrs Boyd Carpenter, "Women's Work in Connection with the Church of England", in Burnett-Coutts, op.cit., p.123.

The motivation to work for the St. Peter's Relief Society was Christian, but it also brought earthly rewards:

Did not feel very well but after  
visiting a poor woman who seems to  
be dying of consumption and who has  
8 children the youngest a baby two  
months old I was cured ... after  
seeing that poor woman I felt I need  
never complain again. (1)

Fell's philanthropy reinforced her appreciation of the advantages of her life. In accepting the benefits of a privileged position, she also accepted the poverty of others. A notable feature of philanthropy is that it rarely lead its workers to question the structures that resulted in its need. There was an acceptance of what Fell called "sad cases" as a regrettable but inevitable part of the social order. The harsh implications of a conservative social and political ideology were accepted by the very people who displayed sympathy and concern for the victims of that ideology. Thus Fell and the clergyman's wife devotedly nursed a nineteen year old immigrant woman who eventually died. She left a twenty-one year old unemployed husband, a two year old child and a week old baby. The Relief Society paid for the funeral and Fell, in response to the dying mother's request, bought clothing for the child. The father, as a destitute immigrant, could not keep the family together and Fell tried to get the child admitted to the Ashfield Infants' Home.<sup>2</sup> Fell held the dying woman's hand but accepted that she could do little to ease the catastrophic consequences of her death.

Fell was well aware of the grinding poverty around her. She invited a sick daughter of a widow to stay with her and described the mother's struggle to survive: she earned 10/- a week cleaning offices and also took in sewing. Her rent for one room was 5/- a week.<sup>3</sup> Similarly, when two girls

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1. Fell, op.cit., 16 February 1886.

2. ibid., 14 November 1886 and 15 November 1886.

3. ibid., 21 October 1890.

came to her door selling crochet work she recorded that she found their Mother crocheting in a sort of desperate way. The rent ... was her great trouble and indeed it is the chief trouble to all poor people as they have to pay 8/- or 10/- a week for a house. She had two days work a week which paid the rent but they had to live and so the money was needed for bread. I told her of our Relief Society and from it she will get a supply of bread each week. (1)

Fell went out of her way to provide help to working class women but she was implacably opposed to working class efforts to resist oppression and transform their own lives. She fulminated against the growing trade union movement:

Talk of tyranny! ... I have great sympathy for the working classes but when they band together to become tyrants there my sympathy ends and certainly the Government ought not be influenced by them. (2)

Fell's attitude lies at the heart of philanthropy; it alleviates conditions whilst conserving the existing social structures. Any measure perceived as challenging those structures, and for Fell, but not all of her class, trade unionism did this, was vigorously opposed. Yet the contradiction remains that Fell's desire to alleviate conditions was genuine and the help she provided was the only available. Hypocrisy is far too simplistic an explanation. One last example serves to illustrate the complex nature of philanthropy.

In 1891 Helen Fell recorded her concern for Arthur Ward, the "bad boy" of her Sunday School class. Arthur had been boarded out but sent back to the Benevolent Asylum because of his behaviour. Despite her intense grief at

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1. ibid., 19 August 1892.

2. ibid., 1 June 1888. Her anger was prompted by the Union allegedly expelling a man because his wife bought vegetables from a Chinese man, cf., similar stories by Cambridge, op.cit., pp.221-35.

the recent death of her son, Fell visited him because she feared he was not understood and so felt sorry for him.<sup>1</sup> Her experience in doing so sheds some light on the horrific experience philanthropic care could be for some children:

the Matron ... in a tone of suppressed rage demanded me to tell where his Mother was ... I said I knew nothing of his Mother ... she turned on the poor boy saying ... Wheres your Mother? The poor child said She is dead. Dead! she exclaimed that vile woman dead I know better. She was a wicked woman and you ... will be vile and wicked as she ... I caught hold of the child's hand and faced her and said How dared she speak to the child so. If his parents were wicked was he to suffer for their sins ... At last I said she could not prevent my writing Arthurs name in the Bible I had brought him ... /the Matron said/ Give such a beautiful book to that boy ... My hand shook as I did so ... her parting words were Now take my advice and have nothing to do with that boy. (2)

The Matron was Eliza Elric, one of the "Nightingale nurses" who caused Lucy Osborn so much trouble in her efforts to establish professional nursing in Sydney.<sup>3</sup> At the Benevolent Asylum she found her niche and was greatly mourned when she died in 1894, ending twenty four years as matron.<sup>4</sup> It is clear from Fell's account that both women accepted the simplistic division between good and evil propagated by nineteenth century theology. Yet despite this belief and her horror at such a violent scene, Fell emerged from the episode as the sole champion of a much abused child.

A final aspect of Fell's life which sheds light on women's sphere philanthropy is her relationship with her servants. Fell's diaries support the argument in this thesis that servants and employers had a mutually dependent (although not equally vulnerable) relationship and that

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1. Fell, op.cit., 1 July 1891.

2. ibid., 2 July 1891.

3. See above, chapter 2, p<sup>148?</sup>

4. Benevolent Society of N.S.W., A.R., 1894, p.16.

the "servant question" was not just a matter of the number of servants but of their competency and shared cultural standards.

Much has been written of the generally bad relations between Australian women and their servants and women such as Hester Massie have left records of continuous conflict between servants and employers.<sup>1</sup> Attempts to remedy this situation utilised philanthropy. Philanthropic institutions invariably aimed to produce competent servants and a philanthropic attitude on behalf of the mistress could cement relations with her servants. The latter is partially the reason why Fell enjoyed excellent work relations with her servants. Thus Fell helped her servants and ex-servants in times of trouble, sheltered them between positions, helped them find work and supported them during their weddings, births and bereavements.<sup>2</sup> The result was all a philanthropist could wish for: her servants were industrious, deferential and grateful.<sup>3</sup> She supplemented her individual philanthropic stance by encouraging her servants to join the Y.W.C.A. Fell noted such descriptions as

Emma and I went to the Social meeting  
of our YWCA Branch ... There was music  
and singing in which the girls took  
part as well as some lady visitors. (4)

The Y.W.C.A. and kindred organisations examined in chapter 4 were all able to provide servants with companionship and pleasure whilst reinforcing the distinction between the "girls" and "lady visitors". Such organisations made sound economic sense to the employers whilst easing some of the discomforts of servitude for the girls.

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1. Hester Massie, *Diaries*, 1879-1912. Her comment on 23 January 1892 was typical: "Both servants gave warning. Lazy creatures!". The diaries were kindly lent to the author by Dr Alan Roberts, Lindfield.
  2. e.g., Fell, *op.cit.*, 7 August 1886 and 15 September 1889.
  3. e.g., *ibid.*, 16 March 1886.
  4. *ibid.*, 27 April 1890.

The diaries of Helen Fell depict the life of one philanthropic lady in the late nineteenth century. They reveal the boundaries of the woman's sphere; how her life was restricted to her family, home, religion and particular philanthropy. Yet they also reveal that she was far from being a passive, merely decorative "prisoner of the drawing room".<sup>1</sup> Within the restrictions of the woman's sphere, her life was active, satisfying and important beyond the confines of her home and family. Her diaries also demonstrate one lady's rapidly increasing confidence within her sphere. It was a confidence shared by other women philanthropists whose work is examined in this thesis and who gave meaning and power to the role of the lady within the woman's sphere.

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1. A.McMahon, "The Lady in Early Tasmanian Society", Tasmanian Historical Research Association, Papers and Proceedings, 26:1, March 1979, p.12.